INDONESIAN (SUNDANESE)

Empal Gepuk

COMPLEXITY	SERVES	PREP	COOK	TECHNIQUE	CUT
Involved	**4**	**20 min**	**1 hr 45 min**	**Simmer**	**Outside round**

Ingredients

- 700 g (1½ lb) outside round, in 2 or 3 thick slabs, cut with the grain
- 1 litre (4 cups) water
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 cm (¾ in) galangal, bruised (or fresh ginger)
- 2 salam leaves (or bay leaves)
- 1 stalk lemongrass, bruised

SPICE PASTE

- 6 shallots
- 4 cloves garlic

SPICE PASTE (CONT.)

- 2 tsp coriander seeds, toasted
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 2 tbsp palm sugar (or brown sugar)
- 3 tbsp thick sweet soy sauce (kecap manis; or 2 tbsp soy sauce + 2 tbsp brown sugar)
- 1 tbsp tamarind paste

TO FRY

- 125 ml (½ cup) vegetable oil, divided
- Sambal, sliced cucumber and steamed rice, to serve

Steps

1. Put the beef, water, salt, galangal, salam leaves and lemongrass in a pot. Bring to a boil, skim off the foam, then lower to a gentle simmer with the lid ajar. Cook for 1 hour 15 minutes, until the beef is very tender.
2. Blend or pound the shallots, garlic, coriander and turmeric into a paste.
3. Lift the beef out and let it cool for 10 minutes. Keep 250 ml (1 cup) of the broth. Place the slabs on a board and pound each with a mallet or heavy pan until about 1 cm (⅜ in) thick, so the fibres loosen but the slab stays whole.
4. Heat 2 tbsp of the oil in a wide pan over medium heat. Fry the spice paste for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring, until fragrant and darker. Add the reserved broth, palm sugar, kecap manis and tamarind and bring to a bubble.
5. Add the pounded beef and simmer for 15 minutes, turning, until the liquid is almost gone and the beef is glossy and dark.
6. Heat the remaining oil in a skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Fry the slabs for 2 to 3 minutes per side, until the edges crisp and turn deep mahogany.
7. Drain on paper towels. Serve whole or cut into pieces, with sambal, cucumber and hot rice.

Notes

- **Make ahead:** the simmered, marinated beef keeps 3 days in the fridge, or freezes for 3 months; fry just before serving.

- **Air fryer:** instead of frying, brush with the sauce and air-fry in a single layer at 200°C (400°F) for 5 minutes per side. A hot broiler or grill also works.
- **Substitution:** no salam leaves? Use 2 bay leaves.