



# Sally's Galley

By Sally Oulton

## Tod Mum Pla – Thai Fish Cakes

**M**any years ago, I did a stint working on board a game fishing boat off the north Queensland coast. For two months, we chased marlin. Charter guests came from all around the world in the hope of hooking a big one.

Some succeeded. Some did not. The person who caught the biggest was an eighty-year old Japanese man. The fish was a massive 1,100 pound and after that fish had taken the bait, it amazingly only took the angler an hour and half to reel her in.

To this day, whenever I reminisce over that fish, I think of the extraordinary scale of it.

We were on board a 56' game

boat and when this fish came up along side, I remembering looking over the side and gasping. It was half the size of the boat.

As you can imagine, we were all on a high. Not only because of the size of that fish, but the sheer excitement of hearing the scream of the reel and watching every marlin we hooked, big or small, fly out of the ocean. It was breathtaking.

As with every day, once the day was almost over, we would steam for the reef and drop the anchor in behind the shallow waters. Other than watching marlin fly, this was the favourite time of the day. Miles from land, gently rocking in the twinkling, turquoise waters. We would sit up on deck drinking a beer, and watch the sky change brilliant colours as the sun slowly set across the tranquil ocean.

As you know, marlin fishing in Australia is predominately tagged and release.

As a result of this, the guests were always up for catching something they could eat. After dinner, we would all throw a line in for a spot of bottom fishing. I'm going to sound like I am bragging here, but night after night, we would catch coral trout, red throat emperor, snapper, nannaygai, giant trevally and so on.

So, what did we do with all that fish? A lot of it we kissed and threw back, but the beautiful white flesh fish such as the coral trout or snapper we always saved and I cooked simply pan-fried or crumbed and served with lemon.

With the other white fillets, I would make into Tod Mun Pla or thai fish cakes for hors' d'oeuvres, and serve up while we watched the sunset the



**Above:** Sally working up a nice dinner off Hamilton Island.

**Left:** This is a perfect recipe for white eat fish - and by carefully filleting the fish, turning the fillet over and removing the skin - a wide variety of popular - and obtainable fish can be used.



following evening. The delicious combination of spice with the fish was always a hit, and they would disappear in a flash.

So next time you are out fishing and you catch a few different types of white flesh fish, and you've exhausted your ideas on what to do with it, why don't you try cooking this recipe up for something different.

You can cook this at home, on the boat with your one stove burner, or you can even make this up while you are out in the middle of the bush, fishing on the river. Just put some oil in your pan or camp oven and fry.

The great thing about this recipe is you can use any white flesh fish, mince it all up together with the spicy ingredients, fry, and serve with some sweet chilli sauce. Delicious!

### Tod Mun Pla – Thai Fish Cakes

Tod Mun Pla are deep fried spicy fish cakes, seasoned with red curry paste and kaffir lime leaves. In Thailand, they are found everywhere and sold on the streets. It is an all time favourite snack and a healthy one.

Once I've cooked them, I serve them with a cucumber, sweet and spicy dipping sauce.

This recipe will serve around 6-people.

#### Ingredients

500 g or a huge handful of white fish fillets.

- 1 tbsp red curry
- 1 egg beaten
- 3 tbsp corn flour



**Editor's Note:** 36 yr old Sally Oulton was born in Perth, did a stint in NZ for five years, before settling in Dubbo, NSW where she grew up with her family. Leaving Oz in 1994, she travelled to Europe, did the secretarial thing for three years - and then changed course to study cooking in 1997. After her first cooking assignment (in the '97 Admiral's Cup) she spent the next ten years at sea - all over the world - in an extraordinary career that has so far embraced 60,000 miles at sea in everything from crack ocean racing yachts in Europe and South America, 'white yachts' in the Med, Caribbean and the Whitsundays - to Oz game boats off the Ribbons. Now back home, with her partner and a 19' Haines, they plan to explore the GBR via trailerboat.

- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 0.5 tsp white pepper
- 1 bunch of coriander – washed and chopped
- Handful of finely, sliced green beans
- 2-3 kaffir lime leaves, rolled up and finely sliced
- Vegetable oil for frying

If at home, mince it up in a mix master. If you are out on the boat or camping, chop the flesh up finely and put into a bowl. Then minced it up with your hands and combine.

Add red curry paste and mix it in with the fish and fluff.

Add the egg, corn flour, sugar, white pepper and fish sauce. Combine well. Add the chopped

green bean, coriander and sliced kaffir lime leaves. Keep fluffing until the colour of the mixture is even. Do not crush the beans.

Cover a plate or tray with greaseproof paper. Take a tablespoon of the mix and roll into a ball, then flatten into a small patty and place onto the greaseproof paper. Cover and refrigerate the patties for an hour if you have access to a fridge or put into your esky. This will help them to seal and let the flavours infuse.

Fill one-third of a wok or frying pan with oil. Heat up over medium heat. When hot, slowly drop the fish cakes into the oil. Cook in batches for 3 to 4 minutes or until golden. Remove fish cakes from the pan when they are golden on both sides and drain on paper towels.

Serve with a delicious dipping sauce. There are two sauces I like to serve it with.

#### Sweet Chilli Dipping Sauce

- 0.5 cup sweet chilli sauce
- 1 tbsp fish sauce

Mix with a spoon and serve in a small dipping bowl.

#### Cucumber Dipping Sauce

- 0.5 cup of vinegar
- 0.5 cup of sugar
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped up.

Combine together. Add a small cucumber diced up thinly and sprinkle half a cup chopped roasted peanuts and some coriander leaves. *Bon Appetit!*