

SARDINE KELAGUEN

My dad remembers his uncle making canned sardine kelaguen on Guam when my dad was about 12 or 13 years old—that would be in the early 1960s. Dad said it was the sardines in the blue and silver cans.

To kelaguen is a traditional process of cooking a variety of proteins with lemon—adding salt, coconut, onions, and hot pepper. Kelaguen is usually eaten with corn tortillas or steamed white rice, or part of a barbecue plate.

If you like sardines, you'll love this kelaguen—especially with crispy, sushi-seasoned rice, or crispy corn titiyas. The crispy seasoned rice takes sardine kelaguen to a whole other level—I can't explain, you just have to try it. And use coconut oil for pan frying the rice and the titiyas—I promise, it's worth it. This sardine kelaguen is yummy within the hour, but if you wait till the next day, I'm telling you!

Grated coconut is essential as well—it balances the strong sardine taste perfectly.

Makes about 3 cups of kelaguen.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

4 - 4.4 ounce cans sardines in oil, olive oil preferably

Set 2

½ cup finely diced yellow onions

¼ cup fresh lemon juice

½ teaspoon salt

1 cup freshly grated coconut

Donne' or spicy Thai pepper

Tools: medium glass bowl, wooden spoon

DIRECTIONS

Remove sardines from oil and place in the bowl. Use your fingers to split each sardine down the middle along the thin side. Remove all bones.

Add the onions, lemon juice, salt, coconut, and hot pepper to the bowl. Fold the ingredients together to combine. The fish will break up as you fold. DON'T stir the ingredients together or you will end up with mush.

Taste the kelaguen, adding a little bit more lemon juice, salt, or pepper if needed. Fridge till ready to eat.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of PaulaQ.com