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Lemongrass-Infused Snails with Spicy Soy Sauce

1

2 fresh lemongrass stalks
1/2 pound ground pork
24 Wild Burgundy Snails--drained, rinsed and minced
2 teaspoons finely grated fresh ginger
2 Thai chiles, halved and seeded, 1 minced and 1 julienned
1 teaspoon Asian sesame oil
3/4 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper
24 snail shells
Lettuce or cabbage leaves, for steaming
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1 scallion, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced on the diagonal
1/3 cup soy sauce, preferably Chinese thin

MAKE AHEAD: The recipe can be prepared through Step 3 and refrigerated for up to 2 days.

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Lemongrass-Infused Snails with Spicy Soy Sauce CONTINUED

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1. Trim the root ends of the lemongrass and remove a total of 8 long outer leaves from the stalks. Tear the leaves into three 3-inch-long strands. Trim off and discard all but the bottom 3 inches of the stalks and finely chop 1 of the tender bulbs. Thinly slice the remaining bulb on the diagonal. In a mini processor, puree the chopped lemongrass to a fine paste.
2. In a bowl, combine the ground pork with the snails, ginger, minced chile, sesame oil, salt, pepper and lemongrass paste.
3. Gently bend a lemongrass strand in half and stick it inside a snail shell, bent side in, and with the 2 ends protruding. Stuff the shell with 2 teaspoons of the pork-and-snail filling, working it between the lemongrass ends. Wipe the rim of the shell. Repeat with the remaining lemongrass strands, shells and filling.

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Lemongrass-Infused Snails with Spicy Soy Sauce CONTINUED

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4. Line a steamer rack with lettuce leaves and set the stuffed shells on top. Steam the snails until hot to the touch and cooked through, about 8 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a small saucepan. Add the sliced lemongrass, julienned chile and scallion and cook over moderate heat until fragrant, about 1 minute. Pour the soy sauce into a heatproof serving bowl. Stir in the scallion-and-chile oil and serve with the snails.

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