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JOHOR

Promoting freshwater fish

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Department launches book with recipes highlighting local aquaculture products

TO ENCOURAGE more people to consume freshwater fish, Johor Fisheries Department has published a cookbook filled with delicious recipes to try.

Its director Zainudin Abd Wahab said the book took more than a year to compile, with assistance from Johor government.

"The objective of the cookbook is to promote freshwater fish, so that people feel less intimidated to cook it at home," he said during an interview with *Star Metro*.

"Not many are familiar with *ikan banying* (yellow catfish), a type of freshwater fish that is popular in Segamat, and we hope to change that."

"We want to make the fish a household name."

Much like how *ikan paku* (silver catfish) is usually associated with Takung, we want people to think of Johor, of the mention of *ikan banying*," he elaborated.

Zainudin said the cookbook showcased 12 different Johorean recipes such as *Ikan Banying Asam Pedas*, *Ikan Kelah* (mahoeet) *Bakar Lemak Manis*, and *Freshwater Prawns Cooked in Butter Sauce*.

The book, which is available for free, also features other freshwater fishes such as *ikan lais*, *ikan sebarau* and *ikan tengkulang*.

"Apart from the recipes, the cookbook includes photos of the fish to help readers identify the species, as well as tips to eliminate the fishy smell and 'muddy taste,'" added Zainudin.

Johor Fisheries Department launched the book during its "Let's Eat Freshwater Fish" campaign held at a mall in the state, and visitors were given the opportunity to try various freshwater fish and aquaculture dishes for free.

Some of the dishes that were showcased were fresh oysters, *Mussels Baked With Cheese*, *Ikan Banying Asam Pedas*, and *Ikan Susu* (Milkfish) *Grilled in Salt*.

"Freshwater fish consumption is highly encouraged by the department as it helps to strengthen the country's food security and resources."

The increased demand for freshwater fish, mussels, prawns and oysters can also help gener-



Johor Fisheries Department is trying to promote the consumption of freshwater fish with dishes such as *ikan susu* (milkfish) *Grilled in Salt*.

ate more income for local breeders and entrepreneurs," said Zainudin.

He added that the state's fisheries sub-sector produced 1,253,770 metric tonnes of products worth RM553.4m last year.

Haliza Hashim, one of the visitors at the event, is looking forward to trying some of the cookbook's recipe.

"I am familiar with freshwater fish as I often cook it for family meals."

"One of my go-to recipes is *Suplex Masak Lemak Cili Api*."

"The key to eliminating the muddy taste and slimy mucus is to soak the fish in tamarind water before rinsing it thoroughly."

"I learned these tips from my mother," said the 45-year-old housewife.

She added that when the fish was prepared properly, visitors could enjoy the tender flesh and

unique taste.

Andy Lim, 38, said he often steered away from freshwater fish as he was under the impression that it tasted "muddy and fishy."

"I was surprised by the taste of some of the fish dishes served at the event."

"Not only did they not have any muddy taste, they were quite delicious."

"I will be more open to eating more freshwater fishes in future," said the housewife.

Nurul Nabilla Mohd Huzaidi, who works as an emcee, also hopes to try more freshwater fish and shellfish in future.

"It was my first time trying fresh oysters at the event, and I was surprised by the clean taste. I was also inspired that they were farmed in Johor."

"I hope more people will give freshwater products a try - this helps support the local econo-

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Zainudin Abd Wahab

my," said the 23-year-old.

The cookbook is in soft copy format.

Those interested in getting a copy of the cookbook can call the Fisheries Department at 07-5104-898 for details.



(From left) Zainudin, showing Kota Iskandar assemblyman Datuk Pandin Ahmad the cookbook at the event. Looking on is Malaysian Fisheries Department's marine aquaculture branch chief Noor Hasanyara Yahya.



Johor Fisheries Department staff members serving fresh oysters to the public at the event held to promote freshwater fish and aquaculture products.