

A recipe for success

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Corn tamales with lime, coriander and red onion salsa

Serves 4 (makes 12 parcels)

Ingredients

4 corn cobs, husks stripped and reserved *
100g crumbled feta (or grated cheddar)
1 cup (180g) masa lista
Salt flakes and cracked pepper
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 red onion, diced
500g cherry tomatoes, quartered
1 bunch coriander leaves and stems chopped

Juice of 2 limes

Finely grated zest of 1 lime

1 long green chilli, seeded and finely chopped

Small pinch of sweet paprika

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

*Save all of the corn cobs (two with the kernels still on, to make Simon's "Chicken and corn short soup with egg threads"

Method

Strip the corn kernels from 2 of the cobs by snapping them in half and running your knife down the cob. Lightly crush the kernels with a rolling pin, or potato masher, then mix together with the cheese, masa lista and 3 cups of water; the mixture should be like stiff mash potato.

Season with a big pinch of salt and pepper. Place it in a small heavy-based saucepan over very low heat and cook for 10 minutes, stirring constantly to create soft dough. It should be fairly dry but not crumbly.

Lightly oil a fresh corn husk with vegetable oil. (If you're using dried husks, rehydrate them first in warm water and pat dry before oiling.) Spread a heaped tablespoon of the masa mixture over the thick end of the husk, and wrap it up into a match-box sized parcel. Place another oiled husk perpendicular to the first one and wrap it up again to seal the sides. Tie the parcel with a fine strip of husk. Repeat with the remaining mixture and husks to make 12 tamales.

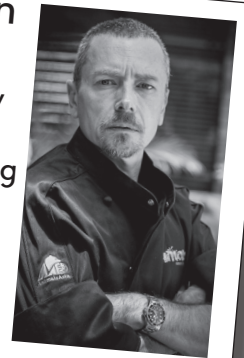
Place a large tiered steamer over a large saucepan of simmering water. Place the tamales in the steamer, then cover and steam for 20-25 minutes. Remove the steamer from the pan. Allow the tamales to sit for 5-10 minutes to finish steaming and to cool a fraction.

Meanwhile blacken the remaining corn cob on a dry chargrill plate or pan over high heat. Turn the cob regularly, as it will go blackened to completely burnt very quickly. You just need to achieve a smoky flavour and create a few black contact spots on the kernels. Leave the corn cob to cool slightly, and then strip the kernels with a knife. Place them in a bowl along with the remaining ingredients and a pinch of salt. Combine to make a salsa.

Arrange three tamales on each plate with the salsa alongside.

A bit about Simon

A passionate advocate of using menus to throw light on the minefield of ethical issues surrounding food. Whether it be fair prices for producers delivering more thoughtfully produced food; using best practice ingredients with minimal environmental impact; the responsible and culturally appropriate use of Australian native foods; or the ethical treatment of animals in the food chain. Above all, a hands-on cook of simple, pared-down, produce-driven, honest cooking that tastes better than just a bunch of words on a menu...



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Chicken and corn short soup with egg threads

Serves 4

Ingredients

50ml flavour neutral oil
1 small onion, diced (save skins for stock)
2 spring onions, sliced, white and green parts separated (save trim and roots for stock)
3 cloves of garlic, crushed (save the skins for stock)
2.5cm piece ginger, chopped (save skins for stock)
1 tablespoon salt flakes
Big pinch freshly ground white pepper
Kernels and cobs (from 2 corn cobs leftover from our Corn Tamales recipe)
Plus 2 (stripped) cobs (leftover from our Corn Tamales recipe)

1 cup (120g) frozen shelled soy beans or baby peas
3 tablespoons shaohsing cooking wine
1.5 litre chicken poaching liquid (from our Chicken Rice recipe)
2 tablespoons light soy sauce
3 tablespoons cornflour, mixed with a little water to make a smooth paste
Meat from 2 chicken drumsticks, sliced thin across grain in 2 cm lengths
2 free-range egg whites, at room temperature, lightly beaten with a little salt
½ teaspoon sesame oil

Method

Remove the kernels from the two corn cobs, set aside.

Chop all 4 corn cobs (i.e. the additional leftover from the Corn Tamales recipe) in 3 cm widths and add to the chicken stock in a 2 litre pot, bring to a simmer over a medium heat with all the aromatics trim (i.e. the skins that you put aside), simmer for 30 minutes. Meanwhile chop all the other ingredients.

Heat the flavour-neutral oil in a heavy-based frying pan over medium heat and saute the onion, white spring onion and ginger. Get a little colour on the ginger, then add the garlic and continue to fry. Add a pinch of salt, add the chicken drumstick meat and fry a couple minutes, deglaze with the cooking wine.

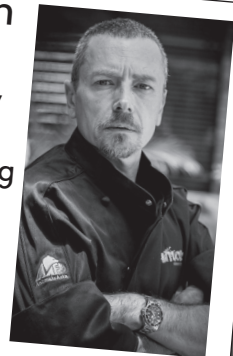
Add the stock and bring back to a simmer (you should have about a litre). Fold in the soy beans (or peas), corn kernels, the soy, and remaining salt, then stream in the cornflour paste stirring constantly until the soup achieves a thick but not gluggy consistency; and cook out the cornflour for a minute.

Remove the pan from the heat and make a little whirlpool by stirring a large wooden spoon around the pan in one direction. Immediately pour in the beaten eggwhites in a thin stream. The residual heat will cause egg threads to form; don't disturb the soup while its setting or you'll create a mess!

Ladle the soup in warm bowls. Finish with sliced green spring onion, a few drops of sesame oil and a big pinch of white pepper.

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Chicken Hokkien noodle with Chinese broccoli

Serves 4

Ingredients

200 ml cold pressed (good quality) vegetable oil
4 free range eggs
2 large onions, peeled and sliced
4 clove garlic, crushed

2 chicken thighs, skin on, meat sliced (1 cm strips)
500g fresh Hokkien egg noodles
160ml soy sauce
2 teaspoon sugar
1 big bunch Chinese broccoli, rip leaves off and cut in half, slice stems in 4 cm lengths

Method

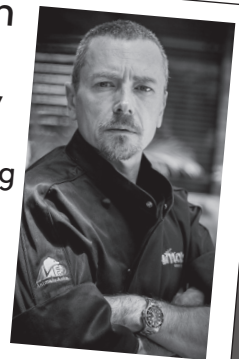
Get everything nearby and ready; you have to work really quickly to 'wok' this dish!

To maintain correct temperature in wok prepare 2 serves MAX at a time.

Put flame on full, and place wok/ fry pan on to pre-heat. Add oil to wok, carefully swirl to cover base of wok/ pan. Break eggs into wok and let the white set, pop yolk. Add onion, stir fry 10 to 30 seconds, add garlic, and stir fry 10 seconds. Add chicken and Chinese broccoli stems, stir fry until chicken is cooked (about 1 to 2 minutes). Add egg noodles and stir fry a further minute or so. Add broccoli leaves, sugar and finally add soy, mixing all ingredients. Take care not to cook too long after adding soy as it will reduce and make the dish too salty. Serve immediately.

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(Sort of) chicken rice

Serves 4

Ingredients

To cook the chicken (and make your chicken stock – also used for the Chicken and Corn Soup)

- 2.6kg free range chicken
- 1 tablespoon sea salt flakes
- 2 tablespoons light soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons shaohsing cooking wine
- 1 thumb knob ginger peeled, minced
- 3 spring onions, crushed
- Additional 2 tablespoons shaohsing cooking wine

Method

For the chicken: Leave your chicken on the bench for an hour to take the chill off before cooking.

Pull the complete maryland off the chicken (i.e. drumstick and thigh) leaving just the breasts on the carcass. Bone out the marylands and store for later use in the other recipes (i.e. drumstick for the chicken and corn soup recipe and thigh for the Hokkien noodle recipe). Chop the leg bones with a cleaver into one inch pieces.

Mix the sea salt flakes, light soy sauce, shaohsing, ginger and spring onion together then rub inside the cavity and over the breasts of the chicken. Then leave breast side down for 1 hour (or not, if your busy!)

Put the chicken (breast side down) and additional bones in a large pot and cover with 2.5 – 3 litres of cold water. Over medium-high heat bring to a gentle simmer then turn off the heat immediately (do not boil). Cover with a tightly fitting lid and leave for 10 minutes until the breast is firm and cooked.

Remove the chicken from the pot and place into a bowl (breast side down) and splash over the extra shaohsing cooking wine. Cover with a tightly fitting lid or foil and set aside.

To cook your rice: strain 3 cups of chicken poaching liquid (stock) to cook the rice with, instead of water. (Use a rice cooker if you have one.)

If making the Chicken and Corn Soup, be sure to keep 1.5 litres of chicken stock for that recipe.

To make the sauce for the chicken, place all ingredients into a food processor and whiz up until smooth. Set aside until ready to serve.

Remove breasts from chicken and slice across the grain, put beside rice on plate and dress with the sauce. Serve with rice and some steamed bok choy.

For rice

- 2 cups jasmine rice
- 3 cups strained chicken poaching liquid from above
- 1 tablespoon salt flakes
- Place in magic rice cooker and press cook!

For sauce

- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons shaohsing cooking wine
- ½ tablespoon sesame oil
- 100ml chicken poaching liquid
- Big pinch salt
- 2 spring onions

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