

Five-spice Vegetarian Stir-fry

2 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp rice wine vinegar
1 tbsp caster sugar
1 red chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
2 teaspoons Chinese five-spice powder
350g / 12oz tofu, cut into chunks
250g / 9 oz Thai fragrant rice
1 tablespoon light vegetable oil
2 red and 1 yellow pepper, de-seeded and sliced
200g / 7 oz broccoli, cut into florets
1 tbsp sesame oil
1 generous tsp cornflower blended with 3-4 tbsp water
1-2 tsp toasted sesame seeds

Mix together the soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, caster sugar, chilli and five-spice powder in a mixing bowl. Add the cubed tofu and stir gently to coat the tofu in the spice mixture. Cover and leave to marinate somewhere cool for 1-2 hours or overnight.

Measure the rice into a saucepan and add 1 ½ times volume of water and a pinch of salt. Cover the pan and bring the rice to boil on the boiling plate. Move the pan to the simmering oven while cooking the stir-fry.

Stand the empty wok on the boiling plate to heat through.

Drain the tofu and set aside, reserving the marinade. When the wok is hot add a little oil to the wok and stir-fry the drained tofu for 1-2 minutes until golden brown. Spoon the tofu onto a warm plate.

Add the remaining oil to the wok and stir-fry the peppers and broccoli and the sesame oil for 2-3 minutes, until the vegetables are just cooked.

Add the cornflower to the reserved marinade and pour into the wok along with the reserved tofu. Stir to heat through.

Spoon the rice into a serving dish and add the stir-fry. Scatter over the sesame seeds.

Serves 4

For full timetable of cookery demonstrations please visit www.louise-walker.co.uk

Grilled Spiced Chicken

4 chicken breast quarters with the wing on

Paste:

1 tbsp sunflower oil

2 tsp sesame oil

2 large red chillies, seeded and chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 tsp cumin seeds

1 tsp fennel seeds

1 tbsp chopped basil leaves

1 tsp turmeric

1 tbsp soft brown sugar

2 tbsp rice wine

2 tbsp tomato purée

pinch salt

Make the spice paste. Heat the oils together in a small saucepan and add the chilli, garlic, cumin, fennel, basil and turmeric. Fry gently for 4-5 minutes, taking care not to let the mixture burn. Stir in the remaining ingredients and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and cool.

Cut a few slashes in the chicken portions. Spread the spice paste over the chicken and place in a non-metallic dish, covered, for 4 hours or overnight.

Put the rack inside the small roasting tin, on the highest setting. Lay on the chicken portions. Hang the tin on the second set of runners from the top of the roasting oven and cook for 15 minutes. Turn the chicken over and cook for a further 10-15 minutes, until cooked and golden brown.

Serve with lemon or lime wedges and tomato and shallot chutney.

Tomato and Shallot Chutney:

225g / 8oz shallots

1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped

2 tbsp sunflower oil

75ml / 3 fl oz rice wine vinegar

50g / 2 oz caster sugar

175g / 6oz cherry tomatoes

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Springtime recipe suggestions from Louise Walker

2 tbsp soy sauce

Peel the shallots and halve any large ones.

Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the shallots and garlic and gently fry until golden. Pull the pan off the heat and add the vinegar and sugar. Return to the heat and bring to the boil. Move the pan, uncovered, to the simmering oven for 15-20 minutes. Halve the cherry tomatoes and add to the pan with the soy sauce.

Stand the pan on the simmering plate until the tomatoes are cooked but holding their shape and the liquid reduced. Cool.

Serves 4

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Sweet Potato Dauphinois

50g / 2 oz butter
2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
1 kg / 2 lb 2 oz sweet potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
2 sprigs fresh rosemary, leaves removed and chopped
700g / 1 ½ lbs potatoes, peeled and finely sliced
450ml / ¾ pint double cream
450ml / ¾ pint whole milk
200g / 7 oz grated Emmenthal or Gruyere

Use some of the butter to butter a 4 litre/ 7 pint shallow ovenproof dish. Sprinkle half the garlic over the base of the buttered dish. Lay over half the sweet potato slices and then dot with half the remaining butter and half the rosemary. Season. Layer over all the potato slices and dot with the remaining butter, garlic and rosemary. Season and finish with the remaining sweet potato slices.

In a saucepan warm together the cream and the milk and then gently pour over the potatoes. Sprinkle with the grated cheese. Bake.

For a 2-oven Aga put the oven shelf on the floor of the roasting oven and slide in the dish of potatoes. Bake for 50-60 minutes until the potatoes are soft when pierced with a knife. If the top is browning too much then cover lightly with foil.

For a 3 or 4-oven Aga put the shelf on the bottom set of runners of the baking oven and slide in the potato dish. Bake for 40-50 minutes until the potatoes are soft when pierced with a knife and the top is golden brown.

Serves 8-10

Rhubarb and Ginger Puddings

4 oz / 110g rhubarb
1 ball of stem ginger, finely chopped
4 tbsp ginger syrup
4 oz / 110g soft butter
4oz / 110g caster sugar
4 oz / 110g self-raising flour
¼ tsp baking powder
½ tsp ground ginger
2 large eggs
1 orange, grated rind and juice

Butter well 6 individual pudding moulds. Stand in a roasting tin.
Spoon the ginger syrup into the buttered moulds. Cut the trimmed rhubarb into 3cm lengths and divide between the moulds.
Put the butter, sugar, flour, baking powder, ginger and eggs in a basin and beat together well until smooth. Beat in the orange rind and juice. Fold in the chopped stem ginger. Divide the batter between the pudding moulds.
Pour a kettle full of water into the base of the roasting tin. Slide the roasting tin onto the bottom set of runners of the roasting oven. Put the cold shelf on the second set of runners from the top of the oven. Cook the puddings for 25-30 minutes, until risen and firm to the touch. Allow to sit in the moulds for 2-3 minutes before turning out and serving with cream or crème fraîche.

Makes 6 puddings.