

BUSYCOOK Meals in a hurry



Phoenix cutlets

Easy-to-cook caramelised onion sauce perks up the bird

WELCOME to a brand new series of Busy Cook. As you can probably tell from the title, this is a cooking guide for people in a hurry.

If like me, you spend the majority of your waking hours in the office, you're probably too beat up to queue at fast food centres for the same tired diet, and even more wary of complicated cooking instructions and major washing up.

With the recipes featured here, you won't have to spend half a day in the kitchen, and still be able to serve up a delicious, nutritious meal for you and yours.

I cheat a lot.

I use short cuts. And I reckon if the end result is pleasing to the palate, I have every reason to

save time this way.

Let's go straight to our recipe this week. I'm sharing with you a fried chicken chop with a delicious brown onion sauce. I call it Phoenix Cutlets because it's so good it resurrects even the most jaded of tastebuds in our house.

The quantities are for two, but if you have a bigger family, simple double the ingredients.

You can choose either white or dark meat. Just remember that a chicken breast takes less time to cook.

The secret to this dish is just a little homework in the morning before you leave for work.

Place your deboned chicken leg chops or breast fillets into a zip-lock bag with a packet of onion dip mix. Toss it around a bit and put it into the fridge.

By the time you come home, the meat will be nicely seasoned and ready for the frying pan.

Invest in a box of gallon-size zip-lock bags. They are multi-functional and very convenient. They save space, too. And if your fridge is as crowded as mine, you'll appreciate that.

The onion mix I'm using is the one you usually sprinkle on a tub of sour cream to make instant party dips.

If you can't find that, you can use a packet of onion soup mix. The flavours are similar.

If you don't even have time to hunt this down, just season with salt, pepper, a little sesame oil and sugar. That's fine, too.

The secret is in the sauce that you will make — with lots and lots of onions.

We are using big brown onions fried in butter to get a deliciously sweet sauce that's the perfect complement to the chicken chops.

If you have more queries, just drop me an e-mail as usual.



by Pauline D Loh

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Chicken Chop with Brown Onion Sauce

What you need:

- 1 pkt onion dip or onion soup mix
- 2 deboned chicken legs or breast fillet
- 2 big brown onions
- 2 tablsn butter or canola oil
- 1 cup green peas
- 1 red chilli, sliced
- black pepper

How to cook:

1. Place rinsed chicken and the onion mix in a zip-lock bag and marinate, preferably overnight.
2. Slice the brown onions very thin.
3. Pan-fry the chicken in a little oil over medium heat till it turns a nice golden brown. Set aside.

4. Place butter in pan. Fry the onion slices over medium heat to brown them. About 10 minutes.

5. When the onions are a deep rich brown, add the chicken and half a cup of water. Season with lots of black pepper, and salt.

6. Bring up the heat and cook till the sauce is thick and coats the chicken. Add the green peas and chillies. Serve hot over rice.

Shopping List

- 1 pkt onion dip or soup mix
- 2 chicken legs / breast fillets
- 1 pkt brown onions
- Green peas, red chillies



TIPS & TRICKS

ONIONS

I've had many queries on the types of onions I use in the recipes. Some readers are curious about my preference of brown onions over red onions.

Others wanted to know the difference. And then, there are the spring onions, and the shallots. How do you differentiate, and when do you use them?

Cooking really is a matter of taste. It all depends on what the cook is after. If you have a young family with children, you would probably tone down the spices in your dishes.

Some children will not take herbs, for example, like chives, coriander or spring onions.

Before you force it down their throats, remember that children have very sensitive tastebuds, and the pungency of the herbs may be doubled where they are concerned.

It took me many years before I would willingly eat up the coriander in my my soup. I still resist the taste of raw spring onions and I'll carefully pick them off my meepok or chicken rice.

That's why I tend to choose brown onions over red. The brown-skinned, white-fleshed bulbs are sweeter and milder.

The local red onions are definitely more pungent and you can tell just by peeling them. The tears are guaranteed to flow.



I find brown onions are better suited for baking and for dishes with a "western" twist. For local dishes like curry, I prefer the red onions. You need the stronger flavour to blend with the robust spices and garlic.

Shallots are your little red onions. They are tiny bulbs packed with flavour and a little goes a long way.

They are also fried nice and crisp to give you that fried onion garnish that Singaporeans love so much.

Spring onions are young onion plants. They are almost indispensable to every local cook, who use them to garnish almost every soup or dish, to add colour and flavour. You can easily grow your own. Just plant a few shallots in some potting mix and before the week is out, you'll have a few plants. — PDL