



**WINNING LETTER:**

We've tried many of your recipes so far and have had great success with most of them. You've been my saviour often, especially when I run out of ideas on what to cook. Can you feature more recipes on what to do with frozen fish, as we can't spare the time to go to the wet market in the mornings to buy fresh fish, which also costs more in the supermarkets.

*Xiangna  
via homechef@newstoday.com.sg*

Thanks for being our fan. Please remember to check out HomeChef next week when we'll be featuring a MAGGI Tom Yam Paste recipe that's really good with fish, either fresh or frozen.

*Do you have a question about MAGGI products?  
E-mail homechef@newstoday.com.sg.*

*The letter chosen for publication each week  
WINS a MAGGI Hamper.*

**THIS WEEK'S DIARY:**

**Fri, May 24 to Tues, May 28:** Come visit the MAGGI booth during the Food Expo 2002 at the Singapore Expo Hall 5 for more great meal ideas.

**TAKE A TIP TODAY**



**Back to Bamboo**

Recently, a Japanese chef came to town to demonstrate a few of his skills. He told me he never leaves home without two things – his sashimi knife and his bamboo steamer. He showed me his steamer, a venerable piece of equipment that has acquired a glowing patina that testifies to its frequent use. Bamboo, the chef explained, soaks up water. As the food cooks the bamboo holds the heat and sends out steam. On a metal steamer, condensation gathers under the lid and drips back on the food, spoiling its density and sometimes, presentation. It all made a lot of sense to me. After all, the most famous collection of Chinese dishes, the *dim sum*, is made almost entirely in bamboo steamers. Here are a few tips when choosing bamboo steamers:

- Make sure it fits in your wok. It should sit snugly half-way up the side, leaving enough room at the bottom for the water to boil without entering the rack.
- Make sure the weaved bamboo cover fits and there are no large gaps that will allow the steam to escape.

# Home flavours

Chicken steamed in oyster sauce is pure comfort food

**T**HE best thing is the gravy, at the bottom of the dish, which tastes better than any commercial essence of chicken. If you pour it over steaming white rice, it's a treat in itself.

This is also the ultimate healthy dish but so easy to prepare that I almost feel guilty. But a simple steamed chicken, flavoured with a good oyster sauce and nothing else, is a heart-warming home-cooked dish on the dinner table.

Every family has their version of steamed chicken – a tasty concoction that goes into the rice cooker to cook with the rice, or steamed over a wok of hot water.

In my family, oyster sauce is the secret. There's no need to add salt if you use a quality sauce like MAGGI Oyster Sauce. All you need to

help the chicken along is a little cornflour, some shreds of ginger and maybe a few red chilli strips to liven up the colour.

And we always add dried mushrooms to soak up the sweetness of the juices.

The secret is in the marinade and the right way to steam.

Season your chicken before you leave home for work. Put the meat in a zip lock bag and let it marinate in the fridge. A longer seasoning period will tenderise the chicken and let the flavours permeate.

If you don't like skin, remove it. I leave it on during the cooking process and discard it at the table. There is no additional oil used in this dish and the skin will keep the chicken moist during the cooking.

What you do need is a good steamer, and I have re-discovered the bamboo steamers my grandmother used to have. These modern versions are better made, I must say, and they come in various sizes. Buy one to fit your wok. (See our Tips column).

When steaming chicken, make sure the fire is high and the water is boiling. The high heat will seal the meat immediately and there will be less "scum" on the meat, which means you'll get clear juices.

Also, cut your chicken into uniform pieces so they cook evenly. Each chicken leg should be cut into at least four pieces, no less.

Drop me an e-mail if you have questions.



by Pauline D Loh

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## Steamed Chicken with Mushrooms & Ginger

**Ingredients:**

- 2 tablespoons MAGGI Oyster Sauce
- 2 whole chicken legs
- 6 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked
- 1cm ginger, cut into slices
- 1 red chilli, seeded, cut into strips
- 1 teaspoon cornflour, a little sesame oil
- MAGGI Chilli Garlic Sauce
- spring onions

**Method:**

1. Chop chicken legs into bite-sized pieces. Marinate in MAGGI Oyster Sauce, sesame oil and cornflour.
2. Cut dried mushrooms into thin slices. Cut ginger slices into fine shreds.
3. Mix marinated chicken well, sprinkle mush-

- room, ginger and chilli shreds on top.
  4. Place in a medium plate large enough to go into the steamer.
  5. Boil water in steamer. When water is at a fierce boil, add chicken. Steam for 15 minutes. Serve hot with a little saucer of chopped spring onions, minced ginger and MAGGI Chilli Garlic sauce.
- (Preparation time: 20 minutes. Serves four.)**

**Grocery List/Price Guide:**

- MAGGI Oyster Sauce (\$1.96/500g)
  - 2 whole chicken legs (\$3)
  - Dried shiitake mushrooms (\$1)
  - Ginger, chilli, spring onions (\$1)
  - MAGGI Chilli Garlic Sauce (\$1.65/305g)
- Total cost: \$8.60**

