



QUESTION: Thank you for your easy to cook recipes. I find them really useful, especially your explanations, tips and tricks. One question: You featured black chicken in a recent column. Why are they black? Can pregnant ladies take them?

tessie@cassiadrive

ANSWER: We try to feature recipes that busy people will have time to try. Cooking should be a pleasure, not a chore. Black chickens are actually white-feathered birds with black pigments on skin and bones. They make healthy eating because their fat content is lower. For that reason, they make good soups, but you can eat them steamed as well. A simple black chicken and ginseng soup, for example, will make a good, tasty tonic for pregnant ladies.

Do you have a question about our recipes or any MAGGI products?

E-mail homechef@newstoday.com.sg

We cannot answer every individual requests, but selected letters will be published in this column weekly.

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

TAKE A TIP TODAY

Colour your food

THE secret to good cooking is to understand the appeal of food. Besides tasting good, food should smell good and look good. Adding a touch of colour will immediately add appeal. Take a lesson from the Japanese. Their food presentations are like works of art. At home, we may not want to fiddle with our food that much, but it is just as easy to make food look appetising with a few simple touches.

FOOD ART:

Choosing the right crockery to compliment your food is important. For best effect, I tend to use black or white plates as these primary colours are great canvases for the palate on your plate. Chose unusual shapes, too. A long, narrow plate will let you display food in a row, rather than piling them high on a round or square plate.

COLOURS ON THE PLATE:

Add colour to the actual dish. The stuffed calamari I cooked was snowy white with a pale chicken filling. To serve it on a white plate would have made the dish "disappear". I highlighted the colours by plating the squid on a black plate, creating contrast. Also I added lots of colour to the dish by using diced red peppers in the sauce. It added a cheerful note and the red peppers gave the sauce colour and added flavour at the same time.

Red, green and yellow peppers make great garnishes, too, and they can be eaten both raw, or cooked. Try them diced, over fried rice!



Stuffed calamari

Sweet and sour squid and chicken perk up the palate

WELCOME back to another series of MAGGI HomeChef. For the next 13 weeks we'll be sharing tasty, easy to prepare recipes using MAGGI mixes and sauces.

There are two new features for our readers as well. You can now write in to the MAGGI Mailbox and share a tip or ask a question about a recipe or a product featured that week.

We also have a new column giving you tips for easier cooking, marketing or some finer points of entertaining.

This week, we kick off with a showy recipe that will probably become a family favourite.

Sotong. Calamari. Cuttlefish. No matter what you call it, the humble squid is really versatile.

Cooked in curries, deep-fried, cut up for a stir-fry or stuffed with a tasty filling, it's really hard not to like sotong.

In almost every country and cuisine, the squid has established its presence with its delicate flavour and texture.

I have taken two fairly large

squid and stuffed them with a chicken and chestnut filling. They are then cooked in that wonderfully piquant MAGGI Sweet and Sour Fish Mix, with extra pineapple and lots of diced red capsicum to give it even more bite.

The result, as you can see, is a colourful dish that will perk up even the most jaded palates.

Just some notes on preparing squid.

The purple skin on the squid is perfectly edible, but may rub off in the cooking process. If you like your squid snowy white, pull it off, otherwise, just leave it.

To make sure the stuffing slides in easily, cut a small slit at the narrow tip of the squid tube for the air bubbles to escape.

Remember to make shallow cuts on one side of the sotong tube as well. This will allow it to cook faster and gives the squid a nice, elegant curve.

I served the stuffed squid with a spicy fried rice. Because it was more a side dish, I used greens and rice. Toss in some diced longbeans, french beans or green peas. The MAGGI Nasi Goreng paste is a spicy all-in-one paste and you don't need to add anything else.



by Pauline D Loh

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Sweet and Sour Calamari Stuffed with Chicken

Ingredients:

- 1 packet MAGGI Sweet and Sour Fish Mix
- 2 medium squid
- 200 gm minced chicken
- 3 water chestnuts, diced
- Half a pineapple, cubed
- 1 red pepper, diced

Method:

1. Clean squid, removing ink bag and stomach contents. Keep tube whole. Set squid tentacles aside.
2. Mix minced chicken and finely diced water chestnuts together with 1 teaspoon

3. Carefully spoon filling into squid tubes. Seal the opening with a toothpick or skewer. Make shallow incisions on one side of squid, taking care not to expose the filling.
4. Start the wok with about 2 cups water. When water boils, carefully slide stuffed squid in and cook five minutes on each side.
5. Sprinkle MAGGI Sweet and Sour Fish Mix over the squid and stir to incorporate. Add squid tentacles. Add pineapple cubes and red pepper just before serving.

(Preparation time: 20 min. Serves four.)

Grocery List/Price Guide:
 MAGGI Sweet and Sour Fish Mix (\$1.44)
 2 medium squid (\$4.00)
 150 gm minced chicken (\$1.50)
 Red pepper (\$0.90)
 Pineapple (\$0.70)
 Water chestnuts (\$0.50)
Total cost: \$9.04

Spicy Fried Rice

Ingredients:

- 1 packet MAGGI Nasi Goreng paste (\$0.46)
- 1 cup green peas (\$0.50), 1 teaspoon diced, seeded chilli, 3 cups cooked rice, 1 tablespoon oil.

1. Fry MAGGI Nasi Goreng paste in the oil and stir in cooked rice. Mix well.
2. Add green peas and diced chilli.
3. Stir fry another two minutes, and serve

