

BUSYCOOK



Sharing the spice

Xie Shaoguang cooks up a couple of hot-sauced salads

Xie Shaoguang's acting skills are already widely recognised. His various roles on our local TV screen have showcased his particular talents as one of the true thespians in the industry.

But, he has one more unexploited skill. I found out last week that my MediaCorp colleague is also a deft hand in the kitchen.

I was told Shaoguang (right) had been appointed hot sauce manufacturer Tabasco's spokesman in Singapore. Great, it would be just the right time to get him to share some recipes with us. And that's how he ended up in our kitchen, chopping, cutting and spicing up the salads.

There were two recipes we tested. The first is a great appetiser that is a breeze to put together.

Canned topshell is sliced and mixed with green apples, drizzled with lemon juice and honey and flavoured with coriander root and leaves.

Like Shaoguang says, it's a pub favourite given a new taste reminiscent of Thai cuisine, thanks to the coriander root.

The tasters like the fresh bite of the green apples. The crunchy fruit also provided good

contrast to the slightly toothsome topshell pieces. Everyone liked the coriander under-flavour and the fire from the classic Tabasco sauce.

The second recipe is more substantial, being pasta based. It's also something you can serve hot or cold. Good for buffets, and simple enough.

We choose a thick-cut macaroni which had holes in the middle to allow corn niblets and tuna pieces to get stuck inside and enhance the flavours. You can also use fusilli (spirals).

The recipe calls for "smoked tuna" but it's a tad difficult to find, so use chunky tuna or salmon in brine or water. Drain the fish well or the salad may turn soggy.

The main attraction here is the extra hot Tabasco Habanero sauce. Go easy on it if your hot-sauce quotient is at novice level. Like Shaoguang says, you should go by taste.

Mind the basics, though. Blanch your carrots if you like them soft. Or leave them raw for extra crunch, but with the pieces cut smaller.

The Japanese cucumber should be cored if you are not eating the tuna pasta salad immediately. The cucumber will bleed water otherwise.

Try these recipes for your next evening gathering with friends, or a weekend family buffet!



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Tabasco Topshell & Apple Appetiser

Ingredients:

- 1 small green apple (diced)
- 1 can topshell (sliced)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Tabasco Pepper Sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed coriander root
- 1 tablespoon coriander leaves
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest, grated
- 2 teaspoon lemon juice

Method:

1. Mix apples and lemon juice together. Add honey and lemon zest.
2. Add sliced topshell, and add Tabasco sauce, coriander root.
3. Mix well together.
4. Garnish with coriander leaves and chill well until ready to serve.



Tabasco Pasta & Tuna Salad

Ingredients:

- 200 gm pasta
- 1 small Japanese cucumber, cored and diced
- 80 gm baby carrots, blanched and diced
- 100 gm whole corn kernel
- 2 tablespoons Tabasco Habanero Pepper Sauce
- 1 can smoked tuna
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons tomato sauce
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

Method:

1. Start a pot of boiling water, with some salt and a spoonful of olive oil added. When water is boiling, add pasta, cook 10 to 15 minutes until tender. Drain and cool.
2. Mix all ingredients together. Season with salt to taste. Chill well until ready to serve.