

Crispy Skin Duck with Organic Plum Sauce

Serve as a meal for 4 with steamed rice or as part of a banquet for 4-6

4 x 200 g duck breasts, with skin, trimmed of excess fat
2 tablespoons Sichuan pepper and salt
2 tablespoons plain flour
safflower or sunflower oil for deep-frying

Organic Plum Sauce

1 cup (250ml) water
1 cup (250 ml) brown sugar
1/3 cup (80ml) fish sauce
4 x star anise
2 x cinnamon quills
2 x plums, de-seeded, cut into quarters
Juice of 3 limes

Rub the duck skin all over with Sichuan pepper and salt. Arrange duck breasts, skin-side up, on a heatproof plate that will fit inside a steamer basket. Place plate inside steamer, position over a deep saucepan or wok of boiling water and steam, covered, for 12 minutes or until duck breasts are half cooked. Carefully remove plate from steamer basket, transfer duck breasts to a rack and set aside for 25 minutes to cool slightly.

Meanwhile, to make the citrus sauce. Combine water and sugar in a small pan and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 7 minutes, or until slightly reduced. Add fish sauce and spices and simmer for a further minute. Stir through lime juice and plums, then remove pan from stove.

Lightly toss duck halves in flour to coat, shaking off any excess. Heat oil in a large hot wok until surface seems to shimmer slightly. Add duck breasts and deep-fry for about 2 minutes on each side or until just cooked through and lightly browned and crispy. Using tongs carefully remove duck from oil and drain well on kitchen paper. Cut duck on the diagonal into 1 cm (½ in) slices and arrange on a platter. Reheat the citrus sauce and spoon over duck, serve immediately.

Sichuan Pepper and Salt

1 tablespoon Sichuan peppercorns
3 tablespoons sea salt

Dry-roast peppercorns and salt in a heavy-based pan.

When the peppercorns begin to 'pop' and become aromatic, take off the heat. Allow to cool, then grind to a powder in a mortar and pestle or spice grinder.

(Makes 4 tablespoons; store in an airtight container.)