



Last Sunday we decided to go to the Sandbar in Camps Bay for lunch. Trying to decide what to order, I said to the waiter, "How are your mussels?" He immediately flexed his diminutive biceps proudly and said, "Quite strong!" He went a few shades of red when I pointed out that I was referring to the mussels on the menu, which, by the way, were perfect! I've included two fantastic mussel recipes in this mailer.

As always, February is the month of love, and even though I categorically dislike Valentine's Day, I have relented and included the recipe for a deliciously seductive dessert. Enjoy!

Tracy

SPICE FILES



The very first recorded history of ginger can be found in the writings of Confucius, way back in 500 BC. Although we don't know for sure whether its origins lie in China or India, we do know that ginger is now one of the world's favourite spices, second only to pepper.

The multi-functional root is as famous for its medicinal properties as it is for its unmistakably fresh taste. Used to aid digestion, cleanse the system, relieve gout and ward off nausea, it's equally valued for its essential oils in cosmetics and as a vital ingredient in sweet and savoury dishes.

The most fantastic thing about ginger is that it is used in so many forms. Can you imagine sushi without pickled ginger, crab cakes without grated ginger or gingerbread men without dried ground ginger? Ginger is also preserved, candied or crystallised. Try adding finely chopped ginger in syrup to ice cream, cakes or crumbles, or julienne fresh ginger and deep-fry for a delicious garnish. To ensure that the ginger you buy is as fresh as possible, check that the skin on the 'hands' is plump, smooth and shiny, and not wrinkled and dull.

RECIPES

grilled nectarine and goat's cheese salad

1 packet watercress
4 nectarines, pits removed, sliced into wedges
1 punnet asparagus
1 punnet oyster mushrooms
100g goat's cheese, sliced into thin rounds
Olive oil
NoMU Veggie Rub

Brush the nectarine wedges and the asparagus lightly with olive oil and grill on a hot grill pan. Set aside.

Place the oyster mushrooms on a baking tray, drizzle with olive oil, season with salt and pepper and roast in a hot oven for about 20 minutes, turning once, until golden brown and crispy.

Drizzle some olive oil onto each goat's cheese round, sprinkle with Veggie Rub and place under a hot grill for 1 minute (just to allow the centre of the cheese to soften and the top to be slightly browned).

Place the watercress onto a platter and add the grilled nectarines, asparagus, oyster mushrooms and goat's cheese. Dress and serve immediately.



nectarine dressing

1 nectarine, roughly chopped
20ml brown sugar
Juice of 1 lemon
30ml water
30ml olive oil

In a saucepan, add the chopped nectarines, sugar and lemon juice. Cook for about 3-4 minutes until slightly thick and reduced. Remove from pan and whisk in the olive oil. Allow to chill before dressing the salad.

TIP 1: Try using walnut or hazelnut oil in the dressing instead of olive oil.

TIP 2: The grilled goat's cheese will be equally delicious with Italian or Provençal Rub and most definitely NoMU Egyptian Dukkah!



paella

6 chicken thighs
1 chorizo sausage, sliced
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 onions, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 ½ cups medium grain rice
1 punnet black olives
4 cups chicken stock
30ml **NoMU Spanish Rub**
NoMU Just Salt
NoMU Just Pepper
500g mussels (already steamed)
400g calamari
10 tiger prawns, de-veined
Handful parsley, chopped

In a paella pan, brown the chicken thighs in a splash of olive oil until nicely browned and just cooked. Remove from pan and set aside.

Using the same pan, sauté the onions, garlic and chorizo sausage until golden brown, add the rice and the Spanish Rub and sauté until the rice grains become translucent.

Add the chicken stock and cook gently over medium heat until the rice is just underdone.

Place the prawns, calamari, mussels, chicken thighs and olives on top of the rice and cover with a fitted lid or foil. Cook for a further 10 minutes, or until the fish is cooked.

Season with salt and pepper, garnish with chopped parsley and serve while hot with wedges of organic lemon.

oriental mussels



- 2.5 kg fresh mussels, cleaned
- a glug of vegetable or peanut oil
- 6 shallots or 2 onions
- 1 tbsp grated ginger
- 1 tsp chopped garlic
- 2 stalks lemongrass, bruised and split in half
- 2 red chillies, whole or chopped (optional)
- 1 tbsp **NoMU Oriental Rub**
- NoMU Just Salt**
- 1 cup white wine
- 2 tbsp Thai fish sauce
- 1 cup coconut cream
- fresh coriander to garnish

In a large pot or wok, sauté the finely diced onion until translucent. Add the garlic, ginger, and Oriental Rub and continue cooking, stirring constantly for a further 3 minutes.

Turn up the heat and add the wine and the fish sauce. Once bubbling, toss in the mussels, pop the lid on and leave for 10 minutes or until the mussels have all opened. Ensure that the lid is tight fitting so that none of the steam escapes and give the wok a good shake every few minutes so that the mussels cook evenly.

Remove the mussels with a slotted spoon and set aside. Add the coconut cream to the wok and simmer for 5 minutes. Taste the sauce at this stage. If it needs more salt add another glug of fish sauce or if you prefer, soya sauce. Add the mussels back into the sauce and give it a good toss to make sure all the mussels are well coated with the delicious, aromatic sauce.

Garnish with fresh coriander and serve immediately with Jasmine rice and a wedge of lime.

Note: Please discard any mussels that are open before you cook them, especially if they remain open after tapping on the shell. This indicates that they are no longer alive and therefore no longer fresh. In the same vein, also discard any mussels that have not opened during cooking.

white chocolate & yoghurt mousse in a summer berry soup

- 15ml gelatine
- 3 tbsp water
- 200g white chocolate
- 500ml Bulgarian yoghurt
- 5ml **NoMU Vanilla Paste**
- 250ml cream

Lightly grease a small loaf tin and line with cling wrap.

Sprinkle the gelatine over the water in a small heatproof bowl. Leave to soak until spongy. Break the chocolate into pieces and place in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water and stir occasionally until melted. Remove the bowl of chocolate and put the bowl of gelatine in the pan of water. Leave to dissolve.

Stir the yoghurt and vanilla into the melted chocolate, followed by the dissolved gelatine. Whisk the cream to soft peaks and gently fold into the mixture. Pour into the mould and chill until firm.

- berry soup**
- 250g mixed berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, youngberries)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup caster sugar

In a saucepan, dissolve the sugar in the water and allow to boil for 5 minutes. Add half the berries, excluding the raspberries, and simmer for 3-5 minutes so that the berries begin to release their juices, but do not overcook. Set aside to cool before adding the rest of the berries.

To serve, place a slice of mousse in the centre of a deep, wide plate, such as a risotto or pasta plate. Carefully spoon the berry soup around the mousse and serve immediately.



BACK TO BASICS

the best rusks ever!

Paul and I start every day with a huge cappuccino and rusks! I've tried to make these rusks as healthy as possible - they're low in sugar and fat and have a lower GI (glycemic index), but still taste rich and delicious. I suggest you bake them in the evening so that they can dry overnight. Happy dunking!



TIP 1: It's impossible to stir the thick mixture with a wooden spoon. The best way is to take off your rings, wash your hands and get stuck in!

TIP 2: Store in an airtight container.

- 1 kg nutty wheat flour
- 500g raisins
- 2 cups sunflower seeds
- 2 cups oats
- 2 cups oat bran
- 200g demerara or muscavado sugar
- 100g ground almonds
- 100g nibbed/chopped almonds
- a pinch of salt
- 3 tbsp baking powder
- 250g melted unsalted butter
- 3 eggs, lightly whisked
- 1 litre buttermilk
- 1 tsp **Vanilla Extract or Paste**

Preheat your oven to 180°C.

Lightly butter a roasting tin or deep baking tray. Line the bottom with grease-proof paper.

In a very large mixing bowl, combine all the dry ingredients. Add the melted butter, followed by the Vanilla Extract/Paste and the eggs which have been whisked into the buttermilk. Mix everything together well. If you struggle to incorporate all the flour, add a splash of milk. Place into the baking tray and spread evenly. Bake for 60 minutes.

Remove from the oven and tip onto a large wooden board. Lower your oven temperature to 90°C. Carefully slice the rusks and place in single layers onto two baking trays. Try to leave a small gap between the rusks as well so that they dry evenly.

Place into the oven and leave to dry for approximately 7-8 hours or until completely dried. I like to leave them in for an extra hour so that they become extra crispy and toasted.

Makes: Nearly 100!