

The Sacred Kitchen

Slow Food and gourmet inspiration from the kitchen of the Sacred Chef.



I would like to welcome you to my first instalment of Sacred Cooking. In this section I will be looking at ingredients and cooking practices from around the world, both current and ancestral, with a view to understanding what makes them sacred. Eating food and sharing meals, breaking bread

together, is of course, a universally regarded sacred act in itself, and something that we could all do well to remember - especially in these, 'in front of TV/computer screen dinner days.'

In my view, the essence of the slow food movement is all about re-valuing the importance of the simple things in life, - like cooking - that have been devalued by our love affair with technology and white goods. If it does it faster, in a smaller space, and plays music to you and tells you the time - it must be better. Well if you want to end up living inside a digital clock radio, it probably is.

The mortar and pestle is one of the oldest surviving cooking utensils still in common use. Just holding one in your hands, made of natural stone or fired clay, connects you with cooks and alchemists tracing back through eons of time. It is a deep sense of connectedness that grounds you in a space of righteous physical activity - engaging your monkey body in grinding and mixing spices, herbs and vegetables, whilst your awareness witnesses the moment. Natural practices imbue your cooking with real flavours that are molecularly at peace with our palates. Just as you would have to be crazy to eat micro-waved food on a regular basis, see the photographs of the frozen water crystals after being micro-waved by Professor Masuro Emoto in his book, The Hidden Messages in Water. Sometimes there is no improving on the basics and I think cooking is one of those areas.

Slow cooking in a tagine is another rare pleasure that can transport you back to another time and place. You're in North Africa or Egypt perhaps, squatting over a fire, bare feet in the dirt and preparing the main meal for your tribe or family. That conical, earthenware little oven is slowly transmuting base ingredients into a delectable spicy stew - an alchemical process for sure. The tall cone is designed so that condensation released through slow cooking slides back down into the dish, thus maintaining moisture and not drying out. The Sacred Chef ■

Recipes

LAMB TAGINE

INGREDIENTS

1.5kg	lamb deboned chopped into chunks	2 tsp	ground cumin
		1 tsp	sea salt
4	onions chopped roughly	1 tsp	ground ginger
6 cloves	garlic slivered	1 tsp	ground coriander
3 tbsp	olive oil	1	cinnamon quill
3	red chillies, deseeded, slivered	2g	saffron
		1 tbsp	palm sugar
2	pickled lemons quartered	1	lemon juiced
		2 cups	water or vegie stock

METHOD

Brown salted and spiced lamb over a high heat in a frypan with a little olive oil for a few minutes before setting aside. Place onion, chilli, garlic & lemons in pan & sauté for 5 minutes until soft. Transfer to tagine, add lamb & all other ingredients cook over a very low heat for 2 hours. Serve with chopped black olives on a bed of cous cous.

GLUTEN FREE CASSAVA CHIPS

VEGE CHIPS Sea Salt TASTY VINEGAR GLUTEN FREE

TASTY CHEESE GLUTEN FREE

AVAILABLE :
 Coles (Health Food aisle),
 Woolworths (Health Food section)
 IGA Supermarkets (Chip aisle),
 Health Food Shops, Juice Bars.

1800 730 135
www.ajitas.com

The Cassava Root

The cassava root is one of those exotic vegetables that you rarely come across, a staple carbohydrate enjoyed by many cultures today and with a rich history dating back thousands of years. The cassava or manioc root is a tuber vegetable, native to South America but also cultivated in Africa and on numerous islands around the world. It cannot be eaten raw, as it contains glucosides that can be converted to cyanide, but in the case of the smaller cassava roots cooking is enough to remove all toxicity. The soft-boiled root has a yummy subtle flavour and is great in stews and soups. Cassava roots do not keep well and need to be prepared and eaten within days of reaching market and this is probably why you may not have heard of them and why you do not find them in your supermarket. Cassava flour or tapioca flour is probably the best know application of this root vegetable, universally used as a thickening agent in a variety of sauces and sweet dishes. Cassava flour is also gluten free, making it an ideal alternative to wheat flour in many cases. Cassava is now the main ingredient in several lines of delicious commercial veggie chips that you can purchase in your supermarket.

Cassava is considered a sacred root in many of the South American Indian civilisations and its preparation was often an essential part of many ritual celebrations. It is the highest yielding source of food energy per plant amongst day crops, which is why it is so popular around the world in subsistent cultures. It must be eaten fresh to capture the wonderful delicate flavour and you are probably best off growing it yourself. Here is a great recipe to highlight cassava at its freshest. The Sacred Chef ■



Recipes

CASSAVA PIE

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups fresh grated cassava
- 4 eggs beaten
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tbsps palm sugar grated
- 1 cup cream
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg ground
- 1 cup gruyere cheese grated
- 1 tbsps flat parsley chopped.
- 1 tsp butter



METHOD

Rub a baking dish with butter. Place cassava, salt and parsley inside. Mix eggs, sugar, cream and spices together in a bowl. Pour over cassava and finish with cheese. Bake in a moderate oven for 30 minutes or until cooked. Serve with freekeh or quinoa.

Bon appétit!

Organic Sauces & Drizzles

— SPIRAL FOODS —



Unit 12, 51 Moreland Rd
Coburg Victoria 3058

PO Box 21
Coburg Victoria 3058

Tel 61 3 8616 7800
Fax 61 3 8616 7811

info@spiralfoods.com.au
www.spiralfoods.com.au