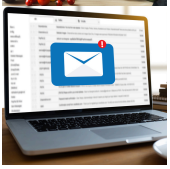
SPICE OF THE MONTH CLUB

November 2024

Join us to discuss

Tuesday, 11/26 / 6:00pm / Annex

Spend the month cooking with your spice and join us to discuss your opinions, experiences, and recipes!



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We'll send you notices when kits are ready to pick up, meeting reminders, and shared recipes!

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This month's spice: Star Anise

History

Star anise is indigenous to Southern China and North Vietnam and is grown in India, Japan, and the Philippines. The trees do not bear fruit until they are about six years old, after which they can supposedly produce for up to 100 years. Centuries of trade carried it to India from the Far East. However, it wasn't seen in Europe until the 16th century. Once discovered in the West, the essential oil found its way into confectionery and liqueurs.

Star anise is the dried star-shaped fruit of a small Asian evergreen tree that grows to about 16 feet tall. Its unscented flowers are narcissus-like and greenish yellow. After blooming, they produce rayed fruits composed of eight seed-holding segments that have a strong, sweet, licorice-like character and deep, warm spice notes that are reminiscent of clove and cassia.

Use

It is frequently used in savory Chinese dishes, and is the dominant spice in Chinese five spice. It combines very well with pork and duck.

Sources: *The Spice and Herb Bible, Third Edition* by Ian Hemphill & Kate Hemphill

Maple-Glazed Pork Roast with Star Anise

Total prep and cook time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Yields 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

½ cup maple syrup, preferably grade B
⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 star anise
pinch ground cloves
pinch cayenne pepper
1 boneless pork loin roast preferably blade-end, (about 2 1/2 pounds), tied at even intervals along length with 5 pieces butcher's twine
¾ teaspoon table salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
2 teaspoons vegetable oil

TIPS:

This dish is unapologetically sweet, so we recommend side dishes that take well to the sweetness. Garlicky sauteed greens, braised cabbage, and soft polenta are good choices..

STEPS:

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position; heat oven to 325 degrees. Stir maple syrup, cinnamon, cloves, star anise pods, and cayenne together in measuring cup or small bowl; set aside. Pat roast dry with paper towels, then sprinkle evenly with salt and pepper.
2. Heat oil in heavy-bottomed ovenproof 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just beginning to smoke, about 3 minutes. Place roast fat-side down in skillet and cook until well browned, about 3 minutes. Using tongs, rotate roast one-quarter turn and cook until well browned, about 2 1/2 minutes; repeat until roast is well browned on all sides. Transfer roast to large plate. Reduce heat to medium and pour off fat from skillet; add maple syrup mixture and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds (syrup will bubble immediately). Off heat, return roast to skillet; using tongs, roll to coat roast with glaze on all sides. Place skillet in oven and roast until center of roast registers about 135 degrees on instant-read thermometer, 35 to 45 minutes, using tongs to roll and spin roast to coat with glaze twice during roasting time. Transfer roast to carving board; set skillet aside to cool slightly to thicken glaze, about 5 minutes. Pour glaze over roast and let rest 15 minutes longer (center of loin should register about 150 degrees on instant-read thermometer). Snip twine off roast, cut into 1/4-inch slices, and serve immediately.

Source: https://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/30-maple-glazed-pork-roast-with-star-anise

Charred Sichuan-Style Eggplant

Total prep & cook time: 1 hour

Yields 2-3 servings

INGREDIENTS:

⅓ cup plus 3 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
2 garlic cloves, sliced thin
15 bird chiles, ground fine (1½ tablespoons)
1 (½-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and sliced thin
1 star anise pod
¼ cup hoisin sauce
½ cup fermented black beans
2 tablespoons plus ¼ cup Shaoxing Chinese rice wine, divided

INGREDIENTS (cont.):

1 tablespoon sugar
2 large Japanese eggplants (1½ pounds), sliced in half lengthwise then cut crosswise into 1½-inch pieces
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into 1-inch pieces
¼ cup water
6 scallions, green parts cut into 1-inch pieces, white parts sliced thin, divided
12 sprigs fresh cilantro, cut into 2-inch pieces

STEPS:

1. Combine ⅓ cup oil, garlic, bird chiles, ginger, and star anise in small saucepan and heat over medium-high heat until sizzling. Reduce heat to low and gently simmer until garlic and ginger are soft but not browned, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool for 5 minutes. Stir in hoisin, beans, 2 tablespoons rice wine, and sugar until combined; set aside.
2. Toss eggplant and salt together in medium bowl. Line entire surface of large microwave-safe dish with double layer of coffee filters and lightly spray with nonstick cooking spray. Spread eggplant in even layer over coffee filters. Microwave on high power until eggplant feels dry and pieces shrink to about 1 inch, about 10 minutes, flipping halfway through to dry sides evenly. Remove eggplant from microwave and immediately transfer to paper towel–lined plate.
3. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in 12-inch skillet over high heat until just smoking. Add eggplant in even layer and cook, tossing or stirring occasionally, until pieces are charred on most sides, 5 to 7 minutes. Push eggplant to outer edges of skillet and add remaining 1 tablespoon oil and bell pepper to center. Continue to cook, without stirring, until bell pepper is lightly charred, about 3 minutes longer.
4. Reduce heat to medium and add ¼ cup rice wine and water, scraping up any browned bits. Cook until liquid is reduced by half, about 15 seconds. Stir in scallion greens and toss or stir until slightly wilted, about 15 seconds. Turn off heat and stir in garlic–black bean sauce until combined. Transfer to serving platter and top with scallion whites and cilantro. Serve immediately.

Source: https://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/9337-charred-sichuan-style-eggplant

Southern Vietnamese-Style Chicken Pho

Total prep and cook time: 1 hour

Yields 4 servings

INGREDIENTS:

Broth:

1 (4-pound) whole chicken, neck and giblets reserved, liver discarded
1 onion, halved
1 (3-inch) piece ginger, peeled and halved lengthwise
2 teaspoons table salt
1 teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon coriander seeds
1 cinnamon stick
1 star anise pod
2 whole cloves
¼ cup fish sauce

INGREDIENTS (cont.):

Pho:

12 ounces dried rice noodles
½ small onion, sliced thin
2 scallion, sliced thin
Bean sprouts
Fresh cilantro leaves and stems
Fresh Thai basil leaves
Lime wedge
Thinly sliced serrano chiles
Hoisin sauce
Sriracha

STEPS:

1. For the broth: Place chicken breast side down on cutting board. Using kitchen shears, cut through bones on either side of backbone. Reserve backbone. Using sharp chef's knife, cut straight down through breastbone to make 2 halves. Working with 1 half at a time, separate leg quarter and wing from each breast.
2. Transfer chicken parts, backbone, neck, and giblets to Dutch oven. Add 12 cups water, onion, ginger, salt, and sugar and bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat to maintain gentle simmer. Cook, skimming off any scum that rises to surface, until breasts register 160 to 165 degrees, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer breasts to plate. Add coriander seeds, cinnamon stick, star anise, and cloves to broth; cover; and continue to simmer 1 hour longer (check broth occasionally and adjust heat as necessary to maintain gentle simmer).
3. Transfer leg quarters to plate with breasts. Discard wings, backbone, neck, giblets, and onion. Strain broth through fine-mesh strainer lined with double layer of cheesecloth. Rinse pot well and return broth to pot. (You should have about 12 cups broth; add water if necessary.) Stir in fish sauce, cover, and keep warm over low heat.
4. For the phở: Place noodles in large bowl and cover with water. Let sit until noodles are pliable, about 20 minutes. While noodles soak, shred chicken, discarding skin and bones. Bring 2 quarts water to boil in large pot. Drain noodles. Return broth to boil.
5. Add noodles to boiling water and cook, stirring frequently, until almost tender, 30 to 60 seconds. Drain immediately and divide among serving bowls. Place ⅓ cup chicken in each bowl (save remaining chicken for another use). Divide onion and scallions among bowls. Add broth until chicken and noodles are covered by ½ inch, about 2 cups per bowl (save remaining broth for another use). Serve immediately, passing bean sprouts, cilantro, Thai basil, lime wedges, serranos, hoisin, and sriracha separately.

Source: https://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/13876-ph-ga-mi-n-nam-southern-vietnamese-style-chicken-pho