

MOCA COOKS with Simon Fan: Crystal Shrimp and Baby Bok Choy with Black Mushrooms

Thursday, August 18, 2022, from 5:30 P.M. - 7:00 P.M. ET

The event is FREE but advance registration is required on mocanyc.org.

Crystal Shrimp / 水晶虾仁

Serves 3 or 4

1 pound (450 g) peeled medium shrimp (from about 1¼ pounds/560 g in the shell), deveined
2 teaspoons baking soda, mixed with about 1 cup (240 ml) water until fully dissolved

Velveting marinade

¼ teaspoon plus ⅛ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
¼ teaspoon sugar
½ large egg white, lightly beaten, or 1 tablespoon water
1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons potato starch
1 teaspoon vegetable oil

Sauce

¼ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons Shaoxing wine
½ teaspoon potato starch
2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons unsalted chicken stock or water

Dipping sauce

1 tablespoon Zhenjiang vinegar
½-inch (1.3 cm) piece of ginger, peeled and cut into very thin matchsticks

1 ounce (30 g) peas, fresh or thawed frozen
1 cup (240 ml) vegetable oil, for oil-blanching

1. In a bowl, soak the shrimp in the baking soda solution for 15 minutes. Transfer to a colander and rinse under cold running water for 1 minute. Drain well and pat dry with paper towels.
2. Place the shrimp in a bowl and add the salt, pepper, and sugar. Stir with your hand or a pair of chopsticks until well mixed and the shrimp feel quite sticky to the touch, about 30 seconds. Add the egg white and stir to combine, then sprinkle in the starch and stir until well coated. Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap. Let marinate for at least 30 minutes, preferably 2 hours, in the refrigerator. Remove the shrimp from the refrigerator 15 minutes before cooking to bring them to room temperature, and mix in the oil right before cooking.
3. In a small bowl, mix well all the sauce ingredients.
4. Make the dipping sauce by combining the vinegar and ginger in a sauce dish.
5. If using fresh peas, blanch them in boiling water until crisp-tender, about 1 minute, then drain well. If using thawed frozen peas, rinse and drain well.

6. Heat the oil in a wok or deep skillet over medium-high heat until the oil temperature reaches 300°F (150°C). Working in two batches, add the shrimp to the wok, and use a spatula to stir and move them around until they turn opaque and are nearly cooked, about 1 minute. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the shrimp to a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Carefully pour the oil into a heatproof bowl, and wipe out the wok if necessary. As an alternative to oil-blanching in this step, you can blanch the shrimp in gently boiling water until nearly cooked, then drain well.
7. Return 2 teaspoons oil to the wok (or add 2 tablespoons oil if you've blanched the shrimp in boiling water). Heat the oil over high heat until it starts to shimmer, then return the shrimp to the wok and add the peas and well-stirred sauce. Stir and toss until the shrimp are just cooked through and well coated with the thickened sauce, about 30 seconds. Serve right away with the dipping sauce alongside.

Baby Bok Choy with Black Mushrooms / 香菇菜心

Serves 4

- 1 ounce (30 g) dried black mushrooms, preferably small, soaked in 1½ cups (360 ml) warm water until softened, about 30 minutes
 - 2 teaspoons soy sauce
 - ½ teaspoon sugar
 - Salt
 - 14 ounces (400 g) baby Shanghai bok choy
 - 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
 - ¼ teaspoon potato starch, mixed with 1 teaspoon water to make a slurry
 - 2 teaspoons sesame oil
1. Remove the mushroom stems. Leave the caps whole if using small ones, or cut in half if larger. Strain the soaking water into a medium saucepan, and add the mushroom caps, soy sauce, and sugar. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat. Cover and simmer until the mushrooms are tender, about 20 minutes. Season to taste with salt.
 2. Meanwhile, cut the baby bok choy in half lengthwise. If using larger bok choy, cut into quarters lengthwise. Shortly before the mushrooms are ready, bring a pot of water to a boil. Add the oil and enough salt so the water tastes salty. Working in two batches as needed, blanch the bok choy until crisp-tender, about 1½ minutes. Drain in a colander, shaking to remove excess water.
 3. Arrange the bok choy attractively in a circle with the cut side down and heads pointing outward on a large deep plate (or shallow bowl). Use a slotted spoon to transfer the mushrooms from the broth to the plate, and arrange them nicely in the center, surrounded by the bok choy.
 4. Bring the broth in the saucepan to a boil over high heat. Drizzle in the well-stirred starch slurry and stir quickly until the liquid has thickened slightly, about 30 seconds. Pour the broth evenly over the bok choy and mushrooms, and drizzle with the sesame oil.