

SINGAPOREAN CHILLI CRAB

This slightly sweet, hot and spicy dish is undoubtedly one of the most popular ways to prepare crabs in Singapore. Fresh, meaty crabs are essential. When choosing a crab, gently press on the underbelly – if it is firm, then it will be more meaty. If using crab claws and not whole crabs, make sure that you crack the shell slightly before cooking, so that the flesh soaks up all the sauce. The shells will also peel away more easily.

SERVES 4

Preparation time 45 minutes

Cooking time 20–25 minutes

- 1.5kg uncooked brown or blue swimmer crabs, or crab claws, scrubbed
- 3 tbsp sunflower oil
- 1 recipe quantity Chilli Crab Spice Paste
- 2 tbsp tomato ketchup
- 2 tbsp chilli sauce
- 2 tbsp clear honey
- 3 tbsp light soy sauce

TO SERVE

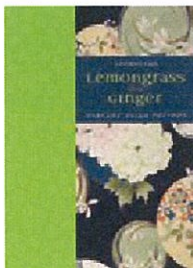
- 1 recipe quantity boiled long-grain rice

1 To prepare each crab, pull off the triangular bony tail flap and discard. Press your thumb under the rear end of the crab and lift the body away from the back shell. Discard the shell and remove and discard the stomach bag and the gills at the sides of the body. Rinse the crab flesh and claws under running cold water and pat dry with kitchen paper. Pull the 2 front claws from the bodies and then, using the back of a knife or a mallet, slightly crack the shell of each claw. Cut the crabs into quarters with a large-bladed knife. If using crab claws only, rinse under running cold water and crack the claws slightly using a large-bladed knife.

2 Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan over a high heat. Add the spice paste and cook gently, stirring occasionally, for 10–15 minutes until fragrant and the oil starts to rise to the surface.

3 Meanwhile, combine the tomato ketchup, chilli sauce, honey and soy sauce in a small bowl. Add the sauce mixture to the wok or pan, then pour in 90ml water and bring to the boil.

4 Tip in the crab pieces and push around the wok or pan until well coated with the sauce. Cover, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 8–10 minutes until the crab pieces turn bright orange and are cooked through. Serve immediately with boiled rice.



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CLAYPOT CHICKEN RICE

SERVES 4

Preparation time 20 minutes, plus 40 minutes
marinating and soaking time

Cooking time 30–35 minutes

700g chicken drumsticks or 500g skinless,
boneless chicken thighs, cut into bite-sized
pieces

1 tbsp sesame oil
1 tbsp oyster sauce
2 tbsp light soy sauce
2 tbsp dark soy sauce

1 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine

1 tbsp clear honey

3cm piece of root ginger, peeled and finely
grated, pulp discarded, reserving the juice

350g long-grain rice, soaked and rested

2 tbsp sunflower oil

4 dried Chinese mushrooms, soaked, drained
and sliced into thin strips

2 spring onions, finely sliced

2 red bird's eye chillies, finely sliced, to serve
(optional)

freshly ground black pepper

If you can, cook this dish the traditional way in a claypot. You will get to enjoy a particularly crunchy layer of rice, which will form at the base and is an important characteristic of the dish.

The combination of fluffy and crunchy rice, chicken generously coated in a tasty sauce, and the earthy flavour of Chinese mushrooms makes this a mouth-watering and satisfying dish.

1 If using chicken drumsticks, rinse the drumsticks under running cold water and pat dry with kitchen paper. Remove the skin and then, using a large chef's knife cut each drumstick into 2 pieces through the bone. Put the drumstick pieces or thighs, if using, into a large bowl and add the sesame oil, oyster sauce, light and dark soy sauces, rice wine, honey and ginger juice and season with pepper. Toss until each piece of chicken is well coated with the marinade, then cover with cling film and leave to marinate at room temperature for 30 minutes.

2 Put the rice in a claypot or deep, heavy-based saucepan. Place the pot over a high heat; pour in 2 cups water and bring to the boil. Stir well, then reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

3 Meanwhile, heat the sunflower oil in a frying pan over a medium high heat. Add the mushrooms and stir-fry for 1 minute, then remove with a slotted spoon and leave to one side. Add the marinated chicken to the pan, reserving the marinade, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10–12 minutes until almost cooked and browned. Leave to one side.

4 After the rice has simmered for 10 minutes and the liquid is almost absorbed, spread the chicken pieces and mushrooms on top of the rice. Cover and continue to cook over a very low heat for another 15 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through. Add the reserved marinade and cook for 4–5 minutes, then add in the spring onions and cook for a further 1 minute. Serve immediately with the chilli slices sprinkled over, if you like.