

CHINESE

This is my version of a Spice Bag. It's a bit convoluted to do the whole, bit maybe start by taking a couple of the elements; the chips, the chicken and seasoning.

Arun's Spice Bag

Fried Chicken & Chip Shop Chips
charred pineapple & peppers, curry mayo

Serves 4 or more

Chicken Ingredients

Buttermilk Bath

Ingredients

250ml buttermilk

1 tsp chilli flakes

500g or so boned & skinned chicken thigh meat cut into long lozenges, all gristle & sinew removed

Crisp Crumb

Ingredients

200g corn flour

200g instant polenta, fine

zest of half an un-waxed lemon, fine grated

Spices: 1 *tsp Chinese 5-Spice*, ½ *tsp fresh thyme*

Good amount of grapeseed oil for deep frying

Spice Bag Seasoning

Ingredients

Spices: 4 *tsp black pepper corns*, 2 *tsp coriander seeds*, 2 *tsp fennel seeds* and 2 *tsp Chinese 5-Spice* all finely ground, then 1*tsp cayenne pepper*, 4 *tsp fine sea salt* all mixed together well

Method

1. Take a large bowl, add the buttermilk and chilli flakes, add the chicken pieces, cover with cling film and pop in the fridge for at least 4 hours or overnight.
2. When it's time to cook, place all the Crisp Crumb ingredients in a bowl mix well. Remove the chicken from the buttermilk bath, pop them into the Crumb bowl, dredge and mix well, then set aside on a wire rack

3. Meanwhile, pour the grapeseed oil into a deep pan, or an electric *deep fat fryer set to 170°C.
4. Next, pick up individual chicken pieces with kitchen tongs, and gently place them into the fryer. Don't crowd the chicken, cook in two or three batches as required
5. Deep fry until crisp and golden allow about 2 to 3 minutes depending on the thickness of the chicken
6. Once cooked through, remove and sprinkle liberally with the Spice Bag Seasoning and serve immediately!

*If you don't have an electric deep fry fryer simply keep a piece of white bread handy...! Take a large saucepan, fill it to one-third full only with the oil, place it on a medium heat. After about 4 to 5 minutes drop a piece of bread into the hot oil, if it takes 3 seconds to turn golden brown, it's the right heat for the chicken. If not, then adjust the heat accordingly.

'Chip Shop' Chips Ingredients

Whenever I'm in the mood for this dish, I pop to my local chippy and ask for a portion or two of chips that they've 'dropped' once ie blanch deep-fried. They're part of the main feature, so to replicate that proper trad spice bag appeal, I find this is a great, easy quick-fix. Then, when all other elements are done, I drop them for a second frying at about 170 to 175°C for about 3 mins or until they have a good, golden fry colour.

Charred Pineapple and Peppers Ingredients

1 fresh, sweet, ripe pineapple, peeled, cored and sliced into long, finger-sized wedges, little shake of icing sugar
3 bell peppers, 1 red, 1 green, 1 yellow, sliced into 8ths

Method

1. Grill the above under a hot flame, until charred both sides. Set aside.

Curry Mayo Ingredients

1 organic large egg yolk
1 tsp or so Dijon mustard
Pinch fine sea salt
1 tblsp white wine vinegar
1 tsp or so Green Saffron Tandoori spice blend
15g fresh ginger root, peeled, fine grated

Sunflower and grapeseed oils, about 500ml of each (though not all will be used)

Method

1. In a small bowl, whisk together all the ingredients, then slowly add the sunflower oil to form an emulsion, finishing with a little grapeseed oil. Set aside in the fridge. Will keep, covered for up to 1 week.

INDIAN

A simple and really authentic south Indian curry. Unlike most curries we know, I've created this recipe to make a punchy dish, packed full of spicy flavour and lots gravy to soak into rice.

Tamil Chicken Curry & Spicy Gravy

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

1kg chicken drumsticks, bone in, skin and knuckle removed
450g to 550g chicken thighs, bone in, skin removed
25ml grape seed oil
1 x 25g sachet Green Saffron Madras blend
1/2 large white onion
40g ginger root
5 cloves garlic
500ml to 600ml warm water

Method

- Preheat your oven to gas 8, 220°C
- Blitz the onion, ginger and garlic to a paste in a food processor or pestle and mortar along with a tblsp of water. Set aside.
- Pop the chicken into a mixing bowl, sprinkle 2tsp of the Green Saffron spice blend and pour the oil over. Mix well then tip into a large casserole pan. Pop in the oven for 35mins
- Remove from the oven, take out the chicken pieces setting aside on a plate. Pop the same casserole pan on your hob, add all the onion paste, stir on a high heat for a moment or two then add the remaining spice blend, stir, then immediately pour in the water.
- Slide the chicken pieces back into the pot, resting juices and all, half cover the pot with its lid, gently simmer for 30 to 40mins until the chicken is cooked and is just starting to come away from the bone.

Assembly

Serve immediately with my Golden Sultana Pilau and Salt Lemon Riata, generously coating everything in loads of the gravy. Yum. Enjoy!

MEXICAN

Chicken burritos, roast chilli salsa

This is a really quick recipe. I have a total love of Mexican food and its ingredients, though don't have a similar amount of knowledge on its 'construction'. I think these little 'parcels of joy' taste yummy, they're really economical and the salsa adds a lovely fresh zinginess.

Serves 2

Ingredients

Burritos

4 ready-made flour tortillas, the ones that are size of your hand

2 chicken breasts, diced

½ tin black-eyed beans, drained, crushed or mashed

1 tsp salt

2 tbs rapeseed oil

Juice of ½ a lime

Spice Blend: 3 tsp cumin, ground, 1 tsp cloves, ground, 1 tsp cinnamon, ground

1 avocado, ripe (Haas variety), de-stoned and diced

1 red chilli, diced

1 small block of cheese, grated (mild cheddar is great)

Roast chilli salsa

3 or 4 tomatoes

2 or 3 cloves of garlic

2 red chillies, whole

1 red onion, roughly chopped

½ tsp sea salt

Small bunch of coriander, parsley and mint, chopped

Method

1. Take a thick bottomed sauté or fry pan and place on a high flame

2. When it's good and hot, pop the tomatoes in and dry-roast them, turning occasionally with a set of tongs until they're scorched and blackened all over. Set aside. (This'll take about 5 to 6 minutes)
3. Then pop in the garlic and chillies and scorch them in the same way. This'll be much quicker, maybe 2 or 3 minutes. Pull the stalks from each chilli and set aside.
4. CAREFULLY set the pan aside and allow it to cool. Then, pop the scorched tomatoes, garlic cloves and de-stalked chillies into a food processor (or pestle and mortar) along with the onion, 1 heaped tsp of your spice blend and salt. Blitz for a quick minute to a thick paste, then stir the herbs through. Set aside.
5. Turn your grill on to its highest setting
6. Take the (same) thick bottomed sauté or fry pan, and gently fry off the diced chicken in the rapeseed oil, adding the remaining spice blend and salt until only just cooked, about 4 or 5 minutes
7. Then, add mashed beans and lime juice. Stir thoroughly to mix everything and cook for a minute or two more
8. Now lay a tortilla on your counter, spoon two of three tablespoons of the chicken, bean mix into the centre of the bread, sprinkle it with a tablespoon each of the diced avocado, chilli and a couple of the cheese
9. Fold the tortilla into a neat 'parcel' and place onto your grill pan, folded sides down onto the pan.
10. Repeat this another three times, then pop the grill pan under the grill and cook the burritos for about 4 to 5 minutes or until they turn a nutty brown colour and crisp up a little
11. Serve immediately with good dollops of the salsa, wedges of fresh lime and a couple of cold cervezas!

THAI

Chaing Mai 'red curry'

chicken, prawns, red pepper, coconut, lime

Serves 2

Ingredients

3 dst sp red curry paste

2 tblsp vegetable oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped

2 chicken thighs, skinless, boneless, cut into bite-sized pieces

2 fresh Kaffir lime leaves

1 red bell pepper, deseeded and cut into strips

Some hot water

1 tblsp fish sauce

1 tin coconut milk

1 teaspoon brown sugar

1 lime juice and zest

200g raw king prawns

salt to taste

Good handful coriander leaves, roughly chopped

Method

1. Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan, add the onion and fry gently until soft, about 4 to 5 minutes
2. Next, spoon in the curry paste. Turn the heat up to medium high, add the chopped onion and stir-fry for half a minute or so.
3. Then, add the chicken, stirring to coat it with the paste, add the kaffir lime leaves, red pepper and pour in a little hot water, just enough to barely cover the meat.
4. Simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally until the meat is cooked through and the liquid has reduced.
5. Pour in the fish sauce, coconut milk, sugar, lime juice and continue to simmer, giving it the odd stir until the sauce has reduced and thickened and takes on a slightly darker colour.
6. Next, add the prawns and cook until they turn pink and are just cooked through.
7. Finally taste the dish, check the seasoning, adding a little salt if you think it needs it.
8. Stir through the chopped coriander and serve immediately with some jasmine rice and wedges of lime.