



January 18, 2017 Flavours of Asia

January 28 marks the start of the Year of the Rooster for the Chinese, as well as other cultures that follow the lunar calendar. Celebrate the New Year with these Asian-inspired dishes.

Our Asian-Style Pork in Lettuce Wraps are quick to make, perfect for a weeknight meal. You can use ground chicken or ground turkey for a leaner dish. Try serving family style, with the lettuce on one plate and the filling on another, so that people can make their own wraps at the table.

Water chestnuts, cilantro, ginger, jalapeno and lime zest give our Asian Turkey Meatballs with Sweet and Spicy Dipping Sauce a unique, Asian flair. This recipe is meant to feed a crowd, or make ahead and freeze for quick weeknight meals.

ASIAN-STYLE PORK IN LETTUCE WRAPS

Ingredients:

2 tbsp (25 mL) oil
1 lb (0.5 kg) lean ground pork
1/4 cup (50 mL) thinly sliced green onion
1 tbsp (15 mL) grated fresh ginger
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1/4 tsp (1 mL) red pepper flakes, optional
1/4 cup (50 mL) hoisin sauce
2 tbsp (25 mL) soy sauce
2 tsp (10 mL) sesame oil
1 can (8 oz / 227 mL) sliced water chestnuts, drained and chopped
1/2 cup (125 mL) finely chopped fresh cilantro
Iceberg lettuce leaves

Method:

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To prepare filling, heat oil in a frypan over medium heat. Add pork and cook, stirring to break up pork, until no longer pink, about 7 - 10 minutes. Drain off excess fat. Add green onion, ginger, garlic and red pepper flakes; saute for 2 minutes. Stir in hoisin sauce, soy sauce, sesame oil and water chestnuts; cook until heated through, about 2 minutes. Stir in cilantro. To serve, spoon filling into centre of individual lettuce leaves; wrap leaves around filling to enclose. *Serves 4.*

ASIAN TURKEY MEATBALLS WITH SWEET AND SPICY DIPPING SAUCE

Ingredients:

1/4 cup (50 mL) diced red bell pepper
1/4 cup (50 mL) drained sliced water chestnuts, chopped
1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped green onion
3 tbsp (40 mL) soy sauce
2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped fresh cilantro
1 tbsp (15 mL) grated fresh ginger
2 tsp (10 mL) finely chopped seeded jalapeno pepper
2 tsp (10 mL) grated lime peel
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 lb (0.5 kg) ground turkey
Sweet and Spicy Dipping Sauce (recipe below)

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil or parchment paper. Place a rack on top.
2. Place first 9 ingredients (red pepper through garlic) in a mini food processor. Process until finely chopped. Transfer mixture to a bowl. Add turkey and combine thoroughly. Mixture will be moist. Shape turkey mixture into 1 inch (2.5 cm) balls. Place meatballs on rack in prepared pan.
3. Bake for 50 - 55 minutes or until completely cooked. Serve with Sweet and Spicy Dipping Sauce. Cooked meatballs may be frozen for up to 1 month. *Makes about 40.*



Sweet and Spicy Dipping Sauce

Ingredients:

1/4 cup (50 mL) soy sauce
2 tbsp (25 mL) honey
2 tbsp (25 mL) fresh lime juice
1 tbsp (15 mL) hoisin sauce
2 tsp (10 mL) finely chopped seeded jalapeno pepper
1 tsp (5 mL) Louisiana-style hot sauce
1 tsp (5 mL) grated fresh ginger
1 tsp (5 mL) sesame oil
1 tsp (5 mL) cornstarch
2 tbsp (25 mL) cold water

Method:

Combine first 8 ingredients (soy sauce through sesame oil) in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring frequently. Whisk together cornstarch and cold water until blended. Whisk into soy sauce mixture. Bring to a boil, whisking frequently. Reduce heat and simmer, whisking constantly, until thickened, about 2 - 3 minutes. Serve warm or cold. Do not freeze. *Makes 3/4 cup (175 mL).*