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Asian Influences

Asian cuisines have been gaining popularity in recent years, and many home cooks enjoy introducing the flavourful ingredients and simple techniques in their home cooking. Here are some of our favourite ways to add a bit of Eastern flair to our everyday meals:

Our Oriental Coleslaw is a decades-old classic, and is a great way to introduce new flavours to those who are less familiar with Asian cuisines. Crisp vegetables are combined with crunchy noodles, almonds and sunflower seeds, and tossed in a zingy vinaigrette featuring rice vinegar, soy sauce and honey. Sesame oil is excellent in the dressing if you have it on hand.

Our Asian-Inspired Strip Loin Steaks merge the familiar flavours of balsamic, Dijon and garlic with oyster sauce and hot pepper flakes for a savoury twist on a perennial favourite.

Finish the meal with our Creamy Coconut Tapioca Pudding. Like most east Asian desserts, this recipe is not too sweet, with intense coconut flavour. It's topped with fresh pineapple chunks to cut through the richness of this dish.

ORIENTAL COLESLAW

Ingredients:

3 tbsp (40 mL) rice vinegar
2 tbsp (25 mL) sugar
2 tbsp (25 mL) oil
1 tbsp (15 mL) soy sauce
1 tbsp (15 mL) honey
Dash salt
1 pkg (100 g) Asian noodle soup mix
1 tbsp (15 mL) butter
2 tbsp (25 mL) sliced almonds
1 tbsp (15 mL) sunflower seeds, optional
6 cups (1.5 L) coleslaw mix
1/2 cup (125 mL) diagonally sliced green onions

**Method:**

To prepare dressing, combine vinegar, sugar, oil, soy sauce, honey and salt in a small nonreactive saucepan. Bring to a boil and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Pour mixture into a small bowl; refrigerate. Crumble noodles from soup mix; reserve seasoning packet for another use. Melt butter in a frypan; add noodles, almonds and sunflower seeds. Cook mixture over medium heat, stirring frequently, until lightly toasted. Transfer mixture to a large bowl; cool to room temperature. Add coleslaw mix and onions to noodle mixture; pour dressing over and toss to coat. *Serves 6.*

Cook's Note: *The ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen used Sapporo Ichiban Soup Mix in this recipe.*

ASIAN-INSPIRED STRIP LOIN STEAKS**Ingredients:**

1/4 cup (50 mL) oyster sauce
2 tbsp (25 mL) balsamic vinegar
1 tsp (5 mL) Dijon mustard
1/2 tsp (2 mL) red pepper flakes
1 clove garlic, crushed
4 strip loin steaks, 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick

Method:

To prepare sauce, combine all ingredients except steaks. Grill steaks over medium heat on natural gas barbecue to desired doneness. Baste with sauce during last 5 - 7 minutes of cooking. *Serves 4.*



CREAMY COCONUT TAPIOCA PUDDING

Ingredients:

6 cups (1.5 L) water
1/3 cup (75 mL) pearl tapioca
1 can (400 mL) coconut milk
1 cup (250 mL) homogenized milk
1/4 cup (50 mL) sugar
1/2 tsp (2 mL) coconut extract
Pinch salt
1 cup (250 mL) pineapple chunks
1/2 cup (125 mL) unsweetened shredded coconut, toasted

Method:

1. Bring water to a boil. Reduce heat; add tapioca and cook, uncovered, for 15 minutes. Drain.
2. Combine coconut milk, milk, sugar, coconut extract and salt in a medium heavy saucepan. Cook, stirring, over medium heat, until mixture is steaming. Stir in tapioca and bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until mixture is thickened and tapioca is tender, about 15 – 20 minutes for firm tapioca and 40 minutes for soft tapioca. Remove from heat. Transfer pudding to a bowl. Cool to room temperature, stirring occasionally.
3. Cover surface of pudding with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to 24 hours. Serve topped with pineapple and coconut. *Serves 4.*