

Sautéed scallops with crispy eggplant and spicy tomato relish

Serves 4

1 eggplant
 2–3 tablespoons plain flour
 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
 vegetable oil, for deep-frying
 1 cup spicy tomato relish
 6–8 black olives, pitted and finely diced
 basic vinaigrette or extra virgin olive oil
 ½ teaspoon olive oil
 25g unsalted butter
 12 large scallops, cleaned and trimmed
 mixed green salad leaves, such as rocket,
 curly endive and baby spinach

Spicy tomato relish

85ml olive oil
 3 shallots or 1 onion, finely chopped
 2 garlic cloves, crushed
 a few sprigs basil, thyme and tarragon
 900g tomatoes, peeled and deseeded
 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
 1 teaspoon caster sugar
 salt
 2–3 drops of Tabasco sauce

Halve the eggplant lengthways and very thinly slice crossways. Mix the plain flour with the cayenne pepper and a pinch of salt. Sprinkle the flour over the eggplant and lightly dust off the excess. These can now be fried in hot oil until golden and crispy. Drain on paper towel and sprinkle with salt. The eggplant can be fried before cooking the scallops and will stay crispy and warm while you finish preparing the dish.

Warm the tomato relish.

Mix the black olives with a little vinaigrette or extra virgin olive oil.

Heat a frying pan until very hot but not smoking. Add a few drops of the olive oil and a little butter. Sit the scallops in the pan, in batches if necessary to keep the pan hot; if the pan is not hot enough, the scallops will simply begin to stew in their own juices, which will spoil their taste and texture. Once the scallops are golden brown on both sides, turn them out, season with salt and pepper (and repeat if you are cooking in batches). Each batch should only take 1–2 minutes.

Season the salad leaves and toss with a little extra virgin olive oil. Spoon the warm tomato relish into the centre of each plate, making a circular platform for the scallops. Spoon the black olive dressing around. Sit the scallops onto the relish and place the salad leaves in the centre. To finish the dish, simply arrange the fried eggplant on top.

Spicy tomato relish

Warm the olive oil in a frying pan over low heat and add the chopped shallots or onion, the garlic and herbs. It's best to leave the herbs as sprigs as these can then be easily removed at the end of cooking. Allow the shallots and herbs to cook gently for 4–5 minutes or until tender.

Cut the tomato flesh into 5mm dice, add to the pan. Have the pan on a very low heat, just lightly simmering, and cook for 35–45 minutes or until most of the liquid has evaporated - this will really depend on the water content of the tomatoes.

Add the wine vinegar and sugar and cook for a further 15 minutes. The tomatoes should have on an almost lumpy sauce texture; if the sauce is very thick, simply fold in a little more olive oil. Allow to cool until just warm, then season with salt and Tabasco. Makes about 2 cups. This sauce goes well with seafood of all types. It's almost like eating a chunky, spicy tomato chutney. Once made, it can be stored in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.



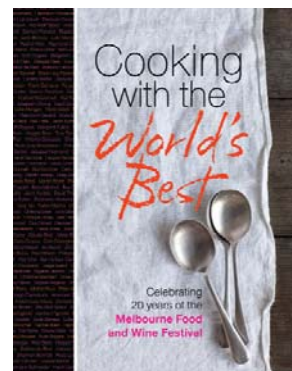
Gary Rhodes

Since its debut in 1993, the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival has grown from humble beginnings to become one of the world's premier food and wine events, attracting 400,000 visitors and the most talented Australian and international chefs each year. *Cooking with the World's Best* celebrates the continuing success of the festival, now in its 20th year, with a unique collection of recipes, photography, quotes and memories.

Contributors include, amongst others: Andoni Aduriz, Stephanie Alexander, Elena Arzak, Sat Bains, Mario Batali, Maggie Beer, Shannon Bennett, Tony Bilson, Roy Choi, George Calombaris, Frank Camorra, Raymond Capaldi, Antonio Carluccio, Donovan Cooke, David Chang, Carlo Cracco, Stefano de Pieri, Jill Dupleix, Margaret Fulton, Peter Gilmore, Bill Granger, Sophie Grigson, Guy Grossi, Fergus Henderson, Nigella Lawson, Cheong Liew, Christine Manfield, Luke Mangan, Karen Martini, Andrew McConnell, Shane Osborn, Neil Perry, Damien Pignolet, Jacques Reymond, Michel Roux, Rick Stein, Tony Tan and Alla Wolf-Tasker.

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Photography: Alicia Taylor



Stefano de Pieri

Stracotto of lamb with olives and orange

Serves 4–6

1 boneless leg of lamb (about 2.25 kg), butterflied
salt and pepper

60ml (¼ cup) extra virgin olive oil

2 medium red onions, chopped into 1cm dice

4 garlic cloves, peeled and left whole

2 anchovy fillets, rinsed and dried

2 oranges, quartered, deseeded, and sliced into 5–6mm quarter-moons

1 cup Tuscan green olives or picholines

125 ml (½ cup) freshly squeezed orange juice

250 ml (1 cup) Chianti or other dry red wine

250 ml (1 cup) basic tomato sauce (sugo)

Preheat the oven to 170°C.

Trim most of the fat from the lamb and season to taste with the salt and pepper. In a large, heavy-based casserole, heat the oil until almost smoking. Brown the lamb on both sides until dark golden brown and remove to a side dish.

Add the onion, garlic, anchovies and orange pieces to the casserole and cook over medium heat until softened (4–6 minutes) scraping the casserole base with a wooden spoon to loosen the brown bits.

Add the olives, orange juice, wine and tomato sauce and bring to the boil. Return the lamb to the casserole, bring to the boil, then cover and bake for 1½–2 hours or until fork-tender. Remove from the oven, then simmer over medium heat for 10–15 minutes or until the sauce has thickened and reduced. Slice the lamb and serve with the sauce.



Melbourne Food and Wine Festival - Australia's internationally acclaimed celebration of food and wine.

Each year in March Melbourne Food and Wine Festival unveils a world-class program of more than 250 events - a true expression of Melbourne's infamous love of food and wine that captures the attention of food-lovers in their hundreds of thousands. The Festival spills through restaurant doors, down laneways, up onto rooftops, into bustling foodie precincts and deep into picturesque wine country.

Now in its 21st year, the Festival's prestigious reputation attracts the world's biggest culinary and wine personalities to its door to participate in a program that also showcases Victoria's own celebrated chefs, restaurateurs, winemakers, sommeliers, producers and artisans.

*"The Chicago Tribune voted this particular festival as one of the five things you should do before you die".
Damien Pignolet*

This book may just inspire you to not wait that long.

Frank Camorra



Pan con chocolate

Serves 6

300g dark chocolate (50% cocoa solids), chopped

4 eggs, separated

100g unsalted butter, softened

2 tablespoons caster sugar

200g firm two-day old white bread (high-tin loaf), crusts removed and cut into 2mm thick slices, then into 8cm x 2cm fingers

olive oil, to drizzle

good-quality sea salt flakes, to sprinkle

Gently melt the chocolate in a bowl placed over a saucepan of simmering water for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Ensure the base of the bowl doesn't touch the water.

Remove from the heat, whisk in the egg yolks, then the butter and stir until all the butter has melted.

In another bowl, whisk the egg white until soft peaks form, then, whisking continuously, gradually add the sugar. Do not overbeat.

Mix one-third of the meringue into the chocolate mixture until nearly combined, then gently fold through the remaining meringue. Pour the mixture into a greased and baking paper-lined 25cm x 10cm loaf tin, cover and refrigerate for one hour or until just set.

It should be served not too cold and just set, so it is important to make this very close to the time required.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 180°C. Place the bread slices in a single layer on a baking tray, then cover with another baking tray the same size and bake for 15 minutes or until crisp. Cool, then place the wafers in an airtight container.

To serve, invert the chocolate onto a chopping board and cut into slices. Drizzle with olive oil, then sprinkle with a tiny pinch of salt. Serve with the bread wafers.