

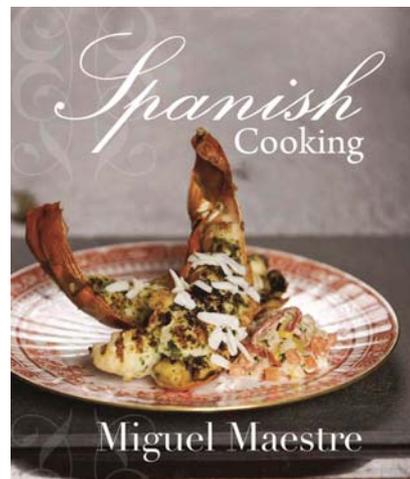
Miguel Maestre has been fortunate to work in some of Sydney's premier kitchens including Bather's Pavilion, Bel Mondo and Cru, before taking up the position at Minus 5 at Circular Quay. At 27 years of age, it was a big test, but the reviews and customer feedback proved it was worth the leap of faith. Miguel became, Head Chef of Tony Bilson's Number One Wine Bar in Sydney's Circular Quay. Working under his friend and mentor Manu Feildel, he impressed the Sydney food scene and then opened his first restaurant in Manly in January 2010, El Toro Loco (The Crazy Bull) where Miguel served wonderful Tapas food and amazing Paella in his own inimitable style.

In January this year, Miguel and Manu opened Aperitif in Sydney's Potts Point where Miguel holds the reins as head chef and serves the wonderful tapas for which he is renowned with a little bit of French thrown in the mix.

Miguel has developed a talent for incorporating Spanish ingredients and cooking styles into his modern Australian menus. In 2010, he was appointed consultant and creative chef of the Argyle's Bazar by Miguel Maestre in the Rocks, Sydney.

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Photography: Karen Watson Stylist: Kathy McKinnon



Sopa de cebolla

Serves 6

- 600g brown onions, finely sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely sliced
- 20g butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon plain flour
- 2 litres good-quality beef stock (homemade if possible)
- salt and pepper
- 6 small slices sourdough bread rubbed with garlic
- 200g grated manchego cheese

Traditional Spanish Onion Soup.

Prep time: 10 minutes. Cooking time: 1 hour 25 minutes.

Heat a large pan on medium-low heat. Cook onion, garlic, butter, olive oil and a pinch of salt, covered, for 40 minutes, until onion softens but does not colour.

Add flour and cook, uncovered, for 3 minutes. Stir in stock and simmer, uncovered, for 35 minutes, until soup reduces slightly. Season.

Pour soup into individual terracotta pots or soup terrines and cover with bread and grated cheese. Place under a hot grill for 1–2 minutes, until cheese melts and bubbles.

Serve with a little glass of brandy.



Caballitos con salsa romesco

Serves 4

¼ cup chopped flatleaf parsley
¼ cup (60ml) extra virgin olive oil
1 long red chilli, seeded and finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
12 green king prawns, peeled, heads and tails intact
12 slices jamón ibérico

Romesco coulis

10 blanched almonds, toasted
3 piquillo peppers
½ cup coriander leaves
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 long red chilli, chopped
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice

King prawn in jamon with romesco coulis

Prep time: 20 minutes. Cooking time: 5 minutes. Marinate: 2hrs

Soak skewers in water for at least two hours before using. Combine parsley, oil, chilli and garlic in a shallow bowl. Wrap body of each prawn with a slice of jamón ibérico. Place prawns in parsley mixture and turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours to marinate.

To make romesco coulis, blend or process all ingredients until smooth.

Preheat a barbecue or chargrill on medium. Thread each prawn onto a small skewer. Cook for 2–3 minutes each side, until cooked through and orange around the heads and tails. Serve immediately with romesco coulis.

Note: Piquillo peppers are available in jars from supermarkets.

The romesco coulis needs to be out of the fridge for at least an hour before eating to allow it to come to room temperature and be of liquid consistency. If you try to use it straight from the fridge the oil will be set on top.



Crema quemada con hojaldre

Serves 8

3 cups milk
½ cup plain flour
190g caster sugar,
plus extra for caramelising
4 egg yolks
1 cinnamon quill
2 sheets ready-rolled puff pastry

Burnt custard with puff pastry.

Prep time: 10 minutes, plus cooling. Cooking time: 20 minutes

Preheat oven to 200°C.

Place ½ cup milk in a small bowl. Add flour, sugar and egg yolks and whisk until smooth.

Place remaining milk and cinnamon in a medium saucepan on medium heat and bring to a simmer. Gradually add egg mixture, whisking constantly, until mixture is smooth. Continue cooking, stirring, for 4–5 minutes, until mixture bubbles and thickens. Discard cinnamon. Transfer custard to a bowl, cover surface with plastic wrap and cool completely.

Meanwhile, place pastry sheets on 2 separate trays lined with baking paper. Bake for 10–15 minutes, until puffed and golden. Cool.

Spread 1½ cups custard on a serving platter to the same size as the pastry sheet. Top with pastry sheet, another 1½ cups custard and remaining pastry sheet. Sprinkle with extra sugar and, using a blowtorch, caramelize the top.

