

Pungent 5-spice powder makes for a potent quick dinner

By Linda Gassenheimer
Tribune News Service

The pungent flavors of Chinese five-spice powder, rice vinegar and soy sauce combine to create this quick shrimp dinner.

Chinese five-spice powder is used in many Asian dishes and includes cinnamon, cloves, fennel seed, star anise and Szechuan peppercorns. It can be found in the spice section of the supermarket. It can also be used to flavor cooked rice or sprinkle on cooked vegetables.

Keep a bag of peeled, frozen shrimp in the freezer for quick dinners. They only take about 5 minutes to defrost in a bowl of cold water.

Helpful Hints

- Buy peeled, raw shrimp.
- White vinegar diluted



Five-spice shrimp with Chinese noodles.

with a little water can be used instead of rice vinegar.

- Dried Chinese noodles or angel hair pasta can be used instead of fresh Chinese noodles.
- A wok or skillet can be used to make the shrimp.

- The quickest way to slice scallions is to snip them with a scissors.

Countdown

- Place water on to boil for noodles.
- Make shrimp.

• Boil noodles.

Shopping List

To buy: ¾ pound peeled shrimp, 1 bottle Chinese rice vinegar, 1 bottle Chinese five-spice powder, 1 bottle low-salt, soy sauce, 1 bottle sesame oil, 1 package fresh or steamed Chinese noodles, ¼ pound broccoli florets and 1 small bunch scallions.

Staples: garlic, salt and black peppercorns.

FIVE-SPICE SHRIMP

Recipe by Linda Gassenheimer

- ¼ cup water
- 3 tablespoons Chinese rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Chinese five-spice powder
- 5 large garlic cloves, unpeeled

- 1 tablespoon reduced-sodium, soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil, divided use
- ¼ pound broccoli florets (about 1½-cups)
- ¾ pound shrimp, peeled and deveined

Mix water, Chinese rice vinegar, Chinese five-spice, garlic, soy sauce, and 1 teaspoon sesame oil together. Heat remaining 1 teaspoon sesame oil over high heat in a wok or skillet until smoking. Add broccoli and stir-fry 2 minutes. Add shrimp and sauce and toss 2 minutes or until shrimp just turn pink. Remove shrimp and broccoli to a plate and boil sauce to reduce, about 1 minute. Remove garlic cloves. To serve, place shrimp on noodles and spoon sauce on top.

CHINESE NOODLES

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- ¼ pound fresh or steamed Chinese noodles
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- ¼ cup scallions, sliced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large saucepan with 3 to 4 quarts of water to a boil. Add the fresh noodles. Bring back to a boil. Drain noodles leaving about 2 tablespoons water in the saucepan. For dried noodles, cook for 3 to 4 minutes before draining. Return noodles to saucepan with the reserved water. Add sesame oil. Add salt and pepper to taste. Toss well. Place on two plates and sprinkle with scallions.

BRUNCH

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CINNAMON APPLE SHEET CAKE

Prep: 30 minutes
Bake: 50 minutes
Makes: 18 pieces

The firmer and fresher the apple, the better the cake. Ground cinnamon, like most ground spices, loses flavor with age. Start your fall baking season with a fresh jar.

Vegetable shortening for greasing the pan
3 cups plus 2 tablespoons

- all-purpose flour, see note
- 3 large (or 6 or 7 small) Gala, Honeycrisp or Sweetango apples, about 1½ pounds total
- 1/3 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1½ tablespoons ground cinnamon
- 1½ cups granulated sugar
- 2 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup expeller-pressed canola oil or safflower oil
- ½ cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
- ½ cup powdered sugar

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Use vegetable shortening to

heavily grease the interior of a 13-by-9-inch metal baking pan. Add 2 tablespoons flour to the pan. Working over the sink, shake the pan to coat it on all sides with flour. Shake out any excess flour.

2. Peel, core and quarter apples. Slice the apples into ¼-inch thick wedges. (If your apples are large, cut the wedges in half.) Put apples into a medium bowl. Stir in brown sugar and cinnamon; mix well.
3. Mix remaining 3 cups flour, granulated sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl. Whisk eggs together in a small bowl. Make a well in center of flour; pour in oil, orange juice and vanilla. Pour in beaten eggs.

Use a large rubber spatula to gently fold the mixture just until all the flour is moistened.

4. Spread about two-thirds of the batter over the bottom of the prepared pan. Gently arrange apple mixture over the batter, being careful not to let apples touch the sides of the pan. Use the spatula to dollop the remaining batter evenly over apples (they won't be completely covered).
5. Bake until top is nicely browned and wooden pick inserted in a batter area comes out clean, about 50 minutes. Cool in pan on wire rack.
6. Stir a couple of teaspoons of water into the powdered sugar in a small bowl to make

a smooth, thickish glaze. Use a large fork to drizzle the glaze over the warm cake. Serve cake while it's still warm.

Note: For a gluten-free version of the cake, Jean-

Marie suggests using Bob's Red Mill Gluten Free 1-to-1 Baking Flour in place of the all-purpose flour. We tested the cake this way in Tribune's test kitchen, and tasters loved the result.

PLUMS

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European plums and prunes bloom late and are better adapted to areas with late frosts or cool, rainy spring weather than are the early-blooming Japanese plums. Most European varieties have moderately high chilling requirements, which rules them out for areas with mild winters.

You can grow plums in many soil types but they do best in fertile, well-drained soil. Best growth and fruit development happen when the tree gets periodic deep

watering even though the tree may be drought tolerant.

For larger fruit and vigorous growth, fertilize heavily. Orchardists give Japanese plums 1 to 3 pounds of actual nitrogen per year; and European plums 1 to 2 pounds.

Many delightful and delicious things can be made using plums and prunes. Italian prunes are one of the best for drying. Also use Italian prunes for prune cake. Mix up cake batter for a white or yellow cake and put it in a baking pan. Place prune halves all over the top of the

batter, skin side down. Sprinkle with a little cinnamon-sugar, then bake as usual. Prune cake is moist enough that you don't have to frost it.

With Italian or Brooks prunes, a prune butter can be made. Grind up the prunes and put them in a stock pot. Slowly simmer for hours just as you would apple butter. The amount of sugar you use can be minimal because of the natural sweetness of the prunes.

If you have gardening questions or comments, please write: greengardencolumn@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading!

SALAD

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EASY CAESAR DRESSING

- 2 anchovies, mashed with a fork
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 5 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Place the red onion wedges and chicken breasts on a baking sheet. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the oil and half of the salt and pepper. Toss to coat and then bake for 10 minutes.

Add the zucchini cubes to the pan and turn them over to coat with the oil. Return the pan to the oven and bake for an additional 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, place the cubed ciabatta on a separate baking sheet and drizzle with the remaining tablespoon of oil. Sprinkle with the remaining

salt and pepper, and toast in the oven for 5 to 7 minutes, until the ciabatta has browned and the chicken on the other pan is cooked through. Remove from the oven.

In a small bowl, whisk together all the dressing ingredients.

Arrange the lettuce on a large serving plate.

Slice the chicken into bite-size chunks and place on top of the lettuce along with the cooked pasta, roasted vegetables and ciabatta croutons.

Drizzle with a little of the dressing and top with the shredded Parmesan.

Serve with extra dressing.

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