

GOURMET RECIPES

The Other Slow Cookers!

Who doesn't want glorious food and less time in the kitchen? And one good answer is slow cooking. Put it on, go away; come back later and dinner is done!

Even before electric slow cookers appeared a while back, slow cooking always popular – with other methods. You could slow roast, bake, simmer or steam; your grill would cook slowly or you could slow fry on the top of the stove or try the increasingly popular *sous vide*!

Talented food writer, teacher and former president of the International Association of Culinary Professionals Andrew Schloss has given us a great overview of these methods in his excellent cooking, *Cooking Slow*, which covers techniques and recipes for each.

Give that new appliance a rest; try these other ways to slow cook; we

recommend one of the oldest, steaming, with this classic and gorgeous whole steamed sea-bass.

Andrew Schloss says, "I have a fantasy of paneling a small room in my hut with cinnamon bark, where I will sip chai tea and slurp curry; I suspect this recipe may be the first step in the realization of that little haven. In this slow-steaming preparation, a whole fish rests on bits of cinnamon bark and is cooked over a pot of barely simmering chai tea. It takes a good hour for the fish to cook through, so long that its flesh can't help but absorb a healthy dose of the spiced perfume!"

Go ahead, have that glass of wine; your fish will be ready in an hour.

Slow Steamed Sea-Bass

Prep time: 10 minutes

Need: large steaming basket, bamboo or metal, with a lid

Cooking time: about 1 hour

Makes 2–3 servings

- 1 chai tea bag
- 2 cups/480 mL boiling water
- One whole sea bass about 2 lb/901 g, cleaned, scaled and fins trimmed by the fishmonger
- 1 Tbsp good quality store-bought curry powder, such as Chef Salt Bamboo Curry
- 2 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 3 cinnamon sticks, broken with a hammer into long shards
- 1 Tbsp hoisin sauce
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 green onions, white and tender green parts, thinly sliced

Steep the tea bag in the boiling water for 3 minutes. Discard the tea bag.

Make three or four diagonal slits through the skin and deeply into the flesh of the fish on both sides. Rub the skin, the meat inside the slits and the body cavity of the fish with the curry powder; drizzle all over with the sesame oil.

Pour the tea into a saucepan big enough to fit your steamer basket nested in the top. Put the saucepan over low heat and the steaming basket on top of

the saucepan. Scatter the cinnamon shards over the bottom of the basket and put the fish on the bed of cinnamon. Cover the basket and steam very gently (the tea should barely bubble) for an hour until the flesh flakes to gentle pressure. Check the tea in the bottom of the steamer halfway through to make sure it is not boiling dry. Add 1/4 cup/60 mL more water if you think the tea level is too low.

While the fish is steaming, mix the hoisin sauce and lemon juice in a small bowl; set aside.

When the fish is done, remove the basket from the pot. Mix 1/4 cup/60 mL of the steaming tea liquid into the hoisin mixture.

Lift the fish with some of the cinnamon onto a serving platter. Drizzle with sauce and scatter the green-onions all over. Serve immediately.

Tony's wine recommendation:

off-dry Riesling, Ontario Gewurztraminer

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Happily enjoyed by Helen Hatton and Ron Morris.

