

Crispy fried squid, Asian crunch salad

I love the whole concept of squid. It's an odd protein in that it's thought of as 'fish' – yet it isn't a fish at all. I suppose on a classical restaurant menu it would have to share a space with cuttlefish, that other seafood oddity. Part of the fun (if you can call it that!) of using squid is in the cleaning of it. Most people buy it already prepared, which saves a lot of mess and time, but one day try to do it yourself. Basically you take out all the inside mess, remove the beak from the tentacles and peel away the tough membrane that covers the whole beast. Easy! Just be sure to wear gloves. The dish has its roots in Spanish cooking. Go and see the boys at Frosts on Union Street in Reading, let them do all the messy preparation work.

Here follows a couple of squid recipes, firstly crispy fried with an Asian crunch salad is too simple to bother with a recipe. Preheat some vegetable oil for deep-frying in a suitable pan or deep fat fryer. I've made a coating from 150g potato flour mixed with 3 teaspoons paprika and a good pinch of salt. Buy potato flour from health food shops. Dust 16 baby squid, cleaned, halved, along with tentacles in the seasoned potato flour and deep fry for 2 minutes until amber gold. Accompany with Asian crunch salad and a wedge of lime. I've put shredded cabbage, bean sprouts, shredded cucumber and spring onion in the salad, sesame oil soy dressing.

Grilled squid, chorizo, tomato and new potato

4 medium sized squid, cleaned and separated into body and tentacles
150ml olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
200g cooking chorizo, spicy, sliced at an angle into 8 pieces
2 ripe tomatoes, cut in half
8 new potatoes, scrubbed, boiled and cut into halves
½ cup fresh flat leaf parsley
50ml lemon juice

Squid should be cooked either hot and fast or low and long. Anywhere between will make it chewy and tough. For this dish have your grill, griddle or even a frying pan very hot before starting to cook. Holding the body of the squid, cut it in half lengthways from the pointed 'tail' end to the body cavity. Toss the flesh in a few teaspoons of oil, some salt and pepper and then put under the grill; turn after 45 seconds and grill the other side. The heat will make the body curl up, but don't worry. Remove to a large warm plate and do the tentacles, which need about 30 seconds longer to cook than the body. Next grill the chorizo pieces for about 30 seconds each side. Put them on the plate too and grill the tomatoes for 1 minute each side. Mix the potato with the parsley and divide between 4 plates. Assemble the grilled foods on top, drizzling with some of the lemon juice and the remaining olive oil. Sprinkle with seasoning and eat before it gets too cold.