

Have Yourself a Veggie Little Christmas



If you are vegetarian or have any non-carnivores coming over for Christmas you'll want to serve some tasty treats that will impress at this festive time of year. And the secret to getting the maximum taste out of your cooking is to choose a well-balanced seasoning - Kikkoman Soy Sauce is a must-have in the kitchen for boosting the flavour of all kinds of dishes.

Made purely from soybeans, wheat, salt and water, and no additives at all, Kikkoman actually enhances the flavour of other ingredients, giving a richer, more full-bodied dish. This is because Kikkoman Soy Sauce has high levels of natural "umami" – the 5th taste sensation alongside sweet, salty, sour and bitter – which roughly translates as "deeply savoury". Try adding a dash to your everyday cooking instead of salt and see the difference. Those on a reduced salt diet, can go for Kikkoman Less Salt Soy Sauce which contains 43% less than the original, but still is still aromatic and delicious.

Try this festive vegetarian menu idea from Kikkoman for your Christmas parties. Find more recipes on kikkoman.co.uk

Canapé: Cheddar beignets with sesame dressing

These deep fried cheesy choux pastries by Michelin chef Galton Blackiston are perfect served as bite-sized canapés and will kick off any dinner party in style.

Serves 2-4

For the beignets

50 g butter

150 ml cold water

1 tsp sugar

75 g plain flour

50 g mature cheddar, finely grated, plus extra to serve

2 eggs, beaten

sunflower oil, for deep frying

For the sesame dressing

2 tbsp sesame oil
4 tbsp Kikkoman soy sauce
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
1 tbsp brown sugar
2 cm piece fresh ginger, grated
1 lime, juice only
1 red chilli, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 tbsp sesame seeds
good pinch szechuan pepper
2 spring onions, chopped
dashes of olive oil

1. For the beignets: put the butter, water and sugar into a saucepan. Bring to the boil and add the flour, beating well until you have a smooth ball of paste that has left the sides of the saucepan clean.
2. Remove from the heat and stir in the cheddar, followed by the eggs, one at a time, beating all the time until you have a smooth paste. Season with salt and pepper, and set aside.
3. Fill another heavy-based pan one-third full with sunflower oil and place over a moderate heat – do not leave this pan unattended. Using two spoons, add spoonfuls of the pastry to the pan - take care not to overcrowd the pan. Fry for about 5 minutes, or until they are nicely browned and have risen to the top.
4. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper. Keep the finished beignets warm while you continue frying the rest of the pastry. While still hot, grate more cheese over.
5. For the sesame dressing: blend all of the ingredients in a food processor or blender, along with salt and pepper, to taste.
6. Serve the beignets hot with a little dipping pot of the sesame dressing.

Starter: Red Pepper and Tomato Vodka Soup

A generous slug of vodka turns this easy soup into a smart dinner party starter that's guaranteed to warm up your guests.

Serves 4

3 red peppers, deseeded and chopped
2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
1 medium onion, peeled and roughly chopped
About 600ml/1pt vegetable stock
600ml/1pt tomato juice
1tsp sugar
2tbsp Kikkoman Soy Sauce

1tbsp chopped fresh basil, plus extra leaves to garnish
Freshly ground black pepper
2tbsp vodka

To garnish:

Soured cream
2 tomatoes, deseeded and diced

1 Put the peppers, garlic, onion, stock, tomato juice, sugar and soy sauce in a pan and bring to the boil. Lower the heat, cover the pan and simmer gently for 1 hour.

2 Liquidise the soup in batches until smooth, season with freshly ground black pepper and stir in the basil and vodka.

3 Serve immediately or reheat when needed, garnishing each serving with a spoonful of soured cream and a scattering of finely diced tomato and some small basil leaves. Alternatively, reheat and garnish when needed as making the soup the day will allow its rich flavours to develop.

Main: Vegetarian Christmas Pots

Make these individual dishes up to 1 day in advance up to the end of step 5. Then simply bake in the oven on Christmas day for easy entertaining.

Serves 2

75 g dried chestnut and cranberry stuffing mix
25 g toasted flaked almonds
2 tbsp olive oil
1 large courgette, cut into small chunks
1/2 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
1 red onion, finely chopped
25 g butter
200 g mixed mushrooms, such as chestnut, oyster, trimmed
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 tbsp plain flour
175 ml vegetable stock
3 tbsp Kikkoman Soy Sauce
4 tbsp cranberry sauce

1. Preheat the oven to gas mark 6/200C/190C fan oven. Put the stuffing mix and almonds into a bowl and mix with 150 ml boiling water. Set aside.

2. Meanwhile, heat half the oil in a frying pan and gently fry the courgette and pepper for 3-5 minutes until starting to brown. Remove and set aside.
3. Add the remaining oil and cook the onion for 3-4 minutes until beginning to soften. Stir in the mushrooms and butter and cook for a further 3-4 minutes.
4. Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Sprinkle over the flour and gradually add the stock until combined. Add the soy sauce and bring to the boil, bubble until slightly thickened. Return the courgette chunks and stir in the cranberry sauce.
5. Spoon into 2 x 300 ml individual pie dishes and leave to cool. Shape the stuffing into 6 small balls and top each pie dish with 3 balls. Bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes until golden. Sprinkle with the parsley and serve with sprouts, roast potatoes and all the classic trimmings.