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Wedge Salad with Papalo Herb Dressing

1 small head iceberg lettuce
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup very loosely packed papalo leaves (or twice this amount of cilantro)

2 cloves garlic
Juice from 1 lime
Salt to taste

Using a blender or mortar and pestle, mix all dressing ingredients until well blended. If too thick, add cold water 1 tsp. at a time until desired consistency. Cut lettuce into 4 wedges. Place lettuce wedge on plate, cut side up. Drizzle with dressing.



ingredients

Crispy Mala Black Sea Bass

by Chef Celine Berger-Chun, formerly of Mei Mei Restaurant



For Marinade

2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon shaoxing cooking wine (or rice wine vinegar)
1/4 teaspoon sugar
1/3 cup cornstarch or potato starch for coating
1 tablespoon Sichuan peppercorn, ground
1/4 teaspoon five spice powder
pinch of salt



For Frying

2 black sea bass, filleted
neutral cooking oil (e.g., canola, peanut oil, safflower oil)
1 thumb ginger, sliced
3 cloves garlic, sliced
1/2 cup dried whole medium heat Chinese chili peppers (or chile de árbol)
1/4 cup Sichuan peppercorn
4-5 scallions - whites separated from greens
pinch of salt

instructions

Cut the fish into bite-sized pieces. In a large bowl, mix the first three marinade ingredients (cooking wine, soy sauce, sugar), then add cut fish and gently mix to fully coat all pieces. Marinade for about 10 - 15 minutes.

Mix the last four marinade ingredients (cornstarch, Sichuan peppercorn, five spice powder, salt) in a zip top bag and then the marinated fish. Gentle shake until every piece of fish is fully coated with the cornstarch mixture.

In a large pan over medium-high heat, heat enough neutral cooking oil to fully cover the pan surface. (Hip tip: to tell if the oil is hot enough, place a wooden chopstick or wooden utensil in the oil. You will see bubbles when the oil is ready). In small batches not crowding the pan, cook the fish pieces until crispy and golden brown on each side. Transfer to a clean plate as they finish cooking.

Clean the pan and heat 2T neutral cooking oil over medium heat, add whole chili peppers and Sichuan peppercorn. Fry until lightly browned and aromatic. Then add ginger, garlic, scallion whites, cook until they begin to lightly brown and soften.

Add the cooked fish and scallion greens to the pan and toss fish to fully coat with the aromatic oil. Add salt (and/or sugar, if you find the dish too spicy) to taste. Serve immediately with a side of rice and the wedge salad.