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Recipe: Earls' Mediterranean Calamari

Before you start cooking, make the salt cured cucumber (curing makes it crisp) as it takes 24 hours to cure and have the Greek yogurt sauce ready to go.

VANCOUVER SUN JUNE 17, 2014

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Earls Mediterranean calamari.

Earls' Mediterranean Calamari

Before you start cooking, make the salt cured cucumber (curing makes it crisp) as it takes 24 hours to cure and have the Greek yogurt sauce ready to go. If you can't find oven-dried grape tomatoes, you could substitute chopped Sun Gold cherry tomatoes in season or chopped sun-dried tomatoes, says Hamid Salimian who developed this recipe for

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Earls. If you can't find Spanish olives preserved in oil, he suggests putting them in oil with chili and garlic overnight for better texture and flavour. You'll have extra lemon oil and yogurt sauce which you can use drizzled over fish or a salad,

7 oz (200 g) calamari, cut into 1/2 in (1 cm) rings

Pinch of baking soda

2/3 cup (160 mL) flour

1/3 cup (80 mL) fine bread crumbs

Salt to taste

Greek citrus yogurt sauce (see recipe)

6 leaves parsley (1/2"/1 cm chop)

6 leaves cilantro (1/2"/1 cm chop)

1 tbsp (15 mL) green onion (1"/2.5 cm bias cut)

6 mint leaves (1" x 1" pieces)

6 basil leaves (1" x 1" pieces)

1 tsp (5 mL) lemon oil (see recipe)

1/2 cup (125 mL) salt cured cucumber (see recipe)

1/2 cup (125 mL) red lipstick radish roughly chopped

1/2 cup oven-dried grape tomatoes

Spanish olives preserved in oil (like Manzanilla), drained, halved lengthwise

Rinse calamari in water that has a pinch of baking soda added.

Mix the flour and bread crumbs and evenly and lightly coat calamari. Place in deep fryer or deep pan of hot oil (375 F) until the calamari becomes light golden brown and crisp (about 1 minute).

Transfer calamari to a paper towel-lined stainless steel bowl and season lightly with salt.

Place Greek citrus yogurt on two plates in a large swipe and sprinkle with parsley and 1 tsp (5 mL) cilantro

Pile the crispy calamari over the yogurt.

In a small stainless bowl, place green onion, mint, basil, remaining cilantro and lemon oil and toss to coat. Sprinkle over the calamari.

Remove cucumber from salted water, pat dry with paper towel and chop into 1/2 in (1 cm) pieces

Randomly drop cucumber, tomatoes, radish and Spanish olives over and around the calamari and herbs.

Greek Citrus Yogurt Sauce:

2 oz (200 g) blanched garlic cloves

2 oz (200 g) fresh squeezed lemon juice

Zest of a half lemon

1/4 tsp (1 mL) fine salt

16 oz (454 g) plain Greek yogurt

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Put everything except yogurt into a blender or food processor and blend until smooth.

Place yogurt in bowl and add blended ingredients mixing thoroughly.

Lemon Oil:

4 oz (113 g) olive oil

8 oz (225 g) freshly squeezed lemon juice

3 oz (85 g) honey

Pinch of fine salt

Salt-cured cucumber:

1 small English or Persian cucumber, deseeded

1 qt (1 L) water, salted

2 tsp (10 mL) salt

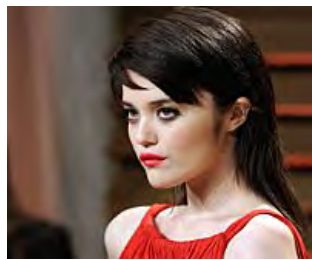
Mix salt and water. Rough chop cucumber and place in water for 24 hours.

Makes 2 appetizer portions.

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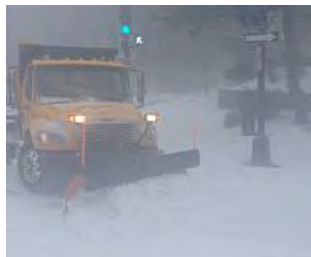


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