

RECIPES FROM SIAM

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The succulent world of offal

Offal is a word I've known since before I was ten, if not earlier, being a young food lover. To be honest, it is not an everyday meal and should be prepared once or twice a month when the whole family can enjoy a mouth-watering delicacy.

The types of offal include edible internal parts of an animal, such as the heart, liver, tongue, brain, tripe, bone marrow, oxtail, kidney, lungs etc, which are also called variety meats, pluck or organ meats. The particular list of edible organs varies by culture and region.

Certain offal dishes, including foiegras- a special type of duck liver, chicken liver pate, and Sweet Bread-pancreas of a young sheep or cow, are considered gourmet. Others remain part of traditional regional cuisines.

In Norway, the traditional dish, Salalove, is made with sheep's head and normally eaten on Christmas eve. It is served with mashed rutabaga and potatoes. In Denmark, a version of liver pate, known as "Leverpostej," is popular. In France, the city of Lyon is well known for its offal preparations like and ouillette, tablier de sapeur, foie de veau, rognons à la crème etc. In Italy, consumption of entrails and internal organs is widespread like fried or stewed brains, boiled stomach, often served in a tomato sauce. Stir-fried liver with onions, roasted kidney, heart, head, and several other offal preparations are based on chicken entrails.

In Spain, the visceral organs are used in many traditional dishes like Callos (cow tripe) is well known. I happened to be in Spain last year and from the first day I started looking for it. I finally found it in Barcelona. Yay! Stir-fried Liver and grilled kidneys; it was an absolute treat. Braised cow's tongue and cow's cheeks are delicacies in Spain too.

In Morocco, I walked through the world famous night food market Jema-el-Fnaa in the old and historic city of Marrakesh, and helped myself to a serving of boiled sheep offal that included brain, tongue, kidney, udder and tripe served with the same sauce and local bread.

In China, many organs and animal-parts are used for food or traditional Chinese medicine. Tongue slices with salt and sesame oil is a popular dish, especially in Sichuan. Stir-fried cow kidneys and liver slices with oyster sauce, ginger and scallions or in soups is a regular dish in the south. The offal of other animals, most commonly cattle, duck, and chicken, are also popular.

In Japan, chicken offal is often skewered and grilled over charcoal and is known as yakitori. Restaurants often specialise in offal, particularly beef offal in Korean-style. The popular traditional Korean sausage called Sundae is steamed animal small intestines filled with animal blood, seasoned noodles and vegetables.

In Indonesia, cow and goat internal organs are popular delicacies. It can be fried, made into soups or grilled. Cow's stomach and intestine are popular, fried or in soup. Cow's lung coated with turmeric and coriander and fried is often eaten as a snack or side dish. Liver is also sometimes made into a spicy dish called Rendang. Brain is sometimes consumed as Soto or Gulai.

In Malaysia, cow or goat lung coated in turmeric and fried is often served as a side dish to rice. Tripe is also consumed, and liver is deep-fried or stir fried in some vegetable dishes.

Thailand's authentic famous offal dish is stir-fried goat liver with flowering chives. Deep-fried intestines are eaten with a spicy dipping sauce. The Thai-Chinese soup called Kuaichapis made with intestines and liver.

In India and Pakistan, goat's brain, feet, head, stomach, tongue, liver, kidney, udder (kheeri) as well as chickens' heart and liver are highly popular. Khata-Khat, is a spicy dish which combines brains, liver, kidneys and other organs. In the northern hilly regions of India, goat's intestines are cleaned and fried with spices to make a delicacy called Bhutwa. In the southern Indian city of Hyderabad, lamb and goat brain are sautéed and stir fried with spices (often called Bheja fry).

In Nepal, goat's brain, feet, head, bone marrow, stomach skin, tongue, liver, kidney,

lungs, fried intestines are famous. Vuton is Fried stomach. Chicken's heart and liver are also sought after but it is chicken gizzards that are truly prized. Buffalo leaf tripe stuffed with bone marrow (sapumichā), stuffed goat lung (swan pukā) and fried variety meats (pukālā) are delicacies in the Kathmandu Valley.

In Bangladesh cow or goat brain curry (mogojbhuna) of Dhaka, feet preparation (paya or nehari) especially the 'poncharkhatta of Sylhet, tripe fry (bhuribhaji) of Bogra and Rajshahi are well known. Tongue curry or roast is very popular in urban area. Any kind of liver and lungs spicy curry is equally popular. Gurda kebab and Khiri kebab are all coveted as delicacies. Chicken skin, feet, heart, gizzard, liver spicy curry with bitter gourd of Narayanganj is just YUM-these are also highly prized. For many of us, rushing to munch on cow tripe after Qurbani on Eid-ul-Azha was something special.

Then there is also the famous Murighonto, mainly made with Rui or Katla fish head in Mung dal with a generous helping of green chilli. The very word Muri means "head."

Just the thought of each of the 'OFFAL' dishes described above makes my mouth watery and raises my yearning for a mouthful.

Read recipes below. Happy cooking!

Spicy Thai offal soup

Ingredients

1kg 250 gm (250 gm of each of beef heart, intestine, liver, oxtail, shank) Offal

5 cups water

2 stalks, bottom 6 inches only lemon grass

2 tbsp Galangal

7 Kaffir lime leaves

2 tbsp fish sauce

4 pieces green chili or sereno chili

1/4 cup (or per taste) white vinegar

200 gm bean sprout

1 cup (chopped) coriander leaf

Method

Clean the offal thoroughly with salt. Rinse and place the oxtail and shank in a large pot. Add water, lemon grass, galangal and kaffir lime leaves. Bring to a boil and boil slowly for 15 minutes. Then add the intestine and heart. Boil for another 45 minutes. Remove all of the offal and slice them into 1 inch long or square pieces. Put them back in the pot and continue boiling for another hour or until the meat is tender. Add water as needed to maintain the original level. Remove from the heat and add the fish sauce. Pound the chilies in a mortar till they are very soft, then chop them finely and mix with vinegar; set aside in a small bowl. Divide the bean sprouts in soup bowls, ladle the hot stew over them and garnish with coriander leaves. Serve the chili vinegar mix and boiled rice.

Pan seared foie gras (duck liver) and smoothy curry sauce

Ingredients

8 slices (1/2 inch thick) Foie gras

1 tbsp flour

1 cup coconut milk



2 tbsp red curry paste

1 tsp curry powder

1 tbsp palm sugar

1 tbsp tamarind juice

1 tbsp butter

1 tbsp Sunflower oil

1/2 (1/4 inch slices) ripe mango

Salt and pepper to taste

Curry sauce preparation -

In a pot, heat oil and butter on medium heat. Stir fry the curry paste for 1 minute. Add the coconut milk and tamarind juice. Simmer for 10 minutes. Taste and season accordingly.

Foie gras preparation -

Sprinkle the flour on the foie gras slices. Remove the excess by brushing. In a non-stick pan on medium high heat, sear the foie gras slices for 1 minute (both sides). When the slices are light golden brown, reduce the heat to medium low and keep on cooking for 3



minutes on each side. Put on a plate and dry the slices with kitchen tissue. Serve with the curry sauce and the mango slices.

Stir fried mutton liver with flowering chive

Ingredients

200gm flowering chive

100 gm mutton liver

3 cloves garlic

1/4 cup chicken stock

For seasoning

1 1/2 tsp oyster sauce

1 1/2 tsp light sauce

1/2 tsp Formula 1 fish sauce

1/2 tsp sugar

White pepper powder for sprinkle

Method

Peel and chop garlic clean the flower chive and cut into 2 inch pieces. Clean the mutton and slice thinly.

Heat oil in a wok over medium heat, add

garlic and cook until golden brown. Add the liver, stir for 30 seconds and then add the chive. Stir well. Add the seasoning and fry for 1 minute. Serve immediately.

Steamed glass noodles with beef belly and prawn

Ingredients

5 pieces river prawn

1 packet of 80gm dried glass noodles

1 cup of small pieces of thick beef belly

5 crushed garlic cloves

2 tbsp (crushed) coriander root

1 tbsp oyster sauce

1 tbsp sugar

2 tbsp soya sauce

1/2 tsp grounded white pepper

1 tbsp sweet black soya sauce

2 tbsp vegetable oil

2 tbsp (thinly cut but big slices) ginger

1 cup chicken broth

1 cup celery leaf

Method

Clean the beef belly and boil till tender. Place glass noodles in a large bowl. Add hot water and cover for 5 minutes. Drain well. Cut the noodles into 2 inches length. Mix all the ingredients together with the noodles except the beef belly, chicken broth and celery. Heat a wok on medium heat. Place the boiled beef belly on the bottom and then top it up with the river prawn. Cover the shrimp with the mix glass noodles. Add chicken broth and sprinkle with celery. Cover for 2 minutes, open the lid and turn the noodle and prawns around. Cover and cook for 3 more minutes. Serve hot.

Photo Courtesy: Shaheda Yesmin