

Squid The Other White Fish

While the season for squid in the Northeast is spring and summer, the season in the Pacific Northwest is now through winter. Squid may seem intimidating not just due to its menacing appearance, but because it must be flash cooked or braised for a long time. Yet, squid makes for an easy weeknight meal and is one of the least expensive items at the fish market (about \$7.99 per pound). Below are a few fall and winter recipes to showcase my favorite cephalopod. So, will you add squid to your repertoire – tentacles and all?

Calamari and Kiwi

- 1 jalapeño
- 1 kiwi
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Sesame oil
- 4 medium squid bodies, cut into rings
- 4 squid tentacles
- Sea salt

Crispy fried calamari is a standard appetizer at Italian restaurants, but this dish lets the squid shine sans flour and splattering oil.

Chop as many thin slices of jalapeño as you wish. Slice the kiwi into eight slices, and fan them along the bottom of an appetizer bowl or plate. (I used two small antique vaseline glass bowls).

Heat a few tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil and sesame oil in a wok until it sizzles. Then, add the jalapeño and sauté for about two minutes. Add the squid and cook for two minutes. While the squid is cooking, move it around with a wooden spoon and coat it in the oils. Spoon the squid atop the kiwi along with the oils and jalapeño, and season with sea salt to taste. The sweetness of the kiwi is a bright balance to the kick of the jalapeño.

Chorizo Stuffed Braised Squid

- 3 links fresh chorizo, casing removed
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- Zest of one lemon
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 14 ounce can of whole, peeled tomatoes
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 dozen medium sized squid bodies

I served this as an appetizer course during a recent Spanish themed cooking session with some of my colleague teachers. They were pleasantly surprised by how tender the squid became after braising.

In a nonstick pan, sauté the chorizo until browned, breaking it up with a wooden spoon. Transfer to a bowl using a slotted spoon.

Heat several tablespoons of olive oil in a large pot. Add the onion, garlic, and lemon zest. Cook until the onions are golden, about seven minutes. Then stir in the wine, chicken stock, and tomatoes. Also add the bay leaf. Season with salt and pepper to taste and bring to a simmer.

Stuff the squid bodies with the chorizo, then nestle them in the liquid. Cover and simmer until the squid is tender, which will take about one hour. Transfer the squid to each appetizer dish, pouring some liquid and tomatoes on top. Serve with toasted focaccia.


Calamari Fra Diavolo

- Extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 box Pomi chopped tomatoes
- Sea salt
- Red pepper flakes
- Dried chili pepper
- Cipriani Tagliarelle pasta
- 6 medium squid bodies, cut into rings
- Fresh oregano, roughly chopped
- Fresh parsley, roughly chopped

Cipriani is my favorite brand of pasta. You may recognize the name as Cipriani restaurants are spread across New York City. What started as Harry's Bar in 1931 off Venice's Piazza San Marco has grown to an international hospitality group. About half a box (4 ounces) is plenty for two. For this recipe, I recommend the Tagliarelle, a thin flat noodle which takes only four minutes to cook.

Begin by sautéing the garlic in olive oil in a pan that has a lid. Then add a box of Pomi chopped tomatoes and salt to taste. Stir. Now create the "Fra Diavolo" – several dashes of red paper flakes as well as a dried chili pepper. When the sauce comes to a boil, reduce the heat to simmer and cover. While preparing the sauce, bring a large pot of water to a boil.

As the water comes to a boil, add a pinch of salt and focus. This part requires quick reflexes and your undivided attention. Add the pasta to the boiling water and stir. After two minutes, add the calamari and the fresh herbs to the sauce. Adjust the heat to medium and cover for two minutes.

At this point, both the pasta and calamari are cooked. Quickly, yet carefully, add the pasta to the sauce pan using tongs, tossing it with the calamari and sauce. Serve the Calamari Fra Diavolo in pasta bowls with grated Parmesan and more red pepper flakes. I know the tradition is not to pair fish with cheese; however, I believe this rule is passé. (Also, I guarantee you will see it on menus!) 



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