

Taste

Hooking a fun fish dish



Eating in

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AFTER cleaning out the pantry I got thinking about the canned items stored there and mentally composed how and when to use them.

I always like to have on hand canned red and pink salmon, tuna and crab meat as well as anchovies and smoked oysters.

With some puff pastry sheets from the freezer little crab pies or a more substantial salmon pie can be quickly made. The salmon can be used as a filling for sandwiches, or in a salad.

For a quick and easy meal make a light milk curry sauce and add hard boiled eggs and salmon, or tuna, and serve it with rice or top it with creamy mashed potato with a cheese crust. Lots of fresh chopped parsley and finely sliced spring onion stirred through makes it more interesting.

Tuna is very versatile and can be quickly whizzed up to make a pate-like topping for biscuits, stirred through pasta or combined with cooked potato, tomato wedges and cooked green beans to make a delicious salad.

Add a few black olives and soft centred boiled eggs and you have a delightful Nicoise salad. I prefer tuna packed in olive oil for most dishes and also have some packed in brine for when oil is not appropriate.

All the varieties mentioned can be added to a frittata or quiche as the main ingredient.

Leftover mashed potato or cooked rice combined with a can of fish, drained, is a great base for fish cakes. Add some fresh herbs and an egg to bind the mixture together and form into patties. Roll in some beaten egg then in dried breadcrumbs and shallow fry. Soften a finely diced onion to add a little more flavour to the fish cake mixture.

I can remember when smoked oysters and mussels were very 'in' as a starter with pre-dinner drinks and, although not at all trendy these days they still have their place.

A few smoked oysters added to a simple oyster soup gives a real boost in flavour.

Keep an eye open for 'specials' and buy for your store cupboard, and put the freshest buys to the back of the cupboard so that the supply is always rotating.

The recipe today for a crunchy salmon sandwich filling is at its best with wholemeal or multigrain bread. It is also good served in lettuce cups as part of a salad or as topping for savoury biscuits.

Crunchy Salmon Sandwich Filling

1 medium sized can red or pink salmon

¼ cup of finely chopped chives or spring onions

2 tablespoons mayonnaise

½ cup finely sliced celery, strings removed

2 teaspoons lemon juice

¼ cup finely chopped gherkin, if desired

freshly ground pepper

Drain the fish.

Remove the skin and bones from the fish and flake.

Add all the remaining ingredients and combine well.

Spread generously on 3 slices wholemeal bread. Top with bread to form sandwiches and cut into the desired size.

The following topping can be used on savoury biscuits or spread on toast and topped with grated cheese and then grilled for a hot snack.

Tuna topping

180 gram can tuna in olive oil, well drained

3 spring onions, finely chopped

2 tablespoons mayonnaise

quarter cup finely chopped green capsicum

½teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

pinch of paprika

freshly ground black pepper

salt to taste

Combine all the ingredients.

I first had the very simple dish of linguine with tuna, lemon and rocket in Puglia where I enrolled in a cooking class with Diane Seed. She used wild rocket, which has more flavour than the cultivated rocket. It is important in this dish to use tuna that is packed in olive oil.

Linguine with tuna, lemon and rocket

400 grams linguine

200 gram can tuna packed in olive oil

2 cups fresh rocket leaves, roughly chopped

juice of two lemons

1 dry red chilli, crushed

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
salt

Bring a large pot of water to a strong boil. Add 1 teaspoon salt.

While the water is coming to the boil prepare the remaining ingredients.

Add the linguine to the boiling water. Heat the oil in a pan and gently cook the garlic and chilli pepper. As the garlic begins to colour stir in the drained, flaked tuna.

When the linguine is caked, drain and stir in the chopped rocket. Add the tuna mixture and squeeze in the lemon juice.

Use a wooden spoon to lift up the pasta and really keep turning it over to evenly distribute the tuna so that it is



VERSATILE: Tuna and corn patties make an easy and healthy meal.

not left at the bottom of the pan. Serve immediately in warm bowls or plates.

Smokey Oyster Soup

1 litre fish stock

1 medium carrot

1 leek

6 snow peas

1 stick celery

6 green beans

1 dozen fresh oysters, pureed

1 tin smoked oysters — drained and chopped

1 soup spoon cornflour mixed with a little water

200mls cream

1 tablespoon chopped parsley, or a combination of parsley, thyme and chervil

Put the fish stock into a large saucepan.

Cut the vegetables into very fine strips

Add the vegetables to the stock and bring to the boil. Simmer for 5 minutes.

Add the fresh oyster puree and the cornflour mixture and return to the boil, stirring until the mixture has thickened slightly.

Add the cream, salt and pepper and do not allow the mixture to boil. Add the chopped smoked oysters and stir in the chopped fresh herbs. Serve immediately with Melba toast.

Out with tradition

TRADITIONAL British meals like fish and chips and roast dinners will have all but vanished within a generation, to be replaced by more exotic foreign fare, says a recent report.

Britain has already undergone something of a culinary revolution from the days when foreign food meant either spaghetti bolognese, Chinese or a curry.

But while consumers are more willing than ever to try different dishes, it seems most mealtimes still contain elements of age-old British food.

Research by supermarket chain Sainsbury's found just over seven out of 10 meals are still classed as "traditionally British", but the panel believed that figure will fall to 25 per cent by the year 2034.

Dishes such as fish and chips, steak pie and roast dinner will have virtually disappeared from the British dinner table when today's children reach adulthood, according to the report.

The study charts the rise in popularity of cuisines like Japanese, Thai, Malaysian and Vietnamese and predicts growing interest in Spanish, Moroccan, Lebanese and Peruvian.

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