

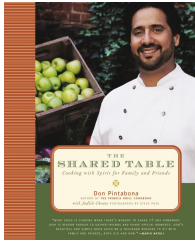


O R I E L

BLACK PEPPER CRAB
Don Pintabona, 'The Shared Table'

WINE PAIRING: TARALULA

SERVES 6



This is one terrific dish for a crowd. It is the perfect equalizer, as everyone can get down and dirty slurping the meat from the crab shells. There must be hundreds of variations of this traditional recipe, but I'd like to think that this is the closest you will come to the real thing. Although this is always made with crab, if great crab is not available to you, try large shrimp or Alaskan king crab legs.

PREPARATION

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| 3 large (about 1 3/4 pounds) live Dungeness, blue, or mud crabs, cut into pieces (see Note) | 3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed |
| 2 cups clam juice or chicken broth | 1/2 cup sherry |
| 3 tablespoons freshly ground pepper | 1 tablespoon cornstarch dissolved in 1 tablespoon cold water |
| 4 tablespoons honey | 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro |
| 4 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce | 1/4 cup chopped scallion |
| 2 teaspoons freshly grated ginger | 6 cups cooked white rice (optional) |
| About 1/4 cup peanut oil | |

1. Place the crab pieces in a large, shallow container (such as a glass baking dish).
2. Combine the clam juice, pepper, honey, soy sauce, and ginger in a small mixing bowl. When well blended, pour over the crab, tossing to coat well. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.
3. Remove the crab from the marinade, reserving each.
4. Heat the oil in a wok over medium-high heat. Add the crab and stir-fry for 3 minutes. Add the crushed garlic and stir-fry for 2 minutes more, or until the garlic is just turning golden brown. Immediately add the sherry to keep the garlic from burning. Cook for about 3 minutes, or until the sherry has almost evaporated.
5. Add the reserved marinade and bring to a simmer. Cover and simmer for about 5 minutes, or until the crab is bright red. Stir in the cornstarch slurry and bring to a simmer, stirring constantly, for about 3 minutes, or until slightly thickened. Remove from the heat and place equal portions of the crab in 6 shallow soup bowls. Ladle the broth over the crab and sprinkle the cilantro and scallion over the top. Serve with the rice, if desired.

NOTE: You will want each person to have 3-4 good-sized pieces of crab, so buy accordingly. Have the fishmonger kill, clean, and cut each crab into 2 to 4 pieces, depending on the size.

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