



CORRECT LINE COOKING

Dear MM of Q

I went off for an evening hair appointment leaving MM to cook his own dinner. I returned and asked MM how he had got on with his culinary adventure. MM explained that he had grilled his steak and then decided to add satay sauce. But to his dismay the dinner tasted very strange. It was only then that he realised he had spread the steak with apricot jam.

Lorna, Q.
(*New Idea Mere Male Column*, 15.9.90.)

Lorna of Q (Queenstown? Queanbeyan?) it is time to do something about this MM (misogynist moron? machiavellian manta-ray?). He is obviously doing it on purpose to keep you from the wild pleasures of Doreen's Salon de Cutt.

Explain to this MM that until he cooks you something nice at least three times a week, you will not do the same for him. Leave recipes for sweet and sour dishes around the house, such as that below, and see if he can't improve on the Cottees special.

I was recently discussing gender and housework with a friend who has been involved in the union movement for many years and who

believes that very little has changed over the years in terms of who does the cooking. She sees secretaries half her age in union offices scurrying off to get hubby's tea, even if hubby is already off work by the time they leave work.

I am not so sure that nothing has changed although even(!) among supposedly progressive people it is generally women who do the less highly regarded work. Not the occasional 'whiz-bang wait til the friends come around for a dinner party and make a chocolate cheesecake' type meal but the everyday boring stuff of checking what is in the fridge, restocking it and making something after work. Who soaks the beans, in other words.



There are statistics to show that spending on fast food (and indeed all 'out of home' food, including restaurants) has more or less doubled over the last few years, at the very time that women's participation in the paid workforce has increased dramatically. Does this mean that the huge part-time wages of women are being converted into Kentucky fried or MacFeasts, rather than hubby doing more around the home?

While on this line of thought, I know of at least one avowedly leftwing collective where the women do the bulk of cooking for functions and are not reimbursed for ingredients, but where the alcohol is arranged by the blokes and they are reimbursed. Shame, collective, shame. That said, let me hastily proceed to the recipe which is dedicated to MM of Q, who has perfected the art of the inventive protest, if not the art of the kitchen.

Chicken and Cashews Sweet and Sour

I use free-range chickens. They actually have muscles due to such unnecessary acts as flapping of wings and walking, and the flesh doesn't slop away from the bones like ice-cream from a stick on a hot day. I recently had wonderful cashews from Mozambique, courtesy CAA mail order, although I'm sure that the plucky Aussie cashew would do fine.

Take le chook and cut into smallish serving sized pieces (eg, each leg into two pieces). Heat oil in a pan and throw in the poulet. The oil should be quite hot. Let the fowl brown all over, turning as necessary. When it is golden brown, pour about half a cup of white wine over the segments and let the fumes evaporate for about one minute. Pour over the following mixture:

- 1/2 teaspoon grated root ginger
- 1 to 2 cloves crushed or finely chopped garlic
- 1 large tablespoon honey
- 1 to 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 to 2 tablespoons soy sauce/tamari
- large half a cup orange juice
- juice of small lemon or lime
- a tiny sprinkling of powdered mace (optional)

This will sizzle like mad. Turn down heat. Stir, cover pan. Cook about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally and making sure it does not burn. Mix in a handful of cashews a few minutes before it's done. Serve with salad and rice. Serves 3 or 4. Good cold.

I think that we have merely opened the sticky and irresistible jampot of gender today, and we will return to it at future dates, like an army of Amazonian ants.

Penelope Cottier.