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Enhancing the Flavours

While we may lose our appetites in the hot weather, Cassie recommends that we whet our appetites by choosing the right ingredients, using natural seasonings and cooking with the appropriate methods. First, we may tickle our taste buds by choosing fruit in season during summer including pineapples and mangoes, or other ingredients carrying flavours that stand out such as cherry tomatoes and purple onions. Adding natural ingredients such as shiitake mushrooms, kelp and kombu can also help enhance the overall umami of the dishes.

Regarding seasoning, we may replace ready-made sauces with natural seasonings such as coriander, ginger, garlic and green onions, layering flavours in a healthy way. In addition, seasonings with sour taste, such as lemon juice, vinegar and tomatoes, can make dishes more refreshing, while a small amount of honey can help balance out the bitterness in some vegetables. As for cooking methods, grilling can be used to cook vegetables such as pumpkins and bell peppers to intensify their natural sweetness.

Making Appetising and Healthy Dishes with Seasonal Fruit and Vegetables

Summer is the season of fruit and vegetables. With high water content and a sweet taste, fruit and vegetables in season during the period can be used for making delicious and healthy dishes, which are perfect for cooling us off. In this issue, we invite Li Pei-xin (Cassie), a registered dietitian, to introduce some fruit and vegetables suitable for consumption during summer, and share with us how to retain the nutrients in these ingredients by using different cooking techniques.

Wax Gourd Soup

Using simple ingredients such as lean pork and ginger to make Wax Gourd Soup during summer can help replenish our bodies with water and cool us off.



Eat with the Seasons

Fruit and vegetables in season during summer, such as wax gourds and angled luffas, not only are fresh and tasty, but also help replenish our bodies with water and nutrients. Cassie suggests us to make dishes with seasonal fruit and vegetables. Water-rich wax gourds, for instance, help cool us off and quench our thirst. They also contain minerals like potassium and magnesium, which help maintain our cardiovascular health and our blood pressure in a normal range. As for angled luffas, they are rich in dietary fibre. They can promote gut health while offering various vitamins and minerals.



Stir-fried Chicken Fillets with Mango

Mangoes are in season during summer. Tasting sweet and tart, they are appetising and healthy.



Tips from Cassie:

How do we retain the nutrients in fruit and vegetables?

1. Do not wash fruit and vegetables by soaking them in water for too long, or the water soluble vitamins will be lost.
2. Prevent overcooking and use cooking methods other than deep-frying as far as possible.
3. Keep the skins of fruit and vegetables as far as possible as they contain nutrients.
4. Quick-boiled soups can retain the nutrients in fruit and vegetables better than double-boiled soups as they require a shorter cooking time.
5. Most nutrients in the soup are actually retained in the dregs. Therefore, it is recommended to enjoy the soup together with the fruit and vegetable dregs to consume all nutrients in the ingredients.



Chef Cheung Hong-man, Executive Chef
at Hyatt Regency Hong Kong, Sha Tin

Choosing Seasonal Ingredients for Nutritious Chinese Cuisine

Sha Tin 18, a three-star EatSmart Restaurant (ESR) in Hyatt Regency Hong Kong, Sha Tin, has committed to promoting healthy eating since 2019 when it first joined the “EatSmart Restaurant Star+” Campaign (ESR Star+ Campaign). Mr Cheung Hong-man, the Executive Chef of the hotel, hopes to provide more healthy choices to customers through continuously creating new dishes. Embracing the principles of “less meat, more vegetables” and “less oil, salt and sugar”, Mr Cheung brings out the healthy flavours of each dish by using seasonal ingredients and creative cooking methods.

Creative Pairings of Seasonal Ingredients

Mr Cheung likes to go to the market, where he gets inspirations for new dishes. He is good at exploring different seasonal ingredients, filling each “EatSmart Dish” with surprises through creative pairings. Among these dishes, “Simmered Luffas, Enoki Mushrooms and Cordyceps Flowers in Soya Milk” makes use of angled luffas, which are in season during summer, as the main ingredient. Unlike the traditional way of using broth, home-made soya milk is used as the base instead, blending the sweetness of the angled luffas with the umami of the mushrooms in an ingenious way. Soya milk not only adds a smooth texture to the dish, but also boosts its nutritional value by offering protein, potassium and other micronutrients in particular. While enjoying the delicacy, customers may obtain more nutrients to help keep their muscles healthy as well as their blood pressure in an ideal range. Moreover, just like the angled luffas, the mushrooms used are rich in dietary fibre. In addition to promoting gut health, they also add umami and a layer of texture to the dish, elevating its overall taste while retaining the natural flavours of the ingredients.



Simmered Luffas, Enoki Mushrooms and
Cordyceps Flowers in Soya Milk



Broth is replaced with home-made soya milk to create a smooth texture and bring out the sweetness of angled luffas.

Creating Healthy Dishes for Summer with the Heart

Another dish suitable for consumption in summer, “Stir-fried Sweet Potato Leaves with Assyrian Plums and Chilli”, also reflects Mr Cheung’s dedication to the pairings of ingredients. Presenting the pairing of sweet potato leaves, the high-fibre and nutritious main ingredient, with Assyrian plums, garlic and cone peppers, this dish is colourful, aromatic, tasty and nutritious. Containing β -carotene and potassium, sweet potato leaves help keep our eyes healthy and our blood pressure in an ideal range. Moreover, the slightly sour taste of Assyrian plums blended with the smooth texture of sweet potato leaves, together with the strong flavour of garlic as well as the spiciness of cone peppers, aids in reducing the use of seasonings that are high in salt or sugar, making the dish healthy and nutritious while adding layers of flavours.

Stir-fried Sweet Potato Leaves with
Assyrian Plums and Chilli

Rare in the market, Assyrian plums are used as their tart taste blends with the smooth texture of sweet potato leaves.





Chef Simon Wong, Executive Chinese Chef
at RÚ, Nina Hotel Tsuen Wan West

Meticulously Crafting the Healthy Taste of Summer

RÚ, a three-star ESR, is the Chinese restaurant at Nina Hotel Tsuen Wan West. Daring to innovate, the restaurant team is good at handling ingredients with ever-changing cooking techniques, making unique and healthy dishes. As summer is approaching, Mr Simon Wong, the Executive Chinese Chef of the restaurant, presents various delicate “EatSmart Dishes” made with fresh fruit and vegetables for customers to experience a season like no other.

Steamed Winter Melon Stuffed with Spinach, Mushrooms and Carrot*

Inspired by “Winter Melon Soup”, this nutritious dish presents the pairing of winter melon with various kinds of mushrooms and vegetables.



Creativity Makes Vegetables “Different”

“Steamed Winter Melon Stuffed with Spinach, Mushrooms and Carrot” is one of the popular “EatSmart Dishes” of the restaurant. Making winter melons into “cups” in an ingeniously way, Mr Wong elevates the umami of the whole dish by adding ingredients such as dried morels and fresh shiitake mushrooms. Sweet carrots and fresh organic baby spinach are also added to the dish not only to enrich its texture, but also to increase its content of calcium, potassium and vitamin A, which are good for our bones, blood pressure and immune systems. Lastly, broth that made with various kinds of vegetables and mushrooms is drizzled over the winter melon cup. Comparing with traditional meat broth, this vegetarian broth is not greasy but refreshing, suitable for customers who pursue a healthy diet.

Enjoying Food Visually, Palatably and Healthily

“Assorted Mushrooms Stuffed in Tomato with Pumpkin Sauce” is another dish that must not be missed. Using a sweet and tart tomato to tickle our taste buds, it is particularly suitable for consumption during the hot summer. Two kinds of mushrooms, golden fungus and yu er mushrooms (*Gloeostereum Incarnatum*), are stuffed inside the tomato. They not only enhance the umami of the whole dish, but also increase its dietary fibre content, promoting gut health. Moreover, colourful pumpkin sauce is drizzled over the tomato. While the intertwining red and orange colours are a joy to the eye, the additional lutein and potassium offered by the sauce are also good for our eyes and blood pressure.

Mr Wong elaborates that since its participation in the ESR Star+ Campaign, the restaurant has gradually replaced deep-frying dishes with stir-fried and steamed ones, which are much healthier. While the general public has a growing demand for healthy eating, customers are positive towards the restaurant’s provision of various “EatSmart Dishes”. The customers’ support has even become the restaurant’s motivation to create more healthy dishes.

Assorted Mushrooms Stuffed in Tomato with Pumpkin Sauce*

This appetising dish is made with colourful and diverse ingredients such as tomato, pumpkin and golden fungus.





A dietitian from the DH gave an introduction on the nutritional criteria of “EatSmart Dishes” to the restaurants’ representatives attending a briefing session.

The ESR Star+ Campaign Briefing Sessions

The Department of Health (DH) regularly organises briefing sessions of the ESR Star+ Campaign, which are hosted by dietitians to help restaurants design healthy menus. Participants may learn about the nutritional criteria of “3 Less” dishes and “More Fruit and Vegetables” dishes, and acquire practical cooking skills. In addition, the dietitians would provide nutritional recommendations regarding the dishes provided by the restaurants, helping participants apply the knowledge learnt to improve the existing dishes or create their unique “EatSmart Dishes”.

To participate in a briefing session or for enquiries, please contact the Secretariat of the Campaign at 3151 7637 or 3151 7645.



Festive EatSmart Dishes Promotion

Under the growing trend of healthy eating, many people enjoy healthy delicacies while dining out with their relatives and friends during festivals. In this regard, the ESR Star+ Campaign promotes meticulously designed festive “EatSmart Dishes” for ESRs via its Facebook page and Instagram account. ESRs are welcomed to participate in the promotion and continue to follow the ESR Star+ Campaign’s social media pages.



“EatSmart Restaurant Star+”
Facebook page



“EatSmart Restaurant Star+”
Instagram

OCT
Mid-Autumn Festival

DEC
Winter Solstice & Christmas

Past Event

To encourage the public to make healthy choices when eating out, the ESR Star+ Campaign set up a promotion booth at the 58th Hong Kong Brands and Products Expo in December 2024. The aim was to introduce the ESR Star+ Campaign and its social media pages to the public, as well as to distribute souvenirs. The event was well-received, with many people gathered around to learn about the details.



Staff introduced ESR Star+ Campaign to the public.

The DH Launches WeChat Official Account

The DH has launched its WeChat official account for the public to learn more about its work in the public health domain. The public can scan the following QR code to view, follow and share the information of the account.

