



CHICKEN AND HAM CHOI BAO



This deliciously spicy ham and chicken dish served in crisp lettuce cups is one of the old-time favorites of Asian food. It is very simple to prepare, and once you start eating it you really won't want to stop. This recipe makes four very large servings.

Pairs well with McWilliams Hanwood Estate® Merlot

Serves Four

- 5.5 oz ham, minced or finely diced
- 14 oz ground chicken meat
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup hoisin sauce (available in good grocery stores)
- 2/3 cup water chestnuts, drained and roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh cilantro leaves, finely torn or chopped
- **For the sauce**
- 2 tablespoons sweet chili sauce (available in Asian food stores)
- OR 1 teaspoon flaked chili and 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons light soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 8 medium-sized lettuce leaves, washed and crisped

Mix the ham and chicken together and keep to one side.

In a wok over high heat, bring the oil to smoking point and add the garlic. Stir for 5 seconds and add the mixed meats. Using the back of a large spoon or a wok spatula, mash the meat so it does not go lumpy. Pour in the hoisin sauce and 1/2 cup of water, then add the water chestnuts. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the cilantro and stir in.

To make the sauce, mix together the sweet chili sauce (or substitutes), soy sauce and lime juice.

Serve the choy bao in a large bowl in the middle of the table with the lettuce cups and sauce to one side.

TIP - It is sometimes difficult to get enough lettuce-leaf cups from a regular lettuce and so I can highly recommend that you use cos lettuce. The individual leaves are removed from the stem, trimmed, washed and crisped in the refrigerator. They are shaped more like boats than cups, but they are much easier to handle.

Recipe courtesy of Peter Howard

Image copyright of Joe Filschic 2004