

Mussel up for health

THE VACUUM CLEANERS OF THE SEA AREN'T JUST GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THEY PROVIDE SOME OF THE HEALTHIEST EATING AROUND

It's the underrated seafood — mussels, often loved on restaurant menus (a steaming, brothy bowl of mussels with crusty bread never goes astray), but not always considered for the home table.

Until now. The affordable, environmentally-friendly and easy-to-cook shellfish has had an “enormous increase in demand”, according to Andrew Puglisi, fifth-generation mussel farmer and executive director of Australia's biggest mussel exporter, Eyre Peninsula Seafoods.

“People are catching on to how affordable, healthy and great for the planet they are,” he says.

“Mussels feed off the extra nutrients in our water systems, like those resulting from tuna and kingfish farming, for example. Mussels are like the mate that stays over and gets up in the morning before you wake up to help clean your house. The magic vacuum cleaners of the sea!”

Mussels are a carbon sink — meaning they grab carbon dioxide from the atmosphere — and require virtually no food, pesticides or land clearing.

Adrian Meder of the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) says “farmed mussels are among the most sustainable seafood choices available to Australians”.

“Because blue mussels are farmed on ropes suspended in the sea, they have a negligible impact on their habitat or other species,” he says.

Health-wise, mussels are rich in iron, protein, omega-3 fatty acids, B2, B12, phosphorus, iron, selenium and iodine.

Puglisi recommends the ‘heat and eat’ Boston Bay cooked mussel packs available from supermarkets for an easy and time-efficient meal. Or, try one of these recipes.



HOT AND SPICY CHILLI MUSSELS

SERVES 2.
PREP 5-10 MINS.
COOK 10 MINS

INGREDIENTS

- 1kg Spencer Gulf Live Pot Ready Mussels
- 1 finely diced onion
- 1 diced red chilli
- 1 tbs vegetable oil
- 3 tbs sweet chilli sauce
- 1 lime cut into wedges
- 2 cloves of crushed garlic
- 2 chopped tomatoes
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 chopped red capsicum
- Coriander

METHOD

- 1** Heat oil in a large pot.
- 2** Add onion and garlic and saute for 5 mins.
- 3** Add tomatoes, chilli, capsicum and wine.
- 4** Bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 mins.
- 5** Increase heat, and add sweet chilli sauce and drained mussels.
- 6** Place lid on pot and cook for approximately 5 mins.
- 7** Garnish with coriander and lime and enjoy.



MARINATED MUSSELS

SERVES 4. PREP 5 MINS. COOK 5 MINS

INGREDIENTS

- Summer and mussels are meant to be together. The beauty of this recipe is that you can whip it up in under 10 minutes and the mussels will keep in the fridge for up to three months.
- You can serve the marinated mussels spread on a cheeseboard with your favourite selection of cheeses, fruits, meats or breads.

- 1kg Kinkawooka Pot Ready Mussels
- 1 cup white wine vinegar
- 1 cup of water
- 1 tsp whole black peppercorns
- 1 tbs sugar
- 2 chillies, sliced
- 1 tsp mustard seed
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 cloves of garlic, sliced
- 1 tsp smoked paprika

METHOD

- 1** Open the pack of Kinkawooka Pot Ready mussels and strain off the water. Give them a quick rinse under cold water.
- 2** Heat up a pot with approximately 1cm of water. When the water is boiling, add the mussels and cover with a lid. Steam them for a couple of minutes, stirring every minute or so until they open.
- 3** Remove from the heat and strain the mussels off, keeping some of the liquid in a bowl.
- 4** Heat the cup of white wine vinegar, sugar and water in a pot until it reaches boiling point. Add garlic, chilli, mustard seeds, peppercorns and paprika and put aside to cool.
- 5** Remove the mussel meat from the shells and place in a sterilised jar.
- 6** Once the marinade has cooled, pour over the mussels and seal the jar.

THAI MUSSELS WITH SWEET POTATO

SERVES 6. PREP 5-10 MINS.
COOK 15-20 MINS

INGREDIENTS

- 2kg Kinkawooka Live Pot Ready Mussels
- 750g sweet potato
- 2 tbs vegetable oil
- 3 finely chopped spring onions
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 red chilli finely sliced
- 2 tbs fish sauce
- 1 tbs sugar
- Handful of basil leaves
- Handful of coriander sprigs
- 3 tbs sweet chilli sauce
- 2 tbs lime juice, plus 1 extra lime cut into wedges
- Steamed rice to serve

METHOD

- 1** Cut sweet potato into large bite sized chunks, cook in a pan of simmering salted water for 10-15 mins until tender, then drain.
- 2** Heat oil, spring onions, garlic, chilli and 1 cup (250ml) of water in a heavy-lidded pan over medium heat.
- 3** Bring to the boil.
- 4** Add mussels, cover and cook for approximately 4 mins.
- 5** Add sweet potato, fish sauce, sugar and chilli sauce to mussels and stir through.
- 6** Add herbs and lime juice, toss well.
- 7** Serve with lime wedges and steamed rice.



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