



Taiwan discovers European Extra Virgin Olive Oil

In the last few years, Taiwan has shown growing interest in healthy way of eating. The phenomenon has presumably been aided by a cultural trend toward westernization and numerous scandals in the food industry that have occurred in the country involving substandard or even harmful products being put on the market, including contaminated flour and adulterated oils of dubious quality and origins.

The gradual increase in attention shown by the countries of the Far East with regard to health food trends also involves the consumption of Extra Virgin Olive Oil and its benefits over the oils more commonly used in that country (soybean oil, sunflower seed oil, palm oil). However, it is important to understand whether the spread of a certain sensibility regarding the positive impact of EVO oil on health and the concepts of traceability, products from a controlled origin and food safety, are modifying the food habits of the Taiwanese population in ways that will lead to actual tendencies in purchase choices.

We discussed the matter with Chef William Lo.

1) From your point of view, would you say European EVO oil is widespread in the Taiwanese market?
I would say so, especially in the large supermarkets.

2) What determines the degree of diffusion of European EVO oil in the Taiwanese market?
It is directly determined by the influence of European cuisine and by the many European restaurants in the country. So, there are many products that come from Europe in Taiwan, and naturally EVO oil as well.

3) In Taiwan, is European EVO oil marketed through multiple sales channels?
Yes. It is generally marketing through online commerce and the large supermarkets and/or small shops specialized in imported goods, and F&B distributors that serve the HoReCa industry.

4) Is there a difference in price between one channel and another?
Yes. Obviously, there are differences in price.

5) How much are the Taiwanese willing to pay for a (1 L) bottle of European EVO oil?
It depends on whether we are talking about a chef or a normal person. For home use they usually spend 6 or 7 Euros but a chef is willing to spend even more.

6) How can EVO oil be used in Taiwanese cooking, in recipes that are genuine and easy to make that enrich their own culinary traditions?
When cooking food, to fry, as a condiment and as a base for sauces.

(Note: In Taiwanese cooking pepper, chilies, ginger and other spices are very commonly used and their flavours are often overwhelming. For this reason most of the population there gives little attention to the use of oil).

7) What could be instruments to promote awareness about European EVO among the Taiwanese in order to incentivize consumption?
The use of media, especially social networks and television.



1. Braised Seafood Tofu Pot



Ingredients

60g carrot, 40g tofu, 20g crab meat, 3 mussels, 20g asparagus, 20g mushrooms, 55cc Extra Virgin Olive Oil, 200cc water / broth, 1 egg, 1 teaspoon salt and pepper, white wine

Recipe

1. Wash and clean the ingredients, cut the tofu and the asparagus into small pieces, and tear the mushrooms into strips.
2. Put the crab meat into a bowl, pour 15cc of Extra Virgin Olive Oil, add a little bit of salt, and mix carefully.
3. Boil the mussels and the crab meat for about 2 minutes, remove and set aside.
4. Making of the braised soup: shred the carrot and put it into a pan. Add 40cc of Extra Virgin Olive Oil, stir fry for 3 minutes. Add a sip of white wine and then add water / broth, cook for 8 minutes until it becomes a thick red broth. Add an egg and stir it to the "egg drop", season with salt and pepper.
5. Pour a small amount of Extra Virgin Olive Oil in a pan. First add tofu, pan-fry until it gets a golden brown surface, then add asparagus and mushrooms, stir-fry at low temperature for 3 minutes, season with salt.



6. Presentation: put all the cooked ingredients in a soup plate, then slowly pour the braised soup into the plate. Add some drops of olive oil to enhance the flavour and the dish is ready to be served.

2. Squid Celery



Ingredients

1 squid, 60g celery, 20g spinach, 1/4 red pepper and 1/4 yellow pepper, 1 small cherry radish, 80cc Extra Virgin Olive Oil, 2 garlic cloves, 10g tender ginger, 3 leaves of basil, 40cc water / broth, 1 teaspoon salt, white wine

Recipe

1. Wash and clean the ingredients: clean the squid and remove the head. Wash and dice celery, yellow pepper and red pepper, shred the cherry radish. Slice one garlic clove, and mince the other garlic clove, shred half of the tender ginger, and mince the other half.
2. Put squid, basil, sliced garlic and shredded tender ginger into a bowl, then pour 20cc of Extra Virgin Olive Oil and a little bit salt, marinate for 20 minutes.



3. Pour a small quantity of Extra Virgin Olive Oil in a pan. Add celery, red pepper, yellow pepper, stir-fry at low temperature for 3-5 minutes, season with minced ginger and garlic, add a bit of salt.
4. Making of the celery paste: Pour the Extra Virgin Olive Oil into a pan. Add celery, spinach, minced ginger and stir-fry for 3-5 minutes. Add a sip of white wine, then add water / broth and cook for 2 minutes. Put the cooked soup into the smash machine, slowly add 60cc of Extra Virgin Olive Oil to make the paste.
5. Fill the squid with the ingredients from step 3. Pour Extra Virgin Olive Oil in a pan, and stir-fry the squid at low temperature for 5 minutes.
6. Presentation: pour the celery paste in a soup plate, then put the fried squid on top. Decorate with shredded tender ginger and cherry radish, add a few drops of Extra Virgin Olive Oil, and the dish is ready to be served.

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