

AUBERGINES WITH GINGER, SPRING ONIONS AND RED CHILLI

Source: Simon Hopkinson Cooks
Serves 4



- Mirin (sweetened rice wine) -200ml
- Light soy sauce – 50ml
- Fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated – 1 large knob
- Spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped – 4
- Garlic, finely chopped – 2 cloves
- Sesame oil – 1 TBSP
- Red chillies, deseeded and finely chopped – 2
- Long purple Asian aubergines - 4 (approx 600g), from any good Asian grocer
- Peanut oil or other neutral-flavoured oil

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C (fan 200°C)

2. Pour the mirin into a saucepan, bring up to the boil, then simmer until reduced to about half its original volume. Decant into a bowl and allow to cool completely. Add the next six ingredients and stir together.

3. To prepare the aubergines, cut them in half lengthways and lightly score their surfaces with a sharp knife in a criss-cross fashion – don't go too deep.

4. Heat a couple of tablespoons of the peanut oil in a large frying pan until hot, but not smoking. Lower in the aubergines cut-side down and fry until the flesh is golden (you will have to do this in batches, together with more oil); it will take about 3 minutes.

5. Now turn them over and cook for about the same time, skin-side down.

- 6.** Drain well on kitchen paper, cut-side down, then place them on to a heatproof, shallow baking tray, cut-side uppermost.

- 7.** Now, carefully spoon over about half the dressing, dividing it as you go between each aubergine. Place in the oven (top shelf) for 5 minutes.

- 8.** Remove, and add more dressing. Continue to bake the aubergines until very tender and almost drenched in the aromatic dressing; residue will also have collected in the baking tray, which will have become deliciously brown and sticky. Flash under a hot grill to add extra gilding, if you so wish.