

## Crisp Prawn-Topped Eggplant

Serves 2 as a starter

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 Jap (slipper) eggplant (about 125g)
- 250g green prawns, peeled and deveined
- 2cm piece peeled ginger, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt flakes, plus extra for sprinkling
- ½ teaspoon castor sugar
- 1 green onion, very finely chopped
- Tapioca starch, for dusting
- Vegetable oil, for deep-frying

### Brown Sauce

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 green onion, very finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon finely grated ginger
- 2 teaspoons brown soy bean paste (doubanjiang)
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons rice wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Shaoxing rice wine
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons castor sugar
- ¼ teaspoon cornflour

### Batter

- 40g plain flour
- 110g tapioca starch
- 1 egg
- 90ml water
- 1½ tablespoons vegetable oil



### METHOD

1. Cut eggplants into 1.5-2cm-thick discs.
2. Sprinkle both sides with salt and set aside.
3. Chop prawns and place in a food processor with ginger, salt, sugar and most of the green onion (reserving a little for garnish); pulse until pasty and well combined.
4. Pat eggplant dry on paper towel.
5. Using wet hands to prevent it sticking to them, mound some prawn mixture on top of each eggplant slice. Set aside.
6. Make Sauce: Heat oil in a small saucepan over low-medium heat. Add garlic, green onion and ginger and stir for about 1 minute, until aromatic. Add soy bean paste and stir for a further 30 seconds or so, until well combined. Add remaining ingredients, increase heat to medium, bring to the boil and stir until thickened, stirring well to remove any bits stuck to the base of the pan. Remove from heat and set aside to keep warm.
7. Make Batter: Combine flour and tapioca starch in a mixing bowl and make a well in the centre. In a separate bowl, lightly whisk egg and water together then whisk in oil. Pour egg mixture into flour mixture and fold together to form a batter.
8. Heat oil for deep-frying.
9. Dust eggplant in tapioca starch, dusting off excess, dip into batter, drain off excess and carefully lower into the oil, mince side down.
10. Fry for 3-4 minutes, until well-coloured, then turn and cook the other side for 2-3 minutes, until well coloured. Drain on a paper towel-lined rack over a plate.
11. Arrange eggplant on a serving plate and drizzle a little Brown Sauce over it.
12. Scatter with remaining green onion and serve with remaining Brown Sauce on the side.