

Cook #1

The Volcano

All About Wok Cooking

 **ASKO**

Inspired by Scandinavia





Wok

The ASKO brand has for many years been synonymous with innovation, design, cooking technology and quality.

It's not just technology we are interested in, but the home cooks' user experience. Wok cooking has become a popular option for many households, as it is quick, easy and healthy. However, our research found that many woks are not being used properly. They are usually left simmering over a moderate heat, rather than sizzling over a high powered flame.

ASKO embarked on a quest for the "power" of the flame, just like the professionals use. We found it mainly in a good, hot core. We have used this knowledge to develop a unique product: the Fusion Volcano wok burner. This provides the power to be able to stir-fry food quickly over a high flame. This means that the art of proper wok cooking is now completely within the grasp of home cooks.

In this magazine, we will tell you the story behind wok cooking, get some top wok chefs to reveal their secrets, look for the best techniques to use, and provide the smartest tips and finest recipes. We will ask the designer for his views and investigate why wok cooking is so healthy. In a nutshell, we will uncover every aspect of wok cooking. This will provide you with more than enough inspiration to grab a wok and spatula and start cooking delicious meals.

Fredrik Lööf
Marketing Manager ASKO

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The wok has been synonymous with oriental cuisine for 2000 years already. The wok embarked on its journey of conquest around the world from China. During the early centuries, Southeast Asia was conquered and it has been part of the Western world for about a hundred years. In the past, woks were used over a wooden fire, but nowadays wood has been replaced by high-powered gas flames. But the basic principle remains the same.

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The stir-fry culture, then and now

Wok cooking around the globe

From ancient China to the modern kitchen, the wok has certainly come a long way. We take a look at the wok's roots, oriental cuisine and stir-fry cooking around the world.

On ships, in wok restaurants and food courts, flames leap around the pan in the good, old-fashioned way



Food stalls at every corner of the street, the wafts of ginger, garlic and pepper floating around you, while cooks toss around vegetables in the wok over a high flame with deft movements acquired from years of practice. This is Chinese wok culture in a nutshell.

However, this is not really an everyday scene any more, at least not in Hong Kong. Regulations in the city have put an end to street food. Only the locals know where to find the wok stalls which suddenly pop up, but disappear just as quickly again as soon as the officials are in sight, leaving behind the unmistakable aroma of wok hei – the “breath of the wok”. Of course, there are other places in the city still offering top-class wok cooking. On ships, in wok restaurants and food courts, the flames leap around the pan in the good, old-fashioned way. But this is far removed from how it ever began: small and delicate, with few resources and a simple stove...

Prototype wok

The roots of wok cooking go back to China some two thousand years ago, during the time of the Han dynasty. Chinese cooking was characterised by food shortages at that time.

In a country with little farmland and woodland, finding enough food and fuel presented a huge challenge. People

learnt how to make the most out of natural produce and prepare it in a tasty way using a minimum amount of fat and fuel. The norm was to cut up the vegetables and meat that were available into small pieces and quickly fry them at the same time in a round pan over a high flame.

This is how the wok came about (the Cantonese word for “cooking pot”), more or less out of necessity, along with stir-fry cooking. The first woks were not, of course, made of steel or cast iron like the ones we can find nowadays in Asian food stores. We're thinking more of a prototype: a simple, metal model based on the earthenware pots which were in use at the time of the Han dynasty and were later discovered in tombs. Some archaeological finds have included “stoves” with large, round holes with space for pans and pots with a distinctive round shape. In any case, the wok, in its earliest form, was simple, handy, multi-functional, suitable for “economical” cooking and easy to carry around. It was particularly handy if you imagine that people at that time moved around more than now, carrying all their belongings with them.



Indians use a large wok pan (kahari) on a brick or clay oven with a hole in it.

Global expansion

There is some speculation as to how and when exactly the use of the wok spread further afield. One thing for sure is that wok cooking had become fully established as a method of cooking in China. This also gave rise to a variety of wok models, such as the Cantonese wok (with a round bottom and one or two steel handles) and the Peking Wok (with a wooden handle and flattened bottom). Whether it was through nomads, fishermen, sailors or other travelling people and/or migrant workers, the use of the wok extended beyond China and became an essential utensil in kitchens almost everywhere in Asia. It's often the case that this is actually the only pan that people have in the house,

simply because you can do virtually everything with it: not just stir-fry but also deep-fry, roast, stew, steam, smoke etc. Indians use a large wok pan (kahari) on a brick or clay oven with a hole in it. This is handy for stewing curries and frying. In Indonesia people cook with a wadjan, which is a slightly flatter wok that is put on a wood or charcoal fire and is used to prepare curries, rice dishes and quick stir-fry dishes. Gradually, the cuisines in Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia also became influenced by Chinese wok cooking. Even the Mongolian barbecue is related to wok cooking. They use a round cast-iron grill bearing a strong resemblance to a wok.

Gradually, the cuisines in Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia also became influenced by Chinese wok cooking.



What is stir-fry cooking?

Stir-fry cooking involves quickly frying in a little bit of oil, over high heat, meat and/or fish and vegetables, while stirring/mixing/tossing the ingredients. The short cooking time and high temperature mean that the taste and nutrients of each ingredient are retained. If you do it really well, you will get that special aroma which may remind you of a barbecue: wok hei.

In actual fact, every oriental culture uses a simple, spacious pan with sloping sides which can be used to prepare one-pan dishes over a high flame. This is what has made the wok a unique and essential element in oriental cuisine.

Faithful to the wok

Of course, it was inevitable that the wok would be introduced into Western culture. Chinese people settled everywhere and remained faithful to their wok. For instance, in America, the wok appeared around the 19th century with the arrival of Chinese immigrants to work in the gold mines. There are also records showing that Chinese woks were used on sugar plantations in Hawaii.

Wok cooking is not unusual in Mexico, and in the Dominican Republic, it is the most natural thing in the world to prepare a traditional prawn dish in a wok. And what about in Europe? We know that woks were used for cooking when the Chinese set out for the UK, Germany, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands (from the 19th century to roughly the 1970s/1980s). People invariably made space in their luggage for one or more woks, intended to be used at home and in the many restaurants that they would open. This is how the majority of home cooks in the West have eventually come into contact with the wok.

Woktips



Wok tips

- Make sure that you have all your ingredients ready so that you can work extremely quickly when the time comes. This means marinating the meat, finely cutting vegetables and having the spices at hand. Use oil that can tolerate a strong heat. Peanut oil is ideal, but soybean oil, rice oil, sunflower oil and maize oil are also suitable (olive oil is less suitable).
- Heat up the dry wok until it is very hot. Pour a few drops of water in it: if this produces small sizzling bubbles, this means that the pan is at the right temperature. Then add just a little oil. When it begins to smell slightly, it is hot enough.
- Make sure that the oil covers all the sides of the wok.
- Do things in the right order: add the “dry” spices first, then the protein-rich ingredients (meat, fish) until they start to sizzle, followed by the vegetables, and finally the wet spices.
- Don't put too much in the pan at once, as this lowers the temperature and you will then be stewing the ingredients instead of stir-frying them.
- Possibly remove the meat/fish temporarily from the pan and then add it again at the end. This will ensure that it isn't overdone.



Heat up the wok, pour the oil in, add the ingredients in batches, stir them around with quick movements over high heat, and voilà! Done.

The real wok

No matter how handy the latest wok pans with their non-stick layers may seem, a real wok pan made of steel or cast iron is best to use for cooking. They are available in Asian food stores. Woks with non-stick layers are not resistant enough to high temperatures. Unhealthy substances are emitted when the wok is extremely hot. Season the wok properly to avoid it getting encrusted.

Sizzling

We have now all embraced wok cooking because it is such a quick, healthy and easy way to prepare food. The basic principle of stir-frying is still the same. What we do still seems to reflect, by and large, what the master chefs of the Han dynasty did. They would heat up the wok, pour the oil in, add the ingredients in batches, stir them around with quick movements over high heat, and voilà! Done.

But the type of pan we use to do this (with a flat underside or a non-stick layer) and the dishes we prepare in it have definitely been westernised.

Of course, if you have a good cookbook, you can easily prepare authentic Chinese wok dishes. Or you can choose the Western path where you use local ingredients to cook with.

Then there is the halfway house: fusion. This involves the art of combining Western and oriental ingredients, aromas and structures in a subtle manner. But, however you do it, do it with finesse. Look for the “breath” of the wok, listen to the musical sizzling in the pan and enjoy!

The hand of the master



Classic wok dishes may well be the tastiest.

They have already been prepared hundreds of times by hundreds of different chefs. And yet they taste slightly differently every time. What makes the difference? The choice of the best and freshest ingredients and the hand of a mas-

ter chef. For centuries, the wok has given oriental cuisine its special flavour. Scallops, chicken and prawns are traditional wok ingredients. These dishes show that traditional doesn't have to mean boring.

Spicy scallops
with baby bok choy



Black bean sauce is perhaps not so well known, but it has a wonderfully rich and earthy taste

Thai green chicken
curry with rice



Stir-fried prawns with a
fresh spicy marinade





Yangchow fried rice

You can find out more about the Fusion Volcano wok burner at asko.co.nz

Spicy scallops with baby bok choy

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Preparation time: approx. 30 minutes
Per serving: approx. 222 kcal, 18 g protein
9 g fat, 49 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

- 12 scallops
- 2 tbsp chicken stock
- 1 tin of black beans
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp cornflour
- 2 tbsp peanut oil
- 1 tbsp ginger, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 4 baby bok choy, cleaned and finely chopped
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and cut into strips
- 1 spring onion, finely chopped

1 Clean the scallops thoroughly and pat them dry with a kitchen towel.

2 In a bowl, mix the stock, black beans, soy sauce and cornflour.

3 Heat a wok over high heat and add oil. Add the ginger and garlic and stir them for around 1 minute.

4 Add the scallops and fry them for around 1 minute until they are a lovely golden colour. Remove scallops from the wok.

5 Stir in the bok choy, pepper, spring onion and black bean mixture together and fry for around 1 minute in the wok.

6 Place the scallops on top and let them cook for around 1 minute.

Thai green chicken curry with rice

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Preparation time: approx. 35 minutes
Per serving: approx. 452 kcal, 29 g protein
31 g fat, 12 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

- 3 tbsp peanut oil
- 400 g chicken thighs, cut into pieces and sprinkled with a little salt
- 500 ml coconut milk

- 3 tbsp green curry paste
- 100 g bamboo shoots
- 100 g baby sweetcorn
- 150 g large mushrooms, cut into quarters
- Half a red pepper, cut into strips
- 50 g beansprouts
- Small handful of coriander and Thai basil, roughly chopped

1 Heat a wok over high heat and pour in the oil.

2 Sprinkle the chicken with a little salt and fry it in the hot oil for around 6 minutes.

3 Remove the chicken from the wok, pour in the coconut milk and add 5 tbsp of curry paste to the wok. Heat and keep stirring well.

4 Mix up the bamboo shoots, sweetcorn, mushrooms, pepper, beansprouts and chicken.

5 Bring to the boil, stir in the spices and serve with rice.

Green curry

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- 6 green peppers, cleaned
- 2 stalks of lemongrass, roughly chopped
- 5 cloves of garlic, roughly chopped
- A small handful of coriander roots, roughly chopped
- 2 tsp of ginger or Thai ginger roots, grated
- 1 shallot, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp grated lime zest
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1/2 tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp coriander seeds

Blend all the ingredients using a blender or food processor. You can keep this curry covered in the fridge for up to a week.

Stir-fried prawns with a fresh spicy marinade

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Preparation time: approx. 25 minutes + waiting time
Per serving: approx. 251 kcal, 19 g protein
17 g fat, 4 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

- 1 red chilli pepper, deseeded and cut into rings

- Small handful of parsley, finely chopped
- 4 tomatoes, deseeded and cut into chunks
- Juice of 1 lime
- 4 tbsp peanut oil
- Salt and pepper
- 12 large raw prawns, peeled and de-veined
- 3 spring onions, cut into rings
- 4 skewers

1 Make a marinade using the chilli pepper, parsley, tomatoes, lime juice and 3 tbsp of peanut oil, adding a little freshly ground salt and pepper.

2 Marinate prawns for around 1 hour. Remove the prawns and keep the marinade aside.

3 Heat 1 tbsp of peanut oil in the wok and fry the prawns for around 1 minute. Stir in the marinade and let it heat up for another minute.

4 Place prawns on the skewers, serve and spoon the marinade over them. Garnish with spring onion.

Yangchow fried rice

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Preparation time: approx. 20 minutes
Per serving: approx. 500 kcal, 18 g protein
9 g fat, 84 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

- 2 tbsp peanut oil
- 200 g prawns, peeled and de-veined
- 400 g cooked basmati rice
- 200 g of frozen peas
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper

1 Heat a wok over high heat and pour the oil in. Add the prawns and fry them for 1 minute.

2 Mix in the rice and peas and stir-fry everything for about another 2 minutes until the rice is fairly hot and the peas are cooked.

3 Stir in the spring onions and add salt and pepper for flavour.

The 5th taste: umami



Umami is otherwise known as the “fifth taste”- in addition to sweet, sour, salty and bitter. More than that, the very presence of umami adds the finishing touch to dishes.

If someone says that something tastes sour or is fairly salty, we understand straight away what they mean.

But umami? Umami means something like “tasty” or “wonderful” in Japanese. But nothing as subjective as “delicious”. However, it is just as easy to detect umami in a dish or ingredient, just in the same way as when something is sweet, sour, salty or bitter. Umami is specifically related to the presence of amino acids (what proteins are made up of) and the flavouring released by it: monosodium glutamate. Whether it is present and how much of it is present in a product is easy to measure. As a general rule, the more monoglutamate there is, the more umami there is and the more pleasant and tasty we find a product or dish.

Rich, wholesome and “creamy”

Umami was first described by Kikunae Ikeda in 1908. This Japanese chemist wanted to know where the strong taste of seaweed soup came from. He discovered that it was the natural amino acid glutamate which produced this rich, wholesome, creamy taste in the mouth and called it “umami”. Many oriental products contain umami: shiitake mushrooms, soy sauce, fish sauce, dried seaweed, various types of stock. This natural amino acid can also be found in a fairly large number of Western products, such as dairy products, beef, dried ham, mackerel, anchovies, sardines, Parmesan cheese, Roquefort cheese, peas and tomatoes. Umami is particularly abundant in fermented and matured products. This explains, for instance, why old cheese has

Cooking delicious food with the wok

Umami occurs in nature, for instance, in mackerel, tuna fish, salmon, oysters, asparagus, shiitake mushrooms, oyster mushrooms, peas, Chinese cabbage, carrot, beef, pork, duck, chicken, eggs and all kinds of fermented sauces and pastes from oriental cooking.

Each of them are great products for wok cooking. A cup of green tea to round it off makes the umami experience complete!



Honest and pure

In the West umami is often described as the fifth taste. In the Far East they refer to it more as a “feeling in the mouth”. Umami is also synonymous with what is healthy, light, fresh, honest and pure.

Tip

Products rich in umami are a tasty, healthy alternative to cooking salt. A pinch of umami works wonders.

more umami than young cheese, there is more umami in juicy red tomatoes than in unripe green ones, and why soy sauce has more umami than soybeans themselves.

Adding colour

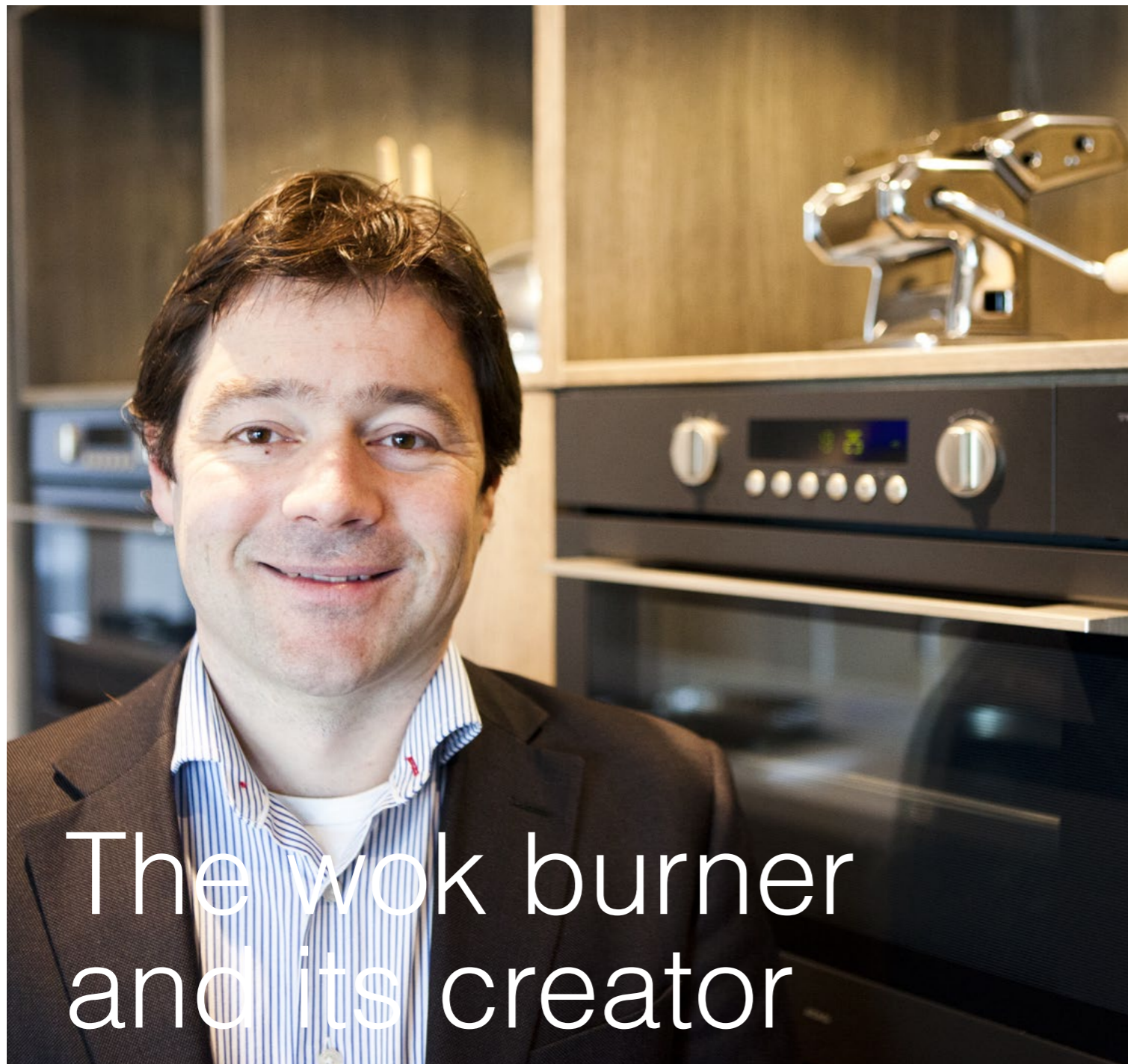
This was quite a discovery by Mr Ikeda. In addition, he was the brains behind the development of monosodium glutamate (MSG) as an artificial flavouring. If something isn't umami, we can make it umami, using MSG.

It is used a great deal in Asian cooking to add the finishing touch to a dish. In the West, we add it mainly to snack foods. For instance, umami is the reason why it's so difficult to only eat one potato chip!

However, anyone cooking fresh, wholesome and delicious

meals doesn't need to jump through hoops to make dishes with umami. It's mainly a matter of thinking a bit beforehand about which protein-rich ingredients you can use.

Do you want to intensify the flavour of a stir-fry dish? Then make sure that your main product is rich in protein, such as meat, poultry, fish and vegetables. Umami is released from these products during preparation. Then go for a flavouring like soy sauce, miso (a fermented mixture of soybeans, salt and grains), black bean paste, fish or oyster sauce or trassi (fermented shrimp paste). On their own, these products are not so delicious that you'd want to consume a lot. But, in combination with other ingredients, they give a better “definition” to the taste. Umami will bring out the colour in your dish. Enjoy its rich and wholesome taste!



The wok burner and its creator

The Fusion Volcano wok burner has a revolutionary shape, elegant design and, above all, is ideal for real wok cooking.

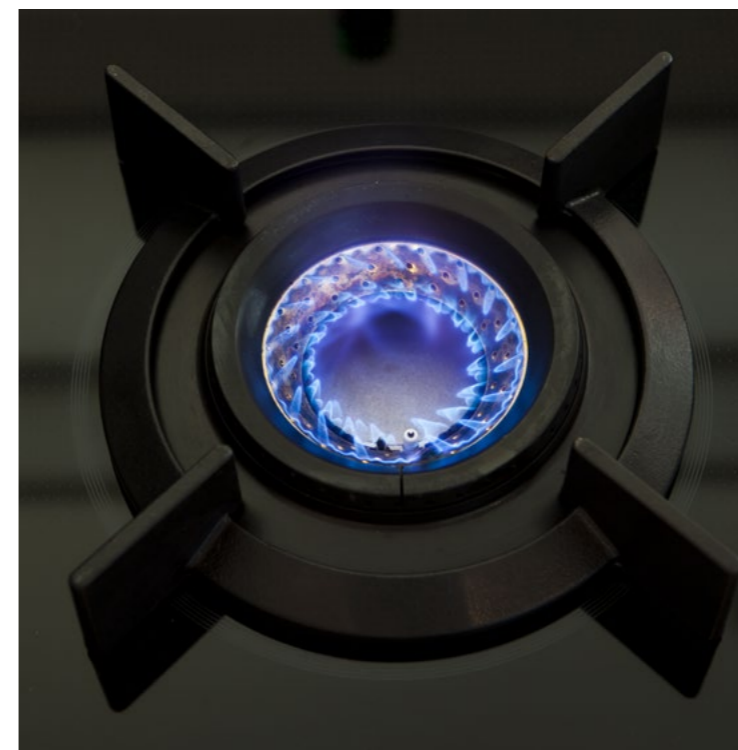
This latest product from ASKO has a “wow” factor. Or as Vincent Hofstee puts it: “It’s an example of technology that will leave people wanting more. We never stuck so closely to the wishes of the amateur cook before.”

Vincent Hofstee, product manager at one of ASKO’s partner companies, admits laying awake at night wondering whether other “gadget fans” like him would find the wok burner innovative.

ASKO presented the Fusion Volcano wok burner at the end of 2013. This product, on which three years of blood, sweat and tears were spent, “set alight” the home exhibition and convincingly demonstrated that it does what it was made for: provide a completely central and concentrated source of heat. Exactly what you need if you want to cook perfect wok cuisine.

How does it happen? Do you just wake up one day with the idea for a new wok burner?

“No (laughing). It’s actually a bit more “structured” than that. This time, for once, we’ve adopted a totally different approach by starting from scratch with the user. Instead of conducting surveys to ask consumers about their wishes and needs, we invited them to come along to group discussions. We also instructed them to keep a sort of diary about their cook top. The great thing about this was that the consumers responded from their own environment. This meant that ASKO was closer to what happens in reality. This fresh approach provided us with a huge number of insights. For instance, we learnt that maintaining hobs is often a pain in the neck, or that people find it annoying shifting pans around on their cooker. But we also found out that people enjoy wok cooking enormously.”





But as an experienced cooking brand, surely you already know how popular wok cooking is?

"Of course, we do. That's our business. We follow the trends and know what's going on. But, it's a different story if you also see what these needs actually are."

This is where the big puzzle begins: what is the perfect wok burner like?

"We deliberately didn't want to adapt any of our existing wok burners, but wanted to start again, completely from scratch. So, we made a real journey of discovery. We spoke to professional chefs and visited various wok restaurants. We could see the huge burners that they use, where they put their foot on a pedal to pump extra oxygen into the fire. This isn't really suitable for using at home. But what we did notice was that a great deal of heat is required to cook the ingredients through

in a short period of time. This is the only way to retain the nutrients."

So, the secret lies in a good flame?

"Definitely. It mustn't just be strong and hot, but, above all, it must be concentrated and remain under the pan. This is the most effective aspect. The problem with the older generation of multi-ring wok burners is that the outer ring is actually hotter than the core. The flame "leaks out". Those burners are actually more suited to large, flat pans and not to wok pans with round bottoms."

It is quite a challenge getting the flame in the right place and keeping it there...

"A design agency helped us to develop the concept. I remember that they presented us with cross-sections of different pans in an illustration, showing how the flames lap around the bottom. Very illuminating. Within six months of carrying out the consumer research, we had an image of what the burner had to be like and devised a concept. Let me assure you that this is very rapid progress for this sector. Subsequently, we came up with the idea in our own certified lab for the new design of wok burner. I saw loads of prototypes come and go. The most difficult thing was getting the flame ports in the right place."

Uhm, flame ports? Please explain.

"Without going into too much detail, the flame ports are the holes that the gas comes out from. With our focus on the power and core of the flame, we wanted as many of these ports as possible to be arranged in a conical internal ring. We had them arranged in a staggered alignment. But this produced a

flame outlet which protruded too high above the hob, making it potentially dangerous. Finally, they were drilled into the cone at an angle. Now the flame is powerful, hot, concentrated and low enough to be perfectly safe."

All done, with nothing more to do?

"Actually, because we feel that it's important for the wok burner to be multifunctional, we have also added a simmering ring and an outer ring to it. The great thing is that the wok flame itself provides 3 kW, which operates very efficiently, but 6 kW is needed for the large flame in the outer ring. This means that you need to switch with the gas supply between a small amount of gas for simmering, a bit more for the wok flame and a huge amount for the outermost flames. This is where our engineer had to spend a great deal of time tinkering around. In any case, we took the design to the limits of what is possible."

And I presume that it is all executed according to the highest quality standards?

"But, of course! We're dealing with gas here, so everything must be completely sound. The conical shape - the volcano, as it were - is made from brass, a traditional metal. Brass has excellent heat resistance, not to mention that it gives the burner that distinctive, professional look."

And now what are you most proud of?

"That it wasn't all pie in the sky, but that it actually works. There have been positive reactions to the Fusion Volcano wok burner. People feel that it's something special and, above all, "different". Why? I think it's the concentrated, powerful flame. A good fire still instils a sort of primeval feeling."

Wok ring

To ensure that you can use the wok safely, the Fusion Volcano wok burner comes with a wok ring. This makes it more stable when placing a round-based wok pan on it. This allows you to move the wok around freely and cook like a professional. The wok burner is also made up of three removable components which are easy to clean.



A Domino Volcano wok burner



"The flame is powerful, hot, concentrated and low enough to be perfectly safe."

Tradition and innovation



The wok is an infinitely versatile pan.

You can use it for almost every cooking method, from traditional stir-fried shredded beef to deep-fried and amazingly crispy chicken. But in these pages, you'll also find some de-

licious vegetable dishes. Why not try stir-fried green beans? A touch of soy sauce and sesame oil gives them an exciting oriental touch!

Stir-fried shredded beef



The secret ingredient in this dish: Chinese five-spice powder. See page 51 to find out more about this.

Chicken with cashew nuts, surprisingly simple and delicious



Cashew chicken

Marinated crispy chicken



Green beans



Vegetables used in traditional French cuisine, with a surprising oriental twist.

Stir-fried shredded beef

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Preparation time: approx. 15 minutes
Per serving: approx. 225 kcal, 26 g protein
10 g fat, 7 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

- 400 g beef cut into thin strips
- 5 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp five-spice powder
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- Half tsp black pepper
- 1 bunch of cherry tomatoes
- 1 bunch of thyme
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 tbsp olive oil

1 Pre-heat the oven to 150°C. Mix the soy sauce, five-spice powder, brown sugar and black pepper and coat the strips of beef with it. Leave it to marinate for half an hour.

2 Place the cherry tomatoes, thyme, sugar and olive oil in an oven-proof bowl and place it in the oven for around 45 minutes.

3 Heat the wok over high heat and add 1 tbsp olive oil to it. Fry the beef strips quickly for around 1 minute, on every side.

4 Serve with rice and the tomatoes from the oven.

Cashew chicken

■■■

Preparation time: approx. 30 minutes
Per serving: approx. 298 kcal, 27 g protein
13 g fat, 13 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

- For the marinade:
- 1 clove of garlic, finely chopped
 - 1 tbsp light soy sauce
 - 1 tbsp cornflour
 - 2 tbsp rice wine (alternatively, dry sherry)
 - Salt

- 400 g chicken drumsticks, boneless and cut into chunks of approx. 1.5x1.5 cm
- 100 ml chicken stock
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp rice wine
- 1 tbsp cornflour
- 2 tbsp peanut oil
- 2 tbsp ginger, grated
- 200 g mange-touts, cleaned, cut lengthwise and cooked al dente
- 1 carrot, cut into thin strips
- 2 stalks of blanched celery, cut into strips
- 2 tbsp unsalted cashew nuts
- 1 spring onion, finely chopped

1 Mix the garlic, soy sauce, cornflour, rice wine and half a teaspoon of salt thoroughly and coat the chicken in it. Leave it to marinate for around 30 minutes.

2 In a bowl, mix the stock, soy sauce, rice wine and cornflour.

3 Heat a wok over high heat and add the peanut oil to it. Add the ginger and fry for a couple of minutes.

4 Coat the chicken in the ginger, fry it on all sides until it is a lovely golden colour, and let it cook for another 2 minutes.

5 Mix the mange-touts, carrot, celery and cashew nuts with the chicken, and stir-fry again for a short time.

6 Pour the stock mix over everything and let it cook through for another minute.

7 Serve in a bowl or on a plate and garnish with spring onion.

Marinated crispy chicken

■■■

Preparation time: approx. 20 minutes
Per serving: approx. 455 kcal, 25 g protein
35 g fat, 13 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

- For the marinade:
- 4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
 - 2 tbsp soy sauce
 - 1 tbsp five-spice powder
 - Half tsp sesame oil

- 400 g chicken thighs, boneless and cut into chunks
- 50 g cornflour
- 8 tbsp peanut oil
- 1 chilli pepper, deseeded and finely chopped
- 1 spring onion, finely chopped

1 Mix the ingredients for the marinade and add in the chicken. Preferably leave it to marinate overnight.

2 Remove the chicken from the marinade, pat it dry and roll it in the cornflour.

3 Heat a wok over a high flame. Add the oil and fry the chicken for around 5 minutes, until all the sides are a lovely golden colour.

4 Sprinkle the chicken with the chilli pepper and spring onion.

Green beans

■■■

Preparation time: approx. 20 minutes
Per serving: approx. 181 kcal, 4 g protein
15 g fat, 5 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

- 1 tbsp peanut oil
- 1 clove of garlic, finely chopped
- 300 g green beans, cut lengthwise and cooked
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- Dash of sesame oil
- 2 tbsp peanuts
- Half a chilli pepper, deseeded and finely chopped

1 Heat the wok over a high flame and add the oil to it. Add the garlic and stir-fry it for around 1 minute.

2 Add the green beans, soy sauce, sesame oil, peanuts and chilli pepper. Mix them around and fry for around 30 seconds.

Healthy eating with a sizzling wok

Super fresh ingredients, a glowing hot wok and well-organised preparation. If you follow these three golden rules, it will make the difference between you cooking a simple wok dish and a wok dish that sets your pan sizzling. If the wok is at exactly the right temperature, the ingredients will constantly sizzle. Keep stirring your pan and make sure the sizzling doesn't stop.

Fresh ingredients

The three golden rules for wok cooking say it all: wok cooking is healthy. Chinese cuisine calls for fresh, unprocessed and preferably seasonal produce. They will be fresher, tastier and crunchier than prepacked vegetables in plastic or a can.

Freshness is the key to stir-fried vegetables. Unlike Western countries, meat is not the most important component in the meal, but vegetables and spices. Lots of vegetables, a little protein and a minimum amount of fat form the basis of a typical Chinese meal.

Glowing hot

A wok can reach temperatures from 160°C to more than 230°C. Such high temperatures cook meat as soon as it hits the pan. This retains all the good juices and absorbs what little fat there is.

This also applies to fish and vegetables. If your wok has been seasoned (see p. 49), you just need a tiny bit of oil. Pour in the oil with a flowing, swirling motion along the edge of your wok. While the oil is sliding down along the edges, quickly add your pre-cut ingredients.

Well organised preparation

No cook is as well organised as a Chinese cook - because they can't be anything but organised. Given that the Chinese have been using a wok to cook for two thousand years, it may well be the case that "order" is now part of their DNA.

If you are going to cook with a wok, it is very important to set up properly. The cooking itself is done in a flash, but the preparation takes time.

Prepare the spice mixes first and put them in dishes ready to go. Chop all the vegetables, meat and fish into small pieces of a similar size and also put them in dishes. Place them in the order they are to be used. Lay out all your tools, clean your workspace, and fire up!

No healthier method than steaming

We mainly use the wok for stir-frying, but it can also be used for deep-frying and steaming your meals.

If you deep-fry with the wok, only a small amount of oil will be absorbed. But the healthiest cooking method is steaming. You don't use any fat and virtually all the vitamins, minerals and flavours will be retained. If you want to use the wok for steaming, fill the bottom with four centimetres of water or stock and place a bamboo or metal steam basket on top.

You can steam almost all vegetables, rice, fish and white meat. Only red meat cannot be steamed.



Stir-fry method

The first step is to add the flavouring to the pan: for instance, ginger, chilli pepper, or garlic. These give the oil some flavour. Stir-fry the meat in the oil and flavouring. Don't cook everything at the same time, because this will cool the wok down. Once one portion of meat is cooked through, move it to the edge of the wok that is less hot and fry the next portion. This is followed by the vegetables.

Carrots and broccoli are some of the vegetables that take longer to cook through and soften. Add these into the wok first, followed by leafy greens, and stir consistently to ensure nothing gets burnt. Lastly, create a gap in the centre of the wok and pour in the sauce.

Create your own

Cooking from packets is easy and can be tasty, but it is never as tasty and healthy as preparing everything yourself. If you know which combinations of flavours work well together, you can mix them up to create your own sauce. If you want to give your sauce a thicker consistency, just add some cornflour. Asian spices are excellent ingredients to work with - easy to use and delicious!

Complimentary flavours

Ketjap manis, Garlic & Ginger, Chilli pepper, Coriander, Soy sauce, Oyster sauce, Ginger & Sugar, Spring onion, Rice wine, Soy sauce, Garlic Sesame oil, Spring onion.



Asian food stores

Asian food stores offer an exciting journey of discovery, full of new and exotic ingredients. We bring you a glossary of some ingredients below. But this is only the beginning of the adventure...

Peanut oil

Peanut oil contains considerably less fat than other oils, doesn't have a strong aroma, and has a slightly more refined taste than sunflower oil. This means you can use it to prepare mild dressings and mayonnaise.

There is also the fact that peanut oil, because of its higher boiling point, is even more suitable for wok cooking and deep-frying than other types of oil.



Bok choy, also known as pak soi, is the perfect wok vegetable.

Ginger

This golden branched root, when used fresh, has a very distinctive, sharp taste: fresh, fragrant and citrus-like. Fresh ginger is not only used in cooking hot dishes and sauces, but it is also delicious in a cup of tea. This root is also renowned for its soothing effect in the case of a sore throat, stomach ache and nausea.

Spring onion

In Asia you will often see this lovely scallion cut into little rings on the table so you can spread them over your noodle soup or curry dish. Spring onions add a mild, fresh flavour to any meal. If you want to steam the rings, do it quickly as spring onions lose their flavour rapidly. Spring onions are also really good in salads or as topping for meat, egg and fish dishes.

Black beans

Unlike the South American black beans, which are mainly used in fillings, Chinese (fermented) black beans give dishes a strong, spicy and salty taste. You can find fermented black beans in most Asian specialty food stores, either canned or dried. Rinse them thoroughly with cold water before using, and then chop into rough pieces.

Sesame oil

A few drops of this fragrant oil will turn a plain pan of noodles into a taste explosion. This Asian oil is pressed from peeled and roasted sesame seeds, and has an intense, nutty flavour. Most Asian food stores sell both pure



Surprisingly tasty, fermented black beans.

sesame oil and aromatic sesame oil. If you're using sesame oil with a hot dish, add it at the very end, as it burns quickly. There is also cold-pressed, western sesame oil, which is perfect for frying.

Bok choy

This variety of cabbage has flexible, crunchy white stems and dark-green leaves, providing a pleasant neutral flavour. It is the most widely eaten vegetable in China. The large variety of bok choy is mostly steamed, boiled or stir-fried for a short time. Add the stems to the pan first and then the leaves at the last minute.

The small variety, known as baby bok choy, can be cooked in the wok whole, steamed or boiled. It is also delicious in soups and salads.

Soy sauce

Asians use soy sauce like we use salt in the West. Chinese soy sauce is rather salty and is added, just like salt and pepper, at the last minute, for flavour. A good soy sauce can be recognised by its label: 'Superior soy sauce' and 'Naturally brewed'. Japanese soy sauce is generally less salty than the Chinese version. There is also a dark soy sauce, with thicker, almost syrupy texture, which is less salty than the Chinese and Japanese versions. In fact, it tastes almost sweet. But it's still not as sweet as ketjap manis sauce. This darker soy sauce is mainly used to add some colour to hot dishes, such as braised beef and stews.

Cutting techniques

Good preparation is half the work. This is definitely true if you are going to stir-fry. Make sure that everything you need is ready and set out in the correct order. Most wok dishes are cooked in a couple of minutes only. Therefore, a good cutting technique is essential.



Capsicum

- 1 Cut the tops off the capsicum. Cut the capsicum in half lengthwise.
- 2 Remove the seeds and cut the halved capsicum into strips.
- 3 Chop the strips into chunks.



Onion

- 1 Cut the onion in half through the root and remove the outer skin. Cut into the onion a couple of times vertically as far as the root, but don't cut it off.
- 2 Cut into the onion a couple of times horizontally as far as the root.
- 3 Turn the onion 90 degrees and chop it finely.



Prawns

- 1 Remove the head from the prawns using a gentle twisting motion.
- 2 Peel the shell by pulling at the tail end.
- 3 Score the top of the prawn lengthways to remove the dark vein.



Chilli pepper

- 1 Cut the chilli lengthways.
- 2 Remove the seeds. Note: the seeds hold all the spice.
- 3 Chop the flesh finely. Wash your hands thoroughly afterwards and avoid touching your eyes.



Ginger

- 1 You can finely grate ginger, but it is also fine to cut it. Cut a piece of peeled ginger into thin slices.
- 2 Then cut the slices into thin strips.
- 3 Finally, chop the strips as finely as possible.



Beef

- 1 If you're going to cook beef in the wok, it is important to cut the meat diagonally along the grain to prevent it getting tough.
- 2 You can clearly see in the photo that the grain runs in the same direction as the knife.
- 3 In this case, the meat is cut correctly, diagonally along the grain.

Accessories

It's not quite complete with just a wok. You also need to have accessories and gadgets. For instance, a board for chopping, or bowls to put the ingredients that you have already chopped up in. We looked for the coolest and most appealing gadgets, from a spatula to an oriental knife.



1. Chopping boards from Sage are made from an environmentally-friendly combination of wood pulp and resin. This has resulted in a smooth, non-porous chopping board which is resistant to deep cuts. But it doesn't cause any damage to your knives either. This chopping board is also heat-resistant and dishwasher-safe, and is resistant to the formation of any bacteria. In a nutshell, this is a chopping board which will do you for life.

Amazon.com, from \$25.
www.sagesurface.com

2. Hand stitching with natural bamboo webbing and a thick solid bamboo plank base, this Dline Bamboo Steamer is ideal for vegetables, seafood, meats, and fruits. Perfect for cooking, reheating, and serving your favourite dim sum. Briscoes, \$47.99.

3. A glowing hot wok and a plastic spatula don't often make a good combination. This spatula's blade is made of heat-resistant plastic, making it ideal for wok cooking. The handle is made of Cromargan, a stainless steel material. It is durable, retains its shape, is waterproof and dishwasher-safe. Online at wmf.com, \$10.

www.wmf.com

4. This stylish and innovative garlic rocker allows you to crush garlic cloves quickly and easily, then conveniently spoon them into the receptacle - leaving your hands smell-free! Stevens, \$39.99.

www.josephjoseph.com



5. You can use kitchen tongs to arrange your plates beautifully and remove fish bones. These Alessi Doménica tongs, designed by Elisa Giovannini, are made from stainless steel and black plastic, which means you can use them to give your food a good stir in your wok, just like you would do with chopsticks. They are not dishwasher-safe, which means that you need to wash them by hand, along with your good knives and your wok! Online at store.alessi.com, \$30.

www.store.alessi.com

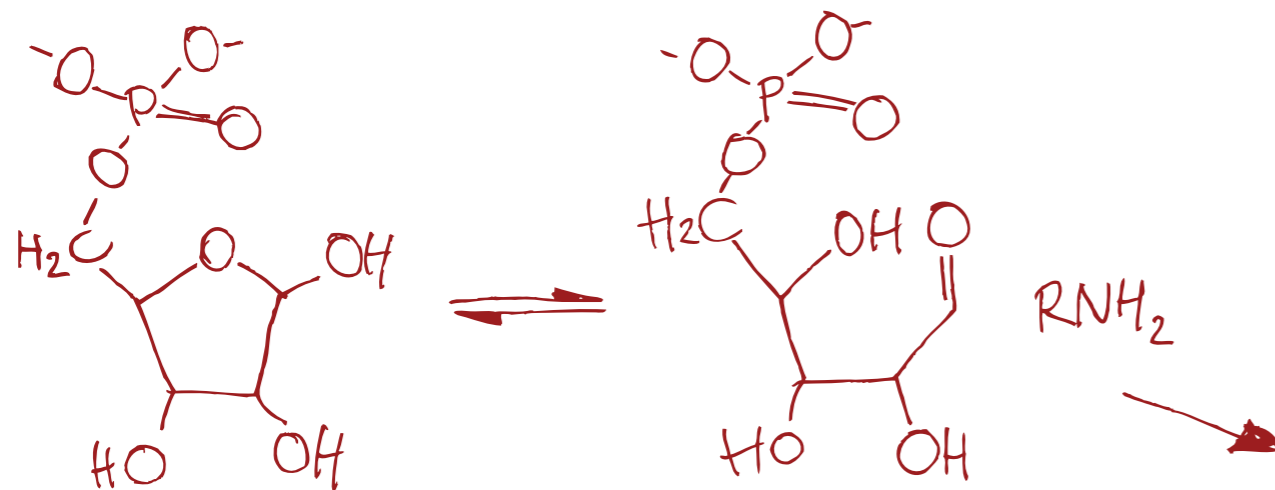
6. Woks cook food quickly, which means that careful preparation is extremely important. If you chop up everything beforehand, you need to have bowls available to hold your ingredients. In the larger Asian food stores, apart from finding wonderful food products, you will also

often come across pans, steam baskets, chopsticks and lovely Chinese ceramic bowls. Available in every Asian food store, in every possible size.

7. A good knife should feel like an extension of your arm. This Japanese blade has been forged from 32 layers of Damascus steel and is razor-sharp. The balanced weight and ergonomic design make this knife comfortable to hold. This smaller Santoku knife is intended for chopping vegetables, meat and fish. Online at kitchenwaresuperstore.co.nz, \$130.32.

www.kitchenwaresuperstore.co.nz

A bit of Maillard



Every cook is secretly a bit of an alchemist. The most spectacular reactions take place right under your nose. The “tastiest” one is perhaps the Maillard reaction. This is the secret behind a brown crust and delicious aroma.

What do stock, a bread crust and fried beef have in common? Rich, deep aromas and a full, all-round flavour. It appears that around 120 aromatic molecules can be found on a perfectly cooked beef steak. And it's precisely the Maillard reaction that makes the difference.

This is something that isn't difficult or complicated to replicate over and over. In fact, every amateur cook uses

the principle behind the Maillard reaction to some degree every day, without knowing it.

This is precisely the reason why we let butter or oil get really hot in the pan, why, when making wok dishes, we stir-fry the meat first at a high temperature and then add the liquid, or why we like to marinate meat in sour mixtures or honey before baking it in the oven or putting it on the barbecue.

Extra cachet

In the Maillard reaction (named after the French doctor/chemist Louis Camille Maillard) everything revolves

The Maillard reaction releases the same aromatic substances, as well as aromas such as flowers, onions and chocolate. The Maillard reaction then produces a richer and more intense taste experience.

around proteins (amino acids) and sugars (carbohydrates), preferably in combination with a little heat. Once the amino acids and carbohydrates are heated to temperatures above 120°C, they start to move. They dance around, interact, collide and enter into a reaction with each other. They form various new compounds together. These new compounds then create the golden colour and additional aromas.

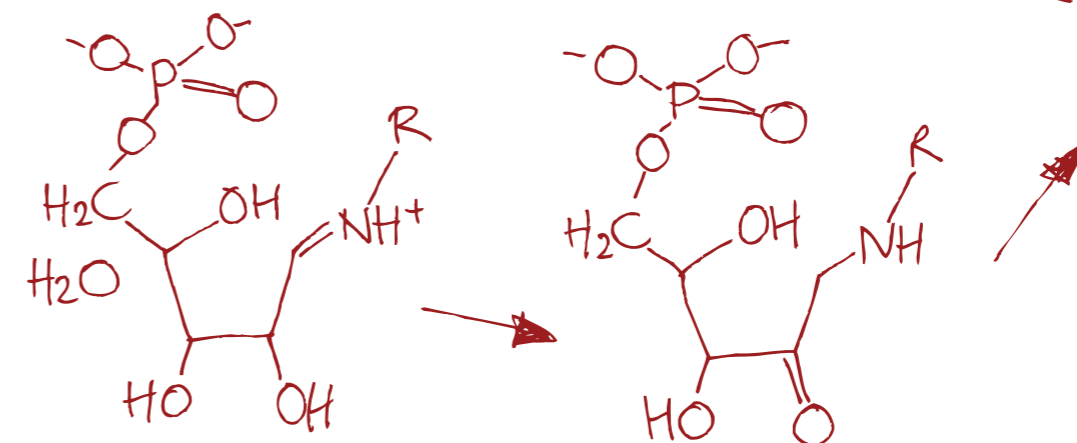
With a bit of luck, you'll be able to detect hints of flowers, chocolate, onions and/or meat, as well as earthy undertones. The Maillard reaction is what adds some extra cachet to a dish.

To use the Maillard reaction in your cooking, try to keep everything as “dry” as possible at the start of your preparation. This means that boiling, steaming, braising and stewing are not ideal, but roasting, baking, cooking au gratin and with a wok will produce the desired effect. Always use some butter or oil to allow you to reach a higher temperature quickly. Make sure that all the water evaporates from the butter or oil, pat the meat completely dry and cook it at a high temperature. Any condiments and spices which you add during preparation will provide additional taste and aroma.

Baking, roasting, wok cooking

The funny thing is that not all Maillard reactions are the same. Small differences in the composition of a product, volume of food and cooking temperature produce different aromas, tastes and colourings. This means that it is difficult to control the Maillard reaction precisely.

You can also try to look for combinations of amino acids/proteins and carbohydrates/sugar/starches in ingredients



(sugar with milk or cream produces the typical butterscotch taste). Fish and meat always do well on this score. Vegetables, once again, do not. They have far too few proteins to nicely get the whole thing started. On the other hand, shellfish such as prawns, lobster and crab “react” at low temperatures. This produces delicious aromas with a hint of nuts and/or popcorn. Even scallops get a brown crust quickly. Bon appetit!

Wok hei

“Wok hei” (the “breath” of the wok) means that the Maillard reaction has actually been achieved. If a dish has “wok hei”, the ingredients are perfectly browned as a result of being heated quickly at a high temperature, creating a rich and full range of aromas and tastes.

The secret of a rich taste experience.

Maillard and caramelisation

Caramelisation and the Maillard reaction are often mixed up. Caramelisation is also a browning reaction, but there are no amino acids and proteins involved. Heating results in the sugar decomposing into various different molecules. This releases aromatic substances which are reminiscent of nuts, sherry and butter.



Fire!

Chinese heat in your own kitchen

Large flames lick the pans. Within a couple of seconds a chef is using his glowing hot wok. In the blink of an eye, your meal will be ready for you. Then the chef cleans his wok before the next order.

The gas burners on a Western cooker supply a very modest flame compared to Chinese wok burners. Your wok will never be hot enough with these. And if your wok isn't hot enough, the liquid won't evaporate, in which case you aren't stir-frying, but boiling.

How hot is a flame?

The temperature in a flame can be several hundred degrees. A Western gas cooker doesn't reach this temperature. The strongest burner won't reach more than around 200°C. The smallest burner will reach, at full capacity, just 160°C. Incidentally, the hottest part of the flame is just above the blue core.

Flames in the pan!

If you let a pan boil over on the cooker, the water will run over the side.

If the water reaches the flames, you will see them turn yellow. This happens because there is temporarily less oxygen during combustion. Flames inside your pan may also appear if your pan gets so hot that the oil or fat evaporates and catches fire.

To put out flames inside your pan, switch the gas off and throw a fire blanket over it or put a suitable lid on the pan, wearing an oven mitt. Never attempt to extinguish the flames with water. This will cause a burst of flames. And never walk around holding the pan. There is great chance of you sustaining burns doing so.

How many cubic metres of gas do we use?

With 1m³ of gas you can have three showers, one bath and boil a kettle six times. If you cook with a wok or steam instead of boiling, you can save 5m³ to 6m³ of gas per year.

Not just for oriental cuisine...

Stir-frying is a cooking method widely used in oriental cuisine. But why not in the West? We put this notion to the test and tried to prepare some typical Western dishes using the wok. This quick cooking method is surprisingly well suited to Mediterranean cuisine.



Lentils with garlic sausage



Penne with cheese and ham

You can even cook pasta in the wok before you make the sauce!



Marinated duck breast fillet with balsamic vinegar

EAST MEETS WEST



Cod fillet with lime sauce



You can find out more about the Fusion Volcano wok burner at:

asko.co.nz

Lentils with garlic sausage

■■■

Preparation time: approx. 40 minutes
Per serving: approx. 647 kcal, 41 g protein
24 g fat, 53 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

2 tbsp peanut oil
3 spring onions, finely chopped
3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
3 large carrots, cut into thin slices
100 ml white wine
400 g lentils
4 Turkish garlic sausages, cut into pieces
small handful of oregano and basil, roughly chopped
salt and pepper

1 Heat the wok over high heat and add oil. Add the onion, garlic and carrot and fry for a short time.

2 Pour the wine in and let it boil off for around 6 minutes.

3 Cook the lentils until al dente.

4 Stir the lentils, garlic sausage and spices through the mixture in the wok and let it all heat through for another 2 minutes or so.

5 Add salt and pepper for flavour.

Penne with cheese and ham

■■■

Preparation time: approx. 30 minutes
Per serving: approx. 788 kcal, 35 g protein
41 g fat, 64 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

400 g penne
3 tbsp peanut oil
2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
200 g cubes of smoked bacon
1 mozzarella, cut into blocks
100 g grated Parmesan
small handful of basil, roughly chopped

1 Bring a large quantity of water to boil in the wok. Cook the penne until al dente. Drain the pasta well.

2 Dry the wok and heat it over a high flame. Add peanut oil to the wok and stir-fry the garlic and bacon cubes for about 1 minute.

3 Add the penne to the wok. Mix the mozzarella and Parmesan through it, heat well for a short time and serve. Garnish with basil.

Marinated duck breast fillet with balsamic vinegar

■■■

Preparation time: approx. 25 minutes
Per serving: approx. 512 kcal, 22 g protein
40 g fat, 14 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

2 duck breast fillets, cut into strips
2 tbsp dark soy sauce
2 tbsp light soy sauce
1 tbsp rice wine (alternatively, dry sherry)
2 tbsp brown sugar
1 tbsp cornflour
1 tbsp sesame oil
2 tbsp peanut oil
4 small spring onions, cut in half lengthwise and cut into 4 cm sections
1 tbsp ginger, finely chopped
1 chilli pepper, deseeded and finely chopped
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

1 Mix the dark soy sauce, light soy sauce, rice wine, brown sugar, cornflour and sesame oil together and dip the strips of duck in it. Leave it to marinate for around 30 minutes, remove the duck and keep the marinade.

2 Heat a wok over high heat and add the peanut oil. Add the spring onions, ginger and chilli pepper and stir-fry them all for 1 minute.

3 Stir in the duck and fry for 1 minute. Stir in the marinade juice and balsamic vinegar and heat.

Cod fillet with lime sauce

■■■

Preparation time: approx. 20 minutes
Per serving: approx. 282 kcal, 23 g protein
8 g fat, 28 g carbohydrates

Ingredients for 4 persons

500 g cod fillet cut into 8 pieces
Salt and pepper
2 tbsp cornflour
2 tbsp oil

For the sauce:

juice of 2 limes
300 ml vegetable stock
2 tbsp honey
2 tbsp light caster sugar
2 tbsp cornflour, dissolved in a little water

1 Sprinkle the pieces of cod with pepper and salt and roll them in the cornflour.

2 Heat the oil in a wok and fry the fish on both sides until they are a lovely golden colour. Let the fish cook for around 5 minutes on low heat.

3 Add the lime juice, stock, honey and sugar and bring to the boil. Stir in the cornflour paste and continue cooking for a short time.

4 Serve the fish with the sauce. Serve some rice or mange-touts from the wok with it.

The best wok



Peking wok

Voor een paar tientjes
koop je al een goede wok

Kantonese wok



A saucepan, a frying pan, a wok, a small gravy pan, and a huge cooking pot. The average Kiwi household has at least five different types of pans in the kitchen. In China they often have just one - because they don't need more!

You can use a wok to stir-fry, deep-fry, stew, steam, smoke, poach and boil. For more than two thousand years, in Chinese kitchens, the wok has been the most important cooking utensil. You won't find a frying pan here. Chinese-American cookbook writer Grace Young interviewed dozens of home cooks and professional chefs in her quest to find the wok's origins. Ironsmiths showed her how they make a wok. Traditional cooks let her see how they achieve "wok hei", the ultimate wok aroma.

One of the cooks let Young see why he doesn't use a frying pan. "I have more control using a wok," he says as he tosses the ingredients around the wok with a spatula.

Young knows what qualities make a good wok. She has noticed that in American homewares stores, you will pay way over 100 dollars for a "good" wok. On the other hand, you don't need to pay any more than 20 or 30 dollars for the best wok. But where should you buy a wok then, and what do you need to look out for? And how do you avoid having to buy a new one again in just a couple of weeks?

Which wok?

The best wok is a round wok made of carbon steel or the thinnest possible plate steel.

This steel conducts the heat very well, allowing the pan to reach a high temperature at lightning speed. And this is what it's all about in wok cooking. But some cooks also prefer to use a cast-iron wok, such as the "wadjan".

This is mainly used in Indonesian cuisine. A wadjan is flatter, much heavier and heats up less quickly.

This makes this pan mainly ideal for simmering and ste-

wing. The best-known types of wok are the Cantonese wok, with two metal handles, and the Peking wok, with a wooden handle.

Buying a wok

If you go into a large Asian food store, they often sell wok pans, spatulas, wok rings and other essentials. If these things aren't available in your local store, ask the owner where there is a suitable store selling these items. Look for a wok that's right for you. Preferably a wok without a non-stick layer. This is because it will burn off in next to no time with the great heat.

A new wok. What now?

Now begins the process of washing and seasoning the wok. This can take a little bit of time. When you buy a new wok, it always has a layer, whether visible or not, which you need to rub off. You do this with hot water, washing-up liquid and a hard scourer.

Dry the wok afterwards with kitchen towel. If it has a grey colour, then you're on the right track. Keep rubbing the pan until nothing more comes off it.

Step two of the process involves seasoning your wok. This means that you burn a natural non-stick layer into the pan. This will prevent your food sticking to the bottom and avoid rust.

There are different processes which can be used to season the wok. The basic method is suitable for any wok made of carbon steel or sheet steel. But if the natural non-stick layer happens to disappear, you can always repeat the process.

Basic method for seasoning

1. Open a window and turn the flame up high under the wok. It will start smoking within 5 seconds. Move the wok around over the flame for a minute to spread the heat consistently. A blue or yellow ring will now form. Take the wok off the flame and let it cool down for 30 seconds.

2. Soak a generous piece of kitchen tea towel in oil and thoroughly grease the inside of the wok. Now turn down the flame to low. Swish the oil around for 30 seconds without stopping, then remove the wok from the flame.

3. Wipe the wok clean with a piece of kitchen towel. The paper may now still be a bit grey. Now repeat step 2.

4. Once the wok has cooled down, wash it with hot water and a soft sponge. Don't use any washing-up liquid. Heat it again for 1-2 minutes under a low flame. When the pan has cooled down, grease it again slightly with oil and a piece of kitchen towel.

Using your wok

After completing the process of washing and seasoning the wok, it is now ready for you to use. From this point on, always wash it with hot water and a soft sponge. Don't use any washing-up liquid and never put it in the dishwasher.

Asian food stores

Asian food stores offer an exciting journey of discovery, full of new and exotic ingredients. Below are our sauce and vegetables suggestions to get you started on your Asian cooking adventure...

Bamboo shoots

Bamboo shoots can be compared to asparagus, not only because of the way in which they are picked, but also in terms of taste. In many places, it is not possible to buy fresh bamboo shoots. But if you do manage to get some, make sure you remove the hard sheath leaves, bottoms and tops and cut them into slices or strips. If you buy them in a tin, always rinse them thoroughly. Bamboo soup is very popular in Asia, but you also find bamboo shoots in curries, wok dishes and salads.

Coconut milk

Coconut milk is widely used for making curries, as well as for desserts such as coconut ice cream and coconut cake. If your curry seems to be on the spicy side, you can tone it down by adding some coconut milk. What is coconut milk exactly? If you mix the white flesh from a coconut with hot water and then squeeze it through cheesecloth, you will have coconut cream left.

If you repeat this process again using the coconut cream, then you'll get coconut milk.

Rice wine

Sushi or small cups of sake are probably what you first associate with rice wine. But this alcoholic beverage ($\pm 14\%$), made from fermented rice, is also an essential ingredient in Chinese cuisine. It is often used as a cooking wine and to add flavour to marinades. Most Chinese rice wines come from Shaoxing. Mirin is a good Japanese cooking wine, but is slightly sweeter. Dry sherry is also a good substitute for rice wine.

Oyster sauce

A Cantonese cook once accidentally forgot about his oyster stock. It simmered and bubbled, and boiled into a thick, dark syrup. But he still tasted a drop of it. According to tradition, this is how oyster sauce was first discovered, around 1800.

Another few ingredients were added to increase its shelf-life and give it colour and texture. Now its flavour is creamy, aromatic, slightly sweet, with a meaty rather than a fishy taste. You add this sauce at the last moment to stir-fry dishes containing vegetables, meat or fish.

Five-spice powder

This is a Chinese mixture of spices combining five basic flavours (sweet, salty, bitter, sour and sharp). The composition may vary, but the most common combination used is: star anise, fennel seeds, cloves, Chinese cinnamon and Szechuan pepper. Chinese cinnamon is a stronger version of ordinary cinnamon.

Five-spice powder is mainly used for rubbing into pork and duck, after which they are fried or roasted. But use only a small amount as its taste can become too intense very quickly.

Thai basil

Just as you would add fresh Italian basil to pasta dishes and pizza, you add Thai basil (cut into strips) at the last moment to curries, soups and wok dishes. We are familiar with three types: Thai "sweet" basil, which tastes strongly like aniseed and slightly like mint. The leaves of Thai "holy" basil are slightly hairy and have a very light taste. There is also lemon basil, which you will often taste with fish and salads.

Szechuan pepper

Spicy cooking is typical of China's Szechuan province. This spice is named after this region. Szechuan pepper is not a real pepper, but comes from a family of citrus fruit, giving it a slight lemon flavour. But it isn't comparable either in terms of taste as it has a slight numbing effect on the tongue. You'll often come across this pepper in fish dishes, but also in chicken, rabbit, veal, as well as sweet dishes.



Thai basil resembles mint and aniseed slightly.



There's really nothing to compare with Szechuan pepper.

A Volcano for all types of Kitchens



HG1825AD \$3339
80 cm ceramic glass gas cooktop

- 1 Fusion Volcano wok burner, with wok/roast + simmer function
- 3 A+ ASKO Burners
- Easy Clean ceramic glass
- Ergonomic metal knobs



HG1935AD \$3669
90 cm Ceramic glass gas cooktop

- 90 cm Ceramic Glass cooktop
- 1 Fusion Volcano wok burner, with wok/roast + simmer function
- 4 A+ ASKO Burners
- Easy Clean ceramic glass
- 5 individual timers
- 6 hour off timer
- Ergonomic metal knobs



HG1145AD \$4449
111 cm Ceramic glass gas cooktop

- Dual Volcano Wok Burners- with wok/roast + simmer function
- 2 A+ ASKO Burner technology
- Easy Clean ceramic glass
- 4 individual timers
- 6 hour off timer
- Ergonomic metal knobs



HG1666AD \$1669
60 cm Anthracite gas cooktop

- A+ ASKO burners
- Super Flex wok burner
- Scratch-resistant surface
- Ergonomic metal knobs



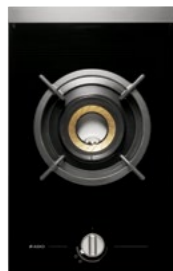
HG1666SD \$1669
60 cm Stainless steel cooktop

- A+ ASKO burners
- Super Flex wok burner
- Scratch-resistant surface
- Ergonomic metal knobs



HIG1995AD \$5669
90 cm Ceramic glass
Duo Fusion gas + Induction

- 1 Fusion Volcano wok burner, with wok/roast + simmer function
- 5 cooking zones
- Easy Clean ceramic glass
- The convenience of two types of cooktops in one package
- Dual Bridge Zones
- 6 Automatic cooking programs - right temperature for correct cooking
- Auto pan detection
- High Powered zones



HG1365GD \$2229
33 cm Domino Fusion Volcano wok burner - Indent order

- 1 Fusion Volcano wok burner, with wok/roast + simmer function
- Easy Clean ceramic glass
- Ergonomic metal knob
- No joining kit is required



HG1776AD \$2449
75 cm Anthracite gas cooktop

- A+ ASKO burners
- Super Flex wok burner
- Scratch-resistant surface
- Ergonomic metal knobs
- Seamlessly welded edges



HG1776SD \$2449
75 cm Stainless steel cooktop

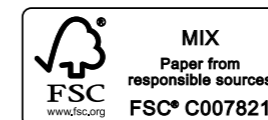
- A+ ASKO burners
- Super Flex wok burner
- Scratch-resistant surface
- Ergonomic metal knobs
- Seamlessly welded edges

ASKO
Inspired by Scandinavia

Phone ASKO on 0800 566 372
or visit www.asko.co.nz for more information

National office • 635 Great South Road • Penrose, Auckland 1061

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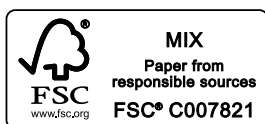


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