

# THE ROW 34 COOKBOOK

Stories and  
Recipes from  
a Neighborhood  
Oyster Bar



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RIZZOLI  
NEW YORK



# Fried Calamari with Spicy Aioli

There's a reason fried calamari is such a popular dish—it can be delicious when done right. The flavor of squid meat is pretty neutral, meaning it marries easily with many other flavors. And when handled correctly the texture is light and just barely chewy. Try to find squid that's been caught and cleaned domestically. If you live in an area where calamari are fished, buy it in season and clean it yourself. It's a small amount of work for big reward. For more tips on frying at home, see *Frying Seafood at Home* (page 15).

Cut the calamari tubes into ¼-inch rounds. In a medium bowl, combine the calamari rounds and tentacles, pepper, and red onion with the buttermilk and sriracha. Stir well to coat. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Line a plate with paper towels. Place the oil in a straight-sided skillet or Dutch oven and heat it to 350°F. Drain the calamari and vegetables, discarding the buttermilk. Place the seasoned flour in a clean bowl and add the calamari and vegetables, tossing well to coat each piece. Make sure the pieces aren't sticking together.

Place the floured calamari in a fry basket, shaking off any excess flour as you transfer them. Carefully lower the basket into the hot oil. Fry until every piece is light brown and crisp, about 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the basket and turn the calamari out onto the prepared plate to drain. (If you don't have a fry basket, shake off the excess flour from the calamari and carefully place the floured calamari directly into the oil. Once fried, use a slotted spoon or skimmer to transfer the calamari to the paper towel-lined plate.)

Season immediately with salt. To serve, spread the calamari out on a platter and garnish with the parsley and lemon wedges. Serve the aioli on the side.

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## SERVES 4 AS AN APPETIZER

**1 pound cleaned calamari, tubes and tentacles**

**1 Fresno or jalapeño pepper, seeded and sliced into thin rounds**

**¼ cup thinly sliced red onion**

**½ cup buttermilk**

**1 tablespoon sriracha hot sauce**

**4 cups canola oil for frying**

**3 cups Seasoned Flour (page 229)**

**Sea salt**

**2 tablespoons roughly chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves**

**4 lemon wedges (see page 43)**

**½ cup Spicy Aioli (page 225)**

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**MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP**

2 egg yolks

2 cloves garlic

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed  
lemon juice

1 tablespoon champagne vinegar

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

½ cup canola oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground  
black pepper

## Aïoli

This is a basic sauce, but an important one that can play a versatile role in so many recipes. We serve aïoli with a lot of fried seafood, but it is also a starting point for many variations. It can easily be turned into a great tartar sauce or enhanced with herbs and seasonings. It can be sweet, spicy, earthy, or umami-flavored. At the restaurants, we always have plenty of good aïoli on hand.

In a food processor fitted with the metal blade, puree the yolks, garlic, lemon juice, vinegar, and mustard until combined. Scrape the sides down with a rubber spatula and pulse a few more times to make sure the ingredients are well blended. With the food processor running, slowly add the oils in a thin stream through the tube and let them emulsify with the yolks. If the mixture becomes too thick, add a few drops of cold water—you shouldn't need more than 1 tablespoon—and continue adding the oil. The finished aïoli should easily coat a spoon. Season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

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### AÏOLI VARIATIONS

**Mayonnaise:** Omit the garlic.

**Horseradish Mayonnaise or Aïoli:** Add 2 tablespoons prepared horseradish, 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce, and 1 tablespoon Tabasco sauce to the aïoli or mayonnaise recipe.

**Tartar Sauce:** Fold in 3 tablespoons minced dill pickles, 3 tablespoons minced red onion, 2 tablespoons rinsed, drained, and chopped capers, and 1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves. You can make this with either aïoli or mayonnaise.

**Tomato Aïoli:** Omit the vinegar. Wash, core, and chop 2 vine-ripened red tomatoes for about 1½ cups. Place the tomatoes in a medium nonstick skillet and simmer over medium heat, stirring frequently, until cooked down to about ½ cup. Allow the tomatoes to cool. Add to the food processor with the yolks, garlic, lemon juice, and mustard. Follow the recipe from there.

**Malt Vinegar Aïoli:** Replace the lemon juice and champagne vinegar with 2 tablespoons good-quality malt vinegar.

**Spicy Aioli:** Omit the lemon juice and champagne vinegar. Add 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice and 2 tablespoons sriracha hot sauce.

**Black Garlic Aioli:** Black garlic is fermented garlic; it can be bought in specialty stores as a head of garlic or as individual cloves. Replace the regular garlic in the aioli recipe with 6 cloves of black garlic.

**Togarashi Aioli:** Replace the lemon juice with 2 tablespoons orange juice and add 1 tablespoon togarashi spice.

**Grain Mustard Aioli:** Replace the Dijon mustard with 2 tablespoons whole grain mustard.

**Lemon Aioli:** Add the zest and juice of 1 whole lemon.

## Beurre Blanc

Once you master this classic sauce you can adapt it endlessly by adding fresh herbs, dry spices, or shrimp shells to the reduction.

Combine the shallot, bay leaf, thyme, peppercorns, vinegar, and wine in a medium saucepan and place over medium-low heat. Simmer gently until the liquid is reduced to about 2 tablespoons. Increase the heat to medium and whisk in 2 cubes of the butter. Continue whisking briskly until the butter is almost completely melted. Add the remaining butter pieces one at a time, whisking and allowing each to melt before adding more. Do not let the sauce come to a simmer or it will break. If the sauce starts to simmer, remove the pan from the heat and continue whisking in the butter off the heat.

After all of the butter has been added, strain the sauce through a fine-mesh strainer and season with salt and pepper. Add the dill, if using. The sauce must be kept warm at a consistent temperature until you are ready to use it; never let it boil or simmer as it will break the sauce.

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### MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- 1 small shallot, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig thyme
- 3 whole black peppercorns
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 3 sticks (24 tablespoons) unsalted butter, cold, cut into 1-inch cubes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped dill (optional)