

zen food a festive hit



Thaw, heat up and eat

ST PHOTO: WANG HUI FEN

Ready-to-Eat Crab (above)

What: House of Seafood has come up with microwave-friendly crabs in three flavours: chilli, black pepper and salted egg yolk.

The Sri Lankan crabs are cooked before being vacuum-packed and frozen.

To heat up, thaw the package for five to seven minutes before placing it in a microwave for five minutes or stir-frying the crabs.

The restaurant's owner, Mr Francis Ng, spent three years developing the product. The crabs are priced at \$60 a kg in a box – similar to dine-in prices.

Where: 01-01 The Punggol Settlement, 3 Punggol Point Road; and 03-33, 756 Upper Serangoon Road

Open: 11am to 11pm daily; closed on first day of Chinese New Year

Info: Call 6466-9000/9003-9000 or go to www.houseofseafood.sg

Fassler Gourmet

What: Golden Treasures Herbal Chicken (\$39.80) is a healthy spin on herbal chicken. It is stuffed with 16 wholesome ingredients, including multi-grain rice, quinoa, mushrooms and red dates, before being steamed for two to three hours in a herbal broth concocted with huai shan and Chinese angelica root. To eat, submerge the thawed pouch in boiling water for an hour.

Those who prefer a Western dish can opt for another new product – the salmon cordon bleu (\$16.80 for two pieces), which has the breaded fish layered with chicken ham and cheddar cheese. The salmon has to be deep-fried.

Golden Treasures is available till the end of March.

Where: 46 Woodlands Terrace

Open: 8.30am to 5.30pm, weekdays; 8.30am to 12.30pm, Saturdays; closed on Sundays; 7 to 11am, Chinese New Year Eve; closed on first three days of Chinese New Year

Info: Call 6257-7257 or go to www.fasslergourmet.com

products are on sale, has increased by 15 per cent from last year.

About 80 per cent of the distributor's products are frozen. Most of the frozen meat has been skewered and sliced, making them easy to use for barbecues and steamboats.

A Far Ocean spokesman says: "More customers are stocking up on frozen food items earlier so they can avoid dealing with rocketing prices of chilled food during their last-minute shopping in wet markets."

He expects prices of seafood to go up by another 20 per cent in the coming week due to increased demand.

For those who prefer chilled fresh products, but want to avoid jostling at the markets, home-grown fish supplier Kuhlbarra, which farms locally bred barramundi, started selling platters of sliced barramundi and air-flown Norwegian salmon two weeks ago. Prices start at \$25 for a 450g platter of sliced salmon.

Ms Eva Lim, 41, Kuhlbarra's global head of sales and marketing, says: "Cutting the fish into slices is more suited for Asian cooking, as they can be used in steamboats and stir-fried dishes."

The fish are harvested three or four times a week. They are sliced and vacuum-packed in cold chain storage conditions before being delivered to customers in insulated boxes filled with ice.

Ms Lim adds that Kuhlbarra has kept its barramundi prices the same as last year's as its farm has a consistent supply of fish.

Those who are too busy to cook from scratch can go for frozen pre-cooked packages.

Seafood and soup supplier Fassler Gourmet in Woodlands Terrace has introduced a pre-steamed herbal chicken (\$39.80) stuffed with multi-grain rice, mushrooms and red dates this year, to go with

ready-to-cook sets as we do the preparation work and customers can cook the dishes in their own time."

Corporate communications executive Wilson Ng, 28, who ordered a ready-to-cook pen cai package from Fassler Gourmet last week, loves the convenience.

"There is usually a lot of preparation work to cook other dishes for Chinese New Year gatherings, so having this ready-to-cook pen cai set helps save effort and time."

Accountant Serene Loh, who is in her 40s, ordered a Fortune Pot from Dish The Fish for a second straight year.

"I don't cook often, but the cooking instructions for the Fortune Pot are simple and it can be ready within an hour. It is also cheaper compared with cooked versions in restaurants," she says. "Buying frozen products in advance ensures that I can get the items I want for reunion

Dish The Fish's pen cai package (above). PHOTO: DISH THE FISH

