

# Delicious Chemistry

Text and Photo by Martin Enrique H. Orosa

**S**ometimes I feel like I'm in a science laboratory whenever I'm in my kitchen. It could very well be one since each time I add that pinch of salt, or when I fry until golden brown actual chemical and physical changes happen. I guess anybody who cooks is in one way or another, a food chemist. By literally mixing and experimenting with the different ingredients and existing brews found in one's pantry, the next "to-die-for" dish or newest flavor, has been created.

One Sunday morning, I channeled my inner food chemist to see what I could cook up. These were what I had available: instant noodles (I personally vouch for the taste of Lucky Me! Sweet and Spicy variant because it is the only one in the market that balances intense spice with the right amount of citrus-sweetness, making it both unique and truly mouthwatering), tomato ketchup (I prefer using Del Monte Extra Rich Tomato Ketchup because I think that among the other commercial brands out there, this brand's sourness is spot-on; it has the freshest, not too ripe tomato taste), tuna (Century Tuna is a brand that I really trust because of its time-tested good quality. It doesn't have an overly fishy smell and taste), garlic, tomatoes, parsley, spring onions, and calamansi. I must say it was a good list of ingredients to

create a tasty meal. The only thing that worried me was whether or not their individual tastes would be in harmony when mixed together. I certainly have never tried putting tomato ketchup on my instant pancit canton, nor have I tried adding any additional ingredients to the noodles I would normally eat as is. So after giving it some thought, I decided to give it a shot.

I first put a little ketchup and a small portion of the prepared noodles on a separate plate. I thought that just in case the first mixture didn't suit my taste, I could leave out the ketchup and just eat the remaining pancit canton. But to my surprise, adding the right amount of ketchup to the noodles made it seem like I was eating angel hair pasta with spicy tomato sauce. The instant pancit canton's spicy taste fused well with the ketchup's tartness, giving it a pleasingly new, rich, and fiery-citrus (think spicy tangerines) twist. From that point, I realized that if I topped it off with tuna (which I fried separately with garlic, tomatoes, spring onions, calamansi juice, and parsley), I neared the creation of a flavorful meal.

The resulting dish definitely pleased me as it had the right amount of sweet, sour, and tangy taste. With the addition of garlic fried tuna flakes, the dish had a pleasantly pungent and appetizing seafood aroma. Since there was more to chew on, the dish also

substantially felt heavier in the stomach. My family and friends, who I've served it to, have compared it to spaghetti pomodoro with tuna. Although for some of them, the dish was a bit too spicy and thus, may probably not be suited for really young children (I guess I have to work on that one next).

Through the creation of this simple dish, I honestly felt inspired to test other food combinations. I may not have invented the next big thing that day, but considering that the world's most appetizing treats came about through experimenting in the kitchen, who knows what I or even you could produce the next time we try concocting something new from the available ingredients we have at home. There are just so many exciting combinations that can be worked with, and it would truly be filling and fulfilling once the right food chemistry has been achieved. In the end, whether one's creation seems simple or complicated to do, a restaurant-ready recipe or strictly-for-personal-consumption recipe, I believe what matters most is that it turns out to be a delicious innovation one can enjoy and be proud of.

Allow me to share with you my recipe for "Spicy Canton with Fried Tomato-Garlic Tuna". For those who want to give the dish a try, it's quick and easy to make, and the ingredients are also very easy to find, if not something you may already have at home to begin with.