

# Omari's cooking up a storm

For 12-year-old vegan Omari McQueen, cooking is all about having fun with food and bringing in the Caribbean flavours of his heritage.

While you might struggle to get many 12-year-olds to eat their veg, Omari McQueen isn't your average tween.

Not only has Omari been vegan since he was eight years old, but his CV reads like that of a seasoned chef: running a pop-up restaurant, selling a range of dips, presenting a cooking show on CBBC – and now publishing his own cookbook.

These spicy cauliflower bites feature in the book and get their golden crunch from being baked, not fried.

Omari's sister was notorious for hating vegetables – until the young cook managed to tempt her with the crunchy bites.

"She eats them all because I use different seasonings, I experiment with flavours," explains Omari.

"I'm creative – the kitchen is my science lab. I'm always experimenting with different flavours and different meals, and making new recipes."

■ **Omari McQueen's Best Bites Cookbook** by Omari McQueen, photography by Xavier Buendia, is published by Scholastic UK, priced £12.99



## HOT CAULIFLOWER BITES

### INGREDIENTS (Serves four)

100g plain flour  
1tsp jerk spice mix  
Half tsp garlic powder  
175ml oat milk

1 whole cauliflower, leaves removed, broken into large bite-size florets  
Half to 1tsp hot sauce, to taste (it's pretty hot!)  
1tbsp maple syrup  
1tsp sunflower oil

### METHOD

1. To make the batter, mix together plain flour, jerk spice mix, garlic powder and oat milk in a large mixing bowl. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas 5. Line a large baking tray with baking paper.
3. Dip the cauliflower florets, one at a time, into the thick, spicy batter until coated all over. Let them drip a little over the bowl to remove any excess batter, then place them slightly spaced apart on the lined baking tray.
4. Bake for 20 minutes, turning once, until light golden all over and the batter sets.
4. Meanwhile, mix together the hot sauce, maple syrup and sunflower oil.
6. Carefully remove the baking tray from the oven. Brush the hot sauce mixture over the cauliflower bites until coated, then put the tray back in the oven for another 20 minutes until golden. Place in a serving bowl then tuck in, dunking them into a sweet chilli mayo, if you like.

