168 BETTER THAN TAKEOUT CHINESE RECIPES



by Mandy From Souped Up Recipes







168 Better Than Takeout Chinese Recipes





Demystify Traditional and Modern Chinese Cuisine with Simple Techniques, Secret Tips, Gorgeous Pictures, and Detailed Video Guides for Every Recipe.

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My ultimate goal is for you to experience the same satisfaction and pride when you replicate a dish you encounter in Chinatown or any Chinese restaurant. Whether it's a perfectly roasted duck, a fluffy steamed bun, or a savory stir-fry, I want you to confidently say, 'I can make it better at home,' and then impress your family and friends with your newfound skills.

Mandy Fu





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Introduction

Hello everyone,

Welcome to Souped Up Recipes! I'm Mandy Fu, a passionate home cook on a mission to share the joy of cooking and the rich flavors of authentic Chinese food with you. As we embark on this culinary journey together, I want to express my deepest gratitude to every one of my followers for your unwavering support and encouragement.

As I penned the recipes for this cookbook, I found myself confronted with a daunting task. China, with its vast territory, large population, diverse ethnic groups, and millennia-old history, boasts an astonishingly rich culinary heritage. The term "Chinese food" encompasses an infinite spectrum of flavors and traditions, making it a challenge to create a single volume that does justice to the breadth and depth of Chinese cuisine.

While I sifted through my recipes on YouTube, I knew I had to include all of those popular takeout dishes like Chicken Fried Rice, Mongolian Beef, Pepper Steak, Sesame Chicken, General Tso's Chicken, Sweet and Sour Pork, Chop Suey, Chicken Lo Mein, Egg Drop Soup, and more. These dishes have proven their status as beloved Chinese food to millions of audiences from all over the world. Their simplicity and affordability make them perfect for home cooking, offering a chance for everyone to cook better than takeout right in their own kitchens.

Delving into the culinary treasures of China and reminiscing about my traveling experience, I've curated various regional specialties that spotlight the diverse and vibrant flavors found across every province of this country. From the savory Beijing Doorknob Dumplings to spicy Sichuan Mapo Tofu, you will see the spirit of Chinese cuisine deeply rooted in this broad land and shining with enthusiasm through time. From the tantalizing Shaanxi Beef Burger Rou Jia Mo to the hearty Yunnan Herb Braised Beef Soup, you will appreciate the abundance and inclusiveness of the food culture in each ethnicity and region. From flavorful Hong Kong Beef Curry to Shanghai Crispy Breaded Pork Chop, you will experience the beauty of fusion foods, which were drawn upon their traditions and colonial history and then evolved into such delicious delicacies. Every dish is carefully selected to offer a taste of its unique locality and rich culture that makes Chinese cuisine so captivating.

Inspired by my cherished childhood memories and the timeless cooking wisdom imparted by my parents and relatives, I've endeavored to include staple family meals passed down through generations. You will also find my personal stories tied into each dish, infusing your kitchen with warmth and love. Recipes like Beef and Broccoli, Cantonese Steamed Fish, Sweet and Sour Ribs, and Chicken Mushroom Congee are emblematic of easy, homestyle cooking that has stood the test of time. With these dishes, you'll be able to savor the local meals like a native Chinese.

I also included some challenging recipes in this cookbook, such as Cantonese Roasted Duck, Char Siu Pork Buns, Taro Puff Dumplings, Aromatic Chicken Wonton Soup, Sticky Rice Dumplings Wrapped in Lotus Leaf, Yibin Flaming Noodles, and more. These dishes require patience and dedication to master. It took me years of experimentation to perfect them to meet the



Souped Up Recipes



Over 400+ Chinese Recipes



highest standards. I've honed these recipes to guide you step by step, explaining the reasons behind the methods, illustrating common pitfalls, and offering tips to help you achieve restaurant-quality results in your own kitchen. My ultimate goal is for you to experience the same satisfaction and pride when you replicate a dish you encounter in Chinatown or any Chinese restaurant. Whether it's a perfectly roasted duck, a fluffy steamed bun, or a savory stir-fry, I want you to confidently say, 'I can make it better at home,' and then impress your family and friends with your newfound skills.

Furthermore, living in Ecuador and the United States made me realize that a majority of my audience comes from all over the world and has difficulty accessing authentic Chinese ingredients. Therefore, I do my best to provide replacements in each recipe so that everybody can cook with the things that they can access and still achieve the desired taste.

In essence, this cookbook, with 168 carefully selected recipes, is a humble attempt to capture a glimpse of the wondrous Chinese cuisine. I chose this specifically because 168 is a very lucky number in Chinese culture, symbolizing that fortune and luck will be with you throughout your life. Each recipe is accompanied by a demo video and detailed step-by-step photos, making this book your ultimate guide to cooking authentic and delicious Chinese food. Within these pages, you will discover a wealth of dishes that not only satisfy your taste buds but also transport you to the bustling streets of China, the vibrant, fresh wet markets, and the cozy kitchens of family homes. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned chef, you'll find valuable insights and secret tips to enhance your cooking experience, as well as heartwarming stories to bring more love and happiness to every meal.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey.

Mandy Fu

My Story

I am Mandy Fu, born in 1992 amid China's one-child policy era. Despite this policy, as a rural family, my parents were permitted to have a second child due to my being a girl. Thus, my sister, Meiqin, joined our family in 1996. However, my parents always wanted a boy. In pursuit of this, they sent Meiqin to live with my grandmother so they could try for another child, because being pregnant with two kids could easily attract the attention of government officers.

When my mom was pregnant, the people who worked for the local family planning office took her for a forced abortion, but she escaped by climbing down the water pipe outside the window; it was on the second floor! To this day, I am still impressed by her bravery.

After that, she hid in my Dabo's (one's father's elder brother) house and gave birth to my little sister, Meihuan, secretly. Not long after, the government broke into my uncle's house and knocked down everything because we couldn't pay the fine. My uncle says there was not even one complete window or unbroken bowl left. I know it sounds scary, but it is a common experience for millions of Chinese children born after 1979, often in secret.

Although my little sister wasn't the gender my parents expected, they loved all three of us as much as they could. Forming a family with three children back then was a difficult and expensive task, carrying political shame. When I was a child, I once asked my mom why she would take such a risk to have three children. If I were an only child, perhaps our lives would have been more affluent and less burdened. She said, "You will know when you become a mom."

Although I am not a mom yet, looking back, I am extremely grateful that I was not born into a single-child family. I appreciate that my parents gave me two younger sisters. Growing up together, we experienced a life that, although modest, was imbued with simplicity, warmth, and abundant love. These are treasures that no amount of wealth could ever replace.

While I never had any professional culinary training, I felt an indescribable connection to cooking when I was very little. My first cooking attempt was at age four. Alone at home and hungry, I attempted to make rice by placing it in a ceramic bowl on the stove. Unfortunately, my novice skills led to a cracked bowl and burned grains, as I did not know you needed to add water! LOL!

Needless to say, it was not a successful trial. My dad came home and taught me my first cooking lesson. Surprisingly, I was a quick learner and requested to be responsible for cooking rice every day. There were no rice cookers back then, and my parents didn't cook with measuring cups, so for a long while, I had to bring the pot to my mom or dad (whoever was home) for guidance to ensure the perfect rice-to-water ratio before I could place it on the stove! Little did I know, this humble beginning would ignite a lifelong passion for cooking and set me on a path of culinary discovery.

After my little sister was born, my mom started selling vegetables in the wet market to make a living. I still feel a lump in my throat when I picture her pedaling the tricycle at the crack of dawn, carrying my little sister on her back, with me and lots of produce sitting in the back of the tricycle. I was responsible for watching the vegetables to make sure they didn't fall, and sometimes, I had to jump out of the cart when she encountered a hill. When we arrived at the market, we would fill our stomachs with a bowl of Braised Pork Belly Noodle Soup (see page 288), which is my favorite breakfast. Back then, my little brain believed braised pork belly must have been the most loved food in the world, and I couldn't stop wondering why my mom didn't like it. When I got older, I realized she did like it, but she chose not to order it so she could save a little bit of money.

After breakfast, we would start putting out the vegetables. The sun rose as we did, and the market started getting busy. As a four-year-old girl, there was not that much I could help with. Most of the time, I was just there observing my mom, watching how to present the vegetables, how to store them correctly so they didn't wilt, how to calculate money, how to call out to attract customers, and how to recognize fake money, which was the most important thing because if you got a big fake bill, you lost your whole day's profit.

What we ate for dinner usually depended on whatever was left over from the day. The meat was expensive, so most of the dishes were vegetables cooked with just enough meat for flavor. Sometimes, we would have a Pork Meatball Soup with Radish (see page 408), and sometimes, we would stir-fry celery with pork slices (see page 86). My least favorite vegetable was bitter melon. I prayed it would sell out every day! LOL!

These experiences may seem ordinary, but they instilled in me a profound appreciation for the essence of simplicity in life and shaped the person I am now. Even today, whenever I shop in the market, cook in the kitchen, and serve food on the table, I am grateful and enveloped by a sense of warmth and love.

My mom has a friend who owns a precooked food stall (熟食摊) in the market. She has dozens of dishes placed in trays for sale, such as Sweet and Sour Ribs (see page 96), Sichuan Cold Crispy Beef (see page 130), Sichuan Mapo Tofu (see page 186), Cantonese Braised Beef with Daikon Radish (see page 136), etc. My mom rarely bought food from her because the price was out of our budget, but her friend was nice. She let me taste a little bit of everything. She was my favorite ayi (means aunty, a polite way to address a woman of one's mother's age). I truly believe some of my early food experiences came from her.

When my younger sister first began walking, she became very attached to me. However, at that time, I was older and wanted to play with other children my own age at the market. I didn't want to be stuck with a little sibling who could barely walk. One day, I sprinted away quickly, attempting to leave my sister behind. Despite my efforts, she persisted in following me, walking in the direction I had gone. My mother was preoccupied and didn't notice. Upon returning a couple of hours later, we realized my sister was missing. We searched every nearby block but couldn't locate her. I was terrified, fearing I had lost my baby sister. Thankfully, the following day, the police found her, and we got her back.

After this lost kid scare, my parents made a big decision to send me to my Dabo's (one's father's elder brother) house because they couldn't take care of two kids and work at the same time.

I ended up living with my uncle and aunt when I was five and a half. Despite being away from my parents, I had a lot of fun playing with the other kids my age in the village. We would sneak into the nearby farmland, picking other people's cucumbers and tomatoes, and sometimes, with good luck, unearthing a few sweet potatoes. Then we would gather up some dried branches, light them up, and roast the sweet potatoes right away. On the few occasions when we were caught, we had to juggle the hot sweet potatoes between our hands and run away amidst the shouts and curses of the pursuing owner, laughing all the while. I understand it wasn't proper, but, hey, kids can be naughty—and hungry.

My Dabomu (one's father's eldest brother's wife) was a simple and hardworking woman. She took good care of me and treated me like a daughter.

During the spring, rain arrived quietly, signaling it was time for planting. Dabomu would take me to the field so she could keep an eye on me while she worked. I immensely enjoyed simulating her fertilizing and sowing actions. What excited me the most was that when we finished, she would climb halfway up the mountain and gather some wild vegetables known as juecai (蕨菜), which are tender shoots of Pteridium aquilinum. Afterward, she would blanch them and give them a quick stir-fry. I enjoyed watching her make endless traditional delicacies all year round and eating them, of course.

During the Qingming Festival, almost every household in the Hakka region would make aici (艾糍) to celebrate the festival. This tradition has been passed down in my uncle's house for many years and carries many cheerful childhood memories. We would head to the fields to gather the aicao, also known as artemisia argyi, an herbaceous plant that grows in the fields. Once blended into a puree, we'd combine it with glutinous rice flour to create delightful mochi buns, filled with various fillings like sesame, peanut, red bean paste, and salted egg yolks. These treats have a smooth surface, an emerald-green color, a delightful aroma, a sweet and bitter flavor, and a chewy texture. Not only do they offer a distinct taste, but we also believe they provide numerous health benefits.

During summer, I get to visit my Dagu (one's father's eldest sister), who had a tall pomegranate tree in front of her house. I climbed two meters high up to the tree because I couldn't resist the bright red ripe pomegranate, with the skin cracking to reveal the shiny pomegranate crystals. I don't know how I did that at age six, but I can't forget it because I got scolded badly after I had climbed down. Then, my Dagu showed me the correct way to pick a pomegranate: using a long bamboo stick with a nest on one side (I felt so silly). We brewed lots of pomegranate wine that day. Although I didn't drink any, I felt pure joy.

My Dagu grew lots of soybeans. She would gather a bunch of immature soybean pods (edamame), braise them in a spicy, flavorful brine, and serve them as appetizers alongside the dinner (see page 206). To be honest, living in rural areas with material scarcity, food was very basic; we didn't get to eat that many appetizers, so this dish is very special to me.

The brisk autumn breezes would persist, transforming the verdant rice fields into a radiant golden hue. Harvesting rice became the top priority of every household, including my Dabo's family. Rice was their main food supply for the entire year. In those days, with no rice-cutting machines, all the adults had to head to the fields. Some were responsible for cutting the rice. Some were responsible for smashing to separate the grains from the straws. It was a non-stop day-to-night process because we were competing with the season and the weather. We kids would chase around in the field, roll on piles of rice straws, and then somehow get in the way of the adults' work. Then my uncle would impatiently ask me to bundle the straws on the ground and take them back to feed the cows. The journey from harvesting the grains to serving them as white rice on the dinner table was lengthy and laborious. The grains had to be sun-dried and then cleaned using a wooden windmill to remove impurities before finally being husked.

With the fresh crop, we could make so many fun and delicious foods, such as Silver Needle Noodles (see

page 290), Hakka Rice Dumplings (see page 372), and rice cakes. The aroma of rice and the joy of the harvest filled every household.

In addition to rice, a large number of vegetables were collected, washed, and hung to dry in the sun. Simple tripods were set up between the trees in front and behind the house, adorned with various vegetables like cabbage, mustard greens, carrots, and radishes. Later, my Dabomu would make them into all kinds of pickles, which we would eat with congee throughout the year.

Though life in the countryside was brief--only a year and a half--these joyful experiences have shaped my palate and firmly embedded the essence of our culinary heritage within my heart, leaving a lasting impact. I've come to appreciate the enduring charm and significance of generational foods and traditions. At the age of seven, when it was time for primary school, I returned to my parents' side. They also brought back my sister, Meiqin, from my grandmom, and our family of five was finally reunited.

Raising three kids under the one-child policy is no doubt hard. We moved almost yearly and usually got kicked out by the landlord. Sometimes we were just trying to hide from the planned-birth officers, which was a phrase that terrified us little kids because the government would sometimes come to our house and confiscate things of value. We couldn't stop them as we couldn't afford to pay the fine. Therefore, my two younger sisters and I didn't have a hukou (Chinese ID) until I turned 15 when my dad finally made up the money.

Despite our financial struggles, my mother always went the extra mile to provide good food and create special treats for us. She would buy pork fat in bulk and render it into lard, which became our primary cooking oil. As a delightful bonus, we kids got to eat the delicious crispy pork cracklings. Sprinkled with salt, chili, and pepper, they tasted better than chips.

My Dabo's (one's father's eldest brother) family made a living by growing tangerines. Every harvest season, they generously gave us a hundred pounds of tangerines. We kids would eat as much as we could. Then, my mom skillfully transformed the rest into tangerine jam and candied citrus peels, providing us with snacks that would last throughout the year. She would also dehydrate the tangerine peels and incorporate them into dishes; see Cantonese Dim Sum Steamed Beef Meatballs (page 149).

I remember her first trial with making homemade Steamed Pork Buns for us; she had to call my grandma for help, though. She over-proofed the dough, and the steamed buns came out with collapsed wrappers. Even though they weren't the best steam buns, we ate them happily anyway, and I learned a lot watching her cook.

She would make traditional foods for all kinds of Chinese festivals, such as Zongzi during the Dragon Boat Festival (see page 240), tangyuan for the Lantern Festival, and eight-treasure congee for the Laba Festival.

My happiest time of the year was the Spring Festival. My mom would stock up on ingredients months before. As the holiday approached, she made new treats every day, including peanut chips, Shrimp Crackers (see page 170), deep-fried dumplings filled with sugar and sesame, and roasted sunflower seeds with five spices. These beautiful childhood memories are what I cherish the most.

As the eldest in my family, I learned early on about the hardships of life, and I also understood my parents' difficulties. I slowly took on responsibility, starting by cooking breakfast for me and my sisters before going to school. I frequently made dishes like Tomato Egg Noodle Soup (see page 269), Chicken and Mushroom Congee (see page 247), and Pork and Century Egg Congee (see page 245) because they were easy, nutritious, and budget-friendly.

As I navigated through my childhood, my parents taught me recipes whenever they got a chance. My father is Hakka, while my mother originates from Hunan province, and we live in Shaoguan, a small city in Guangdong. As a result, I am intimately familiar with the cuisines of all three regions.

I started cooking dinner for the family at age twelve. My mom would give me a daily allowance, and my favorite thing was shopping in the wet market after school. It was thrilling to decide on our daily meals and take charge of the kitchen. I liked collecting requests from my family, understanding what they wanted to eat, and arranging the cooking with a limited budget and time. I found joy and fulfillment in nourishing those I loved. As a bonus, I also learned a lot. For instance, I knew to seek out vendors who had a few vegetables left because they would likely get rid of them for a lower price so they could go home early. I was never afraid of finding traces of insect bites on vegetable leaves because it was a good sign that there were no pesticides. I also discovered the secret to selecting fresh produce: choosing vegetables with straight stems. Why? I observed that even though the vegetables were harvested, the stems would still stretch and bend in the opposite direction from gravity when sitting for days, so

if the stems were curved, you knew they were not fresh. These experiences laid a solid culinary foundation throughout my teenage years. Therefore, every recipe in this cookbook was created using all of my accumulated skills, insights, and knowledge gained along the way.

I went to Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine in 2011. I opened a Chinese traditional medicine tea shop, ran it successfully during my spare time, and earned enough money to cover my university costs and my two little sisters' school expenses.

The tea shop had a tiny kitchen, which gave me peace of mind during stressful work and studies. Each week, I made food in the shop and shared it with my staff; this began a funny tradition, with everybody preferring the weekend shift because they knew they got to eat my delicious meals.

My cooking knowledge expanded exponentially during my college years because Guangzhou is a city blessed with various cuisines and good food from all over the world. Wanting to explore more, I traveled to many provinces during the summer and winter breaks. From Beijing to Sichuan, Yunnan to Fujian, Anhui to Hunan, and Guizhou to Guilin, each trip was an opportunity to immerse myself in diverse cuisines and cultures, which you'll see reflected throughout this cookbook.

After I graduated, I started working as a sales representative for a pharmaceutical company. My job was to talk to doctors and try to sell them medicine, which was both boring and stressful for me. I eventually quit and transitioned to a sales role at a produce delivery company, where I visited restaurants and engaged with chefs and owners to promote our fresh ingredients.

Without exaggeration, I almost stepped into every restaurant in Guangzhou over my three years of working in this company. Though challenging, I found immense joy in this job. I loved listening to my clients' stories, discovering their signature dishes, and understanding their requirements for each ingredient. Occasionally, I even learned a few recipes, techniques, and secret tips from them, which fueled my creativity and served as a wellspring of inspiration for crafting my own recipes. If cooking for my family growing up had honed my skills, this job elevated me from a home cook to a perfectionist.

One of my favorite things to do is replicate classic dishes I tried in a restaurant -- you will find many in this cookbook. My boyfriend (now my husband) and I were both food lovers. We were thrilled and found ourselves jumping up and down every time we successfully made a dish that tasted exactly like the restaurant's. With his encouragement, I decided to share my recipes on YouTube. I was totally new to filming, so the footage, sound, and lighting weren't of good quality, but I still got lots of attention and compliments. I immediately saw the potential and decided to focus more on this newfound hobby.

In 2017, my mother was hospitalized on suspicion of blood cancer, and within ten days of admission, she passed away. We didn't even have enough time to run all of the tests to get a diagnosis before she died. Everything happened too fast, and there was nothing we could do besides cry. I realized then that life is too short and you have to cherish the present, which made me even more determined to continue to share the recipes my mother had taught me.

My boyfriend and I decided to take a break from work to ease our sorrow, so we traveled to Ecuador. We chose Ecuador because the cost of living there is meager, and it is on the equator, which we thought would be good for my arthritis. We lived there intermittently for two years before eventually relocating to the United States in 2019. One main reason we moved was that we couldn't continue to share recipes on YouTube due to the lack of Chinese ingredients. Looking back now, I realize that there were also bright sides to this because I deeply understood the struggle of not being able to find authentic Chinese ingredients firsthand, so I always do my best to provide substitutes, a commitment you'll notice throughout this cookbook.

Currently, we have settled in Florida, where I dedicate myself full-time to cooking. Across platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok, I've shared over 400 Chinese delicacies, gaining 3 million followers worldwide.

It's truly a dream come true to pursue my passion while providing for my family. The growth has surpassed my wildest expectations, and I couldn't have done it without the unwavering support of my followers. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you, and I'm committed to continuing this journey, sharing food and love, and celebrating Chinese cuisine and culture with the world.







Chinese Cooking Equipment and Tools

(Ranked by Importance)



Chinese Wok (铁锅)

A wok is a large bowl-shaped cooking vessel used especially in stir-frying. This is the most used piece of cookware in this cookbook. In fact, wok cooking is deeply rooted in Chinese culinary history. Its iconic round-bottomed, high-walled design dates back over 2,000 years; its prominence in Chinese kitchens stems from its ability to distribute heat evenly, ensuring consistent cooking. Its concave shape and sloping sides simplify tossing and stir-frying, a technique crucial in Asian cuisines. The wok's versatility extends beyond stir-frying; it can be used for searing, boiling, braising, deep-frying, and steaming when equipped with a bamboo steamer.

Based on the different materials used to make them, woks can be roughly divided into three categories: carbon steel, cast iron, and stainless steel.

Selecting the right wok involves many considerations. It should be something that you feel comfortable using and is easy to maintain; it should also be the right size for your kitchen and stovetop. I chose a 12.5-inch carbon-steel wok for its light weight, ease of handling, quick heat response, and non-stick ability. My arthritis doesn't allow me to toss with a cast-iron wok. Also, cast iron holds onto heat much longer than other cookware materials. Once it's hot, it stays hot for a long period of time, which is great for braising but not for stir-frying. Last, the reason I left out stainless steel is that it is less porous, so you are not able to season it for non-stick performance.

A traditional wok has a round bottom and high walls, but it doesn't fit the Western standard range tops, so I recommend a flat-bottom wok with sloping sides for compatibility. It is a great but inexpensive option. If you don't have a wok yet, consider purchasing one for your kitchen.



Clay Pot (砂锅)

A clay pot is the second most-used cookware in this cookbook. It may sound new to you, but it is a traditional tool in Chinese cuisine. It has a high heat capacity. The material retains the heat and then distributes it to the food slowly and evenly, similar to a Dutch oven. The heavy-duty wall allows for better browning and caramelization. Then, you can maintain a low-and-slow temperature on the stovetop or in the oven- it's perfect for making soup, stew, or congee. It can also handle simpler tasks like boiling dumplings, noodles, and wontons. It also functions as a beautiful serving piece that keeps the food warm on the table.



Chinese Cleaver (菜刀)

Cleavers, or cai dao, are the preferred all-purpose cutters across China. Unlike Western chefs' knives, designed for a rocking chop motion, Chinese cleavers have rectangular blades that come in different thicknesses and weights. Meat cleavers are thinner, lighter, and ideal for precise slicing, while bone cleavers are thicker and heavier and excel in heavy-duty butchery, like splitting poultry or fish heads. I own both, but beginners may want to start with a meat cleaver because it is lighter and easier to control. Ideally, a well-trained Chinese cook uses cleavers for every task in the kitchen, including slicing, chopping, grinding, mincing, scraping, and crushing ingredients like garlic cloves or lemongrass. Additionally, they serve as bench scrapers for transferring ingredients. As much as I love my cleavers, they are quite heavy. As my arthritis gets worse, I now prefer the Western chef's knife.



Chopsticks (筷子)

The importance of chopsticks in Chinese cuisine is like knives and forks on Western dinner tables. While you can use forks and knives for Chinese food, eating with chopsticks adds authenticity to the table. Aside from being dining utensils, chopsticks are convenient for picking up bite-sized food and transferring ingredients from one plate to another. We often cook with them. They are great when flipping the ingredients in the pan one by one. There are many materials for chopsticks, such as wood, bamboo, metal, ivory, and ceramics. I think ceramic is the best material. It is easy to clean and dishwasher safe. It doesn't get moldy or rusty, and it will last a lifetime.



Kitchen Scale (厨房秤)

Although lots of Chinese people don't cook with a kitchen scale, I like to give exact measurements in my cookbook for educational purposes. If you are a beginner, it is best to use a scale to precisely measure the serving sizes of ingredients and food items so you don't mess up the recipe.



Thermometer (温度计)

Using a thermometer is the only reliable way to ensure precise cooking and to determine the doneness of meat, poultry, and egg products. I own an infrared thermometer, which is used for checking oil and water temperatures, and a meat thermometer with probes for checking the inner temperatures.



Measuring Spoon and Cups (量杯量勺)

I also give measurements in the imperial system, so having a set of these measuring spoons and cups is handy. However, not all the measuring spoons are accurate. I once did a test using all the tablespoons that I had by measuring water and weighing them. Turns out they are all different. A standard tablespoon should measure 15 grams of water, but I got results of 17g, 14g, 13g, and 10g. I was shocked, so if you have had experiences where you followed the recipe exactly but the dish didn't turn out well, you should check your measuring spoons and see if they are accurate.



Steamer (蒸笼)

You will need to use a steamer for various recipes such as Steamed Pork Buns (page 304), Dumplings (page 351), Siu Mai (page 392), and Cantonese Steamed Ribs in Black Bean Sauce (page 98), to name a few. There are mainly two types of steamers on the market: stainless steel, bamboo, glass, and plastic. Bamboo steamers have an ethnic look, and the lid doesn't condense steam into water. Stainless steel is easier to clean, but it usually has a glass lid, which causes the water to drip back onto your food. You can wrap the lid with a cheesecloth to avoid that.



Steamer Papers (包子垫纸)

Steamer papers are parchment papers that are cut into small round or square shapes to put under dumplings and buns to prevent sticking. Although you can cut your own parchment papers, steamer liners are extremely cheap and handy if you make steamed buns and dumplings often. A few dollars can get you 100 sheets.



Steamer Rack (蒸架)

If you don't have a steamer, this rack is the best tool to use to steam buns, dumplings, and dim sum. Just add a plate on top of the rack. Besides that, you can also use it as a cooling rack for baking and a resting rack for hot cookware, so you don't ruin your countertop.



Spice Grinder (打粉机)

Although you can purchase pre-ground spices, I like to make fresh spice powder for a better aroma. Spices can be tough and hard to grind fine with a regular blender, so a specialized spice grinder or a coffee grinder is necessary.



Kitchen Scissors (厨房剪刀)

I use kitchen scissors a lot to cut open poultry, fish, shrimp, and other shelled seafood. These are tasks that are traditionally done with a heavy-duty cleaver, but I can't do that due to my arthritis.



Chinese Rolling Pin (擀面杖)

Compared to a regular rolling pin, the Chinese version is thinner (3/4 inch in diameter). The length can vary from 6-20 inches depending on the use. The short one is ideal for making dumplings and steamed bun wrappers. The main improvement is in the handling—it gives you more control over rolling than an unwieldy large rolling pin and makes it easier to maneuver with one hand, freeing the other hand to hold and turn the dough, so you are able to produce wrappers that are thick in the middle and thinner on the edge. The long rolling pin is for making handmade noodles and pastries.



Disposable Spice Filter Bags (香料过滤袋)

I use these when making soups or stews. Just put the spices in the bags and dispose them at the end of the cooking. They are inexpensive. A few dollars can get 100 pieces.



Plate Lifter (防烫夹)

An ingenious tool for safely lifting hot plates, bowls, and jars from narrow steamers, pots, and hot water.



Oil Skimmer (滤油勺)

The mesh is super fine and designed to allow water to drain faster than the oil, so you can easily separate the oil from soups or filter other impurities from liquids. It can also be used for deep-frying exquisite and delicate dim sum such as Taro Puff Dumplings (page 378).



Spider Strainer (捞网)

Used for taking vegetables, dumplings, wontons, and noodles out of water; you can also use it to remove food from oil when deep-frying.



Ceramic Grater (磨蒜器)

We will be using lots of grated garlic and ginger in this cookbook. You may want to get a ceramic grater. It has rows of teeth that will grate garlic, ginger, and wasabi fast. Meanwhile, it doesn't hurt you even if you rub your fingers on it.



Dumpling Plate (饺子盘)

A plate with a little sauce compartment; it's ideal for serving dumplings, dim sum, sushi, and other sides. It is not a must-have, but it does add a little character to your presentation.



Air Compressor (高压充气泵)

This is a specialized tool for making Cantonese Roasted Duck (see page 65). It helps to inflate the duck and make the skin crispy. I use an electric portable one, which you can find on Amazon for about 30 USD.





Chinese Ingredients

Although many recipes in this book can be made with regular ingredients found in any supermarket, cooking authentic Chinese food does require some special ingredients, which you can get in Asian grocery stores or online.

However, when you actually walk into the Asian market, it is so easy to get lost because all those unfamiliar products are overwhelming. To help you with your shopping, I have included the Chinese names, English translations, and pictures for every ingredient here. Before you plan your shopping trips, you can take a photo so you can show it to the staff in the Asian market, and they will help you out.

I have divided everything into categories based on their uses and given all my tips on how to pick the best product possible. This is a comprehensive list, so I did briefly discuss some lesser-used ingredients, which you do not need to worry about too much, but do pay attention to the expiration date when purchasing, because less-used ingredients are likely to have been sitting on the shelf for a long time. I have bought multiple expired items from Asian markets in the USA accidentally.





Seasonings





Soy sauce (酱油): Light soy sauce refers to (regular) soy sauce, which is salty and umami. It is not light in taste or low in sodium. Some brands just use the word "light" to distinguish the color from the dark soy sauce.

Traditionally, dark soy sauce is reduced from light soy sauce, so it should be darker in color and thicker in consistency, but not saltier in taste. Instead, it has a similar sodium level to light soy sauce. However, nowadays, many manufacturers add caramel to make dark soy sauce instead of reducing the liquid (you can tell if you see caramel on the ingredient list). Dark soy sauce is mainly used for adding color to dishes and is often paired with light soy sauce to achieve the desired presentation and taste. You will see many brands and types of soy sauce on the market. For daily cooking, I use Lee Kum Kee premium soy sauce and Haitian dark soy sauce. With these two, you can basically cover most dishes in this cookbook. However, in a few special recipes, I use some specialized soy sauce, such as Cantonese sweet soy sauce (HK Style Egg Foo Young, see page 180; Beef and Egg Clay Pot Rice, see page 235), seafood seasoned soy sauce (Cantonese Steamed Fish, see page 154), Sichuan Seasoned Sweet Soy Sauce (Yibin Flaming Noodles, see page 278; Sichuan Pork Slices in Garlic Sauce, see page 94). If you have access, you can hunt for these special soy sauces, but it's not necessary, as they can be replaced by regular soy sauce.

When shopping for soy sauce, make sure you read the ingredient list and pick the one that has fewer ingredients. Ideally, you only want to see water, soybean, wheat flour, salt, and zero additives if possible. Most soy sauces will contain flavor enhancers, which are hard to avoid, but you definitely don't want to see preservatives because soy sauce has such a high salt content that it doesn't need that. I normally keep soy sauce at room temperature. However, if you don't plan on regularly using it, refrigerating will keep its peak quality for longer.



Oyster Sauce (蚝油): is the second most important seasoning in Chinese cuisine. One thing you need to understand is that the quality is determined by the oyster content, which you can tell by reading the ingredient list. For a premium oyster sauce, oyster extract should be the first ingredient on the list. Otherwise, it is more like oyster flavored seasoning. You can also compare the protein content; the higher, the better. The premium one has 5.2% and the oyster flavored seasoning has 0% (see the picture below). That doesn't mean they didn't use any oyster to make the oyster flavored seasoning sauce; it is just that the ratio is too low to count. If you have the budget, of course, go with the premium one, but the regular one is good enough for daily cooking, so don't stress about it at all. For shellfish allergy and vegan options, you can look for mushroom-based oyster sauce (see picture below) or Taiwanese thick soy paste (see picture below), which are soy-based seasonings that have a thick consistency and a sweet, savory taste, as a replacement.



After opening, please store the oyster sauce in the fridge because it can get moldy pretty fast.

I do have a demo video on how to make homemade oyster sauce from real oysters and a vegan oyster sauce recipe made with mushrooms. Neither of them is included in this cookbook, but you can scan the code below to take a look.



Real Oyster Sauce

Vegan Oyster Sauce.



Chinese Cooking Wine (料酒): There are mainly two types of cooking wine on the market. One is Shaoxing wine, which has a brown color; the other is rice wine, which is usually clear. You don't need to worry about the difference because they are interchangeable in cooking unless a recipe requires a certain type. Chinese cooking wine can be replaced with dry sherry.

To pick a good cooking wine, always check the label. One thing that you don't want to see on the ingredient list is alcohol, which sounds strange, right? Let me explain: Cooking wine is made with fermented glutinous rice or sorghum, where the sugar is transformed into alcohol by the yeast, so the original ingredients they use should not include alcohol. If they did add alcohol, that means the cooking wine is not made by the natural fermentation process. It is just alcohol diluted with water and enhanced with artificial flavors. It is perfectly fine to keep cooking wine at room temperature. Just make sure you tighten the cap.



Chinese Black Vinegar (陈醋): The way manufacturers label Chinese black vinegar is confusing, with names such as aged vinegar, seasoned aromatic vinegar, mature vinegar, Zhejiang vinegar, and Chinkiang vinegar. Regardless, the brand and the name really don't matter. There are only two things to look for. First, check how long it has been aged. The longer, the better. Second, check the ingredient list; again, fewer ingredients mean better quality. There shouldn't be any preservatives because vinegar does not go bad if stored correctly. You also don't want to see any flavor enhancer or added color because, after being aged for years, the vinegar itself should have the natural, distinctive taste and unique inky color. I normally keep Chinese black vinegar at room temperature. However, if you don't plan on regularly using it, refrigerating will keep its peak quality for longer.



Sichuan dou ban jiang (豆瓣酱): is also known as the soul of Sichuan cuisine. It is made with fermented broad beans, chili oil, and lots of spices. I always look for the "鹃城 Juancheng" brand, a time-honored local brand in Sichuan, so the quality is better. Your Asian market may not carry it, and whatever is available will do a fine job. After opening, please store it in the fridge.



Hoisin sauce (海鲜酱): is a popular stir-fry sauce in Cantonese cuisine, which adds a complex taste to dishes. It is made with soybeans, chili, garlic, and a bunch of spices. Hoisin means seafood in Cantonese, but this sauce is actually vegan. After opening, please store it in the fridge.



Fish sauce (鱼酱油/鱼露): it may not be known as a Chinese ingredient, but it is often used in South and Southeast China, in Cantonese, Teochew, and Fuzhou cuisines. When shopping, keep an eye on the ingredient list: you want to see only anchovy and sea salt with no other ingredients. Also, check the protein contained in the nutrition facts; the higher the protein, the better the quality. However, premium fish sauce can be quite expensive. I often use the Squid brand because I am comfortable with its quality and price. It is fine to keep fish sauce at room temperature, but if you are not using it a lot, refrigerating it will retain its peak quality for longer.



Sweet flour sauce (甜面酱): is also known as tian mian jiang, tianmian sauce, sweet bean sauce, sweet wheat paste, or sweet flour sauce. It is a thick, smooth, dark brown, or black paste with a savory and sweet flavor. It is made of fermented wheat flour and is commonly used in Northern Chinese cuisine and Northeastern Chinese cuisine, such as Peking Sauce Pork (page 90). Refrigerate it once opened.



Fermented bean curd (腐乳): has a complex and distinct flavor. When you shop in an Asian market, you may find many variations of fermented tofu. Beijing style has a grayish-green color and a stinky smell. Most people can't tolerate its flavor, so I don't recommend using it unless a recipe asks for it specifically. Sichuan style is usually seasoned with chili and cured in oil. It is a little spicy, so I often use it in Hunan or Sichuan recipes. Cantonese-style fermented bean curd, Nan Ru (南乳), has an iconic red color. It is non-spicy and is an important ingredient for making Cantonese BBQ Pork Char Siu (page 72). Please be aware that the fermenting brine that the bean curd is soaked in is also useful for many recipes (see page 74 for Tea-Brined Pork Belly with Fermented Bean Curd).



Soybean paste (黄豆酱): is made with soybeans, salt, and wheat flour. If you can't find the Chinese brand, Korean Doenjang can be a substitute. It is often used in Beijing Doorknob Dumplings (see page 358), Beijing Lazy Dragon Rolls (see page 307), and Soy Stir-fry Green Beans (see page 204). Refrigerate it once opened.



Zhuhou paste (柱候酱): sometimes spelled as zhuhou paste, is made of soybean, wheat flour, fermented bean curd, sugar, sesame paste, etc. As a signature Cantonese ingredient, it is primarily used in Cantonese-style braised meat recipes, such as Hong Kong Beef Curry (page 134) and Cantonese Braised Beef with Daikon Radish (page 136). Refrigerate it once opened.



Satay sauce (沙茶酱): is made of seafood, coconut, garlic, chili, etc. It is often used in Cantonese or Teochew fusion recipes, such as Hong Kong Satay Beef Noodle Soup (page 301) and Teochew Crystal Dumplings (page 369). Refrigerate it once opened.



Worcestershire sauce (伍斯特辣酱油): is mainly used as a dipping sauce for Chinese-Western fusion foods, such as Shanghai Crispy Breaded Pork Chop (see page 110).



Plum sauce (苏梅酱): is like plum jam but made with fermented plums. It has a sweet and savory taste. I like to use it to make Sweet and Sour Ribs. It is also a classic dipping sauce for Cantonese crispy pork belly. Refrigerate it once opened.



Maltose (麦芽糖) is a sweetener that tastes less sweet than table sugar, and it has a thick, sticky texture. It is often used in making a glaze to add color to roasted meats such as Cantonese Roasted Duck (see page 65). Store it sealed at room temperature.

Spices



Sichuan peppercorn (花椒) is the most essential Chinese spice (almost 25% of the recipes in this book use this ingredient). Since this ingredient is new to many people, I devoted a considerable page to explaining it.

Sichuan peppercorn has many English translations (Sichuan pepper, Szechuan pepper, Szechwan pepper, Chinese prickly ash, Chinese pepper, mala pepper, and wild pepper). Despite its name, Sichuan pepper has nothing to do with black pepper or chili peppers. It is the fruit of a citrus plant called Zanthoxylum in the Rutaceae family.

How Do Sichuan Peppercorns Taste?

They are not spicy at all, but they are known for their citrus aroma and the tingling numbing effect, which makes your taste buds more sensitive to flavors, and you will feel that the food becomes more delicious. I need to warn you, though, if you have never had this ingredient before, please start with a small amount, like 1 tsp per pound of ingredients. See how you like it and then adjust from there. Everybody has a different tolerance. If you use too much, your tongue won't be able to taste anything for a little while. Don't be scared because it is not harmful, and the feeling will go away in about 30 minutes. But if you put in the correct amount, it will open up a whole new world to your Chinese cooking journey.

How to use Sichuan Peppercorns

There are many ways to use them. When using the whole peppercorns, you put them in water or stock to blanch or braise meat. It will release a nice fragrance and make your soup or stew smell better. It is convenient to use a disposable spice bag so you can discard the peppercorns once you are done cooking. You don't want to leave it in the soup because it is tough, and it doesn't taste good if someone bites into one by accident.

In Sichuan recipes, we usually sauté the Sichuan peppercorns with a large amount of red chilies in a little bit of oil over low heat until fragrant. This creates a classic flavor called Mala, which means numbing and spicy. Mala flavor usually pairs with lots of aromatics, so it is super fragrant (see page 146 for the Sichuan Spicy Poached Beef recipe).

Another classic way to use Sichuan peppercorns is to make Jiaoyan seasoning. You just toast it with salt, black pepper, and white pepper over low heat for a couple of minutes and blend it into a fine powder. You can sprinkle this onto any deep-fried crispy food. It will instantly bring the dish to another level because the tingling feeling makes the crunchy texture stand out.

Sichuan peppercorn powder is an essential spice in my pantry. You can use it to season anything you like, such as dumpling filling, Mapo tofu, and Kung Pao Chicken. Since it is a powder form, it can be evenly distributed into the dish instead of being overpowering.





How to Pick Good Quality Sichuan Peppercorns

There are two kinds of Sichuan peppercorns on the market: green and red. However, the green version actually looks brown because it is dried. The red one smells super complex, but it is less numbing. The green one smells a bit bland, but the numbing effect is stronger. Unless a recipe specifically asks for the green type, always cook with the red one because it tastes better.

When you buy the red Sichuan peppercorns, the more red, the better. You'll notice in the photo that these are both the red type, but you can see the color difference. The left one is of lower quality; it has no aroma and numbing effects. If you try Sichuan peppercorns and feel no numbing effect, it is probably because of a quality issue.

You want to get the ones that have a vivid color and fewer seeds. It means a fresher and stronger fragrance. Sichuan pepper is a citrus fruit; all of the flavor is concentrated in the red peel. The seeds will only bring you bitterness.



How to Store Sichuan Peppercorns

For the whole peppercorns, you just keep them in a sealed jar. It will stay good in the fridge for 18 months. It is still edible after 18 months, but the aroma and numbing effect will start to fade.

Sichuan peppercorn powder will stay good in a sealed bottle at room temperature for only two months. That's why I don't recommend buying pre-ground powder from the store. Who knows how long it has been sitting on the shelf?

The best way is to keep a jar of whole Sichuan peppercorns in the fridge. Roast and grind enough for just two months. Store it in a small bottle and use it as needed.



Five-spice powder (五香粉): is a spice mixture made with more than five kinds of spices. The "5" refers to 5 different tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and spicy. It is just a rhetorical name that explains that if you use this powder, it will balance all the flavors and make the dish taste better. This is the most useful Chinese seasoning, so most Asian markets will carry it. It is really easy to make at home. I didn't include the homemade five-spice powder recipe in this cookbook, but you can scan the code below to learn.



In some special recipes, I used a spice mixture called thirteen-spice powder (十三香), which is another variant of five-spice powder. One is not better than another. They smell slightly different, but they are interchangeable in most cases.



Aged tangerine peel (陈皮): aka chenpi, is sun-dried and then stored for at least three years. The older, the better. During maturation, the essential oil in the citrus peel begins to dissipate and penetrate its entire surface. Be careful when purchasing chenpi from your local Asian market because I haven't found any good quality ones in the United States. It usually has no fragrance and smells like dust. A good tangerine peel should have a strong citrus aroma. I normally ask my sister to buy it from Xinhui (the city that is known for producing top-quality aged tangerine peels), Guangdong, China, and ship it to the United States. If you don't have access to Xinhui chenpi. You can use fresh tangerine peel as a replacement. Get a small spoon and gently remove the pith. Then finely dice the tangerine peel. Even though the fragrance is less complex compared to the aged chenpi, it is still better than most of the options that you can get from the Asian market.



Dried red chilies (干辣椒): Chinese people like to cook with dried red chilies to add a toasty flavor, a spicy kick, and a nice pop of color to the dish. The most important thing before purchasing is to find out the heat level. You need to buy the chilies that fit your tolerance. Sometimes they are sold whole or pre-cut into short pieces. If you can't find both, it is okay to use chili flakes by taste as a replacement. If you can't handle too much heat, you can remove the seeds.



Red pepper/chili flakes (辣椒面): is essential for making red chili oil (see page 280), often used to season meat and fillings or to garnish. When shopping, please be aware of the spiciness level written on the package and choose carefully.





Sweet chili powder (甜椒粉): is a bright red, non-spicy chili powder. You can use it to add color and a peppery flavor to dishes without making the food burning hot. See usages in Sichuan Mapo Tofu (page 186), and Crispy Pan-fried Noodles (page 262). It is hard to find in the United States, so I normally use sweet paprika as a replacement. If you have access to buy Korean sweet chili powder, that will be a good substitution as well.



Red yeast powder (红曲粉): is made with finely ground red yeast rice. You can use it as a food coloring to give dishes a pretty presentation, such as Cantonese BBQ Pork Char Siu (see page 72). It can be replaced by red food coloring.



White pepper (白胡椒): comes from the same plant as black peppercorns, but it is processed differently. It has an earthy, fermented, and funky smell, and its flavor lasts longer compared to black pepper, so it is great for braising. If you don't have white pepper on hand, you can replace it with black peppercorns.



Dried sand ginger (沙姜): has an intense peppery smell with a camphorous overtone. It is required in Cantonese Roasted Duck (see page 65) and Hakka Style Braised Pork Belly Noodle Soup (see page 288).



Licorice root (甘草): aka gancao, is a popular herb used in Chinese cooking, especially for braising meat. I usually omit it in most of my recipes because gancao is pretty hard to find outside of China. That is why there are only three dishes in this book that require gancao. However, if you have access, you can add a few slices to almost any braised meat recipe, even if I didn't write it in the ingredient list. Gancao has a beautiful sweet aftertaste which helps to balance the savory flavors.



Dried angelica root (白芷): has a special complex aroma; it's like a combination of earth, musk, celery, pepper, and citrus. The fragrance is so strong that a small slice goes a long way. We like to use it to make all kinds of braised beef and lamb. However, it is hard to find this ingredient outside of China, so I only used it in one recipe in this book (see page 143 for Braised Beef with Pickled Mustard Greens). If you have access to buy it, I strongly recommend you put in a small piece while braising meat. You will be surprised by its effect.



Turmeric powder (黄姜粉): is often used to add a nice color and a delightful fragrance to dishes, such as Hainanese Chicken Rice (page 54), Singapore Stir-fry Noodles (page 286), and Hong Kong Beef Curry (page 134)



Curry powder (咖喱粉): is often used to make Chinese-Western fusion recipes, such as Hong Kong Beef Curry (see page 134), Singapore Stir-fry Noodles (see page 286), and Satay Beef Noodle Soup (see page 301).



Cumin seeds (孜然): are often used to pair with lamb, pork, and beef in Chinese cuisine. See Sichuan Cold Crispy Beef (page 130), Sichuan Crispy Pork (page 84), and Xinjiang Baked Buns Kao Bao Zi (page 325).



Toasted sesame seeds (熟芝麻): A lot of Chinese dishes are finished with a sprinkle of toasted sesame seeds to add a nice nutty flavor and a prettier presentation. Please be aware that some recipes may require raw sesame seeds, depending on the cooking process. Also, unless you can go through a lot of sesame seeds, I recommend keeping raw sesame seeds in your pantry and roasting them as needed because pre-roasted sesame seeds go rancid fairly fast. Although black sesame has more of a nutty and rustic taste compared to its white counterpart, in most recipes, they are interchangeable.

Fresh Produce

My first tip for shopping for fresh produce is to ask the staff to find out the day they get new vegetables. Unlike big supermarkets that can replenish produce daily, most small Asian markets in the United States are run by Asian couples, and they replenish vegetables weekly. If you know the date, you can plan your shopping trip smartly and get everything as fresh as possible.



Baby bok choy (上海青): is much smaller compared to regular bok choy. We often use it for soups and stir-fries. Most stores sell them in big bundles, and it takes a while to go through a big bag. By the time I get to the last bok choy, the leaves have turned yellow already. To minimize the waste, I will tear the outer leaves from each bok choy to eat first. The center core will stay good in the fridge for a month or two, depending on the condition when you get them. This tip also works for other vegetables that have a similar structure, such as daikon cabbage and lettuce.



Gai lan (芥蓝or芥兰): aka Chinese broccoli, looks nothing like Western broccoli. It is one of the most popular leafy greens in Cantonese cuisine, and it has quite a thick stem and a small group of flowers in the center. The taste is slightly bitter and sweet. If you don't have access to it, you can use regular broccoli or broccolini as a replacement.



Choy sum (菜心): the second most popular Cantonese vegetable, is a member of the genus Brassica of the mustard family, Brassicaceae. Choy sum is a transliteration of the Cantonese name, which means "heart of the vegetable." The easiest way to enjoy it is to blanch it and season it with garlic and soy sauce (see page 191).



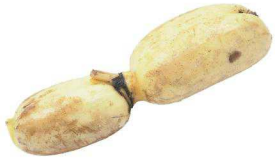
Bean sprouts (豆芽): Surprisingly, bean sprouts can be found in most "non-Asian" supermarkets in the United States, such as Walmart, Publix, and Whole Foods. They are great for making soups (see page 146 for Sichuan Spicy Poached beef) and stir-fries (see page 207 for Stir-Fry Bean Sprouts); you can also stuff them in egg rolls (see page 398 for Shanghai-Style Crispy Egg Rolls).



Chinese long eggplant (长茄子): sometimes also labeled as Korean or Japanese eggplant, has tender skin and seeds compared to globe eggplant. When shopping, look for the light color area between the calyx and the eggplant body. The larger this area, the fresher the eggplant. If you don't see this part or it is small, it means the eggplant is old, and it will have lots of tough, annoying seeds inside.



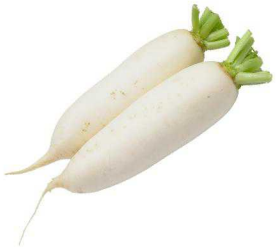
Garlic chive (韭菜): Its scientific name is Allium Tuberosum. It looks like chives, but the leaves are flat. It has a strong garlic flavor; that is how it got its name. Most Asian markets will carry it and I don't know any replacement for it because nothing tastes similar. See usage in HK Style Egg Foo Young (page 180), Chinese Chive Boxes (page 361), and Hong Kong Vegetable Chow Mein (page 258).



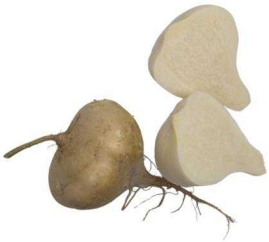
Lotus root (莲藕): Most stores will sell lotus root in sections because a complete one can be 5 feet long. According to maturity, the texture and purpose of lotus roots vary. Young lotus roots are thinner and lighter in color and have a crispy texture, making them ideal for stir-frying. As they age, the roots become fatter and thicker; their starch content increases, resulting in a texture similar to potatoes. Mature lotus roots are suitable for stewing or can be grated to make pancakes. Look into the holes from the cut surface when purchasing because they grow in the mud, and sometimes the mud will get inside if it is not harvested correctly, which is a pain to wash. You want to make sure the holes are clean; you don't want to see any visible dirt.



Chinese celery (中国芹菜): aka leafy celery, is a variety of celery cultivated in East Asian countries. The stems are thinner than Western celery and curved into round, hollow stalks. It smells ten times stronger, too. Sadly, it is a bit hard to find outside of China, so I only include a few recipes in this book that require it. However, if you have access, feel free to replace all the Western celery with Chinese celery in this book.



Daikon radish (白萝卜): aka turnip radish, is great for braising, stir-frying, and making dumpling fillings (see Hakka Rice Dumpling with Radish Filling on page 372). When shopping for daikon radishes, I will compare the weights and pick the denser ones. It means it is fresher and juicier. Surprisingly, daikon radish is available in many Hispanic produce stores in the United States.



Jicama (沙葛): aka Spanish turnip, is sweet, crunchy, and juicy, kind of like a pear or water chestnut. We love to use it to make stir-fry or stuff it into fillings. You can buy it in many "non-Asian" stores, such as Publix, Walmart, and some Hispanic produce markets.







Bamboo shoots (笋): are the edible shoots of many bamboo species. They are used as vegetables in many Chinese dishes and soups. They are sold in various forms, such as fresh, dried, and canned. However, fresh bamboo shoots are not easy to find outside of China, so your options most likely will be dried or in the canned vegetable aisle. Sometimes you can find them in plastic bags as well. Here's a note for those with access to fresh bamboo shoots: some varieties can be extremely bitter. To remove the bitterness, boil the shoots in water for 30 minutes. Then soak them in clean water for at least 24 hours, changing the water every 4 hours.



Thai bird's eye chili (小米辣): Although it is named after Thai, it is popular in Chinese cuisine, especially in Sichuan recipes. It is super spicy, which means most people will not go through a package in a short time, but you can freeze and use it as needed. If you don't find Thai bird's eye chili in the fridge section, some stores will have it in the frozen section. When I was living in Ecuador, I didn't have access to Thai bird's eye chilies, so I was using Scotch Bonnet peppers as a replacement.



Thai basil (金不换): Although it is named after Thai, it is popular in Chinese cuisine as well. Its Chinese name literally translates as I wouldn't trade it for gold. Thai basil has a stronger aroma compared to sweet basil, and it is an essential ingredient for some special dishes, such as Three-Cup Chicken (see page 59) and Taiwanese Popcorn Chicken (see page 48). In the case you can't get Thai basil, sweet basil can be a substitution.



Shallot (红葱头): is an important aromatic in Chinese cooking that adds a beautiful fragrance to many dishes. The shallots you get from the Asian market are a bit different than what's available in a regular Western supermarket -- it is more round and looks like a mini version of a purple onion, whereas most people are probably used to elongated-shaped shallots. However, they are interchangeable in many dishes. Besides fresh forms, Asian markets also carry crispy fried shallots, which are a significant Taiwanese ingredient and are important for making Taiwanese Braised Pork Belly (see page 76).



Bitter melon (苦瓜): has a bitter but fresh and sweet aftertaste. Chinese people believe it has lots of benefits in controlling blood sugar levels. We love to use it in different stir-fry recipes. You can buy it in most Asian markets and Hispanic produce stores.

Dried, Cured, and Preserved



Dried shiitake mushrooms (干香菇): have a complex aroma and an umami taste compared to fresh mushrooms because during the drying process, complex proteins break down into simpler amino acids such as glutamate (aka MSG). They are great for making soup and different fillings.



Wood ear mushrooms (干木耳): also known as tree ears and black fungus, are usually sold in dry form. They have a crunchy texture. We usually make soup, stir-fry, and salad with it. Just so you know, dried wood ear mushrooms expand much in size after soaking, so you don't need to use a lot of them.



Lotus leaves (荷叶): have a wonderful fragrance that adds authenticity to many Chinese dishes. You can use it as a steaming paper to prevent food from sticking to the steamer or a wrapper to make Sticky Rice Wrapped in Lotus Leaf Lo Mai Gai (see page 242).



Bamboo leaves (粽叶): are the essential wrappers for making Zongzi (see page 240), a traditional Chinese delicacy. They are available in dry and fresh forms. The fresh ones can be used directly after a thorough wash, while the dried ones require pre-soaking before use.



Dried seaweed (紫菜): is different than sushi seaweed wrap. It has a smooth, silky texture, and we usually use it to make soups, such as Hot and Sour Wonton Soup (see page 389), Shaanxi Hot and Sour Dumpling Soup (see page 348), and Fuzhou Meatball Soup (see page 409).



Fried dace with fermented black beans (豆豉鲮鱼): is deep-fried fish cured in a can. It tastes kind of like fish jerky and is packed with umami flavor. We use it to make all kinds of stir-fry dishes, such as Bitter Melon and Canned Fish Stir-Fry (see page 194)



Dried shrimp (干虾米): are usually sold in the fridge or frozen section in Asian markets. Their price depends on the size -- the bigger ones cost more. However, for most recipes where they're minced, smaller ones work well and are cheaper. They are used in Taiwanese Sticky Rice (see page 233) and Sticky Rice Wrapped in Lotus Leaf Lo Mai Gai (see page 242).



Dried baby shrimp (虾皮): are similar to dried shrimp but made with baby shrimp. I know it looks like fish food (LOL!), but it is a popular ingredient in many Chinese dishes. Due to the size differences, it is usually used for soups to add a nice umami flavor or wrapped into dumplings (see page 361 for Chinese Chive Box recipe). You can find it in most Asian markets and Hispanic produce stores.



Dried scallops (干瑶柱): are similar to dried shrimp and are also sun-dried. They are an essential ingredient and often pair with dried shrimp to provide a complex flavor for dishes, such as Dim Sum Radish Cake (see page 211).



Cantonese sausage (广式腊肠): aka lap cheong (腊肠), looks like the skinny version of pepperonis, but the taste is quite different – it is slightly sweet and savory. Note: You cannot eat Cantonese sausage raw. It has to be cooked for safety purposes. If you don't have access to buy them, you can make them at home. I didn't include the recipe in this book, but you can scan the codes below to learn.



Cantonese cured pork belly (广式腊肉): aka Cantonese bacon or lap yuk, tastes savory and slightly sweet, and is often used together to make Cantonese recipes. It usually comes with the skin, which should be removed before cooking because it is very tough. If you don't have access to it, you can make it at home. I didn't include the recipe in this book, but you can scan the codes below to learn.



Jinhua ham (金华火腿): is a special cured meat from Jinhua, Zhejiang province. It was listed as a tribute from the Song Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty. It is hard to find outside of China, but you can use Italian prosciutto as a replacement because they taste similar.



Fermented black beans (豆豉): aka douchi, are made by fermenting and salting black soybeans. They have a strong umami taste and a distinctive fragrance. You can use them to make Sichuan Mapo Tofu (see page 186) and Cantonese Steamed Ribs in Black Bean Sauce (see page 98).





Pickled mustard greens (酸菜): have a salty, savory, sour taste. We use them to make Taiwanese Steamed Pork Belly Buns (see page 312) and Sichuan Poached Fish with Pickled Mustard Greens (see page 157). Usually sold in the aisle of packaged, jarred, or canned vegetables. If you don't have access to buy it, try making it yourself by scanning the code below to watch the video demo. Don't confuse this ingredient with another version of preserved mustard greens called sui mi ya cai (see picture below), which is a savory, ready-to-eat minced pickle sold in small packages. It is a specialty from Yinbing, Sichuan, and you can use it to make Yibin Flaming Noodles (see page 278).



Pickled chilies (泡椒): is a popular ingredient for lots of Chinese recipes but I only included 2 recipes that uses this ingreidnet in this book (see page 157 for Sichuan Poached Fish with Pickled Mustard Greens and page 146 for Sichuan Spicy Poached Beef) because I have tried many brands of pickled Chilies from Asian markets in the USA and have not found anything authentic. However, you can learn how to pickle it yourself by scanning the QR code below.



Teochew-style salt-preserved radish, aka Chai Poh (菜脯): is typically used in Teochew cuisine to offer a distinct salty taste and crunchy texture. It comes in various forms: whole, sliced, or minced. It's usually sold in the aisle of packaged, jarred, or canned vegetables. There are two flavor variations -- sweet (preserved with sugar and salt) and salty (preserved with only salt). Ensure you choose the salty kind for all recipes in this book to avoid any confusion. When you buy a big bag, you won't be able to go through it fast. Please keep it sealed and refrigerated once opened. See page 369 for Teochew Crystal Dumplings.



Salted egg yolk (咸蛋黄): has a unique cheese-like flavor. Look for it in the fridge or freezer sections in your local Asian markets. When a recipe calls for just the yolk, buy only the yolk rather than whole salted duck eggs unless you have other recipes to make with the egg white.

Soy products

The texture of the tofu is determined by the water content. The more water, the softer or "silkier" the tofu; with less water, the tofu is firmer.



Silken tofu (内脂豆腐): is undrained and unpressed tofu. It has the highest water content of all types of tofu and is made by coagulating soy milk without curdling it. The texture is smooth and silky like a pudding. It's great for making soups (see page 406 for Hot and Sour Soup).



Medium firm (南豆腐) and firm tofu (北豆腐): contains roughly 85% of water, and the texture is firmer, which means it can be pan-fried without breaking apart. However, you can still crumble it into small pieces by hand and use it as a ground pork vegan substitution.



Pressed tofu (豆干): is a drier variety with most of the moisture pressed out, often smoked or braised. It boasts a firm, cheese-like texture, suitable for slicing, dicing, stir-frying, and braising. It is often used as a meat substitute in vegan or vegetarian dishes, due to its high protein profile and meaty texture. Two options exist when purchasing: flavored and unsalted. Adjust the seasoning when cooking accordingly.



Tofu puff (豆腐泡): is soft tofu cubes that have been deep-fried until golden and spongy. It is great to put into soups as it absorbs flavors. You can use it to make Hakka Rice Dumplings with Radish Filling (see page 372).



Soybean curd skin (腐皮): aka beancurd skin or tofu skin, is made from soy protein. It is a great keto option for egg roll wrappers. You can use it to make Teochew Five-Spice Meat Rolls (see page 108) and Dim Sum Steamed Beef Meatballs (see page 149). Most Asian markets will carry it in the fridge or freezer section.

Starch & Flour



Cornstarch (玉米淀粉): is commonly used to thicken sauces and soups. It can also team up with egg white for velvety marination, yielding smooth, tender, succulent meat.



Potato starch (土豆淀粉): is also used to thicken sauces and soups so in most cases it can be replaced by cornstarch but it makes a shinier gravy compared to cornstarch.



Sweet potato starch (红薯粉): is often used to form long-lasting crispy crust for deep-frying, e.g., Sesame Chicken and Taiwanese Popcorn Chicken (see page 48). Choose between coarse and fine options (see page 40 for details) when buying according to the recipe you're making.



Tapioca starch/flour (木薯淀粉): creates a distinct QQ texture (A phrase Chinese people use to describe a tender, chewy, and bouncy texture, kind of like the bubbles in bubble milk tea), which is vital for Teochew Crystal Dumplings (see page 369), Oyster Pancakes (see page 174), and Hakka Stir-Fry Silver Needle Noodles (see page 290).



Rice flour (米粉): is made from finely milled rice. You can use it to make Hakka Rice Dumplings (see page 372) and Dim Sum Radish Cake (see page 211).



Wheat starch (澄粉): is obtained by removing protein from flour, but it is not gluten-free. You can use it to make Cantonese Shrimp Dumplings (see page 366) and Delicate Taro Puff Dumplings (see page 378). In China, wheat flour is classified into high gluten, medium gluten, and low gluten types, aligning with bread, all-purpose, and cake flour found in Western grocery stores.



Glutinous rice flour (糯米粉): is made from finely milled glutinous rice. You can use it to make Cantonese Ham Sui Gok (see page 375).



High gluten flour/bread flour (高筋面粉): contains more than 10% protein, which provides a strong, dense, and elastic structure. It is often used for making dumplings, wonton wrappers, and noodles for their chewy and firm texture.



Medium gluten flour/all-purpose flour (中筋面粉): contains roughly 10% protein. However, for making steamed buns, I recommend opting for an Asian brand from an Asian grocery store, as the all-purpose flour from US brands might not yield optimal results.



Low gluten flour/cake flour (低筋面粉): contains less than 10% protein, and is often used in making Chinese dessert and Cantonese Roasted Pork Char Siu Bun (see page 316).

Noodles and Wrappers

A lot of people are confused about the difference between fun (粉) and mein (面). Fun means noodles made with starch (rice, potato, tapioca, and mung bean starch, etc.); mein means noodles made with wheat flour.





Egg noodles (鸡蛋面): aka lo mein, are a staple in Chinese cuisine. They have a nice chewy texture, and they are great for soups, pan-frying, and stir-frying. They are available fresh or dry in varying thicknesses. Fresh noodles are refrigerated or frozen, while dry ones are found in the noodle aisle. Curly or straight, the type of egg noodle doesn't impact taste and can be swapped in recipes. For egg-free options, look at the ingredient list. In addition, some noodles that look yellow could be artificially colored. If you don't have access to buy egg noodles, scan the code below to learn how to make them at home.



Rice noodles (河粉/米粉): a beloved staple in Southern Chinese cuisine, offer a gluten-free, bouncy texture. Rice noodles have various shapes and thicknesses; the flat kind (also sold as Vietnamese pho noodles), known as ho fun in Cantonese, is indispensable for dishes like Beef Chow Ho Fun (see page 292) and Cantonese Braised Beef Noodle Soup in Clear Broth (see page 294). The round rice noodles, called mei fun, are typically used in Braised Pork Belly Noodle Soup (see page 288), Pork Chow Fun (see page 284), and Singapore Stir-fry Noodles (see page 286). In China, we are accustomed to getting them fresh. However, in the United States, rice noodles are often sold dry, so you have to follow the instructions on the package to prepare them. Some Asian markets may carry fresh rice noodles in their frozen section. I don't recommend getting them because the texture becomes soggy after being frozen.



Potato or Sweet potato noodles（土豆/红薯粉条）: also called vermicelli because they are translucent, offer a gluten-free option, and a distinctive QQ texture (A phrase Chinese people use to describe a tender, chewy, and bouncy texture, kind of like the bubbles in bubble milk tea). They are ideal for creating dishes like Cabbage Stir-Fry Vermicelli Noodles (see page 297). If you can't find a Chinese brand, go look in the Korean aisle.



Mung bean noodles（绿豆粉丝）: are crafted from mung bean starch and have a translucent appearance. They are essential for making Chinese Chive Boxes (see page 361). While shopping, seek the term "龙口" on the package, signifying a city renowned for top-quality mung bean noodles in China.



Udon noodles（乌冬面）: are not a typical Chinese ingredient, but they are used to make fusion recipes, such as Stir-Fry Beef Udon Noodles in Black Pepper Sauce (see page 299). They are usually sold in the fridge or frozen section in Asian markets.



Dumpling wrappers（饺子皮）: These are usually thicker than wonton wrappers and have a round shape; they are usually stored in the frozen section. Although Chinese people prefer homemade dumpling wrappers, feel free to use store-bought to save time. You will find two basic options on the market. The yellow-colored wrappers are Hong Kong style, and the white-colored ones are Shanghai style. Honestly, the colors don't impact the taste; it is more of a presentation preference.



Wonton wrappers（馄饨皮）: are square and thinner than dumpling wrappers. You can find them in non-Asian markets like Walmart, Publix, and Whole Foods, often located in the vegan section. For those who don't have access to buy wonton wrappers, I do have a demo recipe, which is not included in this book, but you can scan the code below to check out the video.



Egg roll wrappers（春卷皮）: are key for cooking Shanghai-style Crispy Egg Rolls (see page 398). Despite their name, the wrappers are egg-free (for unknown reasons). Easily found across the United States, look into the vegan section of non-Asian markets or in the fridge and frozen sections in Asian grocery stores. If unavailable, I offer a demo recipe (not in this book); you can learn more by scanning the code below.

Rice and Oil



Indica rice (籼米): also known as long-grain non-glutinous rice, is slim and lengthy and produces distinct firm grains that stay fluffy and separate after cooking. Its main production areas are distributed in the southern region of China and some countries in Southeast Asia. There are various types of indica rice based on their origin; jasmine rice is my favorite and is what I recommend as a daily staple if you want to make a Chinese meal. In case you ask, I use the Three Ladies Brand. I know it is a Thai brand, but it is widely available across the United States and Canada.



Japonica rice (粳米): also known as short-grain or sushi rice. Its grain is short and roundish. While cooking, it absorbs more water than other varieties and becomes tender and sticky after. It is mainly produced in the northern regions of China, such as the commonly used Northeast rice (东北大米) and Wuchang rice (五常大米). Both indica and japonica are popular staples in Chinese cuisine, but based on my experience, japonica rice is slightly more expensive as it often comes in smaller packages in Asian markets. I don't use it often because I grew up in Southern China. LOL!



Brown rice (糙米): is a whole-grain rice with the inedible outer hull removed, but the bran and germ layer remain, constituting the brown or tan color of rice. It used to be a low-class food as it is roughly processed and doesn't have a tender texture. Nowadays, it has become a healthier option due to its high nutritional value.



Glutinous rice (糯米): also called sticky rice, sweet rice, or waxy rice, has opaque grains. Widely consumed across Asia, there are numerous cultivars of glutinous rice, which include japonica, indica, and tropical japonica strains. It doesn't contain any gluten, though; it got the name due to its gluey and sticky texture once cooked. Glutinous rice is often used to make meals such as zongzi and lotus sticky rice wrap.



Peanut oil (花生油): is the go-to choice cooking oil in Chinese cuisine because it has a high smoke point, which is perfect for high-heat stir-frying. It also adds a nutty taste to dishes. For most of the recipes in this book, when I call for cooking oil or vegetable oil, I am likely using peanut oil because it is my daily staple. However, you can use other high-smoke-point oils as a substitution, such as sunflower seed oil, soybean oil, corn oil, and avocado oil.



Pork lard (猪油): is a second popular cooking shortening for rustic countryside dishes, such as Delicate Taro Puff Dumplings (page 378), Pork Chow Fun (page 284), and Teochew Style Oyster Pancakes (page 174). In some recipes, it can be replaced with butter or vegetable oil.



Sesame oil (芝麻油): adds a nice nutty flavor, and it is great to finish dishes with a touch of sesame oil. When you check the ingredient list, you should only see one ingredient: sesame seeds or sesame seed oil.



Corn oil (玉米油): is my go-to choice for deep-frying because it has a high smoke point and it is affordable so I don't feel bad using a large amount of oil.





Sichuan Red chili oil (四川油泼辣子): It is widely used in noodle dishes, wonton soups, spicy salad dressings, and dumpling dipping sauces. You can buy it from Asian markets or check page 278 to learn how to make it at home.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE ASIAN MARKET TOUR



Poultry

34. Sichuan Kung Pao Chicken / 四川宫保鸡丁
36. Moo Goo Gai Pan (Mushroom and Chicken Stir-Fry) / 蘑菇鸡片
37. Cashew Chicken / 腰果鸡丁
39. Chicken and Broccoli Stir-Fry / 西蓝花炒鸡胸肉
40. Sesame Chicken / 芝麻炸鸡
42. Orange Chicken / 橙子鸡
44. Crispy Lemon Chicken / 柠檬炸鸡
46. General Tso's Chicken / 左宗棠鸡
48. Taiwanese Popcorn Chicken / 台湾盐酥鸡
50. Fried Chicken Wings with Jiao Yan Flavor/ 椒盐炸鸡翅
52. Mouthwatering Chicken / 口水鸡
54. Hainanese Chicken Rice / 海南鸡饭
57. Scallion Sauce Chicken / 葱油鸡
59. Three-Cup Chicken / 三杯鸡
60. Soy Sauce Chicken / 豉油鸡
61. Crispy Roasted Cornish Hen / 脆皮童子鸡
64. Cantonese Roasted Duck / 广式烤鸭



Sichuan Kung Pao Chicken

sì chuān gōng bǎo jī dīng
四 川 宫 保 鸡 丁

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Serves:
25 minutes	10 minutes	2 people

The dish is made with diced chicken, peanuts, and chili peppers, all stir-fried in a wok with a savory sauce. It was created by Ding Baozhen (1820–1886), a governor of Sichuan Province during the late Qing Dynasty, who held the title Kung Pao. In honor of him, the dish was named Kung Pao Ji Ding, with ji ding meaning diced chicken. Over time, Kung Pao Chicken has become one of the most popular Sichuan dishes and has spread throughout the world, with variations often incorporating additional ingredients such as vegetables, tofu, or seafood.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

For the marinade

- 454g / 1 pound boneless chicken breast
- 3.8g / ⅔ tsp salt
- 1.2g / ½ tsp onion powder
- 9.3g / 2 tsps Chinese cooking wine
- 11g / 1.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 1 egg white

For the stir-fry

- 4g / 1 Tbsp Sichuan peppercorns or less to taste (see page 18)
- 8g / about ⅓ cup dried red chilies or to taste
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps cooking oil
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 3g / 1 tsp minced ginger
- 25g / 2 Tbsps brown sugar
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 24g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese black vinegar (see page 16)
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch
- 120g / ½ cup water
- 30g / about 2 scallions, diced
- 50g / ⅓ cup roasted peanuts

Ingredients Tips:

- This recipe uses one egg white. Save the egg yolk to make General Tso's Chicken (see page 46).
- Chinese black vinegar can be replaced by balsamic vinegar.
- Roasted peanuts can be replaced by other nuts, such as walnuts and cashews.

1. Dice the chicken breast into ½-inch cubes and place in a bowl. Add salt, onion powder, and Chinese cooking wine and mix continuously for about 5 minutes until the meat becomes sticky.

2. Add cornstarch and egg white, and continue to mix until smooth and velvety. Set it aside for 20 minutes.

> **Chef's Secret:** Cornstarch and egg white marinade is a method in Chinese cuisine called velveting. It creates a starchy layer that can preserve the moisture of the meat while cooking, which leads to juicy, tender meat.

3. Toast the Sichuan peppercorns in a wok over low heat for 2 minutes, and then grind them finely with a spice grinder.

> **Chef's Secret:** Sichuan peppercorns are not spicy but they have a numbing effect. If you're new to this ingredient, you may not have developed a tolerance yet. Please use 1 tsp instead of 1 Tbsp because it can be overly powerful and ruin the dish.

4. Cut the dried red chilies into ½-inch long pieces with a pair of scissors. Discard the seeds and set the chilies aside.

5. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until it is smoking hot. Add the oil and toss it around to create a non-stick layer at the bottom of the wok. Add the marinated chicken and spread the meat so most pieces are touching the bottom of the wok. Do not stir or flip the meat too early, or else the starch will stick to the wok immediately. Wait a minute for the starch to set, and then stir to cook for 2-3 minutes or until the chicken changes color from pink to white.

6. Turn off the heat and take the chicken out of the wok. Make sure to tilt the wok so the excess oil will be left behind.

7. Add Sichuan dou ban jiang to the same wok and stir over low heat for 1 minute or until the oil turns into a bright red color.

8. Add the minced garlic, ginger, Sichuan peppercorn powder, dried red chilies, and brown sugar. Stir until the sugar melts.

9. Introduce the chicken back into the wok along with the rest of the seasonings: the soy sauce, Chinese black vinegar, and dark soy sauce, and stir well.

10. In a measuring cup or small bowl, quickly mix 2 tsps of cornstarch with ½ cup of water until no lumps remain, and then pour the mixture into the wok. Stir for 2 minutes or until the sauce is thickened.

11. Add the diced scallions and the toasted peanuts and toss thoroughly. Taste and adjust the seasonings for your desired flavor. Serve with white rice.











Moo Goo Gai Pan

(Mushroom and Chicken Stir-Fry)

mó gū jī piàn
蘑 菇 鸡 片

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people

This is a staple dish in most families because it is easy and delicious. Mushrooms contain lots of natural MSG, which goes really well with the chicken slices. Even though there are not that many seasonings--just soy sauce and oyster sauce--this dish is packed with umami flavors.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO



For the marinade

- 400g / 14 oz boneless chicken breast
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp soy sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 7g / ½ Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 1.2g / ¼ tsp baking soda
- 6.8g / 1.5 tsps sesame oil

For the stir-fry

- 85g / 3 oz carrots
- 85g /3 oz snow peas
- 100g / 3.5 oz fresh shiitake mushrooms
- 100g / 3.5 oz white button mushrooms
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil
- 15g / about 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 15g / 1 Tbsp water
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce

1. Slice the chicken into ⅛-inch thick pieces. Combine the chicken, salt, soy sauce, oyster sauce, Chinese cooking wine, baking soda, and a drizzle of sesame oil in a mixing bowl and stir well. Let it sit for 20 minutes.

2. Slice the mushrooms and carrot into thin slices and set them aside. I use both shiitake and white button mushrooms for a more complex texture, but one kind of mushroom will also work.

3. Snap the tips of the snow peas and pull to eliminate the tough string that runs along the side. Doing so will give you a better eating experience.

4. Heat the wok until it is smoking hot. Add the oil and swirl it around to create a non-stick layer at the bottom. Add the marinated chicken and stir over high heat for a few minutes or until the meat has changed color.

5. Remove the chicken from the wok and set it aside. Make sure to tilt the wok so the excess oil remains in the wok.

6. To the same wok, add the garlic, carrot, mushroom, and snow peas. Stir over medium heat for 2-3 minutes or until they are a bit soft. If the wok feels dry, add 1 Tbsp water to lubricate.

7. Add the soy sauce and oyster sauce and stir well. Introduce the chicken back into the wok. Keep mixing for 2 more minutes to combine everything.

8. Serve with white rice.



Cashew Chicken

yāo guǒ jī dīng
腰 果 鸡 丁

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Cashew chicken is a popular stir-fry in Chinese cuisine that originated in the Zhejiang Province of China. It is often served with white rice or noodles and is enjoyed for its combination of crunchy cashews, tender chicken, and flavorful sauce.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

For the marinade

- 400g / 14 oz boneless chicken breast
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 1.2g / ¼ tsp baking soda
- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 7g / 1.5 tsps Chinese cooking wine
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste

For the sauce

- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 10.5g / ½ Tbsp hoisin sauce (see page 16)
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water
- 3.8g / 1.5 tsps cornstarch

For the stir-fry

- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil
- 30g / about 10 cloves garlic
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger
- 45g / about 3 scallions
- 70g / 2.5 oz red bell pepper
- 70g / 2.5 oz green bell pepper
- 70g / 2.5 oz carrot
- 75g / ½ cup cashews
- 30-45g / 2-3 Tbsps water as needed

1. Slice the chicken breast into ⅔-inch (1.7cm) thick strips, and then dice into ⅔-inch (1.7cm) cubes. In a mixing bowl, combine the chicken, salt, baking soda, cornstarch, dark soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, and ground white pepper and stir well. Set it aside for 15 minutes.

2. Combine the soy sauce, oyster sauce, hoisin sauce, dark soy sauce, five-spice powder, water, and cornstarch in a bowl and stir until there are no lumps. Set it aside.

3. Peel 10 cloves of garlic and cut them into halves. Slice the ginger thinly. Dice the scallions and separate the white and green parts.

4. Cut the red and green bell pepper into small diamond shapes. Cut the carrot into bite-size pieces.

   Souped Up Swap: The different colors of vegetables make this dish pretty in presentation. However, feel free to switch them with whatever you have in your kitchen.

5. Add oil and the cashews to the wok and stir over medium heat for 1 minute or until the nuts are slightly golden. Remove the cashews from the wok, leaving the oil behind.

   Souped Up Swap: The cashews can be replaced with walnuts, pecans, or peanuts.

6. Turn the heat to high and add the marinated chicken to the wok. Stir for 3 minutes or until the chicken is nicely charred. Remove the chicken from the wok but leave the oil behind.

7. Switch the heat to medium, and then add the garlic, ginger, the diced white parts of the scallions, and the carrot to the same wok and stir until fragrant.

8. Add a tablespoon of water and cover the vegetables with a lid; wait for 2 minutes to allow the steam to cook the carrot through.

9. Add the red and green bell pepper and pour in the sauce. Introduce the chicken back to the wok and stir well. If the wok looks dry, you can add another tablespoon of water to help to mix everything.

10. Before serving, add the nuts and diced green parts of the scallions and toss thoroughly. Serve with white rice or noodles.













Chicken and Broccoli Stir-Fry

xī lán huā chǎo jī xiōng ròu
西 蓝 花 炒 鸡 胸 肉

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Chicken and Broccoli is a classic combination in Chinese cuisine that has become a popular and beloved dish around the world. This simple yet flavorful stir-fry typically features tender slices of chicken and crisp broccoli florets that are tossed with a savory sauce. Roasting the vegetables instead of blanching them adds a different layer of flavor to this dish. You should give it a try, as it tastes so much better than takeout.

For the marinade

- 283g / 10 oz chicken breast
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 15g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 15g / 2 Tbsps cornstarch
- ½ of an egg white

For the sauce

- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 3g / 1 tsp grated ginger
- 3g / 1 tsp grated garlic
- 120g / ½ cup chicken stock
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce

For the stir-fry

- 227g / ½ pound broccoli florets
- 41g / 3 Tbsps oil

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO



1. Slice the chicken breast at a 45-degree angle into slices that are ¼ of an inch thick and place in a bowl. Add soy sauce and cooking wine and mix continuously for a few minutes or until the meat becomes sticky.

2. Add cornstarch and egg white, and continue to mix until smooth and velvety. Let it sit for 20 minutes.

> **Chef's Secret:** The cornstarch and egg white give a lot of moisture to the chicken and create a starchy layer that locks the juiciness inside the meat. That is the key to tender, juicy meat.

3. Combine all of the sauce ingredients in a bowl; mix well and set aside.

4. Heat a wok without oil over medium heat. Add the broccoli florets and toast for a few minutes. Move the vegetable pieces around to allow the cut surfaces to touch the bottom of the pan so you can get some charred marks, adding some complex, smoky flavor to your dish. Set the vegetables aside.

5. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add the oil and swirl it around to cover the bottom of the wok.

6. Add the chicken and stir for a few minutes or until the chicken is lightly charred.

7. Introduce the roasted vegetables back into the wok and pour in the sauce. Toss thoroughly or until the chicken and vegetables are coated nicely.

8. Serve with white rice.

Sesame Chicken

zhī má zhá jī
芝 麻 炸 鸡



Prep Time:
40 minutes

Cooking Time:
25 minutes

Serves:
3 people

Although this is an Americanized Chinese dish, no one can resist these crunchy, nutty little bites of chicken that are covered with a glossy sauce. Read on for lots of tips so you can make it better than takeout.

For the marinade

- 454g / 1 pound boneless chicken breast
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 1 egg
- 22.5g / 3 Tbsps sweet potato starch
- 120g / 1 cup sweet potato starch (to coat the chicken)

For the sauce

- 38g / 3 Tbsps brown sugar
- 42g / 2 Tbsps honey
- 42g / 2.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 43g / 2.5 Tbsps ketchup
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Chinese black vinegar
- 5g / 2 tsps sweet potato starch
- 52.5g / 3.5 Tbsps water

For the stir-fry

- 550g / 2.5 cups oil to deep-fry the chicken
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps toasted sesame seeds
- 6g / 1.5 Tbsps diced scallion for garnish

Ingredients Tips:

1. Chinese black vinegar can be replaced by balsamic vinegar.
2. There are two different forms of sweet potato starch available in the Asian market (fine and coarse). The coarse kind makes the crispiest sesame chicken. If you don't have it, use potato starch or cornstarch and follow the method below to improve the texture.
   - Spray a little bit of water on the starch. Give it 20 seconds to allow the starch to clump up into little balls.
   - Fluff the starch by using a whisk. Then spray on more water, wait for 20 seconds, and whisk it again.
   - Do this four times in total, and you will create some starch lumps, which will give some extra crunch to the chicken.





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1. Cut the boneless chicken breast into ⅓-inch thick slices. In a mixing bowl, combine the chicken, minced garlic, soy sauce, salt, ground black pepper, baking soda, egg, and 3 Tbsps of sweet potato starch. Stir thoroughly until the chicken is well coated, and then let the mixture rest for 20 minutes.

2. Evenly spread 1 cup of sweet potato starch into a big container. Add the marinated chicken, leaving some space between each piece. Put on the lid and shake for a minute or until all the chicken pieces are coated evenly.

3. Take the chicken out and use a spider strainer to shake off the excess starch. You may need to do this in a few batches.

4. Let the chicken pieces rest for 15 minutes to allow the starch to bond well. Otherwise, it will fall off a lot while deep frying.

5. Heat the oil in a wok to 380°F (193°C). Fry the chicken for 2-3 minutes or until lightly golden. Remove from the oil and let the chicken rest on a drying rack for 15 minutes. I suggest frying the chicken in two batches to avoid crowding the wok. Between each fry, use a fine sieve to remove the starch clumps from the oil; otherwise, it will compromise the taste of the dish.

6. Increase the oil's temperature to 400°F (204°C). Double-fry the chicken for 2-3 minutes or until golden brown. Take the chicken out and set it aside.

Chef's Secret: Double-frying will reinforce the crunchiness so the coating stays crispy longer.

7. In a large bowl, combine the brown sugar, honey, soy sauce, ketchup, vinegar, water, and sweet potato starch.

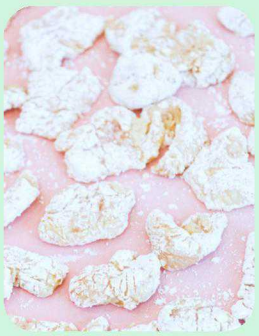
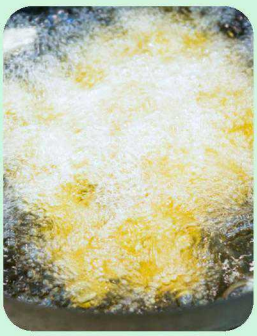
8. Pour the sauce into a large wok and stir over medium heat for a few minutes or until the sauce is thickened.

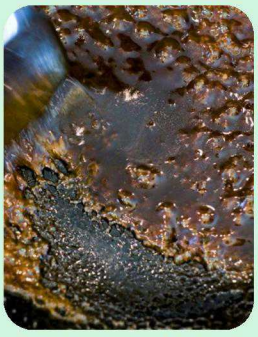
9. Add the fried chicken, sesame oil, and toasted sesame seeds, and then toss everything until the chicken is coated nicely with the sauce.

10. Sprinkle some diced scallions as garnish. Serve with white rice.








Orange Chicken

chéng zi jī
橙 子 鸡

Prep Time: 40 minutes

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Although orange chicken is not an authentic Chinese dish, the technique of making fried chicken and coating it with a sweet and sour sauce is commonly used in many, many Chinese recipes, such as sweet and sour pork, fish, shrimp, and tofu. This recipe will help you achieve that crispy outside, tender inside consistency, and a perfect balance of sweet and sour sauce so you can make sweet and sour anything.

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For the marinade

- 300g / 10.6 oz boneless chicken breast
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 30g / 2 Tbsps freshly squeezed orange juice

For the batter

- 2 eggs
- 100g / 3.5 oz cornstarch

For the sauce

- 9g / 2 tsps cooking oil
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps minced ginger
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 0.5g / ¼ tsp red pepper flakes
- 60g / ¼ cup fresh orange juice
- 58g / 3.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 50g / ¼ cup brown sugar
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps orange zest
- 21g / 1 Tbsp honey
- 48g / 3 Tbsps white vinegar
- 15g / 1 Tbsp water
- 10g / 4 tsps cornstarch

For frying and serving:

- 440g / 2 cups frying oil
- 4g / 1 Tbsp diced scallion as garnish
- Red pepper flakes as garnish
- A few orange slices as garnish

1. Cut the chicken breast into two strips lengthwise and then slice the strips into ¼-inch-thick pieces.

2. Combine the chicken, salt, ground black pepper, and freshly squeezed orange juice in a mixing bowl and mix well. Let the mixture rest for 30 minutes to allow the orange juice to tenderize the meat.

3. Mix the two eggs with 100g of cornstarch until it makes a smooth batter. It takes a few minutes before the cornstarch changes from being clumpy to smooth.

4. Combine the chicken with the cornstarch batter and mix thoroughly.

5. Heat the oil in a wok to 360°F / 182°C. If you don't have a thermometer, test the temperature by adding a few drops of batter. If the batter bubbles and floats to the top of the oil immediately, the temperature is good.

6. Carefully add the chicken slices into the oil, one by one, and fry for 3 minutes or until the meat is slightly golden. Remove the chicken from the oil and let it rest for 10 minutes. I suggest frying the chicken in two batches to avoid crowding the wok. Between each fry, please use a fine sieve to remove the starch clumps from the oil; otherwise, it will compromise the taste of the dish.

7. Increase the oil's temperature to 390°F / 198°C. Double-fry the chicken for 2 minutes or until golden brown. Remove the chicken from the oil and set it aside.

Chef's Secret: Double-frying is the key to ensuring all your chicken comes out crispy.

8. To make the orange sauce, add 2 tsps oil, minced ginger, garlic, and red pepper flakes to the wok. Stir over medium-low heat until fragrant.

9. Add the fresh orange juice, soy sauce, brown sugar, orange zest, honey, and vinegar. Stir until the sugar melts.

10. Mix 1 Tbsp water with 4 tsps cornstarch until no lumps remain, and then add it to the wok. Stir over medium heat for a few minutes to thicken the sauce. Be aware that if the sauce is too thin, the chicken will lose its crunchiness faster.

11. Toss the fried chicken with the sauce until it's thoroughly coated. Garnish with diced scallions, red pepper flakes, and orange slices. Serve with white rice.















Crispy Lemon Chicken

níng méng zhá jī
柠 檬 炸 鸡

Prep Time: 40 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 3 people

As one of the most popular take-out dishes, Crispy Lemon Chicken is also breaded and then fried and coated with a glossy sauce. It hits all the notes of lemony, savory, and tangy. You'll find that this sauce is very versatile; it works great with any other proteins such as shrimp, pork, and beef. Usually, restaurants will deep-fry the chicken. However, by cooking it at home, you can try shallow-frying it with less oil and you will get the same crispy result.

For the marinade

- 454g / 1 pound boneless chicken breast or thigh
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 3g / 1 tsp minced ginger
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps soy sauce
- 7g / 1.5 tsps Chinese cooking wine
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper or to taste

For the lemon sauce

- 42g / 2 Tbsps honey
- 50g / 4 Tbsps brown sugar
- 58g / 3.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 32g / 2 Tbsps sambal chili sauce
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 9g / 1 Tbsp lemon zest
- 52.5g / 3.5 Tbsps lemon juice

For frying and finishing

- 80g / ⅔ cup cornstarch
- 93g / ⅔ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 egg
- 220g / 1 cup oil to shallow-fry
- 4g / 1 Tbsp diced scallion as garnish
- 3-4 lemon slices as garnish

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1. Cut the boneless chicken breast or thigh into big strips, and then slice it into bite-size pieces.

2. Combine the chicken, minced garlic, minced ginger, soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, and ground black pepper in a mixing bowl and mix thoroughly. Let the mixture rest for 20 minutes.

3. While waiting, combine all of the lemon sauce ingredients in a bowl and mix well.

> **Meal Prepping Tip:** You can multiply the sauce and keep it in the freezer for up to six months. The sauce will not solidify in the freezer due to the high sugar and salt content, so you can use it anytime without defrosting.

4. The next step is breading the chicken. Combine ⅔ cup cornstarch and ⅔ cup all-purpose flour in a large ziplock bag and shake well.

> **Chef's Secret:** Since cornstarch is the key to making chicken crispy, you want to use both cornstarch and flour. If you use only flour, the breading will come out doughy.

5. Add the marinated chicken into the bag and shake until well-coated. Use a sieve to get rid of the excess flour and transfer the chicken into a bowl.

6. Crack one egg into the coated chicken and mix thoroughly. Put the chicken back into the bag and shake to coat it twice because a thicker breading will protect the breast meat from drying out.

7. Use a sieve to get rid of the excess flour again. Let the chicken rest for 15 minutes so the flour has enough time to bond together, and less breading falls off during the frying.

8. Meanwhile, heat 1 cup oil to 400°F / 204°C.

9. Fry the chicken in two batches over medium-high heat for 2 minutes on each side or until both sides are golden brown. Shallow-frying uses less oil than deep-frying. Since the food is only partly submerged, it must be flipped over partway through the cooking process. Before you fry the second batch, remove the flour crumbs from the oil using a fine sieve.

10. Once the chicken is golden brown, remove it from the oil and let it rest.

> **Meal Prepping Tip:** You can freeze the chicken after frying for up to 6 months. Whenever you want to eat it again, heat it in an air fryer (360°F / 182°C for about 10 minutes) or an oven (400°F / 204°C for 12-14 minutes) without defrosting. Then coat it with the sauce, and you have a quick delicious dinner ready.

11. Pour out most of the frying oil from the wok but leave 1 Tbsp behind. Add the lemon sauce and stir over medium heat for 3 minutes or until it thickens.

12. Add the fried chicken and toasted sesame seeds to the wok. Toss everything until the chicken is coated with the sauce. Recommend to combine the chicken with the sauce at the last minute when everybody is ready to eat, so the chicken retains its crust and crispiness. The longer you let the chicken sit before serving, the less crispy it will be.

13. Garnish with diced scallions and lemon slices and serve with white rice.










General Tso's Chicken

zuǒ zōng táng jī
左 宗 棠 鸡

Prep Time: 30 minutes
Cooking Time: 30 minutes
Serves: 3 people

This homemade General Tso's Chicken has a perfect balance of sweet, savory, spicy, smoky, and sour elements, and its extra-crispy crust remains for a long time.

The chef who invented this dish hails from Hunan Province in China, one of the places where people are obsessed with chilies. If you can't find whole red chilies, you can use 1 teaspoon of red pepper flakes instead.



For the marinade

- 454g / 1 pound boneless chicken thigh
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 4.3g / ¾ tsp salt
- 5.5g / 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 egg yolk

For the sauce

- 56g / 4.5 Tbsps sugar
- 2.5g / 1 tsp cornstarch
- 40g / 2.5 Tbsps Chinese black vinegar (see page 16)
- 28g / 5 tsps soy sauce
- 52.5g / 3.5 Tbsps water
- 4.5g / 1 tsp cooking oil
- 3g / 1 tsp minced ginger
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced garlic
- 4g / about 8 dried red chilies or to taste

For coating and deep-frying

- 40g / ⅓ cup cornstarch
- 47g / ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- 440g / 2 cups oil

For the garnish

- 6g / 2 Tbsps diced cilantro
- 6g / 2 tsps toasted sesame seeds

Ingredient Tips

- You can use breast meat, but just be aware that the meat might be a bit less juicy inside compared to using chicken thighs.
- This recipe uses 1 egg yolk. Save the egg white to make Mongolian Beef (see page 116) or Chicken and Broccoli Stir-fry (see page 39).
- Chinese black vinegar can be replaced by balsamic vinegar.

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1. Cut the chicken thigh into bite-size pieces.

2. Combine the chicken, salt, ground black pepper, soy sauce, and egg yolk in a large mixing bowl and mix thoroughly. Let it sit for about 15 minutes. The egg yolk contains a certain amount of fat, which makes the chicken extra crispy.

3. Combine the cornstarch and all-purpose flour thoroughly.

Chef's Secret: Cornstarch is what makes the chicken crispy. If you use only all-purpose flour, the chicken will come out doughy.

4. Place half of the flour and cornstarch mixture into a large container. Add the chicken and cover it with the rest of the flour. Put on the lid and shake for 2 minutes or until all the chicken pieces are coated evenly.

5. Put the chicken in a sieve and shake off the excess flour. Set the chicken aside.

6. Heat the oil to 350°F / 175°C and fry the chicken in 2 batches, about 2-3 minutes for each batch. When the chicken is lightly golden, remove it from the oil and let it rest for 15 minutes.

7. Use a fine sieve to remove the small particles from the oil; otherwise, they will burn while double-frying and bring a bad taste to the dish.

8. Increase the oil's temperature to 370°F / 185°C, and double-fry the chicken over high heat for 2 minutes to reinforce the crispy texture. Once the chicken is golden brown, remove it from the oil and set it aside.

9. Combine the sugar, cornstarch, Chinese black vinegar, soy sauce, and water in a bowl and set it aside.

10. Cut the dried red chilies into ½-inch-long pieces and remove the seeds.

11. Heat your wok over low heat and add the oil, minced garlic, minced ginger, and dried red chilies. Stir until the chilies are slightly smoked.

12. Pour in the sauce. Switch the heat to medium and continue to stir for 2-3 minutes or until the sauce thickens into a syrupy texture. Make sure to evaporate as much moisture as possible, so it doesn't soften the chicken's crust once combined.

13. Add the fried chicken to the wok and toss thoroughly with the sauce. Sprinkle some toasted sesame seeds and diced cilantro for garnish.

Meal Prepping Tip: Make extra chicken and freeze it right after the first fry. It will stay good for up to 4 months. Whenever you want to eat General Tso's Chicken again, there is no need to defrost it; just directly deep-fry the chicken at 370°F / 185°C for 4-5 minutes and coat it with the sauce. It's a delicious dinner with almost no work!













Taiwanese Popcorn Chicken

tái wān yán sū jī
台 湾 盐 酥 鸡

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Several key features contribute to the unique flavor and texture of this Taiwanese Popcorn Chicken. The crispy breading is crafted from sweet potato starch, a gluten-free alternative that adds a satisfying crunch. Orange juice is incorporated into the marinade to infuse the chicken with a hint of fruitiness. The addition of fried basil and Chinese salt and pepper perfectly complements each other, resulting in a delectable and irresistible dish.

For the Jiao Yan Seasoning (Chinese Salt and Pepper)

- 34.2g / 2 Tbsps sea salt
- 8g / 2 Tbsps Whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 10g / 1 Tbsp whole white peppercorns

For the marinade

- 500g / 1.1 pounds boneless chicken breast
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 2g / 1 tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 9g / about 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 3g / 1 tsp minced ginger
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp onion powder
- 17.6g / 2 Tbsps all-purpose flour
- 1 egg white
- 30g / 2 Tbsps fresh orange juice
- 120g / 1 cup sweet potato starch (preferably the thick version; see notes)

For frying and finishing

- 550g / 2.5 cups oil to fry the chicken
- 37.5g / about 1.5 cups Thai basil leaves
- A few shakes of chili powder (optional)

Ingredients Tips:

- There are two different forms of sweet potato starch available in the Asian market (fine and coarse). The coarse kind makes the crispiest sesame chicken. If you don't have it, use potato starch or cornstarch and follow the method on page 40 to improve the texture.
- Thai basil is known as jiu ceng ta (九层塔) in Chinese. It smells more intense than the Italian sweet basil, but you can use Italian basil as a replacement.
- This recipe uses one egg white. Save the egg yolk to make General Tso's Chicken (see page 46).

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Make the Jiao Yan seasoning

1. Jiao Yan (椒盐) is a popular seasoning used on all kinds of fried food, such as crispy fried chicken wings, squid, shrimp, and potato wedges. It can be replaced by regular salt and pepper if you don't have time to make it, but it's worth the effort if you can.

2. Toast the sea salt, Sichuan peppercorns, and white peppercorns in a cast-iron skillet over low heat for 3-4 minutes, then remove the mixture from the skillet and let it cool on the side.

3. Once the mixture is cool, blend in a spice grinder until fine.

4. Store in a sealed container for up to 4 months.

Marinate and bread the chicken

1. Slice the chicken breast into ½-inch thick strips and then dice into ½-inch cubes.

2. In a nonreactive bowl, combine the chicken breast, soy sauce, salt, five-spice powder, minced garlic, ginger, onion powder, all-purpose flour, egg white, and orange juice. Mix thoroughly and let it sit in the fridge for 30 minutes to allow the orange juice to tenderize the meat.

   Chef's Secret: The all-purpose flour acts as a glue, which helps to adhere the breading later. You can replace it with cornstarch and make this into a gluten-free recipe.

3. Add the sweet potato starch and the marinated chicken into a big bag. Seal the bag and shake until all the chicken is well coated.

4. Put the chicken in a sieve and shake off the excess flour. Rest the chicken on a tray for 10 to 15 minutes to allow the coating to bond; otherwise, the starch will fall off while deep-frying.

Deep-fry the chicken

1. Heat the oil to 350°F / 175°C.

2. Fry the chicken in 3 batches. Each batch takes about 3 minutes over high heat or until the chicken is golden brown.

3. When the chicken is almost done frying, throw in a handful of basil leaves and quickly cover the wok with a lid to avoid the oil splashing. Fry for 8-10 seconds. If the basil looks clean, you don't have to wash it. If you do wash the basil, be careful to dry it thoroughly; it's dangerous to deep-fry wet basil.

4. Remove the chicken and the basil from the oil and use paper towels to absorb the excess grease. Then, continue to fry the next batch of chicken.

5. Sprinkle the Jiao Jan Seasoning and red pepper flakes over the chicken to taste and serve as an appetizer or a main dish with rice and vegetables.















Fried Chicken Wings with Jiao Yan Flavor

jiāo yán zhá jī chì
椒 盐 炸 鸡 翅

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4 people

Marinate overnight

I know there are already tons of fried chicken recipes out there, but this one is speechless delicious. It has the perfect crust that remains crispy for a long time, even if you let the chicken sit for a couple of hours. My secret apple marinade makes the chicken wings extra juicy and flavorful inside.

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For the marinade

- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 3g / about 1 ginger slice
- 4g / 1 Tbsp diced white part of the scallion
- 42g / 2.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 8.6g / 1.5 tsps salt
- 4g / 2 tsps thirteen-spice powder
- 43g / 1.5 oz apple, peeled, seeded, and diced
- 22.5 / 1.5 Tbsps fresh lemon juice
- 907g / 2 pounds chicken wings

For the flour coating

- 70g / ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 60g / ½ cup cornstarch
- 12g / 2.5 tsps baking powder
- 4g / 2 tsps thirteen-spice powder
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt

For frying and finishing

- 660g / 3 cups oil for deep-frying
- Jiao Yan Seasoning to sprinkle onto the wings to taste

Ingredient Tips

- The thirteen-spice powder (see page 19) can be replaced by five-spice powder or curry powder.
- Jiao Yan (椒盐) is a popular seasoning used on all kinds of crispy fried food. You can check page 49 to make it at home, or replace it with regular salt and pepper.

1. In a blender cup, add garlic, ginger, the white part of the scallion, soy sauce, salt, thirteen-spice powder, diced apple, and lemon juice. Blend everything into a puree.

   Chef's Secret: Apple and lemon juice do a great job at tenderizing meat. In addition, they add moisture to the chicken and provide a natural fruity taste.

2. Put the chicken wings and the puree into a ziplock bag. Massage for a few minutes, and then let it sit in the fridge overnight.

3. Mix the all-purpose flour, cornstarch, baking powder, thirteen-spice powder, and salt in a big mixing bowl.

   Chef's Secret: Baking powder releases a lot of air when heated in the hot oil, which adds lightness and fluffiness to the crust.

4. Coat the chicken wings with the flour mixture and then shake off the excess flour. Let the wings rest for 15 minutes so the flour and the starch can bond well. If you fry them immediately, the coating will fall off, which not only affects the final texture of the chicken wings but also ruins the quality of the oil.

5. Heat the oil to 350°F / 175°C. Fry the chicken wings in two batches. Each batch will take 6-8 minutes or until lightly golden. Between each batch, use a sieve to remove any bits of coating that fell off in the oil so they don't cause a burnt taste.

6. Remove the wings from the oil and rest for 10 minutes.

7. Increase the oil's temperature to 390°F / 195°C and double-fry the chicken wings over high heat for 2 minutes to reinforce the crust.

8. Remove the wings from the oil and use paper towels to absorb the excess grease.

9. Sprinkle the Jiao Yan Seasoning over the wings according to your taste and serve as an appetizer.

   Meal Prepping Tip: Freeze these wings right after the first fry. They will last about 4 months in the freezer. Whenever you want to eat them again, fry the frozen wings at 350°F / 175°C for 5-7 minutes without defrosting.















Mouthwatering Chicken

kǒu shuǐ jī
口 水 鸡

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 2 people

This is a classic Sichuan recipe. The chicken is poached to the perfect doneness and then dressed with a spicy and numbing sauce. We used quite a lot of Sichuan peppercorns in this dish, so that it really numbs your tongue and lips and makes your mouth watery. That is how it is named. If you're a fan of spicy food, this is one of those recipes you will love. By the way, this dish is usually made with bone-in and skin-on chicken because we enjoy that silky texture. If you don't like chicken skin, it is totally fine to switch to skinless breast meat.

For poaching the chicken

- 454g / 1 pound chicken leg quarters
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 18g / about 6 ginger slices
- 30g / about 2 scallions, cut into 2-inch long pieces
- 4g / 1 Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 17.1g / 1 Tbsp salt
- 2 liters / about 8.5 cups water

For the sauce

- 6g / about 2 ginger slices
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic
- 8g / ½ Tbsp pure sesame paste
- 60g / ¼ cup the broth that you cook the chicken with
- 50 - 66g / 3-4 Tbsps soy sauce
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Chinese black vinegar (see page 16)
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 1.5g / 1 tsp Sichuan peppercorn powder (see page 18)
- 27g - 68g / 2-5 Tbsps red chili oil, depending on your tolerance

For serving

- 200g / 7 oz cucumber
- 6g / 2 Tbsps diced cilantro

Ingredient Tips

- Chicken leg quarters are a cut that includes bone-in and skin-on thigh, drumstick, and part of the hind end of the chicken. If you don't have this cut, use chicken drumsticks or thighs only.
- You can use 100% pure peanut butter to replace the pure sesame paste.
- Red chili oil (油泼辣子) is one of the must-have pantry essentials in Sichuan cuisine, and it is easy to make at home. You can check page 280 to learn how to make it.

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1. Add the chicken leg quarters, garlic, ginger, scallions, Sichuan peppercorns, salt, and 2 liters of water to a pot and bring it to a boil over high heat. Turn the heat to low and simmer for 8 minutes.

2. Turn off the heat. Remove the pot from the stove. Let the chicken sit in the hot water for 5-10 more minutes or until the inner temperature reaches 165°F / 74°C.

3. Transfer the chicken into an ice bath until it cools down completely. Use a heavy-duty cleaver to cut the chicken into 1/2-inch thick pieces.

> **Chef's Secret:** Based on the Cantonese standard, the perfectly poached chicken should have the chicken meat thoroughly cooked, but the marrow inside the bones is still pink. The chicken meat is soft, smooth, and silky at this stage. If the marrow turns brown, it means the meat is overcooked. I understand some may worry about the risk of Salmonella infection with pink-colored marrow. Just to clarify, Salmonella lives in the intestines of humans, animals, and birds. The chicken bone is the last part that Salmonella can get into after the chicken is slaughtered. If you use fresh chicken, the bone shouldn't contain Salmonella. As for the meat part, as long as you cook it to 165°F, it is safe to eat. Of course, if you don't know how long the chicken has been sitting on the shelf or you are not comfortable with pink chicken marrow, you can cook it to your desired doneness.

4. Thinly julienne the cucumber and put it on the serving plate. Place the chicken on top of the cucumber and set it aside.

5. To make the sauce, blend the ginger, garlic, sesame paste, and ¼ cup of the broth that you used to cook the chicken in a blender until it creates a puree.

6. Add the soy sauce, Chinese black vinegar, sugar, Sichuan peppercorn powder, and red chili oil to the puree. Mix well. Taste and adjust the flavor based on your preference.

7. Pour the sauce all over the chicken. Garnish with some cilantro. Serve as a cold dish.

Hainanese Chicken Rice

hǎi nán jī fàn
海 南 鸡 饭

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cooking Time: 1.5 hours

Serves: 6 people

Hainanese Chicken Rice is a dish that highlights the tenderest and silkiest chicken. It sounds like one dish, but it is a complete meal as it includes chicken, rice, soup, and a few dipping sauces. Although it is a popular Singapore food, it harkens back to a dish called wen chang ji (文昌鸡) in Hainan, China. Wen chang ji is a special breed of chicken that is organically raised and freshly slaughtered right before cooking. The chicken itself is fatty and flavorful, the chicken skin is bright yellow when cooked, and it has a rich buttery taste – it's so delicious. In comparison, the chicken in the United States is less fatty and lighter in taste. I recommend using organic chicken for the best result.



For blanching and poaching the chicken

- 1.4 - 1.8kg / 3-4 pounds whole organic chicken
- 25.7g / 1.5 Tbsps sea salt to rub the chicken skin
- 5 liter / 5.2 qts of water
- 45g / about 3 scallions
- 30g / about 2 inches ginger, sliced thinly
- 2.5 liters / 2.6 qts ice water
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil to brush the chicken
- 0.3g / ⅛ tsp turmeric powder for color, optional

For cooking the rice

- 400g / 2 cups jasmine rice
- 27g / 2 Tbsps chicken fat or cooking oil
- 27g / 3 Tbsps diced shallot
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced ginger
- 600g / 2.5 cups of the chicken poaching broth
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt

For making the ginger scallion sauce

- 21g / ⅓ cup diced scallion
- 22.5g / 2.5 Tbsps grated ginger
- 4.3g / ¾ tsp salt
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps vegetable oil

For making the chili sauce

- 30g / about 10 cloves garlic
- 15g / about 1 inch ginger
- 100g / 3.5 oz mild red chili
- 6g / about 3 Thai bird's eye chilies (see page 23)
- 68g / 4 Tbsps fish sauce
- 45g / 3 Tbsps lime juice
- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp sugar
- 22.5g / 1.5 Tbsps chicken broth

For making the sweet soy sauce

- 50g / 3 Tbsps soy sauce
- 33g / 2 Tbsps dark soy sauce
- 25g / 2 Tbsps palm sugar or brown sugar
- 6.8g / 1.5 tsps sesame oil

For making the soup

- The broth that you poached the chicken in
- 170g / 6 oz cabbage
- 85g / 3 oz carrot slices
- 11.4g / 2 tsps salt

For serving

- 6g / 2 Tbsps diced cilantro as garnish
- 227g / ½ pound cucumber

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Poach the chicken

1. Trim any excess chicken fat from the end of the cavity if there is any. Then dice and reserve the fat in the fridge. You will use it to cook the rice later.

2. Rub the chicken inside and outside with coarse sea salt for 5 minutes to remove impurities and unpleasant smells; then rinse under running water thoroughly.

> **Short Cuts:** If you don't want to use a whole chicken, use chicken leg quarters but adjust the cooking time and method by following the Mouthwatering Chicken recipe (see page 52).

3. Tie the chicken legs with kitchen twine. Leave a little string at the end, making it easier to pick up and transfer the chicken later.

4. Fill a big pot with 5 liters of water and bring to a simmer. The pot needs to be big enough for you to move the chicken around to ensure even blanching.

5. Drop the chicken in hot water, drag the kitchen twine to move the chicken around for 15 seconds to shrink the skin, and then remove it from the water for 30 seconds. Repeat three times.

6. Transfer the chicken into a smaller pot, add the scallions and ginger slices, and then pour in 2.5 liters of the blanching water to cover the chicken. We used 5 liters of water to blanch, but we only needed 2.5 liters now. You can discard the rest of the water. The poaching liquid is very important in making the rice, soup, and chili sauce later. By switching to a smaller pot with less water, you ensure the broth is concentrated and full of chicken flavor when done poaching.

7. Turn the heat to the lowest and poach the chicken for 50-60 minutes or until the inner temperature reaches 160°F / 71°C.

> **Chef's Secret:** The standard Chinese poaching technique is to cook at such a low temperature that you only see a few bubbles coming up from the pot at a time. There should not be any obvious boiling activity in the pot. The water should be calm and slightly steamy, with the temperature around 185°F / 85°C. This ensures the most tender chicken meat.

8. Once the chicken reaches 160°F / 71°C, transfer it to an ice bath for 15 minutes to stop the cooking process, and then set it aside. Reserve the chicken poaching broth by keeping it warm on a spare stove over the lowest heat; you will use it later.

9. Mix the sesame oil with turmeric powder, and then evenly brush it onto the chicken skin. Set the chicken aside.









Cook the chicken rice

1. Rinse the jasmine rice under running water several times and drain it completely.

2. Stir the reserved chicken fat in a pot over medium heat until you get 2 Tbsps oil. If you didn't reserve any chicken fat, use the same amount of cooking oil.

3. Add the diced shallots, minced garlic, and ginger, and sauté on low heat for a few minutes or until the aromatics are lightly golden.

4. Add the rice, salt, and 2.5 cups of chicken poaching broth and bring to a simmer. Put on the lid and cook the rice on low heat for 15 minutes.

5. Fluff the rice and set it aside.

Make the chili sauce

1. Roughly dice the garlic, ginger, mild red chili, and Thai bird's eye chilies. I use both mild and hot chilies to adjust the spice level to my preference. If you don't eat spicy food, skip the Thai bird's eye chilies.

2. Add the garlic, ginger, red chili, Thai bird's eye chilies, fish sauce, lime juice, sugar, and 1.5 Tbsps of the chicken broth into a blender. Blend until smooth. Set the chili sauce aside.

Make the scallion ginger sauce

1. Add diced scallions, grated ginger, and salt to a heat-proof bowl.

2. Heat 2.5 Tbsps vegetable oil until it is smoking hot; pour it over the aromatics and mix well. Set it aside.

Make the sweet soy sauce

1. Combine the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, palm sugar (or brown sugar), and sesame oil in a saucepot. Stir over low heat until the sugar melts. Set it aside.

Make the chicken cabbage soup

1. You should have about 1.9 liters / 2 qts of the chicken poaching broth left in the pot. Bring it to a boil.

2. Add the carrot slices, cabbage, and salt to taste; cook for a minute.

Plate and serve

1. Slice the cucumber thinly and put it onto a serving plate.

2. Cut the chicken into bite-size pieces and place it on top of the cucumber slices. Garnish with diced cilantro.

3. Serve the chicken with chicken rice, chicken cabbage soup, chili sauce, sweet soy sauce, and scallion ginger sauce.

















Scallion Sauce Chicken

cōng yóu jī
葱 油 鸡

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 3 people

This dish, similar to Mouthwatering Chicken (see page 52), features perfectly cooked meat accompanied by a savory and tangy sauce. The difference is that Scallion Sauce Chicken is not spicy, making it suitable for everyone. Another reason I find this dish impressive is that even though the sauce is extremely flavorful, it doesn't overpower the chicken, allowing you to enjoy the purest taste of the chicken meat.

- 907g / 2 pounds chicken leg quarters
- 1.2L / 5 cups of water
- 38g / about 2.5 inches of ginger
- 60g / about 4 scallions
- 90g / about 2 shallots
- 50.8g / 3 Tbsps oil
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 36g / 2 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 6.3g / 1.5 tsps sugar

Ingredient Tip

- Chicken leg quarters are a cut that includes bone-in and skin-on thigh, drumstick, and part of the hind end of the chicken. If you don't have this cut, use chicken drumsticks or thighs only.

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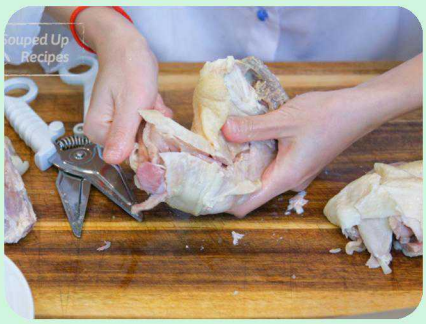

1. Slice the ginger thinly; cut 2 scallions diagonally into 1/2-inch pieces, and keep 2 scallions whole. Quarter 2 shallots, peel the outer layers, and then slice them thinly.

2. Add chicken leg quarters, half the ginger slices (reserve the rest for later), 2 whole scallions, and 5 cups of water to a stock pot and bring it to a boil over medium heat. If you don't like dark meat, use the same amount of chicken breast and 5 cups of chicken broth instead of water.

3. Turn the heat to low and simmer the chicken leg quarters for 8 minutes. Turn off the heat and let the chicken sit in the hot water for 15 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, add the cooking oil to a saucepan, along with the ginger slices, sliced shallots, and diced scallions (Reserve 1 tbsp for garnish). Stir over medium-low heat for a few minutes or until the aromatics are golden.

5. Separate the aromatics and the oil by pouring them through a sieve. Add the oil back to the saucepan and reserve the crispy goodness on the side.

6. To the saucepan, add the soy sauce, oyster sauce, and sugar. Mix over low heat until the seasoning is condensed. Turn off the heat and set the sauce aside.

7. Check the chicken by poking the thickest part with a fork. If there is no pink juice leaking out, the chicken is completely cooked through. Transfer the chicken into an ice bath to stop the cooking process.

8. Take the chicken out of the ice bath and use paper towels to wipe the excess water.

9. Debone the chicken and cut the meat into bite-size pieces. You can remove the skin if you want, but as a native Cantonese, I love the texture of the skin, so I keep it.

10. Place the chicken on a serving plate. Drizzle the scallion sauce all over and garnish with some fresh diced scallions and the reserved crispy fried aromatics.

11. Serve as a cold dish.

Three-Cup Chicken

sān bēi jī
三 杯 鸡

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cooking Time: 50 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Hailing from Jiangxi Province, Three-Cup Chicken has since gained popularity in Taiwan for its simple preparation and incredible taste. The name "three-cup" alludes to the three liquid seasonings used in the recipe--soy sauce, sesame oil, and rice wine--which harmonize to create a deliciously savory flavor. Traditional Three-Cup Chicken is made using a whole chicken, which is chopped into bite-sized pieces, because cooking the chicken with the bones adds more flavor. However, I found that chicken wings are a perfect size and offer the perfect ratio between the meat and the bone.

- 907g / 2 pounds chicken wings
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 12g / about 4 ginger slices
- 3g / about 6 dried red chilies, optional
- 20g / about 4 scallion stalks, white part only
- 45g / about 15 cloves garlic
- 38g / 3 Tbsps sugar
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 91g / 5.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 168g / ¾ cup rice wine
- 113g / 4 oz dried bamboo shoot
- 25g / about 1 cup Thai basil leaves

Ingredient Tips

- Thai basil can be replaced with sweet basil.
- Dried bamboo shoots are hard to find outside of China; you can replace them with dried shiitake mushrooms.

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1. Soak the dried bamboo shoots with warm water for 1 hour. Drain and cut into bite-size pieces.
2. Slice the garlic cloves in half and set them aside.
3. Use paper towels to dry the chicken wings.
4. Add the oil, ginger slices, dried red chilies, the white part of the scallions, and the garlic to the pan. Stir over medium heat for a few minutes or until the garlic is slightly golden on the edges. Push all the aromatics to the side of the pan.
5. Add the chicken wings and pan-fry over medium heat for 3-5 minutes on each side or until golden brown.
6. Turn the heat to low and move the chicken around to create an empty well in the center. Add the sugar to the empty well and stir for 2 minutes to caramelize it.
7. Transfer everything into a clay pot. Add rice wine, soy sauce, sesame oil, and the soaked bamboo shoots.

Souped Up Swap: If you don't have a clay pot, you can use a heavy-duty Dutch oven or slow cooker. If you use a regular pot, it is better to be nonstick; otherwise, the chicken will stick to the bottom because this dish contains sugar.

8. Mix everything and simmer the wings on low heat for 40 minutes. Come back every 10 minutes to give it a stir to ensure even cooking.
9. After 40 minutes, check the consistency of the sauce. It should be thick and glossy. If not, turn the heat to high and reduce it.
10. Add a handful of basil and mix thoroughly. Serve with white rice.



Soy Sauce Chicken

chī yóu jī
豉 油 鸡

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 1.2 hours

Serves: 3 people

Marinate overnight

This is a classic Cantonese dish that's famous for its savory flavor and silky, tender meat. You can definitely cook this in a regular pot or wok, but when I first made this, I used a rice cooker, and it came out like a perfectly roasted chicken. If you don't have an oven, learn this rice cooker hack and impress your friends and family.

- A whole chicken, about 1 - 1.5kg / 2.2 - 3.3 pounds
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 133g / ½ cup light soy sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 112g / ½ cup Chinese rice wine
- 25g / 2 Tbsps brown sugar
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 1.3g / 1 tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 125g / about ½ of a medium-sized onion
- 15g / about 1 inch ginger
- 24g / about 8 cloves garlic
- 360g / 1.5 cups water

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1. It is better to choose a younger and smaller chicken to achieve a tender, silky result. If you don't want to use a whole chicken, use bone-in, skin-on chicken legs or thighs instead.
2. Trim off the excess fat attached to the chicken, and then dice the fat and reserve it to brown the chicken later.
3. Tuck the wings behind the back of the chicken. Use kitchen twine to tie the legs together and leave a few inches of string at the end so you can lift and flip the chicken easily later.
4. Lightly crush two scallions and stuff them into the chicken cavity.
5. Roughly chop the ginger and crush it, cut the onion into bite-size pieces, and smash the garlic cloves.
6. In a small bowl, add the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, brown sugar, star anise, cinnamon stick, bay leaves, Sichuan peppercorns, ginger, garlic, and onion. Stir until the sugar is dissolved.
7. Put the chicken into a ziplock bag along with the sauce. Push out all the air and seal the bag. Let it sit in the fridge, breast side down, overnight.
8. The next day, take the chicken out of the bag. Reserve the marinade liquid on the side.
9. Set the rice cooker to cooking mode. Add the diced chicken fat and stir for a few minutes or until the oil is rendered out.

Souped Up Swap: Use a stainless steel stock pot if you don't have a rice cooker.

10. Place the chicken into the rice cooker and sear the skin until golden brown. Flip the chicken around to char as much surface as you can. This will take 6-8 minutes.
11. Add the reserved marinade sauce, including all of the spices and aromatics; pour in 1.5 cups of water and bring it to a simmer.
12. Cover the chicken and cook on low heat for 50 minutes to 1 hour (depending on the size of your chicken) or until the inner temperature reaches 165°F / 74°C. Flip the chicken every 15 minutes to ensure even cooking.
13. Remove the chicken from the rice cooker. There will be some sauce left in the rice cooker. Brush it all over the chicken skin.
14. Cut the chicken into bite-size pieces and serve with white rice.



Crispy Roasted Cornish Hen

cuì pí tóng zi jī
脆 皮 童 子 鸡

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 40 minutes
Serves: 1 person

Marinate overnight

This Crispy Roasted Cornish Hen is super easy to make. Just marinate the birds and roast them. You can do it in the oven or air fryer. I included both of the methods. These little chickens are juicy, tender, and much quicker to cook than a large bird, which is a different option to serve for Thanksgiving in case you don't want to deal with a huge turkey.

This recipe is actually a simplified version of Cantonese roasted pigeons. I wasn't able to buy pigeons in Florida, USA, but luckily, the Cornish hen is perfect because the size is similar. In fact, this is a single-serving size bird. That makes it easy to multiply the number of people you're going to serve and decide how many Cornish hens you want to cook.

For marinating the Cornish hen

- 1 Cornish hen, around 725g / 1.6 pounds
- 20g / about 2 pieces of Cantonese fermented bean curd
- 16.5g / 1 Tbsp fermented bean curd brine from the jar (see page 17)
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 10.5g / ½ Tbsp hoisin sauce (see page 16)
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper
- 90g / about 2 shallots, sliced thinly
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, smashed and diced
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, smashed and diced
- 30g / about 2 scallions, cut into stalks

For glazing the hen

- 6.3g / ½ tbsp sugar
- 10.5g / ½ Tbsp honey
- 64g / ¼ cup white vinegar
- 60g / ¼ cup water

For making the gravy sauce

- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp cooking oil
- The leftover marinade
- 60g / ¼ cup water

Ingredient Tip

- Fermented bean curd (page 17) can be replaced by the same amount of Japanese miso paste or Korean Doenjang.

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Marinate the cornish hen

1. Combine the fermented bean curd, the bean curd juice from the jar, soy sauce, oyster sauce, hoisin sauce, five-spice powder, ground white pepper, shallot slices, minced garlic, and ginger in a big mixing bowl.

2. Use paper towels to dry the Cornish hen skin and the cavity. Put the Cornish hen in the marinade and rub it for a few minutes. Note that the ingredient amounts I gave are for one Cornish hen. If you make more than one, please adjust the seasoning proportionally.

3. Once done, cover the Cornish hen and let it sit in the fridge overnight. If you are in a rush, 2 hours will do a fine job because this is a small bird.

Glaze the cornish hen

1. Add the sugar, honey, white vinegar, and water to a saucepan; stir over medium heat until dissolved, and then set the glaze aside.

> **Chef's Secret:** For those unfamiliar with Cantonese cuisine, we always glaze the poultry before roasting, which is the key to creating that perfectly charred golden brown skin.

2. Remove the aromatics from the Cornish hen and reserve the extra marinade left in the bowl.

3. Bring the Cornish hen to the sink with a rack under it. Boil 1 liter of water using an electric kettle and pour it over the chicken. The heat will stretch the skin and make it nice and smooth. Don't worry about washing off the flavor because it has been marinated long enough, and the reserved leftover marinade will make a flavorful gravy.

4. Put the Cornish hen into a big clean bowl, pour the glaze onto the chicken, and rub it all over the skin. The sweetener in the glaze will caramelize while roasting, and that is how the skin gets beautiful.

> **Chef's Secret:** This glaze is reusable, so if you cook more than one hen, you don't have to make another batch of glaze.

5. Remove the Cornish hen from the glaze, tie the legs with kitchen twine, and wrap the wing tip with tin foil.











Roast the hen (air fryer method)

1. Place the Cornish hen in the air fryer basket. Set the temperature to 300°F / 149°C without preheating and let it cook for 35 minutes.

2. After 35 minutes, check the inner temperature of the hen; it should be above 180°F / 82°C.

3. Switch the temperature to 400°F / 205°C and continue to roast for another 3-6 minutes or until beautifully charred. Every air fryer is different, so please keep an eye on it, and feel free to pull out the basket to check the doneness.

Roast the hen (oven method)

1. The downside of the air fryer is that you can only cook one chicken at a time because the basket is small. If you cook more than one, please use an oven.

2. Preheat the oven to 350°F / 175°C. Since the heat circulation is not as good as an air fryer, the temperature needs to be higher.

3. As an optional step for crisper skin, quickly dry the chicken skin with a small fan while waiting for the oven to preheat. If you don't have one, just put it under a ceiling fan for 10-20 minutes, and it will do the same job. This is totally optional, but it does help to make the skin crisper.

4. Bake one Cornish hen for 35 minutes. If you cook more than one, add 10 more minutes for every extra hen.

5. After 35 minutes (more if you cook extra hens), switch to the broiler and broil it for 3-5 more minutes or until beautifully charred.

Make the gravy sauce and serve

1. During the roasting, you can work on the gravy. Add 1 Tbsp of oil to a saucepan. Put the aromatics from the leftover marinade into the saucepan, but leave the liquid sauce behind.

2. Sauté the aromatics over medium-low heat for 3-5 minutes or until everything is caramelized.

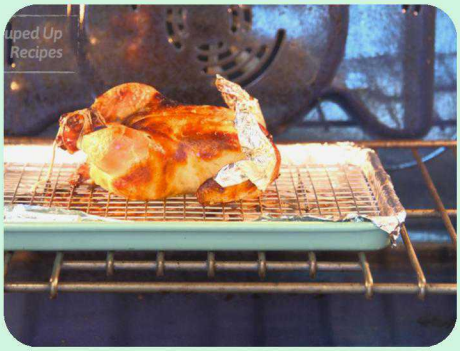
3. Add the remaining sauce and stir well. Pour in ¼ cup water and simmer it for a minute or two. Pour the sauce through a sieve. Drizzle it onto the rice and the chicken.

4. Cut the roasted Cornish hen into a manageable serving size and serve with white rice and blanched vegetables.













Cantonese Roasted Duck

guǎng shì kǎo yā
广 式 烤 鸭


Prep Time:
8 hours


Cooking Time:
1.2 hours


Serves:
3 people

After a lot of trial and error and taste-testing, I perfected this marinade, which will make your duck taste exactly like you got it from a Cantonese restaurant. With my secret glaze formula, your duck will have the crispiest skin and beautiful reddish-brown color, which will look just like the ones hanging in front of the roast shops in Chinatown. Imagine putting that on the table! You will get tons of compliments. This is a more elaborate dish, so it's a good idea to read through the steps and ingredients before you begin to make sure you are prepared.

Ingredient Tips

- Maltose can be replaced by honey.
- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use the same amount of water.
- The aged tangerine peel can be replaced by lemon zest.
- When buying a duck in an Asian market, you can choose one with or without the head. It's better to opt for the head-on duck because the headless one usually has the entire neck cut off, which affects the air-pumping process. It is like blowing a balloon; you need to grip onto the long and narrow opening.
- If you have a frozen duck from the Asian market, defrost it in the refrigerator for at least 36 hours to ensure a safe and consistent thawing process.

For the crispy glaze

- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp sugar
- 23g / 1 Tbsp maltose (see page 17)
- 85g / ⅓ cup vinegar
- 168g / ¾ cup Chinese cooking wine

For the spice blend

- 3.3g / 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 1.3g / 1 tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 0.4g / about ½ of a star anise
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.4g / about 1 slice dried gancao (licorice root) (see page 20)
- 0.8g / about 2 slices dried sand ginger (see page 20)
- 1g / 1 square inch aged tangerine peel (see page 19)

For seasoning the duck

- 11.4g / 2 tsps salt
- 8.3g / 2 tsps sugar
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 21g / 1 Tbsps hoisin sauce (see page 16)
- 16g / 1 Tbsp zhuhou paste (see page 17)
- 20g / about 2 pieces fermented bean curd (see page 17)

For sautéeing the sweet onion

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps cooking oil
- 280g / about 1 large sweet onion, diced
- 18g / 2 Tbsps minced garlic
- 15-18g / about 5-6 ginger slices

For stuffing the duck

- 1 whole duck, about 1.8kg / 4 pounds
- 15g / about 1 scallion
- 12g / about 6 cilantro leaves
- 1 metal skewer
- Electric portable air compressor with a nozzle adaptor

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Make the crispy glaze

1. In a saucepan, add the sugar, maltose, vinegar, and Chinese cooking wine. Stir everything over medium heat until fully dissolved. Set it aside. This glaze will caramelize while roasting, giving the duck that desired reddish-brown color.

Make the spice blend and seasoning sauce

1. Toast the black peppercorns, Sichuan peppercorns, star anise, bay leaves, cinnamon stick, dried gancao (licorice root), dried sand ginger, and aged tangerine peel in the wok over low heat for 2 minutes.

2. Blend the spices in a spice grinder until fine. Pour the mixture through a sieve to eliminate the stubborn pieces.

3. In a bowl, thoroughly combine the salt, sugar, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, zhuhou paste, fermented bean curd, and the spice blend that you made previously. The measurements in this recipe apply to a 4-pound duck (weighed after removing the head, wings, feet, and innards); please adjust the amounts proportionally based on the weight of the duck you purchased.

Sauté the sweet onion

1. Add the oil, ginger slices, minced garlic, and diced sweet onion to a wok and sauté over medium-low heat until the onion is translucent.

2. Put on the lid and cook the onions on the lowest heat until soft, about 5 minutes.

3. Remove the onions from the stove and set it aside.

Chef's Secret: Cantonese-style roasted duck is unique with onion soup inside, making it juicy and perfect for dipping over rice. The key to creating the onion soup is to sauté the onions before roasting, as the oven time isn't sufficient otherwise.

Season, stuff, and seal the duck

1. Once the duck is defrosted, cut off the head but keep the neck; remove the wing tips and the feet because they burn fast while roasting. Rinse the duck thoroughly.

2. Use paper towels to dab the excess moisture. Make sure you dry the cavity as well, so it doesn't dilute the sauce.

3. Pour all the seasoning sauce into the duck cavity and rub it for a few minutes so that the flavor can deeply infuse into the flesh.

4. Stuff the sautéed onion, scallion, and cilantro leaves into the cavity.

5. The next step is to seal the duck. Grab the opening of the cavity and stick a metal skewer in, twisting it over tightly and stitching it in again. Repeat that step until there is no more opening. When you reach the end, stick the tip of the skewer into the cavity. Use a metal skewer, as a bamboo skewer may break.

Pump the duck

1. This is the most important step to ensure a crispy roasted duck. You will need an electric portable air compressor with a nozzle adaptor (see page 13). Wrap the tube and the nozzle with plastic film.





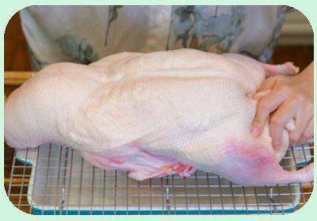





2. Stick the nozzle into the duck's neck under the skin and hold it tightly. Pump air until the whole duck is inflated. During the process, you may find that the air is leaking through the cavity. Please use your other hand to hold the cavity as tight as possible so the duck can inflate more. You want to see the air filling up the space between the skin and flesh, allowing the fat to melt away during roasting.

3. Once done, tie the neck with kitchen twine to retain the air. Set the duck aside.









Blanch and glaze the duck

1. Fill a large pot with water and bring it to a boil over medium heat.

2. Move the duck to the sink and place it on a rack, breast side up. Use a large cup to remove some hot water and pour it onto the skin. The heat will stretch the skin and make it tight and smooth.

3. When you are pouring water onto the back, grab the neck and try not to put pressure on the chest because you want to keep it nice and fluffy.

4. Rinse the duck under running water to prevent it from overheating.

5. Put the duck in a clean tray. Pour the crispy glaze all over the duck. Gently rub the glaze onto the duck to make sure every part of the skin is covered. Set aside.



Dehydrate the duck

1. Place the duck onto a rack in a dehydrator; set the temperature to the lowest and dehydrate for 6 hours or until the skin becomes dry like plastic.

2. If you don't have a dehydrator, place the duck on a rack under a ceiling fan for 6 hours or until the skin becomes dry like plastic.



Roast and serve the duck

1. Preheat the oven to 360°F / 182°C.

2. Wrap the baking pan with tinfoil for easy cleaning. Place the duck on the baking rack, breast side up. Optionally, put an extra steamer rack under to lift the baking rack so there is plenty of space between the duck and the baking pan, allowing better air circulation.

3. Roast the duck at 360°F for 20 minutes. The purpose is to allow the high heat to build to attain that beautiful golden-red color on the skin.



4. Change the oven temperature to 320°F / 160°C, open the oven door for a few seconds to release some heat, and continue to bake for 50 minutes for a 4-pound duck. Add 15 more minutes for every extra pound. Every oven is different; please keep an eye on the duck and adjust the timing based on your own judgment.

5. If everything goes right, you will have a perfect, golden brown, crispy roasted duck. Before serving, pull the skewer out and drain all of the onion juice into a small bowl. Pour the onion juice through a strainer. You can use this sauce to drizzle over the duck and rice.



6. Carve the duck and serve with white rice and blanched vegetables.





Top, in a siu laap shop (Chinese roasted meat restaurant), lots of Wengchang chicken (文昌鸡) hanging by the window, which is believed to be the origin of Hainanese chicken rice (see page 54); bottom, Joy Hing Roasted Meat Restaurant, the best-rated siu laap shop in Hong Kong, located at 1 C Stewart Road, Wan Chai District (no sponsorship), is known for its Crispy Pork Belly (see page 70) and BBQ Pork Char Siu (see page 72).



Pork

70. Cantonese Crispy Pork Belly / 广式脆皮烧肉
72. Cantonese BBQ Pork Char Siu / 广式叉烧
74. Tea-Brined Pork Belly with Fermented Bean Curd / 茶香南乳红烧肉
76. Taiwanese Braised Pork Belly / 台湾控肉饭
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80. Cantonese Sweet and Sour Pork / 酸甜咕噜肉
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84. Sichuan Crispy Pork / 四川小酥肉
86. Pork and Celery Stir-Fry / 芹菜炒猪肉
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89. Twice Cooked Pork / 回锅肉
90. Peking Sauce Pork / 京酱肉丝
92. Pork Chop Suey / 炒杂碎
94. Sichuan Pork Slices in Garlic Sauce / 蒜泥白肉
96. Sweet and Sour Ribs / 糖醋排骨
98. Cantonese Steamed Ribs in Black Bean Sauce (Dim Sum Style) / 豉汁蒸排骨
100. Hunan Style Steamed Pork With Rice Powder / 湖南米粉蒸肉
102. Rolled Omelet with Pork Filling / 猪肉蛋卷
104. Red Braised Lion's Head Meatballs / 红烧狮子头
108. Teochew Five-spice Meat Rolls / 潮州五香条
110. Shanghai Crispy Breaded Pork Chop / 上海炸猪排
112. Fried Lotus Root Meatballs / 莲藕炸丸子



Cantonese Crispy Pork Belly

guǎng shì cuì pí shāo ròu
广 式 脆 皮 烧 肉

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Serves:
5 minutes	75 minutes	2 people

- 454g / 1 pound skin-on pork belly
- 3.8g / ⅔ tsp salt
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 1.5g / ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder
- 0.7g / ⅛ tsp salt to rub the pork skin
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps plum sauce for dipping
- 19g / 1.5 Tbsps sugar for dipping

Using an air fryer is the easiest way to roast a crispy pork belly because the circulation is efficient and constantly draws out moisture from the skin while cooking. This recipe requires no blanching, no marinating overnight, no poking holes, and no dehydrating the skin. The prepping literally takes 5 minutes and guarantees the best crispy result.

If you ask me, "Can I do this in a regular oven?" the answer is yes, but I didn't include it in this book. However, you can scan the code for the demo. Using an oven will be more complicated because the air circulation is not as good as an air fryer. That's why extra steps like blanching, poking holes, dehydrating the skin, and adding baking powder are required.

AIR FRYER METHOD

OVEN METHOD

1. Take a sharp knife to score the meat side of the pork belly without cutting through the skin.

2. Thoroughly combine the salt, sugar, ground black pepper, garlic powder, and five-spice powder in a bowl. These listed measurements are for one pound of meat, so you can adjust the amount by multiplying the weight of pork you are making.

3. Place the pork belly skin side down, and then sprinkle the seasoning mix all over the meat. Make sure you open the cut surfaces and rub them well.

Chef's Secret: Avoid touching the skin because this will cause the spices to burn while roasting and affect the presentation.

4. Flip the pork to the skin side up and rub it with a pinch of salt for a few minutes or until the salt draws some moisture out of the skin. Use a paper towel to wipe the moisture.

5. Wrap the pork belly with tinfoil, but keep the skin exposed.

6. Set the air fryer at 250°F / 121°C without preheating and cook the pork belly for 1 hour. The cooking time is for one pound of meat. Add 15 minutes in addition for every extra pound.

7. Increase the temperature to 400°F / 204°C and fry for 10-15 minutes or until the skin is crispy and golden brown. Every air fryer is different, so please keep an eye on it. Feel free to pull out the basket and check the doneness. Adjust the frying time if needed.

8. Cut the crispy pork belly into bite-size pieces and serve with plum sauce or white sugar.

Chef's Secret: These are two classic dipping components for a crispy pork belly. The plum sauce tastes sweet and sour, perfectly balancing the pork belly's heaviness. Eating pork belly with white sugar is more of a local Cantonese habit. The sugar crystal enhances the crispy texture, and the sweetness is such a surprising fit with the taste of the roasted pork.













Cantonese BBQ Pork Char Siu

guǎng shì chā shāo
广 式 叉 烧

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 50 minutes

Serves: 5 people

Marinate overnight

Char siu is the kind of dish that brings happiness and satisfaction, especially at the moment when you take it out of the oven. The sizzling meat is bursting with deliciousness, filling your home with the mouthwatering aroma of roasted meat and sweet caramelized honey.

You will be shocked at how easy it is to make char siu at home. Just marinate the meat overnight and roast it in the oven the next day. Since I first tackled this recipe five years ago, I have picked up a lot of insider tips and tricks, so this upgraded recipe guarantees restaurant-quality results.

OVEN METHOD

AIR FRYER METHOD

- 63g / 5 Tbsps sugar
- 63g / 3 Tbsps honey
- 50g / 3 Tbsps soy sauce
- 20g / about 2 pieces red fermented bean curd
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 9g / 1 Tbsp grated garlic
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 6g / 1 Tbsp red yeast powder (see page 20)
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp tapioca starch (see page 28)
- 15g / 1 Tbsp water
- 1134g / 2.5 pounds boneless pork shoulder or pork butt
- 42g / 3 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 53 / 2.5 Tbsps honey to brush the char siu

Ingredient Tips

- Fermented bean curd (腐乳) adds a unique flavor to char siu. When you shop in an Asian market, you may find a few different variations (see page 17). Please pick the Cantonese-style nanru (南乳), which is fermented with red yeast, so it has a classic red color. If unavailable, substitute with 1 Tbsp of Japanese miso paste. While the flavor differs, miso is also a fermented soy product and will enhance the taste of your roasted pork.
- Red yeast powder gives char siu its iconic color but doesn't affect the taste. You can use twelve drops of red food coloring or skip it if you don't care about the presentation

Make the char siu sauce

1. Combine the sugar, honey, soy sauce, red fermented bean curd, salt, grated garlic, five-spice powder, and the red yeast powder in a saucepan and mix well.

2. Stir the sauce over medium-low heat for 5 minutes or until the texture becomes syrupy.

> **Chef's Secret:** When marinating the meat overnight, the seasoning will draw out lots of moisture from the meat, which dilutes the flavor. Therefore, reducing the sauce makes a significant difference in taste.

3. Mix the tapioca starch with water and then add it to the sauce. Continue to stir over medium-low heat for 2 more minutes or until the sauce becomes thick and sticky; set it aside.

Marinate the pork

1. Cut the pork into 1.5-inch-thick strips and then poke a lot of holes into the meat with a fork. This helps the marinade infuse evenly.

2. Rub the pork with Chinese cooking wine for a few minutes and then use paper towels to absorb the excess moisture from the surface.

3. Combine the pork with the char siu sauce in a big mixing bowl and mix thoroughly. If your room temperature is too cold, the char siu sauce will coagulate and become too sticky. You may need to reheat it over the stove at medium heat for just 30 seconds so it becomes softer and easier to mix.

4. Cover the marinated pork and place it in the fridge overnight. If you have the time, give the pork a good mix about halfway through the marinating time.

Roaste the char siu and serve

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F / 204°C. While waiting, wrap a baking pan with tinfoil. Put a baking rack in the baking pan and place the marinated pork strips on the rack with some space between each other. Reserve the extra marinade left in the bowl.

2. Bake the pork for 20 minutes. Then, take the char siu out of the oven and brush the leftover marinade on the pork. Flip over and brush the other side.

3. Put the pork back into the oven and bake for another 20 minutes. Then, remove the char siu from the oven again and brush a thin layer of honey all over the meat, creating a shiny and tempting glaze.

4. Bake the honey-glazed char siu for another 5-10 minutes. Every oven is different. Please keep an eye on the meat until it is beautifully charred.

5. Slice the char siu into thin pieces. Serve with a mound of white rice and some blanched choy sum on the side.

> **Chef's Secret:** Use char siu meat to make Cantonese Roasted Pork Char Siu Bun (see page 316), HK Style Egg Foo Young (see page 180), and Singapore Stir-Fry Rice Noodles (see page 286).











Tea-Brined Pork Belly with Fermented Bean Curd

chá xiāng nán rǔ hóng shāo ròu
茶 香 南 乳 红 烧 肉

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Serves:
20 minutes	2 hours	3 people

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

In China, the most loved pork dish has to be Hong Shao Rou (红烧肉), pork belly braised in a red, sweet, and savory sauce until it is gelatinous and melt-in-your-mouth tender.

Among the wide varieties of this dish from all over China, there are many different approaches to cooking it. The recipe I share is the Cantonese style. We like to season the pork with red fermented bean curd to provide a distinctive flavor. I always enjoy trying new things when I cook, so I tried adding black tea to the dish. It did a fantastic job of reducing the greasy taste of the pork belly.

- 907g / 2 pounds skin-on pork belly
- 75g / 6 Tbsps sugar
- 38g / about 2.5 inches of ginger, sliced thinly
- 60g / about 4 scallions, cut into 3-inch stalks
- 15g / about 5 cloves garlic
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 75g / ⅓ cup Chinese cooking wine
- 50g / 3 Tbsps soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 20g / about 2 pieces fermented bean curd (see page 17)
- 16.5g / 1 Tbsp fermented bean curd juice
- 480 - 720g / 2-3 cups water
- 2 black tea bags or 5g loose tea

1. Cut the pork belly into 1.5-inch cubes. Add the pork belly to a big stock pot and fill it with water. Then bring it to a boil over medium heat.

2. Use a fine sieve to remove the foamy scum floating in the water. Take the pork belly out of the water and let it drain on the side completely.

3. While the pork is draining, prepare the garlic cloves, ginger slices, scallion stalks, star anise, and cinnamon stick. Having these ingredients beforehand avoids rummaging around while caramelizing the sugar.

4. Add the pork to a wok and stir over medium heat for 8-10 minutes or until 1-2 Tbsps fat has been rendered out.

5. Remove the pork from the wok but leave the oil behind. Please clean any residue left from rendering the pork fat; otherwise, it will burn while caramelizing the sugar and bring a bitter taste.

6. Add the sugar to the wok and stir over low heat for about 3-4 minutes or until it is caramelized.

7. Wait until the caramelized sugar starts producing foamy bubbles, and then quickly toss in the garlic cloves, ginger slices, scallion stalks, star anise, and cinnamon stick. Stir for 30 seconds or until fragrant.

8. Add the pork belly back into the wok. Pour the Chinese cooking wine from the side of the wok and stir to evaporate the alcohol.

9. Add the soy sauce, oyster sauce, fermented bean curd, and the juice from the fermented bean curd jar and stir until well combined.

10. Transfer everything into a clay pot. If you don't have a clay pot, use a heavy-duty stock pot or a Dutch oven.

11. Rinse the wok with 2-3 cups of water and pour it into the clay pot. The amount of water depends on your cookware and your stove. Please make sure all ingredients are fully immersed and arrange the pork belly skin side down, which helps the skin get the desired red color.

12. Turn the heat to low and simmer the pork belly for 1.5 hours or until tender. Please check the liquid level occasionally. If the water is evaporating too fast, add hot water; do not add cold water.

13. Five minutes before the pork is done, add two tea bags and continue to simmer over low heat for 3-5 minutes. If using loose tea, please put it in a spice bag so it doesn't distribute everywhere.

14. Taste the broth and remove the tea bags before the broth becomes too bitter. Discard all the aromatics and spices.

15. Turn the heat to high and constantly stir to reduce the broth until it becomes a thick and syrupy sauce. Be aware that collagen-rich sauce bubbles a lot while reducing, which makes it look like there's more sauce than there is. Please don't over-reduce the sauce; otherwise, the pork will be dry, and the flavor will be bitter.










Taiwanese Braised Pork Belly

tái wān kòng ròu fàn
台 湾 控 肉 饭

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 2 hours

Serves: 4 people

If you are a meat-eater and can't say no to tender, succulent, flavorful braised pork belly, this recipe is for you. Make Taiwanese Braised Pork Belly and reward yourself today!

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- 907 g / 2 pounds skin-on pork belly
- 54g / 4 Tbsps cooking oil to sear the pork belly
- 45g / about 1 shallot, minced
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, minced
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps cooking oil to caramelize the sugar
- 38g / 3 Tbsps sugar
- 66g / 4 Tbsps soy sauce
- 66g / 4 Tbsps dark soy sauce
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.4 / about 2 bay leaves
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 18g / ¼ cup crispy fried shallots
- 56g / ¼ cup Chinese cooking wine
- 720-960g / 3-4 cups water
- 18g / about 6 pieces dried shiitake mushroom (see page 24)
- 4 boiled and peeled eggs
- 113g / 4 oz pickled long beans to serve as a topping, optional

Ingredient Tips

- Any brands of soy sauce and dark soy sauce will work for this recipe. However, since this is a Taiwanese dish, I recommend using the Taiwanese Kim Lam brand.
- Crispy fried shallot is a popular Taiwanese ingredient, which adds a different flavor compared to fresh shallots. If you don't have it, check page 78 to learn how to make your own.
- The boiled eggs will be simmered with the pork for a long time, so they are definitely overcooked, but that is what Taiwanese people prefer. If you don't like hard-boiled eggs, you can skip them or add some daikon radish.





1. Soak the dried shiitake mushrooms in 3-4 cups hot water for 20 minutes.
2. Use paper towels to dab the pork belly to absorb the excess moisture.
3. Preheat the wok, add 4 Tbsps cooking oil, and pan-sear the pork belly, skin side down, over medium heat for 3-5 minutes or until golden brown. Use caution because pan-searing can cause hot oil to splatter. You can put the lid partially on the wok to allow the steam to escape and to avoid dirtying the countertop.
4. Flip the pork belly and sear the meat side for just a minute. Don't fry the meat side for too long or else it will dry out and become stringy at the end.
5. Take the pork out and let it rest for a few minutes. Slice it into ⅔ of an inch thick pieces. Set them aside.
6. After pan-searing, discard the oil, which will be brown and less healthy. Add 1.5 Tbsps new oil to the wok along with 3 Tbsps sugar and stir constantly over medium-low heat to caramelize.
7. As you stir, the sugar will melt, turn to brown caramel, and suddenly bubble; quickly toss in the minced garlic, ginger, and shallots. Stir for a couple of minutes or until the aromatics are fragrant.
8. Add the soy sauce and dark soy sauce and continue to stir for 2 minutes to mingle all the seasonings.
9. Transfer everything into a clay pot. A stock pot, instant pot, or Dutch oven will also work if you don't have one.
10. Add the crispy fried shallots, the soaked shiitake mushrooms, Chinese cooking wine, and the boiled and peeled eggs.
11. Use the mushroom-soaking liquid to rinse the wok and then pour it into the clay pot.
12. Check the liquid level; add more water if needed to make sure most of the ingredients are covered with liquid.
13. Bring this to a boil and then taste it, adjusting the flavor to your preference. Turn the heat to the lowest setting and simmer for 1.5 hours.
14. Serve with white rice and Chinese pickled long beans; the tartness of the beans balances the fattiness of the pork belly well. If you don't have it, you can skip it or use other pickles as a replacement.



Taiwanese Lu Rou Fan Rice Bowl

tái wān lǔ ròu fàn
台 湾 卤 肉 饭

Prep Time: 30 minutes | Cooking Time: 1.5 hours | Serves: 5 people

Lu Rou Fan is known for its melt-in-your-mouth tenderness and luscious sauce that goes amazingly well with the rice. I love the smell of porky goodness wafting through my home, and this dish ensures that it happens every time. I upgraded this recipe by deep-frying the shallots with the pork fat rendered from the pork belly, so your final dish is not oily at all. This is one of those recipes that allows you to make a big batch and portion it out. It stays well in the freezer for a few months, and it's delicious reheated in the microwave.

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For braising the pork belly

- 1134g / 2.5 pounds skin-on pork belly
- 24g / about 8 cloves garlic, peeled
- 24g / about 8 ginger slices
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.6g / about 3 bay leaves
- 70g / ⅓ cup rock sugar
- 116g / 7 Tbsps soy sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 224g / 1 cup Shaoxing cooking wine
- 2.4g / 1 tsp ground white pepper
- 2g / 1 tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 720g / 3 cups water

For frying the shallots

- 15g / 2 Tbsps dried shrimp, optional
- 270g / about 6 shallots, sliced thinly
- 73g / ⅓ cup pork fat rendered from the pork belly

For serving on the side (optional)

- 5 soft-boiled eggs
- 150g / about 5 baby bok choy, blanched

Ingredient Tips

- Rock sugar (冰糖) is refined and re-crystallized from granulated sugar and can be replaced by the same amount of granulated sugar. It won't affect the taste that much.
- Dried shrimp (干虾仁) is an optional ingredient, but it adds a third dimension to the dish, making the fragrance more complex and pungent. If you don't have it, try adding a few anchovy fillets while simmering the pork.
- Any brands of soy sauce and dark soy sauce will work for this recipe. However, since this is a Taiwanese dish, I recommend using the Taiwanese Kim Lam brand.

1. Soak the dried shrimp in hot water for 30 minutes.
2. Cut the skin-on pork belly into ⅓-inch thick slabs, and then dice into ⅓-inch thick pieces.

> **Chef's Secret:** Pork skin is essential for this recipe because it contains a lot of gelatin, which makes the sauce thick, shiny, and flavorful.

3. Preheat a heavy-duty cooking vessel (a clay pot, Dutch oven, cast-iron pot, or any other cookware with thick walls) over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add the pork without any oil and stir over medium-high heat. The pork will release lots of juice, which will evaporate in a few minutes. Once the pork fat starts rendering out, keep stirring until you get about ⅓ cup of pork fat, which will take 10-15 minutes.
4. Tilt the clay pot to let the oil run to the side, take the fat out into a saucepan, and reserve it for later use.
5. Add the garlic cloves, ginger slices, star anise, cinnamon stick, bay leaves, and rock sugar to the pork. Continue to stir until the aromatics are fragrant.
6. Add the rest of the seasonings: light soy sauce, dark soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, ground white pepper, and five-spice powder. Stir well, making sure to use the spatula to deglaze all the brown bits at the bottom.
7. Pour in 3 cups hot water and simmer the pork on low heat for 1.5 hours. The amount of water needed may vary depending on your stove and cookware. Keep an eye on it during the simmering to make sure it does not evaporate too much. If you need to add more water, please add hot water instead of cold.
8. While the pork is simmering, slice the shallot thinly and mince the soaked dry shrimp.
9. Add the shallot slices to the reserved pork fat and stir over medium-low heat until lightly golden, about 10-12 minutes. **Note:** It is normal for the oil to become foamy while frying the shallots.
10. Add the minced dried shrimp and continue to fry for 2 more minutes or until the shallots are golden brown.
11. Drain the oil with a sieve, reserving it for other uses if you wish.
12. By now, the pork should have been simmered for about 30 minutes, and it still has 1 more hour to go. Add the fried shallots and shrimp to the clay pot and keep cooking with the pork belly for the rest of the time.
13. Once done, remove the spices and discard them (the ginger slices, star anise, cinnamon stick, and bay leaves).
14. Check the consistency of the pork belly, which should be thick, sticky, and saucy. If your broth is thin, turn the heat to high and reduce the liquid; if it is too thick, add a bit more hot water.
15. Scoop the meat and place it over some white rice. Serve with soft-boiled eggs and blanched baby bok choy. Taiwanese people like to serve this with Ludan (卤蛋) (see page 76), which is hard-boiled eggs braised with pork belly until flavorful. However, I find soft, tender eggs pair better with this dish.





Cantonese Sweet and Sour Pork

suān tián gū lū ròu
酸 甜 咕 噜 肉

Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cooking Time: 40 minutes
Serves: 3 people

Marinate 1 hour

Sweet and sour pork is one of the most representative Chinese dishes with no definitive origin story. However, multiple provinces in China claim to have created the first recipe, including Henan, Sichuan, Jiangsu, Shandong, and Canton. This dish went global in the late 1800s as the first wave of Chinese immigrants (mainly Cantonese) crossed the Pacific to California to construct the railroads for the Gold Rush. A few decades later, the dish expanded worldwide during World War II, with Americans and Europeans savoring the dish. Therefore, the Cantonese version is commonly believed to be the prototype of the sweet and sour dishes in Western Chinese take-out restaurants, such as orange chicken, lemon chicken, and even Mongolian Beef.

For marinating and coating the pork

- 454g / 1 pound pork tenderloin
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 2.4g / ½ tsp baking soda
- 30g / ¼ cup cornstarch
- 1 egg
- 210g / 1.5 cups plain flour to coat the pork

For making the sweet and sour sauce

- 136g / ½ cup ketchup
- 128g / ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- 100g / ½ cup sugar
- 36g / 2 Tbsps orange jam
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt or to taste

For frying and finishing

- 113g / 4 oz red bell pepper
- 113g / 4 oz green bell pepper
- 227g / 8 oz pineapple
- 550g / 2.5 cups oil for deep-frying
- 18g / 2 Tbsps minced garlic
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp cooking oil
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 120g / ½ cup water

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1. Remove the silver skin from the pork tenderloin. Then cut the meat into ⅔-inch cubes.
2. Add the pork, soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, salt, baking soda, cornstarch, and egg to a big non-reactive bowl. Mix until there are no lumps and set the mixture in the fridge for 1 hour.
3. Cut the pineapple and multicolor bell peppers into the same size as the pork.
4. In a sauce bowl, thoroughly combine the ketchup, sugar, apple cider vinegar, orange jam, and salt. Mix well and set it aside.
5. Place some of the all-purpose flour at the bottom of a big bowl. Add some pork pieces and cover them with another layer of all-purpose flour. Toss the pork around until it is coated evenly. You may have to do this in 2-3 batches.
6. Shake the excess flour off the meat and then rest the pork for 10 to 15 minutes to allow the coating to bond.

   Chef's Secret: If you do not let the pork rest, the flour bits will fall off while deep-frying, which ruins the quality of the oil.
7. Heat 2.5 cups oil in a wok to 350°F / 177°C. Fry the coated pork in 2-3 batches over medium heat until lightly golden, about 3-5 minutes for each batch. Remove the pork to the side and rest for 10 minutes.
8. Use a sieve to remove the particles from the oil, increase the temperature to 380°F / 193°C, and double-fry the pork over medium-high heat for 2 minutes or until golden brown. Transfer the pork onto a tray with some paper towels under it to get rid of the excess oil.
9. Pour out all the frying oil. You can save it for other deep-frying purposes. Add 1 Tbsp of new cooking oil to the wok. Sauté the minced garlic until fragrant. Pour in the sweet and sour sauce and then stir until bubbling.
10. Quickly mix 1 Tbsp cornstarch with ½ cup water and pour it into the sauce. Stir until the sauce thickens.
11. Add the bell pepper and the pineapple and mix over medium heat for a few minutes or until these two ingredients are cooked to your liking.
12. Introduce the fried pork back to the wok. Keep mixing until everything is coated with the glossy, sticky sauce. Serve with white rice.



Northern Chinese Sweet and Sour Pork

guō bāo ròu
锅 包 肉

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Northern Chinese Sweet and Sour Pork is different than the Cantonese Sweet and Sour Pork. The coating is much thinner, the color is lighter, and there is much less sauce so the pork can stay crispy.

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For marinating the pork

- 350g / 12.3 oz pork loin
- 2.9g / ½ tsp of salt
- 1.5g / ½ tsp garlic powder
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp of ground white pepper
- 1.2g / ¼ tsp of baking soda
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps of Chinese cooking wine

For the sweet and sour sauce

- 50g / ¼ cup sugar
- 2.5g / 1 tsp cornstarch
- 38g / 2.5 Tbsps of water
- 40g / 2.5 Tbsps white vinegar
- 2.1g / ⅜ tsp salt

Others

- 120g / 1 cup cornstarch
- 180g / ¾ cup water
- 330g / 1.5 cups oil to deep-fry
- 9g / 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps julienned ginger
- 8g / 2 Tbsp julienned scallion for garnish



1. Slice the pork loin into ⅛-inch thick slices.

> **Souped Up Swap:** While this recipe is traditionally made with pork loin, pork belly also works; it is even more crunchy and delicious.

2. Add the pork, salt, garlic powder, ground white pepper, baking soda, and Chinese cooking wine to a nonreactive mixing bowl and combine well. Set it aside for 15 minutes.

3. Combine all the ingredients for the sweet and sour sauce in a bowl and set it aside.

4. In a separate bowl, mix the cornstarch with the water until it becomes a smooth, thick batter. Then combine the marinated pork with the batter and mix until the meat is coated nicely.

5. Add oil to a wok and bring it to 380°F / 193°C over medium heat. Unfold the pork slices and drop them in the oil one by one. Fry them for a few minutes or until they are lightly golden. It is best to fry the pork in 2 batches so you don't crowd the wok.

6. Remove the pork from the oil and rest on the side for 10 minutes.

7. Increase the oil's temperature to 400°F / 204°C. Double-fry the pork over high heat for 1-2 minutes or until golden brown.

8. Remove the pork from the oil and set it aside.

9. Pour out most of the oil from the wok but leave 1.5 tsps. Use the remaining oil to sauté the garlic slices and julienned ginger until fragrant. Pour in the sweet and sour sauce. Stir over medium heat until the sugar melts completely and the sauce thickens.

10. Add the fried crispy pork and toss thoroughly. Garnish with the julienned scallions and serve as an appetizer.



Sichuan Crispy Pork

sì chuān xiǎo sū ròu
四 川 小 酥 肉

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Xiao Su Rou translates to little crunchy bites of pork. What's special about this dish is that it comes with an aromatic spice rub, or what we call zhan liao (蘸料) in Chinese, which is like a bomb of flavors and usually served as a dipping component for crunchy stuff. You've got to give it a try because it brings any crunchy foods to another level.

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For marinating the pork

- 500g / 1.1 pounds pork shoulder
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 6g / 2 tsps minced ginger
- 2g / 1 tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp soy sauce
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda

For making the spice rub

- 12g / ½ cup dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 4g / 1 Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 23g / 2.5 Tbsps sesame seeds
- 1.7g / ½ tsp whole white peppercorns
- 2.6g / 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1g / 1 piece aged tangerine peel, 1 in x 1 in (see page 19)
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar

For making the batter

- 28g / 1 oz all-purpose flour
- 120g / 1 cup sweet potato starch (see page 28)
- 2.4g / ½ tsp baking powder
- 1 egg
- 90g / 6 Tbsps water
- 25g / 1 Tbsp + 2.5 tsps vegetable oil



1. Cut the pork shoulder into ⅓-inch thick strips.

> **Souped Up Swap:** Besides the pork shoulder, this dish can also be made with pork belly, pork loin, and short pork rib.

2. Add the pork, minced garlic, ginger, five-spice powder, Chinese cooking wine, salt, soy sauce, and baking soda to a nonreactive bowl and mix well. Let the mixture sit for 30 minutes.

3. While waiting, make the aromatic spice rub (zhan liao). Roast the dried red chilies, Sichuan peppercorns, white peppercorns, 1.5 Tbsps sesame seeds (reserve 1 Tbsp on the side), ½ tsp cumin seeds (reserve ½ tsp on the side), and the aged tangerine peel in a wok over medium-low heat for 2 minutes. Remove from the wok and let it cool. Grind all the roasted spices into a fine powder using a spice grinder. Set it aside.

4. Add the reserved sesame seeds and cumin seeds to the wok and stir over medium-low heat for 2 minutes. This time, we don't grind them.

5. Combine the whole roasted sesame seeds, roasted cumin seeds, salt, sugar, and spice powder and mix thoroughly.

> **Chef's Secret:** You can store this in a sealed container for up to 4 months in the fridge and sprinkle it on fried chicken, squid, wontons, potato wedges, or any other crispy foods by taste.

6. In a big mixing bowl, add all-purpose flour, sweet potato starch, baking powder, egg, water, and vegetable oil and mix until it makes a smooth batter.

> **Souped Up Swap:** If you don't have sweet potato starch, use potato starch or tapioca starch.

7. Combine the batter with the marinated pork and mix until the meat is well-coated.

8. Heat the oil to 370°F / 188°C. Add the pork, piece by piece, and fry over medium heat for 4-5 minutes. Stir constantly to ensure even cooking. Since this is the first frying, the pork doesn't need to be golden brown.

9. When you see the meat is no longer bubbling furiously, take it out and rest it for 10 minutes. You may need to fry the pork in 2-3 batches, depending on the size of your cookware.

10. Increase the oil's temperature to 400°F / 204°C. Add all the fried pork and deep fry it again over high heat for 2-3 minutes or until golden brown.

11. Remove the pork from the oil and use paper towels to absorb the excess grease.

12. Sprinkle the zhan liao spice rub all over the pork by taste and serve as an appetizer.

> **Meal Prepping Tip:** Once you finish the first frying, you can freeze it for up to 5 months. Whenever you want to eat it again, you don't even need to defrost it; just directly double-fry at 400°F / 204°C for 3-5 minutes or until golden brown, and it will be ready right away.

Pork and Celery Stir-Fry

qín cài chǎo zhū ròu
芹 菜 炒 猪 肉

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people



This is one of those recipes that I started learning from my parents in the early years of my childhood. Although it looks easy with not many ingredients, my parents thought it was the best example to teach me how to reach the wok hey effect and maximize the flavor of the ingredient itself. It took me a long time to understand that stir-frying the meat over high heat results in better flavor than cooking it at medium heat - the pork sears immediately, which provides a complex smoky flavor and a juicy texture.

- 300 grams /10.6 oz pork shoulder meat
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt to season the pork
- 1.2g / ¼ tsp baking soda
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 9.3g / 2 tsps Chinese cooking wine
- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch
- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil
- 180g / 6.3 oz celery, preferably Chinese celery
- 30g / about 1 green chili pepper
- 30g / about 1 red chili pepper
- 15g / about 5 cloves garlic
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt or to taste

Ingredient Tip

- Chinese celery (中国芹菜), aka leafy celery, is a variety of celery cultivated in East Asian countries. It smells ten times stronger compared to Western celery. Sadly, it is a bit hard to find outside of China, so use Western celery instead.

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1. Slice the pork into ⅛-inch thick pieces. Add the pork, salt, baking soda, soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, and cornstarch to a nonreactive bowl and mix well. Let it rest for 20 minutes.

Chef's Secret: I like to keep this recipe basic, but you can add some chili flakes, black pepper, or five-spice powder here.

2. If using Chinese celery, cut it into 2-inch-long stalks; if using Western celery, julienne it into 2-inch-long sticks.

3. Slice the red and green chili peppers into thin slices; then crush and peel the garlic cloves. You don't need to dice them, or else you will burn the garlic while stir-frying over high heat.

4. Heat the wok to smoking hot. Add the oil and toss it around to create a non-stick layer. Add the marinated pork and stir over high heat for 2-3 minutes.

5. Remove the pork from the wok and leave the oil behind if there is any left. If not, add a little more oil.

6. Add the celery, chili pepper, and crushed garlic cloves to the same wok, sauté them over medium heat for 3 minutes, and then season with some salt to taste.

7. Introduce the pork back to the wok and toss thoroughly. Serve with white rice.



Pork and Pepper Stir-Fry

qīng jiāo ròu sī
青 椒 肉 丝

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Pork stir-fry with green pepper is a simple recipe, but it involves a Chinese restaurant's secret. I am sure many of you have wondered why the meat in Chinese restaurants is so tender and succulent. I will reveal the secret, and you will be able to make perfect stir-fry from now on.

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For marinating the pork

- 227g / ½ pound pork
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 1 egg white
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp cooking oil

For making the sauce

- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 1g / ½ tsp five spice powder (see page 19)
- 2.5g / 1 tsp cornstarch
- 60g / ¼ cup water

For frying and finishing

- 27g / 2 Tbsps pork lard or vegetable oil to stir-fry
- 8g / 1.5 tsps sweet flour sauce (see page 16)
- 170g / 6 oz green chili pepper, julienned
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, sliced thinly

1. Slice the pork into ⅛-inch thick slabs and then julienne the slabs into ⅛-inch thick strips.

2. Add the pork, salt, white pepper, dark soy sauce, and Chinese cooking wine to a nonreactive bowl and mix continuously for a few minutes or until the meat becomes sticky.

3. Add egg white and cornstarch and continue to mix until well combined.

> **Chef's Secret:** Cornstarch and egg white marinade is a technique in Chinese cuisine called velveting. It creates a starchy layer that preserves the moisture of the meat while cooking, which leads to juicy, tender meat.

4. Drizzle the oil into the bowl and mix to prevent the meat strips from tangling, making it easier to stir-fry later. Set it aside.

5. In a bowl, combine the soy sauce, oyster sauce, sugar, five-spice powder, cornstarch, and water and mix well. Set it aside

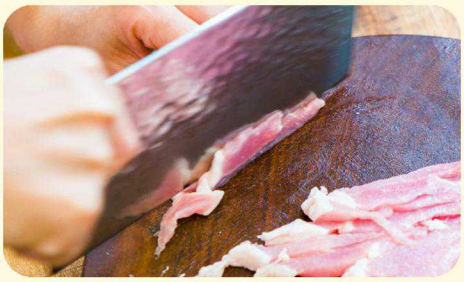
6. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add the pork lard and stir the pork over high heat for a couple of minutes or until the meat changes color. If you don't like pork lard, use vegetable oil.

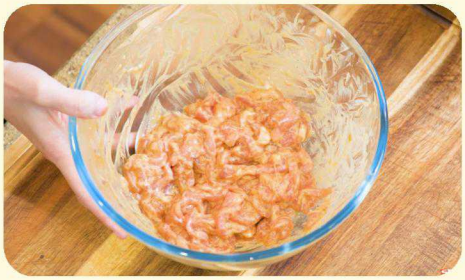
7. Add the sweet flour sauce and mix well.

8. Switch the heat to medium and add the sliced garlic and julienned green pepper. Keep cooking until the pepper is slightly wilted.

> **Souped Up Swap:** If you don't like spicy food, use bell pepper instead.

9. Pour in the sauce and stir well. Serve with white rice.













Twice Cooked Pork

huí guō ròu
回 锅 肉

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cooking Time: 30 minutes
Serves: 3 people

The origins of Twice Cooked Pork trace back to ancient Chinese sacrificial traditions. In Sichuan, pork for ancestor worship was simmered without salt as a sign of respect. After the ceremony, the meat was reheated and stir-fried for the family to enjoy. Over time, this preparation evolved into the dish we know today. Its name reflects the cooking method—first simmering the pork, then stir-frying it to perfection.

Ingredient Tips

- Garlic sprouts (蒜苗) are hard to find outside of China; you can use scallions as a replacement. However, there will be a difference in the taste of the dish.
- Sweet flour sauce (甜面酱) is made with fermented wheat flour with lots of spices, which add a complex flavor to this dish. If you don't have it, use hoisin sauce as a replacement.



For cooking the pork for the first time

- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water
- 454g / 1 pound skin-on pork belly or pork butt
- 9g / about 3 slices ginger
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 2g / ½ Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorn (see page 18)
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine

For cooking the pork the second time

- 100g / about 4 garlic sprouts
- 15g / about 5 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 60g / about 2 green chili peppers
- 60g / about 2 red chili peppers
- 24g / 1.5 Tbsps Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)
- 5.3g / 1 tsp sweet flour sauce
- 2.8g / 1 tsp fermented black beans (see page 26)
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine

1. Add water, the pork belly, ginger slices, scallions, Sichuan peppercorns, and Chinese cooking wine to a pot, and then bring to a boil. Switch the heat to low and simmer for 25 minutes.
2. While the pork belly is simmering, cut the garlic sprouts into 2-inch-long stalks. Separate the white and green parts.
3. Cut the red and green chili peppers into small triangles and set them aside.
4. Remove the pork belly from the pot, rinse it under running water, and wipe off the moisture with paper towels. Cut the pork belly into ⅛-inch thick slices.
5. Heat the wok over medium heat and add the pork slices. Stir for 3 minutes or until a few tablespoons of fat are rendered from the pork. You can take some pork fat out of the wok so the dish is not too greasy.
6. Add the garlic, ginger slices, red and green chili peppers, the white parts of the garlic sprouts, fermented black beans, sweet flour sauce, and Sichuan dou ban jiang. Stir over medium heat for a few minutes.
7. Season the dish with soy sauce and Chinese cooking wine. Mix until well combined.
8. Add the green part of the garlic sprouts and toss well. Serve with white rice.

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Peking Sauce Pork

jīng jiàng ròu sī
京 酱 肉 丝

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Legend has it that this dish was born out of love and resourcefulness. When a grandfather and his grandson couldn't afford to have Peking Duck for Chinese New Year, the grandfather got creative. He cooked pork in the same sauce used for Peking Duck and prepared it in the same style (with julienned cucumber and scallions). To their delight, the grandson loved it, and they enjoyed a wonderful spring festival together. Since then, this dish has become a household favorite, earning its reputation for being both easy to make and incredibly delicious.

For marinating the pork

- 340g / 12 oz pork loin
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 0.8g / ⅓ tsp ground white pepper
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 1 egg white
- 11g / 1.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps oil

For making the aromatic water

- 8g / about 2 stalks of scallions, green part only, roughly diced
- 9g / about 3 ginger slices
- 1.3g / 1 tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 60g / ¼ cup water

For stir-frying and garnishing

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil to stir-fry the pork
- 25g / 2 Tbsps sugar
- 48g / 3 Tbsps sweet flour sauce (see page 16)
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 200g / 7 oz cucumber
- 32g / about 8 stalks of scallions, white part only

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1. Slice the pork into ¼-inch thick slabs. Stack the slabs and julienne them into ¼-inch thick strips.

2. Add the pork, salt, white pepper, dark soy sauce, and Chinese cooking wine to a nonreactive bowl and mix until well combined.

3. Add the egg white and cornstarch and continue to massage the meat for 5 minutes. Drizzle the oil into the bowl and mix to prevent the meat from tangling, making it easier to stir-fry later. Set it aside.

4. Thinly julienne the cucumber and the white part of the scallions and place them onto a serving plate. Set them aside.

5. Add the green part of the scallion, ginger slices, Sichuan peppercorns, and water to a blender and blend into a puree.

6. Let the puree go through a sieve to eliminate the solid parts. Reserve the aromatic water on the side.

7. Heat the wok until smoking hot, add the oil, and stir the pork over high heat for a couple of minutes or until the meat changes color. Remove the pork from the wok and set it aside.

8. Clean the wok to remove the pork residue, but leave the remaining oil in the wok; otherwise, it will burn and ruin the taste.

9. Add the sugar to the wok and stir over medium-low heat until it turns into an amber color and starts bubbling, about 2-3 minutes.

10. Add the sweet flour sauce and the Chinese cooking wine and mix well. Pour in the reserved aromatic water in batches and constantly stir over medium heat until thickened, for about 2-3 minutes.

11. Introduce the pork back to the wok and toss until well combined.















Pork Chop Suey

chǎo zá suì
炒 杂 碎

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Many believe that chop suey was created by Chinese Americans in the United States. However, after extensive research, I found that this dish actually originated in China, with its name being a transliteration of "炒杂碎, chǎo zá suì."

- Chao (炒) means stir-fry, which is the most common cooking technique in Chinese cuisine.
- Za (杂) means a little bit of everything.
- Sui (碎) means broken, referring to all the roughly chopped ingredients.

Authentic chop suey requires the use of a Chinese wok to achieve the desired "wok hay" flavor, a complex smoky taste and aroma created by cooking food in a well-seasoned carbon steel wok over high heat. While there is no fixed recipe for chop suey, it is typically an impromptu stir-fry made with whatever ingredients are available.

For marinating the meat

- 340g / 12 oz pork meat
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 1.2g / ¼ tsp baking soda
- 5.5g / 1 tsp soy sauce
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper or to taste

For the stir-fry

- 400g / 14 oz fresh mixed vegetables of choice
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps cooking oil
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 15g / 1 Tbsp water
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch
- 60g / ¼ cup water
- 6.8g / 1.5 tsps sesame oil

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1. Cut the meat into ⅛-inch thick slices. I used pork, but chicken and beef will also work.
2. Add the meat, salt, baking soda, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, and black pepper to a nonreactive bowl and mix well. Set it aside for 15 minutes.
3. While waiting, cut all of the vegetables into bite-sized pieces. I like using Chinese broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, snow peas, and bean sprouts, but you can use whatever you have in your kitchen.
4. Separate the delicate vegetables (such as leafy greens and bean sprouts) from the hard vegetables (such as carrots and broccoli) because they require different cooking times.
5. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until it is smoking hot. Add the oil and toss it around to create a non-stick layer. Add the marinated meat. Quickly stir for a couple of minutes or until the meat changes color.

> **Chef's Secret:** It is best to undercook the meat because you will cook it again later. If it is fully cooked now, it will be overcooked when mixed with the vegetables.

6. Remove the meat from the wok. Be sure to leave the excess oil in the wok so you can continue using it to cook the vegetables.
7. Toss in the garlic and ginger slices. Stir for a minute or until fragrant.
8. Add the hard vegetables and season them with the soy sauce and oyster sauce. Continue to cook over medium heat for a few minutes or until they reach your desired doneness. If the wok looks dry, add 1 tablespoon of water to create some steam to help cook the vegetables.
9. Introduce the pork back to the wok, along with the delicate vegetables. Add a drizzle of Chinese cooking wine from the side of the wok. Mix to combine everything.
10. Quickly mix the cornstarch with the ¼ cup of water and then pour into the wok. Stir until the sauce is thickened.
11. Before serving, add a drizzle of sesame oil for a nutty taste.



Sichuan Pork Slices in Garlic Sauce

suàn ní bái ròu
蒜 泥 白 肉

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 40 minutes

Serves: 3 people

This is a perfect recipe that shows how a sauce can shine through an entire dish. The pork belly is simmered in an aromatic liquid until tender. While the meat retains its natural aroma, the taste is slightly dull. Then, the spicy garlic sauce fills the vacancy of the flavor and completes the dish.

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For simmering the pork

- 500 grams / 1.1 -pound pork belly
- 15g / about 5 ginger slices
- 24g / about 8 cloves garlic
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves,
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 2g / ½ Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 56g / ¼ cup Chinese cooking wine
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water

For the spicy garlic sauce

- 48g / about 16 cloves garlic
- 2.1g / ⅜ tsp salt
- 38g / 2.5 Tbsps water
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps the Seasoned Sweet Soy Sauce
- 54g / 4 Tbsps Sichuan Red Chili Oil (see page 32)

Others

- 227g / ½ pound cucumber, julienned
- 6g / 2 Tbsps diced cilantro

Ingredient Tip

- Seasoned Sweet Soy Sauce, or what we call fu zhi jiang you (复制酱油), is the prominent flavor of this dish and is used in many Sichuan recipes, such as Zhong's Dumplings, Mouthwatering Chicken (see page 52), and Yibin Flaming Noodles. Unfortunately, it is difficult to buy this ingredient outside of China, and I haven't found appropriate replacements. You can check page 279 to learn how to make it at home.











1. Add the pork belly, ginger slices, garlic cloves, scallions, bay leaves, cinnamon stick, star anise, Sichuan peppercorns, Chinese cooking wine, and the water to a stockpot; bring it to a boil. Sieve out the scum and then turn the heat to low and simmer for 40 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, make the spicy garlic sauce. Add the garlic cloves, salt, and water to a blender. Blend them into a thick puree.

3. Add the soy sauce, Seasoned Sweet Soy Sauce, and chili oil to the garlic puree. Mix thoroughly and set it aside.

4. Take the pork belly out of the pot and let it cool for 30 minutes. Then slice it into ⅛-inch thick pieces.

5. Place the julienned cucumber on a shallow plate and then arrange the meat slices on top of the cucumber.

6. Pour the spicy garlic sauce over the pork, garnish with diced cilantro, and serve.



Sweet and Sour Ribs

táng cù pái gǔ
糖 醋 排 骨

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 70 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Sweet and Sour Ribs is probably one of the first dishes that a Chinese beginner will choose to learn because it's the most popular flavor in Chinese cuisine. It exists in many regional cuisines of China, such as Shandong cuisine (鲁菜 lǔ cài), Shanghai cuisine (本帮菜 běn bāng cài), Sichuan cuisine (川菜 chuān cài), and Jiangsu cuisine (苏菜sū cài). Aside from those, every family will have their own twists and taste preferences.

This recipe was passed down from my grandma; it requires simple ingredients, provides a well-balanced condiment ratio, and delivers an irresistible result. One of my fondest childhood memories is of my sisters and I fighting over the sweet and sour sauce left on the rib plate. We loved to mix it with white rice and thought it was the most delicious food we could imagine.

- 680g / 1.5 pounds short pork ribs
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil
- 50g / 4 Tbsps sugar
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 38g / about 2.5 inches of ginger, sliced thinly
- 45g / about 3 scallions, cut into stalks
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 42g / 3 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 48g / 3 Tbsps rice vinegar
- 50g / 3 Tbsps soy sauce
- 45g / 2.5 Tbsps plum sauce
- 360g / 1.5 cups water
- 6g / 2 tsps toasted sesame seeds as garnish

Ingredient Tip

- Plum sauce (see page 17) is similar to plum jam, but it's made with fermented plums, which give it a unique flavor. If you don't have it, use regular plum jam.

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1. Slice the short ribs into individual pieces by cutting between the bones.

2. Add the ribs, soy sauce, and black pepper to a nonreactive bowl and mix well. Let the mixture sit for 15 minutes.

3. While waiting, prepare the garlic cloves, ginger slices, scallion stalks, cinnamon stick, and star anise. Having these ingredients beforehand avoids rummaging around while caramelizing the sugar.

4. Preheat a wok to smoking hot and add the oil. Pan-fry the ribs over high heat for 1-2 minutes or until the meat is slightly charred.

> **Chef's Secret:** This step is not to cook the ribs all the way through, but rather than creating what's called a Maillard reaction so the flavor of this dish becomes complex.

5. Remove the ribs from the wok and set them aside. Make sure to clean any residue left in the wok, or else it will burn while the sugar caramelizes, bringing a bitter taste.

6. Add the sugar to the same wok and stir over medium-low heat for 3-4 minutes or until the sugar turns amber in color.

7. Wait until the caramel starts producing foamy bubbles, and then quickly toss in the garlic, ginger, scallions, cinnamon stick, star anise, and seared ribs. Stir everything for a minute or until fragrant.

8. Add the Chinese cooking wine, rice vinegar, soy sauce, and plum sauce. Continue to stir until well combined.

9. Transfer everything into a clay pot. If you don't have one, use a stainless steel stock pot or a Dutch oven.

10. Rinse the wok with water and pour it into the clay pot. Turn the heat to low and simmer the ribs for 50 minutes or until fork-tender.

11. Discard all the soggy aromatics and then check the consistency of the sauce. If the sauce is thin, turn the heat to high and constantly stir to reduce the sauce until it's thick and syrupy.

12. Turn off the heat and add toasted sesame seeds as a garnish. Serve the ribs with white rice.













Cantonese Steamed Ribs in Black Bean Sauce

(Dim Sum Style)

chǐ zhī zhēng pái gǔ
豉 汁 蒸 排 骨

Prep Time: 1.5 hours

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Steam may not sound like your preferred method to cook ribs, but this is the most popular rib recipe in Cantonese cuisine. By sautéing part of the garlic and the fermented black bean, the flavor really stands out. The citrus aroma from the tangerine peel is a nice spark that brings a bright, refreshing note to the dish. These ribs are incredibly tender, juicy, and full of umami flavor.



For cleaning and rubbing the ribs

- 500g / 1.1 pounds short pork ribs
- 11.4g / 2 tsps salt
- 30g / ¼ cup cornstarch
- 60g / ¼ cup crushed ice
- 42g / 3 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine

For seasoning the ribs

- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 7g / ½ Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 0.8g / ⅓ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 0.7g / ⅓ tsp minced aged tangerine peel, optional
- 27g / 3 Tbsps minced garlic
- 9g / 3 tsp minced ginger
- 15g / 2 Tbsps cornstarch
- 5.6g / 2 tsps fermented black beans, roughly diced (see page 26)
- 27g / 2 Tbsps vegetable oil

For garnishing

- 4g / 1 Tbsp diced scallion as garnish
- 30g / about 1 red chili pepper, sliced thinly, as garnish

Ingredient Tips

- When shopping for pork short ribs, ask your butcher to remove the silver skin before cutting a full rack into short ribs for better texture. You could use longer ribs, but dim sum is supposed to be enjoyed as bite-sized treats.
- Aged tangerine peel (陈皮) can be replaced with 1 tsp of fresh orange zest.

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1. Slice the ribs into individual pieces by cutting between the bones.

2. Add the ribs, salt, cornstarch, crushed ice, and Chinese cooking wine to a big mixing bowl and rub for 8 minutes. Rubbing for 8 minutes will loosen up the grains and fibers of the meat, which physically tenderizes the ribs – this is very important for making fall-off-the-bone ribs.

3. Rinse the ribs under running water for a few minutes or until all the starch is gone, and let the ribs drain thoroughly. Chef's Secret: The purpose of this cleaning process is to wash off the myoglobin, which gives the meat its red color. If you don't wash it off, you will get a bold, gamy taste, and the ribs will have a brown color after cooking. This step is optional, but Cantonese people prefer steamed ribs to have a light color and a clean taste.

4. Meanwhile, combine the following ingredients for the marinade into a big mixing bowl: the soy sauce, oyster sauce, Chinese cooking wine, salt, baking soda, sugar, white pepper, minced aged tangerine peel, 2 Tbsps minced garlic (reserve 1 Tbsp for later), and 2 tsps of the minced ginger (reserve 1 tsp for later).

5. Use paper towels to dry the ribs as much as possible. Even though the ribs are well-drained, they are still wet. If you don't dab the excess water, you will end up with steamed rib soup.

6. Mix the ribs with the marinade until well combined. Then add the cornstarch, mix thoroughly, and set it aside. The cornstarch will create a soft film, which locks in the juice and produces that classic dim sum rib texture -- a tender, succulent result.

7. In a sauce pot, add the oil, diced fermented black beans, the reserved 1 Tbsp minced garlic, and 1 tsp minced ginger. Sauté for a couple of minutes or until the aromatics are slightly golden on the edges. Turn off the heat. Let it cool.

8. Pour the aromatics and oil into the ribs and mix thoroughly. Let the ribs sit in the fridge for at least 1 hour; overnight will be even better.

Chef's Secret: Marinating the ribs with both fresh and deep-fried garlic gives this dish complex flavors.

9. Fill the steamer pot with water and bring it to a boil. Place the ribs on a shallow plate and steam on high heat for 30 minutes. Make sure you have enough water in the steamer so it doesn't evaporate too fast.

10. Garnish the ribs with diced scallions and red chili slices, and serve as an appetizer or main dish.



Hunan Style Steamed Pork With Rice Powder

hú nán mǐ fěn zhēng ròu
湖 南 米 粉 蒸 肉

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cooking Time: 1.5 hours

Serves: 3 people

As its name indicates, this dish originated from Hunan cuisine. The pork is coated with a roasted coarse rice powder and then steamed until it's melt-in-your-mouth tender. I know many of you have never heard of it, but it is so worth trying. The secret is the rice powder. My grandma used to make kgs of it and share it with all her kids and siblings. It is packed with complex spice fragrances, and the pork has a gooey, sticky texture. I hope you'll agree that it's incredibly delicious.

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For the rice powder

- 266g / 1⅓ cup uncooked jasmine rice
- 66g / ⅓ cup uncooked glutinous rice
- 2g / ½ Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 0.4g / about ½ star anise
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 1.5g / about ½ a black cardamom pod
- 2g / about 4 dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 8.6g / ½ Tbsp salt
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar

For marinating the pork

- 454g / 1 pound pork shoulder meat
- 9g / 3 cloves garlic
- 1.5g / ½ tsp grated ginger
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 10g / about 1 piece fermented bean curd

For garnishing and serving

- 1 piece lotus leaf (see page 24)
- 7.5g / 1.5 Tbsps diced scallion as garnish
- 9g / 1.5 Tbsps diced red chilies as garnish

Ingredient Tips

- Glutinous rice provides a sticky and gooey texture that binds all the rice powder together. If you only use jasmine rice, the rice layer tends to fall off slightly.
- Lotus leaf is only for fragrance. It won't affect the taste. If you cannot find it, you can use parchment paper or banana leaf.
- Fermented bean curd (腐乳) adds a complex and distinguished flavor to this dish. If you don't have access to buy it, use ½ Tbsp Japanese miso paste. Although the flavor is different, miso is a fermented soy product, so it will also level up the flavor of the pork.

1. Add jasmine rice and glutinous rice to a cast-iron skillet and stir constantly over low heat for 20-30 minutes or until the rice turns to a light golden color.

2. Allow the rice to cool completely and blend the rice in a blender until coarse.

3. Toast the Sichuan peppercorns, black pepper, white pepper, star anise, cinnamon, black cardamom, and dried red chilies in a cast-iron skillet over low heat for 3-5 minutes.

4. Allow the spices to cool and blend them in a spice grinder until fine. You need to grind the rice and the spices separately because they have different hardness levels.

5. Combine the rice powder with the spice powder and season with the salt and sugar. You only need ½ cup rice powder for this recipe, so you can save the rest in a sealed container for future use. Rice powder will last three months at room temperature.

6. Cut the pork shoulder meat into bite-size pieces.

7. Add the pork, minced garlic, ginger, soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, salt, and fermented bean curd to a nonreactive bowl and mix well. Let it sit for 20 minutes.

8. Cut the lotus leaf into a size that fits your steamer. Then, soak it in hot water for a few minutes so it becomes pliable.

9. Place the lotus leaf in the steamer. Poke a few holes in it to allow the steam to go through.

10. Coat the pork with the rice powder piece by piece. Shake off the excess powder and then place the pork into the steamer. It is okay to stack the pork pieces.

11. Steam the pork over medium-low heat for 1.5 hours. Garnish it with diced scallions and red chilies.



Rolled Omelet with Pork Filling

zhū ròu dàn juǎn
猪 肉 蛋 卷

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Serves:
25 minutes	20 minutes	3 people

Whenever I get a bite of these meat rolls, I'm instantly taken back to Grandma's kitchen. I swear that the sound of her chopping meat on the cutting board echoes in my ears. She likes to serve this as an appetizer or a side dish. It is one of my family's favorite items to put in a hot pot. It also makes an excellent topping for noodle soup. This is one of those Chinese recipes that you can't find much information about on the internet in English, but it is so delicious and easy to make that it deserves to be shared.

For making the pork filling

- 454g / 1 pound ground pork
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps finely diced ginger
- 18g / 2 Tbsps finely diced garlic
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 4.3g / ¾ tsp salt
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 30g / ¼ cup tapioca starch
- 32g / ½ cup diced scallion
- 2 eggs

For making the egg wrapper

- 4 eggs
- 15g / 2 Tbsps tapioca starch
- 23g / 1.5 Tbsps water
- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil

For making the dipping sauce

- 50g / 3 Tbsps soy sauce
- 4g / 1 Tbsp diced scallion
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp diced garlic
- 2g / 1 tsp diced Thai bird's eye chili (see page 23)

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1. In a nonreactive bowl, mix the ground pork with the soy sauce, oyster sauce, Chinese cooking wine, salt, sugar, diced ginger, garlic, sesame oil, tapioca starch, scallions, and egg. Stir the meat in one direction for a few minutes to develop the texture. Set the filling aside.

   Chef's Secret: Tapioca starch gives the filling a slightly gooey and tender texture. It is optional, so you can leave it out if you are on a keto diet. You can also make this recipe with ground chicken, shrimp, or fish.

2. Crack 4 eggs into a bowl and whisk well. Reserve 2 Tbsps of the beaten egg on the side. That will be the glue to seal the omelet rolls later.

3. Mix 2 Tbsps tapioca starch with 1.5 Tbsps water and add it to the whisked eggs. The starch will lower the chance of your egg wrappers breaking apart. If you leave out the starch, you must be super careful not to break the egg wrappers when wrapping and flipping.

4. Heat a wok or a non-stick frying pan (10 inches in diameter) to smoking hot. Add a little bit of oil and rub it with a paper towel to coat the bottom of the pan.

5. The amount of egg mixture is enough to make two egg wrappers, so pour half of the egg mixture into the wok and swirl it around so the egg covers the bottom of the cookware. Once the egg is set and formed into a crepe, carefully flip it and cook the other side for just 10 seconds. Remove the egg wrapper from the pan and set aside on parchment paper. Repeat the same process to make the second egg wrapper.

6. Place a parchment paper under each egg wrapper. This will help you transfer the omelet rolls in and out of the steamer without breaking.

7. Brush the remaining egg mixture on each wrapper, and then use a dough scraper or a spatula to evenly spread the meat filling on the top. Roll each one into a log to ensure the egg wrapper forms a spiral at the cross-section.

8. Poke some holes all over the rolls by using toothpicks so they don't inflate while cooking.

9. Fill the steamer pot with water and turn the heat to high. Grab the parchment paper to transfer the rolls into the steamer. Steam the rolls on high heat for 20 minutes; start counting the time after the water comes to a boil.

10. Meanwhile, make the dipping sauce. Add the diced scallion, minced garlic, Thai bird's eye chili, and soy sauce in a small sauce bowl and mix thoroughly. If you don't eat spicy food, you can skip the chili.

11. Slice the rolls into ½-inch thick pieces and serve with the dipping sauce.

Red Braised Lion's Head Meatballs

hóng shāo shī zi tóu
红 烧 狮 子 头

Prep Time: 35 minutes

Cooking Time: 80 minutes

Serves: 4 people

Don't worry; the lion is not on the ingredient list; it is a meatball dish from Huai Yang cuisine (淮扬菜). It got its name from the shape, which resembles the head of the Chinese guardian lion. This recipe features the most tender, fluffy, and delicate meatballs.

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For making the meatballs

- 600g / 21.2 oz skinless pork belly
- 100g / 3.5 oz fresh or canned bamboo shoots, diced
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 120g / ½ cup water
- 15g / about 1 scallion, crushed
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp diced ginger
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, diced
- 0.7g / ½ tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 38g / 5 Tbsps cornstarch

For braising the meatballs

- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps cooking oil
- 25g / 2 Tbsps sugar
- 30g / about 2 scallions, diced
- 18g / about 6 slices ginger
- 15g / about 5 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 2g / ½ Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 1.3g / about ½ cinnamon stick
- 0.4g / about ½ of a star anise
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 600g / 2.5 cups water
- 42g / 2.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 56g / ¼ cup Chinese cooking wine
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce

For frying and finishing

- 660g / 3 cups frying oil
- 180g / about 6 baby bok choy, quartered and blanched (see page 21)

Ingredient Tips

- Fresh or canned bamboo shoots can be replaced by water chestnut, carrot, shiitake mushroom, or celery.

Make the meatballs

1. Freeze the pork belly and then partially defrost it. This makes dicing it much easier. Slice the pork belly into ⅕-inch thick slabs. Cut the slabs into ⅕-inch strips, and then dice finely. Once done, use a cleaver to roughly run over the diced meat for a couple of minutes.

> **Chef's Secret:** If you're short on time, here's an alternative method: Select a boneless pork shoulder cut and request that the staff grind it only once. In the United States, supermarkets may feed the meat through the grinding machine multiple times, and the meat will come out super fine. That is not what we want for this recipe. We want the meat to be roughly ground, which gives the meatball a better texture.

2. Dice the baby bamboo shoots and then combine them with the diced pork in a nonreactive mixing bowl.

3. Season the mixture with the soy sauce, oyster sauce, salt, sugar, and ground white pepper. Mix well and set it aside.

4. In a blender cup, add the scallion, diced ginger, diced garlic, Sichuan peppercorns, and the water; blend everything into a puree. Let it go through a sieve to discard the solid bits.

5. Mix the aromatic liquid with 5 Tbsps cornstarch until no lumps remain.

6. Pour the aromatic starch water mixture into the pork in batches. Stir it in one direction until absorbed. Continue to whisk the meat in one direction for another 4-5 minutes to develop the texture.

7. Evenly divide the meat into eight batches. Shape each of them into meatballs. Do not make them too small, otherwise they will dry out quickly while deep frying. Set the meatballs aside.

Deep-fry and braise the meatballs

1. Add the cooking oil and sugar into a clay pot. Stir over medium-low heat for 2-3 minutes or until the sugar is caramelized.











2. When the caramelized sugar begins to bubble, toss in all the aromatics (the Sichuan peppercorns, cinnamon stick, star anise, bay leaves, scallions, ginger slices, and garlic) and stir for a couple of minutes or until fragrant.

3. Pour in the water, the soy sauce, the Chinese cooking wine, and dark soy sauce.

4. Bring the braising liquid to a boil and set it on a spare stove over low heat while waiting for the meatballs.

5. Add oil to a wok and heat it to 380°F / 193°C over high heat. Add the meatballs one by one and deep-fry them on high heat for 4-5 minutes or until golden brown.

6. Transfer the browned meatballs into the braising liquid immediately. Put on the lid and simmer on low heat for 1 hour.

7. Serve the meatballs with some blanched baby bok choy and white rice.

















Top left, various dishes in a self-service fast food restaurant; top right, an open-air vendor stir-frying noodles (chow fun, see page 292 for the recipe) on the street in Guangzhou, China; bottom, various Hakka-style stuffed foods in the market.

Teochew Five-spice Meat Rolls

cháo zhōu wǔ xiāng tiáo
潮 州 五 香 条

Prep Time: 40 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 4 people

Teochew Five-spice Meat Roll is popular in the Southeast coastal cities in China and some Southeast Asian countries. The unique part about these rolls is that we use soybean curd skin as the wrapper. Besides being high in protein content and gluten-free, soybean curd skin is also surprisingly crispy and delicate.

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- 454g / 1 pound ground pork shoulder
- 1 egg
- 18g / 2 Tbsps minced garlic
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced ginger
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 17g / 1 Tbsp fish sauce
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 2g / 1 tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 1.5g / ½ Tbsp fish powder, optional
- 30g / ¼ cup sweet potato starch (see page 28)
- 227g / ½ pound jicama, peeled and diced
- 20g / about 4 scallion stalks, white part only, diced
- 2-3 big sheets of soybean curd skin
- 440g / 2 cups frying oil
- Your favorite chili sauce for dipping

Ingredient Tips

- Fish powder (大地鱼粉) (see page 273) is a special Teochew seasoning that is made from roasted flounder. It is packed with a pungent umami flavor, which adds a strong characteristic to this dish. You can replace it with Japanese dashi stock powder. I know you probably will ask me, "I don't have it, can I skip it?" That is a question that puzzles me whenever I make these traditional recipes. Technically, you can skip it, but you are also losing a touch of the local spirit and flavor.
- Jicama (沙葛), aka Spanish turnip, is sweet, crunchy, and juicy, kind of like a pear or water chestnut. You can usually find this in Walmart or Hispanic markets. However, you can use water chestnut, carrot, or daikon radish instead.
- Sweet potato starch can be replaced by tapioca flour.
- Soybean curd skin (腐皮) (see page 27) has very distinct qualities; there is no true replacement. However, you can use rice paper or egg roll wrappers. Although the taste is slightly different, it will still be crunchy and delicious.





1. Add the ground pork shoulder, egg, minced garlic, ginger, soy sauce, fish sauce, salt, five-spice powder, fish powder, and sweet potato starch into a large mixing bowl. Stir in one direction for 4-5 minutes until the meat becomes sticky.

2. Combine the seasoned ground pork with the diced jicama and white parts of the scallions thoroughly. Set the mixture aside.

3. The soybean curd skins usually come in large sheets; you need to cut them into 6 x 9-inch rectangular pieces.

4. Put 3-4 Tbsps of filling on the soybean curd skin and shape the filling into a long log. Dab a little bit of water on the rest of the sheet. Then roll up the soybean curd skin all the way. Pinch and twist both ends so the filling is not exposed. Apply the same technique to finish all the rolls.

5. Let the rolls rest for 10 minutes or until the soybean curd skin becomes damp.

6. Add the oil to a wok and heat it to 320°F / 160°C. Add the pork rolls and deep-fry them over medium-low heat for 8 minutes. You can pan-fry or shallow-fry them if you want to use less oil. Do not use high heat because the soybean curd skin burns quickly.

7. Slice the rolls into bite-size pieces. Pair with your favorite chili sauce (I used sriracha) and serve as an appetizer or a side dish. You can also use it as a topping for noodle soup, congee, and hot pot.



Shanghai Crispy Breaded Pork Chop

shàng hǎi zhá zhū pái
上 海 炸 猪 排

Prep Time: 2.5 hours

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2-3 people

As one of the representatives of Shanghai-style Western food, fried pork chop has been localized and became part of the daily catering choices of Shanghainese. The prime dipping sauce for this dish is La Jiang You (辣酱油), translated as spicy soy sauce, which is a Chinese variant of Worcestershire sauce. It was brought from England in the 19th century. The umami taste and a slight sourness pair well with deep-fried crispy food.

For marinating the pork

- 454g / 1 pound boneless pork chop slabs, ½-inch thick
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 3g / 1.5 tsps paprika
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 3g / 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1g / ½ tsp ginger powder
- 120g / ½ cup buttermilk
- 26g / 3 Tbsps all-purpose flour

For frying and finishing

- 210g / 1.5 cups all-purpose flour
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt to season the all-purpose flour
- 2.4g / 1 tsp ground white pepper
- 14.4g / 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 15-30g / 1-2 Tbsps water
- 440-660g / 2-3 cups oil
- 48g / 3 Tbsps Worcestershire sauce for dipping

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1. Get a sharp knife to make some cuts on the thin layer of fat around the edge of the pork chop slabs. This will prevent the silver skin from shrinking, and the meat will not bulge up while cooking.

> **Souped Up Swap:** If you don't eat pork, you can use butterflied chicken breast.

2. Use the back of a knife or a meat tenderizer to strike both sides of the meat until the surface becomes rough. Since pork chops are lean, they can become tough, chewy, and dry if not tenderized correctly. Striking the meat helps to break down the muscle fibers and provides a tender texture.

3. Add the pork chop, soy sauce, paprika, salt, sugar, garlic powder, ginger powder, and buttermilk in a nonreactive bowl and mix well. Let it rest in the fridge for at least 2 hours or until the pork absorbs most of the buttermilk.

4. Mix the marinated pork chop with 3 Tbsps of all-purpose flour thoroughly.

> **Chef's Secret:** This thin layer of batter will act like glue and catch more coating later.

5. In a separate mixing bowl, combine 1.5 cups all-purpose flour with ½ tsp salt, white pepper, and baking powder and mix well.

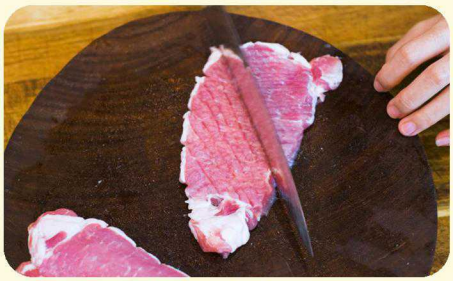
6. Slowly drizzle 1-2 Tbsps water into the flour and stir to create tiny lumps. Rub the flour between your hands to make the lumps even and fine. These flour bits will attach to the pork and create an extra crispy layer.

7. Use a fork to transfer a piece of pork chop slab onto the coating. Then, bury the pork and give it a few solid presses. Shake off the excess flour and set it aside on a rack. Continue to coat the rest of the pork. A fork is very helpful here because you don't need to touch the wet pork with your bare hands.

8. Let the breaded pork rest on a drying rack for 15 minutes so the dry flour has enough time to bond together, and it will fall off less when deep-frying. Don't rest the pork on a flat board; otherwise, the flour clumps on the bottom side will compact together and lose some of the fluffiness.

9. Add the oil to a wok and bring the oil to 360°F / 182°C over medium heat. Deep-fry the pork chop for 8-10 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 145°F / 63°C.

10. Pair with Worcestershire sauce and serve with white rice or salad.















Fried Lotus Root Meatballs

lián ǒu zhá wán zi
莲 藕 炸 丸 子

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people

One of my favorite ways to enjoy lotus root is putting it into meatballs because it provides a nice crunchy texture. These meatballs are deep-fried until crispy on the outside and tender inside.

- 140g / 5 oz lotus root (see page 22)
- 340g / 12 oz ground pork
- 1 egg
- 12g / 3 Tbsps diced scallions
- 9g / 3 Tbsps diced cilantro
- 18g / 2 Tbsps minced garlic
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced ginger
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 17g / 1 Tbsp fish sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 19g / 2.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 440-660g / 2-3 cups oil to deep-fry

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1. Peel the lotus root and dice it finely or grate it using a vegetable grater if you have one.

2. Combine the diced lotus root, ground pork, egg, minced garlic, minced ginger, diced scallions, diced cilantro, cornstarch, soy sauce, fish sauce, oyster sauce, and white pepper in a large nonreactive bowl. Thoroughly mix until the seasonings are well combined, and then stir the mixture in one direction for 5 minutes to develop the texture.

3. Heat the oil to 375°F /190°C. Grab some of the ground pork lotus root mixture and squeeze it. The mixture will come out between your forefinger and thumb and naturally form into a round ball. Dip a spoon in water to prevent sticking and use it to scrape the meatball off your hand. Add it to the oil and continue to do that until all the meatballs are formed.

Chef's Secret: If you can't do this method, you can also roll 2 tablespoons of the mixture in between your hands to form the meatballs.

4. Fry the meatballs over medium heat for a few minutes or until golden brown. If you don't want to use that much oil to deep-fry, you can flatten the meatballs into patties and pan-fry until both sides are golden brown.

5. Remove the meatballs from the oil and serve with your favorite dipping sauce.















BBQ roast shops (siu laap shops) are everywhere in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. You can think of it like the Chinese delis. These perfectly roasted meats of goodness are glistening by the windows and dripping with the signature sticky, crimson-red sauce. Usually, the menu is written on the window. After you place your order, the chef will slice the meat for you and serve it with a plate of rice and some blanched greens on the side.

This cookbook includes a few siu laap classics, such as BBQ Pork Char Siu (page 72), Soy Sauce Chicken (page 60), Cantonese Roasted Duck (page 64), Hainanese Chicken (page 54), and Crispy Pork Belly (page 70).



Beef

116. Mongolian Beef / 蒙古牛肉
118. Pepper Steak / 杭椒牛柳
120. Beef and Bitter Melon Stir-Fry in Black Bean Sauce / 豉汁苦瓜炒牛肉
122. Beef and Mushroom Stir-Fry in Black Pepper Sauce / 黑椒牛肉炒杏鲍菇
124. Beef and Broccoli Stir-Fry / 芥蓝炒牛肉
126. Oyster Sauce Beef Served on a Hot Iron Plate / 铁板蚝油牛肉
128. Sichuan Ganbian Beef Stir-Fry / 干煸牛肉
130. Sichuan Cold Crispy Beef / 冷吃牛肉
132. Garlic Steak Bites in Black Pepper Sauce / 蒜子牛肉粒
134. Hong Kong Beef Curry / 港式咖喱牛腩
136. Cantonese Braised Beef with Daikon Radish / 萝卜炆牛腩
139. Beef and Potato Soup Over Rice/ 牛肉盖浇饭
141. Beef and Potato Stew with Red Fermented Bean Curd / 腐乳牛肉炖土豆
143. Braised Beef with Pickled Mustard Greens / 酸菜炖牛肉
146. Sichuan Spicy Poached Beef / 四川水煮牛肉
149. Dim Sum Steamed Beef Meatballs / 点心蒸牛肉球



Mongolian Beef

méng gǔ niú ròu
蒙 古 牛 肉

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Mongolian Beef is one of the most popular takeout dishes in American Chinese restaurants. The funny thing is, I have never seen this dish anywhere in China, so there is no authentic recipe that originated in China. The reason why this is considered a Chinese dish is that it uses the classic marinade method called velveting to tenderize the meat, which provides excellent soft and succulent results.

Although Mongolian Beef is deep-fried in restaurants, I recommend shallow-frying because it is more friendly for home cooking, and the taste is equally delicious.

For marinating the beef

- 454g / 1 pound beef
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 2.8g / ½ tsp dark soy sauce
- 23g / 3 Tbsps cornstarch
- 1 egg white

For making the sauce

- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch
- 42g / 2.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 38g / 3 Tbsps brown sugar
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 120g / ½ cup water
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce

For frying and finishing

- 220g / 1 cup oil
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced ginger
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps minced garlic
- 90g / about 6 scallions, separate the white and green parts and cut into stalks
- 3.6g / 2 tsps chili flakes
- 9g / 1 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds as garnish

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Ingredient Tips

- I recommend using sirloin, ribeye, strip steak, or flank steak.
- This recipe uses one egg white. Save the egg yolk to make General Tso's Chicken (see page 46).

1. Cut the beef across the muscle grains into ⅛-inch thick slices. Add the beef, Chinese cooking wine, salt, ground black pepper, and dark soy sauce to a large mixing bowl and mix the meat for a few minutes or until all the liquid seasonings are absorbed.

2. Add cornstarch and egg white, and keep mixing the meat for a few minutes or until the meat becomes smooth and velvety. Set it aside for 30 minutes.

Chef's Secret: Using cornstarch and egg to create a smooth marinade is a method called velveting in Chinese cuisine. It preserves the moisture of the meat while cooking, preventing the fibers from seizing up, and it gives you a juicy, tender texture that literally melts in your mouth. This marinade can be applied to chicken and pork as well.

3. While waiting, combine all the sauce ingredients in a bowl and mix well.

4. In a wok, heat 1 cup oil to 400°F / 204°C. Add the beef slices to the wok piece by piece and shallow-fry the meat in 2-3 batches over high heat for 30 seconds per side or until both sides are golden brown. Remove the beef from the oil and set it aside.

5. Pour out most of the oil, reserving 1 Tbsp in the wok. Add the minced ginger, garlic, the white part of the scallion stalks, and the dried red chilies (optional); stir over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add the sauce and continue to stir until it thickens.

6. Introduce the beef back into the wok, toss in the green part of the scallion stalks, and mix until the beef is well-coated.

7. Sprinkle the toasted sesame seeds as a garnish and serve with white rice.















Pepper Steak

háng jiāo niú liǔ
杭 椒 牛 柳

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

This Pepper Steak is quite different compared to what you typically get from American Chinese takeout restaurants. It doesn't have that much sauce, and the taste is not as sweet. Instead, it is savory and spicy. Hangjiao（杭椒）is a special breed of pepper from Hangzhou, China; it tastes mild and spicy and has a nice crunch. Niuliu (牛柳) is the beef tenderloin. So, the name is pretty straightforward, LOL! This dish is super easy and quick, perfect for a busy day.

- 283g / 10 oz beef tenderloin
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 2.5g / 1 tsp cornstarch
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 6.8g / 1.5 tsps cooking oil
- 150g / 5.3 oz green chili pepper
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 4.3g / ¾ tsp salt
- 0.5g / ¼ tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil

Ingredient Tips

- It is almost impossible to buy Hangzhou pepper outside of China. I used Korean long-hot pepper because it has a similar taste and texture. You can also use other green chili peppers, such as jalapeno, chilaca, and anaheim. If you can't handle spicy food, choose bell pepper instead.
- Beef tenderloin is the ideal cut for this recipe, but you can use a cheaper cut. If so, be sure to add ¼ tsp baking soda to your marinade to tenderize the beef.

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1. Cut the beef into ⅛-inch thick slabs. Then slice the slabs into ⅛-inch thick strips.

2. Place the beef in a large mixing bowl and add the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, ground black pepper, and cornstarch. Mix thoroughly.

3. Drizzle in the cooking oil and stir to coat the beef. Set it aside for 10 minutes.

> **Chef's Secret:** Putting starch in the marinade helps to keep the meat juicy, but it also increases the chance of food sticking to the wok. Coating the meat with a drizzle of cooking oil will make it stick less.

4. Use a meat tenderizer to lightly crush the pepper, then cut the pepper at a 45-degree angle into thin slices.

> **Chef's Secret:** Hammering the pepper allows the sodium and the beef flavor to be infused into the peppers.

5. Heat the wok until smoking hot. Add cooking oil and toss to cover the bottom of the wok. Add the beef and stir over high heat for a minute or two; remove the beef from the wok but leave the oil behind. It is best to undercook the meat so it won't be overcooked when we introduce it back to the wok later.

6. In the same wok, toss in the garlic, ginger, and pepper slices and stir over medium heat for a few minutes.

7. Season the pepper with ¾ tsp salt and stir well.

> **Chef's Secret:** When using hot peppers, it is better to season them a little bit saltier than your normal taste to balance the spiciness and bring out the flavors.

8. Switch the heat to high. Introduce the beef back into the wok. Add the five-spice powder and drizzle the Chinese cooking wine from the side of the wok. Keep stirring for a minute to mingle all the flavors.

9. Serve with white rice.















Beef and Bitter Melon Stir-Fry in Black Bean Sauce

chī zhī kǔ guā chǎo niú ròu
豉 汁 苦 瓜 炒 牛 肉

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 3 people

This dish is a classic and simple meal commonly found in the southern region of China. It can be enjoyed in various settings such as school cafeterias, takeout restaurants, family dinner tables, and dim sum tea houses. Since it's cooked with bitter melon, some may assume that the beef will taste bitter, but that's not the case. Bitter melon doesn't transfer its bitterness to other ingredients and instead adds a refreshing scent that enhances the flavor of the beef.



For marinating the beef

- 454g / 1 pound beef
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 2.5g / 1 tsp cornstarch
- 7g / ½ Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp soy sauce
- 2.8g / ½ tsp dark soy sauce
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp vegetable oil

For stir-frying

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps cooking oil
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 300g / ⅔ pound bitter melons or other vegetables of choice
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt to rub the bitter melon

For the sauce

- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 36g / 2 Tbsps black bean garlic sauce
- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch
- 180g / ¾ cup beef stock

Ingredient Tips

- I recommend using rib-eye, top sirloin, strip steak, flank steak, chuck roast, or flat iron.
- Bitter melon is the classic item for Cantonese people when making stir-fry beef in black bean sauce. If you don't like it or you don't have access to buy it, you can use broccoli, asparagus, or celery as a replacement.
- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use 1 tsp ginger juice + ½ tsp water.
- Black bean garlic sauce is a popular ingredient for making Cantonese stir-fries. It can be replaced with hoisin sauce.



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1. Cut the beef across the muscle grains into ⅛-inch thick slices.
2. Place the beef in a mixing bowl. Add the salt, baking soda, cornstarch, Chinese cooking wine, soy sauce, and dark soy sauce and mix well.

> **Chef's Secret:** Baking soda can break down the meat fibers and tenderize your beef. Cornstarch envelops the beef and creates a thin starchy layer that protects the beef from drying out while cooking.

3. Add a drizzle of cooking oil and stir to coat the beef. Let the beef marinade while you prep the other ingredients.

> **Chef's Secret:** Mixing the meat with starch increases the chance of food sticking to the wok. Therefore, adding a drizzle of cooking oil to cover everything at the end of the marinade will make it stick less.

4. Cut the bitter melons in half and then into quarters lengthwise. Remove the spongy white center by using a knife, and then scrape it off entirely with a rounded spoon.
5. Cut the bitter melon at a 45-degree angle into ½-inch thick slices.
6. Place the bitter melon in a mixing bowl and add 1 tsp salt. Toss for 1-2 minutes and then let it rest for 15 minutes to allow the salt to draw out the moisture from the bitter melon.
7. Squeeze as much moisture as possible from the bitter melon to reduce the bitter taste. Discard the liquid. Rinse the bitter melon with cold running water several times to wash off the salt. Drain thoroughly and set it aside.
8. Before cooking, quickly combine all the sauce ingredients (soy sauce, oyster sauce, black bean garlic sauce, cornstarch, and beef stock) in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Set aside.
9. Turn the heat to high and heat your wok or a large sauté pan until it is smoking hot. Add 2.5 Tbsps cooking oil and swirl it around to create a non-stick layer.
10. Add the beef to the wok and stir for 2 minutes. Once most of the beef has changed color, remove it from the wok, leaving the oil behind. The beef should be slightly undercooked at this point because you will cook it further. If the beef is fully cooked at this moment, it will be overcooked after you mix it with bitter melon and the sauce.
11. To the same wok, add the garlic, ginger, and bitter melon and stir over medium heat for a few minutes or until the bitter melon is a bit soft.
12. Pour in the sauce and introduce the beef back into the wok. Keep mixing for 2 minutes to mingle the ingredients. Serve with white rice.



Beef and Mushroom Stir-Fry in Black Pepper Sauce

hēi jiāo niú ròu chǎo xìng bào gū
黑 椒 牛 肉 炒 杏 鲍 菇

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Cantonese cuisine was influenced quite a bit by England, so it is very common to use Worcestershire sauce, which gives a powerful umami taste and a slight touch of sourness to this dish. The beef is coated with starch and pan-fried. You can enjoy some crunchy texture if you serve it fast enough, but the purpose of the breading here is to catch the flavorful sauce. I hope you'll agree this is a delicious and quick dinner recipe to add to your regular recipe rotation.

For marinating and coating the beef

- 400g / 14 oz beef (rib eye, sirloin, flank steak, or chuck)
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 80g / ⅔ cup cornstarch
- 9.6g / 2 tsps baking powder

For making the sauce

- 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 42g / 2 Tbsps honey
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 7.2g / 1 Tbsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 3g / 1 tsp minced ginger

For stir-frying and finishing

- 4 Tbsps oil to pan-fry the beef
- 22730 / 8 oz king oyster mushrooms
- 70g / about ¼ of a large onion

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1. Slice the beef across the muscle grains into ⅛-inch thick pieces.
2. Place the beef into a mixing bowl and add the salt and the whole egg. Mix thoroughly and set it aside.
3. Combine the baking powder with the cornstarch in a separate mixing bowl and stir well.
4. Add the beef slices to the starch mixture and mix until the beef is coated evenly with the flour. If beef slices stick together, please take some time to separate them.
5. Take the beef out and shake off the excess flour. Set the beef aside for 10 minutes so the starch has time to bond.
6. While waiting, slice the mushroom into ⅕-inch thick pieces, cut the onion into bite-size pieces, and combine all the sauce ingredients (soy sauce, honey, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, ground black pepper, minced garlic, and minced ginger) in a bowl.
7. Heat a carbon steel frying pan over high heat until smoking hot. Add the cooking oil and swirl it around to cover the bottom of the pan. Pan-fry the beef slices in batches on high heat for one minute per side or until golden and crispy. You want to make sure you don't crowd the pan.
8. Remove the beef to the side and continue to fry the next batch until all the beef is finished.
9. Add the mushrooms to the same pan and sear over high heat for 1 minute per side or until the mushrooms are slightly golden on the edges.
10. Add the onion and stir well.
11. Pour in the sauce and introduce the beef back to the pan. Toss to make sure every piece of the meat is coated nicely with the sauce.
12. Serve with white rice.



Beef and Broccoli Stir-Fry

jiè lán chǎo niú ròu
芥 蓝 炒 牛 肉

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people

If you are looking for an easy and delicious meal to make tonight, look no further than this authentic beef and broccoli recipe! Unlike the typical American Chinese takeout version, this dish is flavored with a touch of satay sauce and fish sauce. Both are popular ingredients in Teochew cuisine. As for the vegetable component, locals like to use Chinese broccoli, also known as gai lan (or jie lan in Mandarin, see page 22), which adds a unique mustard flavor and a slight sweetness. But don't worry, you can easily substitute regular broccoli if needed.

For marinating the beef

- 300g / 10.6 oz beef
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 11.3g / 1.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 8.5g / ½ Tbsp satay sauce
- 1.5 Tbsps cooking oil

For making the stir-fry sauce

- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 8.5g / ½ Tbsp fish sauce
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 2.5g / 1 tsp cornstarch
- 60g / ¼ cup water

For stir-frying and finishing

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil to stir-fry the beef
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 6g / 2 tsps minced ginger
- 227g / 8 oz Chinese broccoli (see page 21)
- 1.5 Tbsps water to cook the Chinese broccoli stem

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Ingredient Tips

- I recommend using sirloin, ribeye, flank steak, chuck, or top round for this recipe
- Satay sauce adds a nutty and umami taste to the dish. If you don't have it, replace it with XO sauce or Thai-style shrimp paste.
- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use the same amount of beef stock.

1. Cut the beef across the muscle grains into ⅛-inch thick slices. Place the beef in a mixing bowl and add the baking soda, ground white pepper, dark soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, cornstarch, and satay sauce. Mix well.

Chef's Secret: Baking soda is efficient at tenderizing meat, but only a small amount is needed; otherwise, it will leave a soapy taste.

2. Add 1.5 tablespoons of cooking oil and mix to coat the beef; this will prevent the slices from sticking, making it easier to stir-fry later. Set the beef aside for 15 minutes.

3. Cut the Chinese broccoli on a 45-degree angle into 2-inch-long stalks. Separate the leaves and the stems because they will go into the wok at different times. If using Western broccoli, cut it into bite-sized florets.

4. In a bowl, thoroughly combine the light soy sauce, oyster sauce, fish sauce, sugar, cornstarch, and water. Set it aside.

5. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add 2.5 tablespoons of oil and swirl it around to create a non-stick layer.

6. Add the beef to the wok and stir over high heat for 2 minutes or until the meat is slightly charred. Remove the beef from the wok but leave the oil behind.

7. Add the minced garlic, ginger, and the broccoli stem to the same wok. Stir over medium heat for 2 minutes. If the wok looks a little dry, add a splash of water to create some steam, helping to cook the stem through.

8. Add the broccoli leaves and keep cooking until wilted.

9. Introduce the beef back into the wok, pour in the sauce, and stir until the sauce is thickened. Serve with white rice.















Oyster Sauce Beef Served on a Hot Iron Plate

tiě bǎn háo yóu niú ròu
铁 板 蚝 油 牛 肉

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Serves:
15 minutes	15 minutes	2 people

Since I was little, I always loved this dish because it is served on a portable fondue stove, and it sizzles when you put it on the table, creating a fun and festive atmosphere.

Although Mongolian Beef is deep-fried in restaurants, I recommend shallow-frying because it is more friendly for home cooking, and the taste is equally delicious.

For marinating the beef

- 400g / 14 oz top sirloin steak (sirloin cap, flank steak, round, or flat-iron work)
- 15g / 2 Tbsps cornstarch
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 1 egg white
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp oil

For making the sauce

- 36g / 2 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps soy sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 4.8g / 2 tsps ground black pepper
- 6.3g / 1.5 tsps sugar
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water
- 1.3g / ½ tsp cornstarch

For stir-frying and finishing

- 41g / 3 Tbsps oil to pan-fry the beef
- 9g / 2 tsps oil to stir-fry the aromatics
- 30g / about 10 cloves garlic
- 270g / about 6 shallots, peeled and quartered
- 15g / about 1 inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 4.5g / 3 Tbsps dried red chilies, seeded and cut into short pieces (see page 19)
- 4g / 1 Tbsp diced scallions as garnish

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1. Cut the beef across the muscle grains into ⅛-inch thick slices. Place the beef in a mixing bowl and add the dark soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, egg white, and cornstarch. Gently mix for 5 minutes and then set the beef aside for 15 minutes.

2. While waiting, combine the oyster sauce, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, ground black pepper, sugar, cornstarch, and water in a bowl. Set it aside.

3. This dish will be served in a small cast-iron pot or a heavy-duty skillet over a fondue set. Before stir-frying the beef, preheat the cast-iron pot over medium-low heat on a spare stove.

4. Heat your wok until smoking hot, add 3 tablespoons of oil, and stir-fry the beef over high heat for 1.5 minutes or until the meat slices are lightly charred on the edges. Remove the beef from the wok and set it aside.

5. Add the sauce to the same wok and stir over medium-low heat for 1.5 minutes or until the sauce thickens. Add the beef back and toss thoroughly. Turn off the heat.

6. Once the cast-iron pot is piping hot, add 2 teaspoons of oil and toss in the garlic cloves, ginger slices, shallots, and red-dried chilies. Quickly stir for 20 seconds.

7. Add the beef to the cast-iron pot, making sure to scrape down the sauce so you don't waste any flavor. Garnish with diced scallions.

8. Light a fondue set and continue to heat the cast-iron pot over low heat on the dinner table to keep it sizzling while serving.



Sichuan Ganbian Beef Stir-Fry

gān biān niú ròu
干 煸 牛 肉

Prep Time: 25 minutes
Cooking Time: 20 minutes
Serves: 3 people

Ganbian (干煸) is a cooking technique translated as dry stir-fry; it means stir-frying the ingredients over medium heat until nicely charred to concentrate the flavor.
To prevent the meat from getting chewy, a bit of baking soda in the marinade is a necessity. This beef is so delicious—it tastes like a tender piece of jerky, spicy and numbing, with a bit of nuttiness. You can serve it as a side dish or an appetizer. We like to eat it as the perfect snack to accompany beer.

Ingredient Tip

- Chinese celery (中国芹菜), aka leafy celery, is a variety of celery cultivated in East Asian countries. It smells ten times stronger compared to Western celery. It is a bit hard to find outside of China, so it is okay to use Western celery.

For marinating the beef

- 454g / 1 pound beef (sirloin, flank, or beef chuck)
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 3g / 1 tsp grated ginger
- 3g / about 1 clove garlic, grated

For stir-frying and finishing

- 3 Tbsps oil
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)
- 18g / 2 Tbsps julienned ginger
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 5g / about 10 dried red chilies, cut open and seeded (see page 19)
- 200g / 7 oz Chinese celery
- 35g / 2.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 30g / about 2 scallions, cut into 2-inch-long stalks
- 9g / 1 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 1.5g / 1 tsp Sichuan peppercorn powder or to taste (see page 18)

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1. Cut the beef into ⅛-inch thick slabs, then julienne the slabs into ⅛-inch thick strips.

2. Place the beef in a large mixing bowl and add the salt, five-spice powder, sugar, baking soda, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, garlic, and ginger. Mix thoroughly and set the beef aside for 15 minutes.

3. If using Chinese celery, cut it into 2.5-inch long sticks; if using Western celery, cut the stalks into 2.5-inch long pieces and then julienne them into thin sticks.

4. Heat your wok over high heat until smoking hot. Then add 3 tablespoons of oil and swirl it around to cover the bottom.

5. Add the beef strips to the wok and spread them out so none of them overlap. Sear the beef for 20 seconds and then stir the beef over medium heat for about 5 minutes, or until the beef is nicely charred.

6. Push the beef to the side of the wok. Add the Sichuan dou ban jiang and stir over low heat until the oil becomes bright red.

7. Add the ginger strips, garlic slices, seeded dried red chilies, and celery stalks. Stir for a couple of minutes.

8. Add the Chinese cooking wine from the side of the wok and stir to deglaze the bottom.

9. Add the scallion stalks, toasted sesame seeds, and Sichuan peppercorn powder. Stir thoroughly and serve with white rice.













Sichuan Cold Crispy Beef

lěng chī niú ròu
冷 吃 牛 肉

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4 people

The key to making Sichuan Cold Crispy Beef is to fry it until crispy and then mix it with lots of aromatics. This is a great snack for beer and movies. You can also serve it as a side dish. I love it so much that my mouth waters every time I say the dish's name!

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For boiling the beef

- 680g / 1.5 pounds beef (beef chuck, brisket, or round)
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine, optional
- 9g / about 3 slices ginger
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water to cook the beef

For making the spice mix

- 3 to 20 dried red chilies or to taste (see page 19)
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp fennel seeds
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper
- 4g / 1 Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 1.5g / about ½ a black cardamom
- 2.7g / 1 tsp cumin seed
- 18g / 2 Tbsps sesame seeds
- 8.6g / 1.5 tsps salt
- 6.3g / 1.5 tsps sugar

For stir-frying and finishing

- 220g / 1 cup vegetable oil to deep-fry the beef
- 45g / about 3 scallions
- 18g / about 6 slices ginger
- 100g / about half a small onion, sliced thinly
- 15g / about 5 cloves garlic, lightly crushed
- 60g / ¼ cup water
- 12g / 3 Tbsps diced scallions

1. Cut the beef into a few pieces that are about 3-inches big.

2. Add the beef, Chinese cooking wine, ginger slices, scallion, and water to a stockpot. Bring it to a boil, and then simmer it on low heat for 15 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, toast the following spices in a wok over low heat for a few minutes: dried red chilies, bay leaves, star anise, cinnamon, fennel seeds, white peppercorns, Sichuan peppercorns, black cardamom, and half of the cumin seeds. Keep the other half of the cumin seeds whole and reserve on the side.

4. Add the toasted spices into a spice grinder and blend until fine.

5. Combine the spicy powder with the sesame seeds, salt, sugar, and reserved whole cumin seeds. Set it aside.

6. Take the beef out of the pot and rinse under running water to cool. Slice the beef into ¼-inch thick slabs and then julienne into strips. Set the beef in a colander to drain completely.

7. Add the oil, scallions, ginger slices, onion slices, and crushed garlic to a large wok. Stir over medium-low heat until the aromatics are golden brown; this seasons the oil so your beef comes out with a complex fragrance.

8. Remove the aromatics from the oil and discard them.

9. Bring the oil to 370°F / 188°C. Add the beef and deep-fry for 5-8 minutes or until nicely charred. Stir constantly to ensure even cooking.

10. Take the beef out. Pour out most of the oil and leave ¼ cup in the wok. Add the beef back to the wok along with the spice mix and ¼ cup water. The water helps to mingle all the flavors without burning the delicate spices.

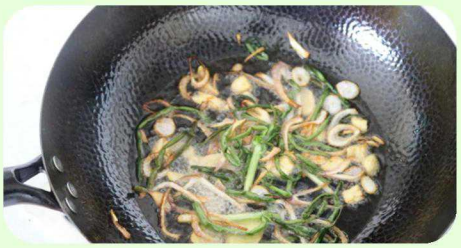
11. Stir everything over medium-low heat until most of the water evaporates. Chill the beef in the fridge for 3 hours. Garnish with diced scallions and serve as a cold dish.

















Garlic Steak Bites in Black Pepper Sauce

suàn zi niú ròu lì
蒜 子 牛 肉 粒

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 3 people

This is a fusion recipe that was created by a master chef named Wu Liangtang at the Sheraton Hotel in Tianjin, China. He came up with this idea right after an exchange and study at the Sheraton Hotel in Singapore. His idea to use butter with Chinese seasonings is genius, resulting in a sauce that is so rich, savory, and buttery. The black pepper stands out and pairs really well with the succulent beef. The best part of this dish is the large amount of garlic, which not only acts as an aromatic condiment but also is used as a root vegetable. You will be surprised by its starchy texture and fragrance.

- 680g / 1.5 pounds rib-eye steak
- 6.3g / 2.5 tsps cornstarch
- 2.4g / ½ tsp baking soda
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 45g / 2.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 11g / 1.5 Tbsps ground black pepper or to taste
- 38 / 2.5 Tbsps water
- 10g / 2.5 tsps sugar
- 0.5g / ⅓ tsp Sichuan peppercorn powder (see page 18)
- 11g / 2 tsps dark soy sauce
- 150–180g / 50–60 cloves garlic, peeled
- 3 Tbsps oil
- 9.5g / 2 tsps butter
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallions

Ingredient Tip

- Chinese cooking wine can be replaced with dry sherry. Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe; in this case, you can use ½ Tbsp ginger juice + 1 Tbsp water.

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1. Cut the rib-eye steak into 1-inch cubes and place them into a large mixing bowl. Add the cornstarch, baking soda, and Chinese cooking wine. Mix well and set it aside for 10 minutes.

> **Chef's Secret:** There is no salt in this particular marinade because all the flavor is contained in the sauce.

2. In a bowl, add the oyster sauce, soy sauce, water, sugar, Sichuan peppercorn powder, dark soy sauce, and the ground black pepper. Mix well and set the sauce aside.

3. Add 3 tablespoons of oil to a frying pan and sauté the garlic cloves over medium-low heat for a few minutes or until the surface of the garlic becomes slightly golden.

> **Chef's Secret:** Please buy pre-peeled garlic; otherwise it will take forever to peel 50 to 60 cloves! The standard preparation is to pair each beef cube with 1-2 cloves of garlic.

4. Turn off the heat and remove the garlic from the pan. Make sure to tilt the pan so you can leave the oil behind.

5. Crank up the heat to maximum. Once you see a slight smoke coming out, add the beef. Spread the meat so that it doesn't overlap. Let it sear on one side for 2 minutes or until well-charred. Flip the beef cubes to sear the opposite side for 2 minutes or until the beef is nice and charred.

6. Turn the heat to low. Introduce the garlic back to the pan and pour in the sauce. Mix thoroughly.

7. Before turning off the heat, quickly add the butter and toss to melt it. Garnish with diced scallions and serve with white rice.

Hong Kong Beef Curry

gǎng shì gā lí niú nǎn
港 式 咖 喱 牛 腩

Prep Time:
15 minutes

Cooking Time:
2.5 hours

Serves:
4-5 people

Hong Kong is a very interesting place. You can find all kinds of cuisines from all over the world that have been adapted to the local taste, resulting in a unique cultural and culinary combination. On this little island, curry is not as bold and spicy; instead, it is gentle and mild, with a slight sweetness. You can make curry with chicken, meatballs, or seafood, but beef curry is one of the most popular takeout dishes in Cha Can Ting restaurants (茶餐厅).

- 907g / 2 pounds beef stew meat
- 2 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 140g / about ½ a large purple onion, diced
- 45g / about 1 shallot, diced
- 15g / about 5 cloves garlic, diced
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced ginger
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 1g / about 1 square inch aged tangerine peel (see page 19)
- 18g / 1 Tbsp zhuhou paste
- 17g / 1 Tbsp satay sauce
- 5.4g / 1 Tbsp curry powder
- 2.6g / 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp palm sugar
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine, optional
- 240-480g / 1-2 cups hot water
- 200ml / 6.8 fl oz coconut milk
- 17.1 / 1 Tbsp salt or to taste
- 400-600g / about 2-3 potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks

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Ingredient Tips

- Aged tangerine peel (陈皮) can be replaced with fresh lemon or orange peel. Be sure to remove the white pith before using it.
- Zhuhou paste (柱候酱) is what makes this curry recipe Cantonese because Zhuhou paste is primarily meant to be used in Cantonese-style braised dishes. If you don't have it, you can skip it or use the same amount of hoisin sauce. The flavor will be slightly different but will still be delicious.
- Satay sauce (沙茶酱) is another hint that shows you Hong Kong is a culinary melting pot. Satay sauce makes the curry creamier and thicker because it contains a lot of peanuts. If you don't have it, you can combine 8g / ½ Tbsp of peanut butter and 8g / ½ Tbsp shrimp paste as a replacement. If you are allergic to peanuts, use almond butter.
- Turmeric powder is optional because curry powder already contains turmeric. The brand of curry powder that I use does not give the dish its distinctive yellow color, so I like to add a little extra turmeric. You may not need it, depending on what brand of curry powder you use.
- Palm sugar can be replaced by brown sugar.
- Instead of the potatoes, you can also use carrots or daikon radish.

1. Cut the beef into 1-inch cubes. Any stew meat will work well here, such as shank, chuck roast, or brisket.

2. Add the vegetable oil to a pot (preferably a clay pot or Dutch oven) along with the diced onion, shallot, garlic, and ginger. Stir over medium-low heat for about 5 minutes or until the aromatics are soft and translucent.

3. Add the bay leaves, cinnamon stick, orange peel, zhuhou paste, satay sauce, curry powder, turmeric powder, palm sugar, and soy sauce. Stir for 2-3 minutes or until everything is combined into a thick paste.

4. Add the beef and the Chinese cooking wine. Use a spatula to deglaze the bottom of the pot and keep mixing until all the meat is coated nicely.

Chef's Secret: I simplified this recipe by adding the raw beef to the curry. Usually, Cantonese people like to blanch the meat before braising it to achieve a clean taste. However, curry is so flavorful that blanching will not make a big difference in taste. However, you can blanch it if you want to cook like legit Cantonese people.

5. Add the water and coconut milk. The amount of liquid should be enough to cover all of the meat. Bring this to a boil and add some salt to adjust the flavor. Simmer on low heat for 2 hours.

6. Add the potato chunks to the clay pot and cook for another 30 minutes with the beef.

7. Garnish with diced cilantro and serve with white rice.















Cantonese Braised Beef with Daikon Radish

luó bo wén niú nǎn
萝 卜 炆 牛 腩

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 2.5 hours

Serves: 5 people

As a classic Cantonese dish, you can find this everywhere. In high-end restaurants, they serve it as a centerpiece on the table. In fast food places, it's a popular takeout dish. It is so delicious that street food vendors serve it as a snack in paper cups. I used to get those all the time when I lived in Guangzhou, and I miss it so much.

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For blanching the beef

- 1134g / 2.5 pounds beef stew meat
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water
- 56g / ¼ cup Chinese cooking wine, optional
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 30g / about 2 inches ginger, sliced thinly
- 2g / ½ Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)

For making the sauce

- 36g / 2 Tbsps zhuhou paste (see page 17)
- 42g / 2 Tbsps hoisin sauce (see page 16)
- 24g / 1.5 Tbsps peanut butter
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)
- 20g / about 2 pieces fermented bean curd
- 38g / 3 Tbsps sugar

For braising the beef

- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil
- 18g / about 6 cloves garlic
- 30g / about 2 inches ginger, sliced thinly
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 1g / 1 square inch aged tangerine peel (see page 19)
- 1.6g / about 4 slices dried gancao (licorice root)
- 2g / 1 slice dried galangal, optional
- 1g / about 2 dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 960g / 4 cups water
- 66g / 4 Tbsps soy sauce
- 11g / 2 tsps dark soy sauce
- 907g / 2 pounds daikon radish
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallion as garnish

Ingredient Tips

- Fermented bean curd (腐乳) adds a complex and distinguished flavor to this dish. If you don't have access to buy it, use 1 Tbsp Japanese miso paste. Although the flavor is different, miso is a fermented soy product, so it will also level up the flavor of this dish..
- Aged tangerine peel (陈皮) can be replaced with fresh lemon or orange peel. Be sure to remove the white pith before using it.
- Gancao (甘草), also known as licorice root, has a sweet aftertaste, which helps to balance all the spices. If you don't have gancao, use 1 tsp of fennel seeds as a replacement since fennel seeds also have a sweet aftertaste.
- Daikon radish (白萝卜) has a unique peppery and sweet flavor. Although nothing tastes similar, it is completely fine to use carrots or potatoes instead.

1. Cut the beef into 1-inch cubes. Add the beef, 2 liters of water, Chinese cooking wine, scallions, ginger slices, and Sichuan peppercorns to a large stock pot.

2. Bring it to a boil and then skim off all the scum. Discard all the scallions, ginger slices, and Sichuan peppercorns. Remove the beef from the water and set it aside to drain.

3. Combine the zhuhou paste, hoisin sauce, peanut butter, Sichuan dou ban jiang, fermented bean curd, and sugar in a bowl and mix well. Set the sauce aside.

4. Add the oil, garlic cloves, ginger slices, star anise, bay leaves, cinnamon stick, orange peel, gancao, dried galangal, and dried red chilies to a heavy-duty pot (preferably a clay pot, Dutch oven, or cast-iron pot). Stir over medium heat for a couple of minutes or until fragrant.

5. Add the sauce and sauté for a few minutes to activate the flavor. Add the blanched beef and continue to mix well.

6. Add 4 cups hot water and bring it to a boil. The amount of liquid should be able to cover the beef completely; if not, add more water..

7. Add the soy sauce and dark soy sauce for color. Turn the heat to the lowest and let it simmer for 2 hours or until tender.

8. Peel the daikon radish and then peel another layer after the skin is removed.











Chef's Secret: I found that the daikon radish in the United States is not as sweet as the ones I had in China. It is more on the bitter side, and it gives the soup a slightly bitter aftertaste. The skin contains more bitter elements, so it is very important to double-peel the daikon radish.

9. Cut the radish into big chunks using the roll-cutting technique.

10. Optionally, add the radish into a pot of boiling water and blanch for about 5 minutes to reduce the bitter taste. If your radish is not too bitter, you can skip this step.

11. Remove the radish from the water and transfer it into the pot where you are simmering the beef. Give it a taste to adjust the flavor again because you want to be accurate after you add the daikon radish.

12. Continue to simmer the beef with the radish for about 20 minutes or until cooked through. Serve with white rice or noodles.













Beef and Potato Soup Over Rice

niú ròu gài jiāo fàn
牛 肉 盖 浇 饭

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 3 people

The best part of this recipe is the rich and flavorful sauce, which makes the rice taste delicious. Usually, the beef is braised for a long time until tender. I made this into a quick dinner recipe by using ribeye steak and searing the beef for a short time to keep it juicy and soft. This is a perfect dish for a busy day.

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For marinating the beef

- 454g / 1 pound boneless ribeye steak
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps cooking oil

For making the soup

- 200g / about 1 large potato
- 160g / about 2 small carrots
- 480g / 2 cups beef stock
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps oil to sear the beef
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps minced garlic
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced ginger
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 36g / 2 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 11g / 2 tsps dark soy sauce
- 2.2g / 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 60g / about ¼ medium-sized purple onion
- 80g / about ⅓ red bell pepper
- 80g / about ⅓ green bell pepper
- 6.3g / 2.5 tsps cornstarch
- 15g / 1 Tbsp water
- salt to taste

1. Cut the boneless ribeye steak into ⅔-inch cubes and place them into a mixing bowl. Add the salt, ground black pepper, baking soda, and 1.5 Tbsps cooking oil. Mix well and set the beef aside.

2. Peel the potato and carrots, and cut them into 1-inch pieces. Dice the purple onion and then cut the green and red bell peppers into ½-inch pieces. Set them aside.

3. Put the potato, carrot, and beef stock in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, and then simmer for 10-15 minutes or until they are fork-tender.

4. Meanwhile, preheat a frying pan until hot. Add 20g / 1.5 Tbsps cooking oil and swirl it around to create a non-stick bottom.

5. Add the beef to the frying pan and sear over high heat for 30 seconds per side. You want both sides of the beef to be golden brown with the middle still pink and undercooked.

6. Add the minced garlic, ginger, soy sauce, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce, cumin powder, and five-spice powder, and stir for a minute to allow the heat to slightly caramelize the soy sauce, creating a more complex flavor.

7. Add the diced purple onion and the red and green bell pepper, and stir to cook to your desired doneness.

8. Once the potato and carrot are fork-tender, pour them and the beef stock into the frying pan. Stir well.

9. Give it a taste and add some salt to adjust the flavor. Serve with white rice.

10. Mix 2.5 tsps cornstarch with 1 Tbsp water until no lumps remain, and pour it into the frying pan. Continue to stir over medium heat until the sauce is slightly thickened.











Beef and Potato Stew with Red Fermented Bean Curd

fǔ rǔ niú ròu dùn tǔ dòu
腐 乳 牛 肉 炖 土 豆

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 2.5 hours

Serves: 4 people

This is a perfect recipe for beginners. You just put all the ingredients together and let time do its job. It yields melt-in-your-mouth tender beef with a luscious, flavorful sauce that will make you devour heaps of rice unconsciously. Its flavor profile is gentle but rich with a subtle sweetness. The bean curd lends a delightful fermented aftertaste, elevating the dish to a different level.

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- 680g / 1.5 pounds beef stew meat (chuck, brisket, shank, or sirloin tip)
- 18g / about 6 cloves garlic
- 18g / about 6 slices ginger
- 60g / about 4 scallions, cut into stalks
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps cooking oil
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp zhuhou paste
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps tomato paste
- 20g / about 2 pieces red fermented bean curd
- 25g / 2 Tbsps sugar
- 960g / 4 cups water
- 400-600g / about 2-3 potatoes
- 120g / about ½ red bell pepper, cut into small triangles

Ingredient Tips

- Zhuhou paste (柱候酱), a signature Cantonese ingredient, is primarily used in Cantonese-style braised meat recipes. If you don't have it, you can use the same amount of hoisin sauce as a replacement.
- Fermented bean curd (腐乳) adds a complex and distinguished flavor to this dish. There are many kinds of fermented bean curd in Asian markets. Make sure you choose the Cantonese red fermented bean curd. If you don't have access to it, use 1 Tbsp Japanese miso paste as a replacement.
- If you don't care for potatoes, you can use carrots or daikon radish instead.





1. Cut the beef into 1-inch cubes and add it to a big stock pot. Fill the pot with water and bring it to a boil over medium-high heat. Remove the beef from the pot and set it aside to drain.

2. Let the blanching water go through a fine cheesecloth to eliminate the scum. Reserve it on the side.

3. Thoroughly combine the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, oyster sauce, zhuhou paste, tomato paste, sugar, and fermented bean curd in a bowl and set it aside.

4. Preheat the clay pot until nice and hot. Add the cooking oil, blanched beef, garlic cloves, ginger slices, and scallion stalks, and stir over medium heat until fragrant. If you don't have a clay pot, use a heavy-duty Dutch oven, a pressure cooker, or a slow cooker.

5. Pour in the seasoning sauce and mix for 2 minutes to allow the heat to activate all the flavors.

6. Pour in 4 cups of the reserved beef blanching water, which should be just enough to immerse all the ingredients. Bring it to a boil, switch the heat to low, and simmer for 2 hours. During this time, come back to check the liquid level once in a while; add hot water if the water evaporates too fast.

7. About 40 minutes before the beef is done, peel the potatoes and cut them into bite-size chunks.

8. Remove the soggy scallions and the ginger slices from the clay pot. Add the potatoes and continue to simmer for 30 minutes or until tender.

9. Check the consistency of the braising liquid. It should be slightly thick. If yours is too thin, increase the heat to high and reduce the sauce until slightly thickened.

10. Before serving, add the red bell pepper and stir well. Taste the broth to adjust the flavor. Serve with white rice.

Braised Beef with Pickled Mustard Greens

suān cài dùn niú ròu
酸 菜 炖 牛 肉

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 3 hours

Serves: 3 people

This is a hearty, soul-warming beef recipe. The meat is braised with pickled mustard greens, which is truly the heart and soul of this dish; it brings in a distinct and rustic charm and gives the beef a dominant fermented taste. I know it is new for many people who have never tried this ingredient, but trust me, you will fall in love with its flavor.

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For braising the beef

- 454g / 1 pound beef chuck meat
- 454g / 1 pound beef femur bone
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water to blanch the beef
- 960-1200g / 4-5 cups hot water to braise the beef
- 15g / about 1 inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 45g / about 3 scallions, cut into stalks
- 125g / about ½ a medium-sized purple onion, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.2g / about 2 cloves
- 2.2g / 1 tsp fennel seed
- 3.3g / 1 tsp whole black peppercorns
- 3g / about 1 slice dried angelica root, optional (see page 20)
- 8g / 2 Tbsps of whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)

For making the soup

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil
- 15g / about 1 inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 90g / about 2 shallots, quartered
- 18g / about 6 cloves garlic, cut in half
- 510g / about 5 Thai bird's eye chilies, diced (see page 23)
- 2.5g / about 5 dried red chilies, cut into short pieces (see page 19)
- 227g / 8 oz pickled mustard green (see page 26)
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce or to taste
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce or to taste



Ingredient Tips

- The femur bones, also known as beef marrow bones, are large bones from the cow leg, which can exude lots of flavors and gelatin when slow-simmered to produce a rich stock. They are usually sold and precut into 1.5-inch-thick pieces. If you can't find them in the fridge section, check the frozen section. You can also replace them with beef short ribs or neck bones.
- Pickled mustard greens can be replaced by sauerkraut. You'll need to add one more Tbsp of soy sauce in addition because sauerkraut is a bit less salty compared to Chinese pickled mustard greens.













1. Put the beef chuck and beef bones in a large stock pot and fill it with water. Place the lid on partially so the water doesn't overflow. Bring it to a boil over high heat.
2. Meanwhile, put the following aromatics and spices into disposable spicy bags: the ginger, garlic, scallions, purple onion, cinnamon stick, cloves, black peppercorns, fennel seed, Sichuan peppercorns, and dried Angelica root (optional).
3. Once the beef pot boils, skim off all the scum using a fine sieve. Transfer the beef and the bones into a clean clay pot and discard the blanching water.
4. Fill the clay pot with 4-5 cups hot water or enough to immerse all the ingredients. Add the spice bags and simmer the beef over low heat for 2.5 hours.
5. After 2.5 hours, discard the bones and the spice bag. Remove the beef meat from the pot and leave the broth behind.
6. Cut the beef into bite-size pieces and put it back into the clay pot. Set it aside.
7. Rinse the pickled mustard greens with running water to remove the excess salt and roughly dice them.
8. Heat the wok over medium heat and add the oil, ginger, shallot, garlic, Thai bird's eye chilies, dried red chilies, and Sichuan dou ban jiang. Sauté for a few minutes.
9. Add the pickled mustard greens, switch the heat to high, and keep stirring for a few minutes to activate the umami flavor.
10. Add the oyster sauce and soy sauce. When adding the soy sauce, drizzle it from the side of the wok; the heat will help to create a complex aroma. Be sure to taste before seasoning because every brand of pickled mustard greens has different saltiness.
11. Pour the beef and the broth into the wok and bring to a boil.
12. Switch the heat to low and simmer everything for 10 minutes. Serve with white rice or plain noodles.



Various pickled vegetables

Sichuan Spicy Poached Beef

sì chuān shuǐ zhǔ niú ròu
四 川 水 煮 牛 肉

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Serves:
50 minutes	50 minutes	2 people

This is a classic Sichuan dish. The beef is marinated using the velveting method, which makes the meat extra tender and juicy. I order it every time I go to a Sichuan restaurant. The funny thing is that the name of this recipe fools many people when visiting Sichuan. Shuizhu niurou literally means boiled beef in Chinese, and it sounds nothing like spicy food. However, as the representative dish of Sichuan Mala (麻辣) flavor (Mala translates as spicy and numbing), this recipe is loaded with chilies and Sichuan peppercorns, bringing complex tastes, aromas, and textures, making this dish incredibly delicious.

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For marinating the beef

- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic
- 6g / about 2 slices ginger
- 15g / about 3 scallion stalks, white part only
- 60g / ¼ cup water
- 300g / 10.6 oz beef, sliced thinly
- 4.3g / ¾ tsp salt
- 1.2g / ¼ tsp baking soda
- 1 egg white
- 15g / 1 Tbsp water
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch

For the roasted and chopped chili (Dao Kou La Jiao)

- 16g / ⅔ cup dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 4g / 1 Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 27g / 2 Tbsps oil

For the vegetables at the bottom of the bowl

- 71g / 2.5 oz julienned carrot
- 71g / 2.5 oz bean sprouts
- 71g / 2.5 oz shredded cabbage
- 71g / 2.5 oz julienned celery
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste

For the poaching broth

- 41g / 3 Tbsps oil
- 12g / about 4 slices ginger
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, roughly minced
- 20g / about 4 stalks scallion, white part only
- 2.7g / 2 tsps whole Sichuan peppercorns
- 48g / 3 Tbsps Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)
- 54g / about 3 pickled chilies, finely diced (optional)
- 2.7g / 1.5 tsps chili flakes
- 600g / 2.5 cups beef stock or water

For finishing

- 6g / 2 tsps toasted sesame seeds
- 27g / 3 Tbsps minced garlic
- 40.81g / 3 Tbsps hot oil to pour on the top
- 106g / 2 Tbsps diced cilantro to garnish
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallion to garnish

Ingredient Tips

- Pickled chili is an optional ingredient, but it gives a unique character to the dish. It is quite salty, though. If you decide to skip this ingredient, you will have to adjust the saltiness in this recipe.
- While sirloin and tenderloin work the best for this recipe, if you don't have the budget, chuck and flank steak will also work.

Marinate the beef

1. Blend the garlic, ginger, the white part of the scallion, and 60g / ¼ cup water into a puree using a blender. Let it go through a sieve to get rid of the solid part and set the aromatic water aside.

   Chef's Secret: This aromatic liquid adds so much flavor and juiciness to the meat.

2. Slice the beef into ⅛-inch thick pieces and place in a bowl.

3. Add the salt, baking soda, aromatic water, and one egg white to the beef and stir everything in one direction for a few minutes until all the liquid is absorbed.

4. Mix 1 Tbsp of water with 1 Tbsp of cornstarch until no lumps remain, and pour it into the beef. Keep massaging the meat for 3 minutes or until the beef has a velvety texture. Set it aside for 20 minutes.

   Chef's Secret: Egg white and cornstarch create a soft starch layer that locks in the juice, leading to tender and succulent meat.

Make the roasted and chopped chili

1. Add 2 Tbsps oil, the Sichuan peppercorns, and dried red chilies to a wok. Stir over medium-low heat for 2 minutes or until the chilies are slightly darkened. Be careful not to burn it, or else it will bring a bitter taste.

2. Remove the Sichuan peppercorns and chilies from the wok. Tilt the wok so you can leave the oil behind. You will use that to cook the vegetables later.

3. Roughly chop the chilies and finely dice the Sichuan peppercorns on a cutting board using a knife. This is called Dao Kou La Jiao (刀口辣椒) in Chinese, meaning peppers and chilies under the blade. However, you can also grind them using a mortar and a pestle or a blender. Set them aside.











Stir-fry the vegetables

1. Add the julienned carrot, bean sprouts, shredded cabbage, and celery to the same wok and sauté the vegetables on high heat for a minute. Don't cook for too long, as you want the vegetables to stay crunchy.

2. Add salt to taste and mix well. Place the vegetables in a large serving bowl and set aside.

Poach the beef

1. Add 3 Tbsps oil, ginger slices, the white part of the scallion, the minced garlic, Sichuan peppercorns, Sichuan dou ban jiang, chili flakes, and diced pickled chilies (optional) to the wok. Stir over low heat for 2 minutes or until fragrant.

2. Pour 2.5 cups of beef stock and bring it to a boil. If you don't have stock on hand, the same amount of water will work fine.

3. Taste the soup to adjust the saltiness. Turn the heat to low and let it simmer for 5 minutes so all the spices can release their flavor. Then use a sieve to fish out the spices.

4. Add the marinated beef and stir gently. Bring the broth to a full boil and then turn off the heat. Pour everything into the large serving bowl on top of the sautéed vegetables.

5. Sprinkle the roasted and chopped chilies and Sichuan peppercorns (dao kou la jiang), sesame seeds, and minced garlic on top.

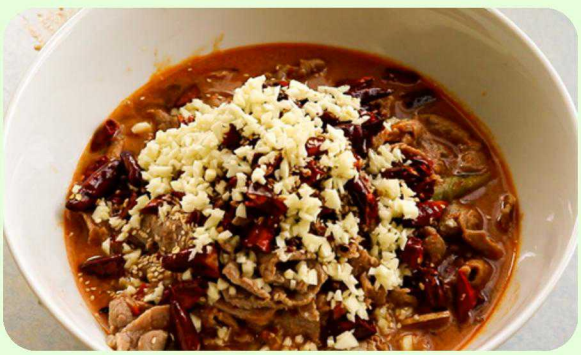
6. Heat 3 Tbsps of oil until smoking hot and pour it over the dish. Garnish with some diced cilantro and scallions. Serve with white rice.











Dim Sum Steamed Beef Meatballs

diǎn xīn zhēng niú ròu qiú
点 心 蒸 牛 肉 球

Prep Time: 1.5 hours

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 6 meatballs

Dim sum style beef meatballs are special for their tender, succulent texture and two significant flavors, one of which is cilantro. However, for those of you who genetically hate cilantro, please use scallions. The second flavor comes from chenpi (陈皮), or aged tangerine peel, providing a citrus aroma and paying homage to this dish's Cantonese roots.

For the meatballs

- 200g / 7 oz lean ground beef
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 6.3g / 1.5 tsps sugar
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 2g / ½ tsp chicken bouillon powder, optional
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 4.5g / 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1.6 / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 42g / 1.5 oz hot water
- 42g / 1.5 oz crushed ice
- 29g / 1 oz tapioca starch
- 42g / 1.5 oz pork fat
- 12g / 4 Tbsps cilantro
- 3g / 3 square inches aged tangerine peel
- 42g / 1.5 oz jicama (Mexican turnip)

For serving

- 6 sheets square soybean curd skin, cut into 4-in squares, optional
- 73g / ⅓ cup oil to deep-fry the soybean curd skin
- 32g / 2 Tbsps Worcestershire sauce for dipping

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Ingredient Tips

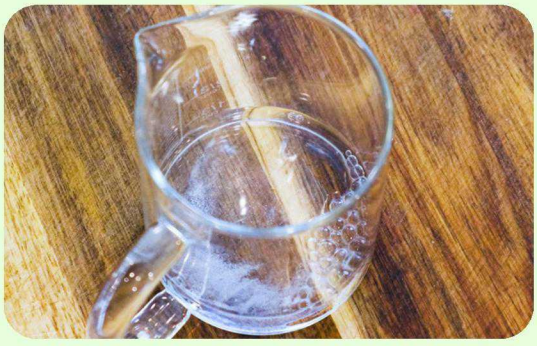
- Fresh and lean ground beef is the key to achieving a tender and succulent texture. However, most pre-ground beef contains some silver skin, which does affect the texture. If possible, choose the correct cut, such as beef round and sirloin, and then ask the butcher to remove the silver skin before grinding it.
- Aged tangerine peel (陈皮), aka chenpi, is sun-dried and then stored for at least three years. The older, the better. If you don't have access to buy Xinhui (A city in Guangdong, China that is known for producing top-quality aged tangerine peel) chenpi, you can use fresh tangerine peel as a replacement. Get a small spoon and gently remove the pith. Then finely dice the tangerine peel.
- Soybean curd skin (腐皮) is optional in this recipe as its purpose is to prevent sticking. You can use parchment paper or cabbage leaves as a replacement.
- If you can't find jicama (Mexican turnip), use carrot, water chestnut, or daikon radish.
- It is a bit difficult to buy pork fat in the supermarkets in the United States. You have to ask your butcher to give you a little bit, or you can save the trims whenever you cook a roast.











1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground beef, salt, sugar, oyster sauce, chicken bouillon powder, white pepper, and sesame oil. Mix the beef until the seasonings are well combined. Chill the mixture in the fridge for one hour.

2. While waiting, soak the aged tangerine peel with room temperature water for 40 minutes or until soft. Use a spoon to scrape the pith, and then dice the tangerine peel finely and set it aside.

3. Finely dice the pork fat, jicama, and cilantro and set them aside.

4. Heat ⅓ cup oil to 380°F / 193°C in a wok. Deep-fry the soybean curd skin in the oil for a few seconds. Remove them from the oil and soak them in clean water for a couple of minutes or until soft.

5. Squeeze the soybean curd skin to eliminate the water and set aside on a plate that fits into your steamer. Soybean curd skin is chewy if you steam it directly, which is unpleasant to eat. Deep-frying and soaking make it porous and soft, so it can absorb flavors from the meatballs.

6. Combine the baking soda with the hot water and stir until any bubbles are gone.

> **Chef's Secret:** The heat will break the sodium bicarbonate into sodium carbonate (Na2CO3), which will improve the texture of the meat by changing the pH level. That is why the meatballs are soft and succulent.

7. Cool the baking soda solution by adding the crushed ice. Then combine the liquid with tapioca starch and stir thoroughly.

8. Take the seasoned ground beef out of the fridge, add the tapioca water in batches, and stir the meat in one direction until the liquid is absorbed. Continue to whisk the meat for a few minutes or until the texture becomes gluey and sticky.

9. Add the diced jicama, chenpi, pork fat, and cilantro. Mix until well combined.

> **Chef's Secret:** Small bits of ingredients will inhibit protein formation, which lowers the water-absorbing rate, making the meatballs less juicy. That's why you should mix the meat with the tapioca starch water first, then add all the minced ingredients afterward.

10. Grab a big batch of meat mixture and squeeze it. The meat will naturally form a ball between your thumb and forefinger. Scoop the meatball with a spoon and put it on the plate with the fried soybean curd skin under it. This recipe is enough to make six big meatballs, 65 grams (2.3 oz) each.

11. Fill the steamer pot with water and bring it to a boil. Place the plate into a steamer and steam the meatballs over high heat for 10 minutes.

12. Serve the meatballs with Worcestershire sauce for dipping. This is the classic way to enjoy dim sum meatballs because the seasoning is alkaline; a slightly sour taste balances out the flavors perfectly.












生蚝
38元/只
黄油蟹
388/只
虎虾
188元
500g
花蟹
138元
500g
龙虾
538元
500g
帝王蟹
488元
象拔蚌
468
花螺
128元
500g
鲍鱼
18元/只
元贝
38元/只



Fish, Shrimp, and Other Seafood

154. Cantonese Steamed Fish / 广式清蒸鱼
157. Sichuan Poached Fish with Pickled Mustard Greens / 四川酸菜鱼
160. Crispy Salt and Pepper Shrimp / 椒盐大虾
162. Kung Pao Shrimp / 宫保虾仁
164. Shrimp and Broccoli Stir-Fry / 西蓝花炒虾仁
166. Cantonese White Boiled Shrimp / 广式白灼虾
168. Sesame Shrimp Toast / 虾多士
170. Shrimp Crackers / 炸虾片
172. Pepper and Squid Stir-Fry / 双椒鱿鱼花
174. Teochew Style Oyster Pancakes / 潮州蚝烙
176. Sizzling Rice Soup with Seafood / 海鲜锅巴



Cantonese Steamed Fish

guǎng shì qīng zhēng yú
广式清蒸鱼

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Cantonese Steamed Fish is often the highlight of a festive or special occasion meal. This is a deceptively simple recipe that requires skill to achieve a smooth tender texture and retain the fish's natural flavor. Therefore, I explained as much detail as possible to ensure you get the perfect result.

My favorite part of making this dish is pouring hot oil. The sizzling sound is music to the ears, and it is a crucial step to infuse the flavor and aroma into the fish, filling your home with mouthwatering smells. Without this step, the dish lacks its spirit.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

For marinating the fish

- 544-820g / 1.2-1.8 pounds white fish, preferably whole (weight before gutting)
- 15g / about 5 cloves garlic
- 30g / about 2 inches ginger
- 45g / about 3 scallions
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine, optional

For the seasoning sauce

- 9g / 2 tsp oil
- 1.3g / 1 tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 3g / 1 tsp diced ginger
- 3g / 1 tsp diced garlic
- 3g / 2 tsps diced scallion
- 1.5g / about ½ a dried shiitake mushroom (see page 24)
- 45g / 3 Tbsps hot water to soak the mushroom
- 58g / 3.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 8.5g / ½ Tbsp fish sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 6.3g / 1.5 tsps sugar

For steaming and serving

- 45g / about 3 inches ginger
- 60g / about 4 scallions
- 9g / about 3 ginger slices
- 30g / about 1 red chili pepper
- 22.5g / 2.5 Tbsps finely minced garlic
- 41g / 3 Tbsps hot oil

Select the fish

1. Freshness is the most important thing for this dish. It will be best to get your fish straight out of a fisherman's net or alive from the tank in a seafood market. If live fish is unavailable around where you live, ask your supermarket to figure out their weekly seafood replenishment schedule and plan your grocery shopping for that day.

2. A fresh fish should have a clean smell, clear, shiny eyes, bright red gills, moist, glossy scales, and firm, bouncy flesh. If the fish has an unpleasant odor, the eyes and scales are dry, the gills are pink or gray, and the flesh is soft, don't buy it.

3. It is crucial to pick a smaller fish, around 1.2–1.8 pounds. If the fish is too big, it will take much longer to steam, and the outside of the meat will end up being overcooked before the inside gets done.

4. There are no particular rules on the types of fish. Any white fish will work. Here are some of the common types that we use in China: sea bass, sea bream, perch, flounder, grouper, snapper, grass carp, and mandarin fish.

Prepping the fish before steaming

1. In Cantonese culture, steamed fish must be whole with the head and tail on for good luck. However, there is nothing wrong with using fish fillets only. Ask your fishmonger to descale the fish and remove the gills and guts. Otherwise, follow the steps below to prep the fish.

2. Take a pair of scissors to remove the fins and trim the tail. Please do this step before scaling because fins can be sharp, and you can get hurt by accident in the following steps.

3. Open the gill cover and use scissors to cut off the gills and discard them.

4. Use the back of a utility knife to descale the fish by holding it at a 45-degree angle and scrubbing it from the fishtail towards the head with steady pressure. This process is messy. I recommend filling a sink or a bucket with water and working everything under the water. This way, the scales will pop out and flow with the water instead of flying everywhere.

5. Use a pair of scissors to cut the fish belly open and discard all the innards.

6. Inside the fish cavity, there is a blood vine running along the spine: use kitchen paper to scrub it; otherwise, your dish will end up with a fishy smell.

7. Rinse the fish with cold water several times or until the water runs clear.

8. Use a sharp knife to score the fish flesh along the backbone on each side. The belly part is thinner. The back part is much thicker. By scoring it, the fish can be cooked evenly.

9. Smack 5 cloves garlic, 2 inches ginger, and 3 scallions using a heavy-duty cleaver, then roughly dice them.

10. Add the diced ginger, garlic, scallions, Chinese cooking wine, and the fish to a big mixing bowl and rub the aromatics onto the fish surface for a few minutes. Let the fish rest at room temperature for 20 minutes.

Make the steamed fish seasoning sauce

1. Cut the dried shiitake mushroom into smaller pieces using kitchen scissors, and then soak the mushroom in 3 Tbsps hot water for 15 minutes.

2. Add the vegetable oil, Sichuan peppercorns, 1 tsp diced ginger, 1 tsp diced garlic, and 2 tsp diced scallions into a saucepan and stir over medium-low heat for 3 minutes.

3. Add the soy sauce, fish sauce, oyster sauce, sugar, and the soaked mushroom, along with its soaking water, and stir well.

4. Put on the lid and simmer everything on the lowest heat for 3 minutes to mingle all the flavors.

5. Let the sauce go through a sieve to eliminate all the solid ingredients. Set the sauce aside.

Steam the fish and serve

1. Cut 3 inches of ginger into thick strips. Cut 4 scallions into 3-inch-long stalks. Separate the green and white parts. Cut the red chili pepper open and remove the seeds.

2. Stack the green part of the scallion, ginger slices, and red chili pepper together and then thinly julienne them. Soak them in clean water for 10 minutes so they will curve naturally and make a better presentation. Remove them from the water and use paper towels to absorb the excess moisture.

3. Place the ginger strips and white parts of the scallion stalks on an oblong plate.

4. Remove the aromatics from the fish and use paper towels to pat it dry. Next, lay the fish on the plate on top of the ginger and scallion stalks. These aromatics lift up the fish while steaming, allowing better air circulation so that the fish will cook evenly.

5. Please use the widest steamer you have so it fits the fish. Fill the steamer with lots of water. Turn the heat to the highest setting and bring the water to a full boil.

6. Place the fish and the plate in the steamer and steam over high heat until cooked through; the steaming time depends on the size of the fish. For your reference, a 1.2-pound fish takes 6-8 minutes; 1.4-pound takes 7-9 minutes; 1.6-pound takes 8-10 minutes; and 1.8-pound takes 10-12 minutes (the fish weights should be measured before gutting).

7. Once it is done, turn off the heat and leave the fish in the steamer for 3-5 minutes. The rest of the heat will continue to cook the fish. If you skip this step, your fish may be undercooked.

8. Use a chopstick to poke the thickest part of the fish; if it goes through easily without resistance, it is cooked. You should be skillful enough to understand how long it takes to cook your fish and steam it once for good. You could check it in the middle and put it back to cook again, but the texture might be ruined.

9. Transfer the fish to a clean serving plate; then place the soaked julienned scallions, ginger, red chili, and minced garlic on top of the fish.

10. Heat 3 Tbsps vegetable oil until it is smoking. Pour it over the aromatics.

11. Drizzle the seasoning sauce all over the fish and serve.

Sichuan Poached Fish with Pickled Mustard Greens

sì chuān suān cài yú
四 川 酸 菜 鱼

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 hour

Serves: 3 people

Poached fish may not sound appetizing, but it is my all-time favorite. This dish was originally from Sichuan and became popular all over China due to its unique spicy, sour, numbing, and rich taste. So let's get out of your comfort zone and try it.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

For marinating the fish

- 500g / 1.1 pounds fish meat slices
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 5g / 1 tsp ginger juice
- 1 egg white
- 3.8g / ½ Tbsp cornstarch

For making the fish broth

- 500g / 1.1 pounds fish bones
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 42g / 3 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 15g / about 1 inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 30g / about 2 scallions, cut into 2-inch stalks
- 1.2 liters / 5 cups hot water

For poaching the fish

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil
- 15g / about 5 cloves garlic, crushed
- 15g / about 1 inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 500g / 1.1 pounds pickled mustard greens (see page 26)
- 150g / about 8 pickled chilies (see page 26)
- salt to taste

Before serving

- 18g /2 Tbsps diced garlic
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallion
- 54g/ 4 Tbsps oil
- 8g / ⅓ cup dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 6g / 1.5 Tbsps whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)



Prep the fish

1. Any type of fish will work for this recipe as long as it is fresh. Please use whole fish because we need the fish head and bones for the broth. If you ask the fishmonger to scale and fillet the fish, please give directions not to remove the fish's skin because it prevents the flesh from breaking apart while cooking.

2. Slice the fish fillet diagonally into ⅓-inch thick pieces. Don't slice it too thin, or else the fish meat will fall apart while poaching.

3. Place the fish into a mixing bowl. Add the salt, Chinese cooking wine, ginger juice, egg white, white pepper, and cornstarch to the fish. Gently mix until the cornstarch is well combined. Set it in the fridge while working on other things.

Make the fish broth

1. Cut the fish bones into short pieces by using a cleaver or a pair of scissors.

2. Rub the fish bones with salt, Chinese cooking wine, and cornstarch for a few minutes. Fish bones are sharp, so please wear gloves for safety.

3. Rinse off the cornstarch under running water several times or until the water is clear. Drain completely by letting the fish bones sit in a colander for 5 minutes.

4. Heat a wok to smoking hot. Add 2.5 Tbsps oil, garlic, ginger, and scallions and stir until fragrant. Add the fish bones and sear until golden brown, about 3-5 minutes on each side.

5. Pour in 5 cups boiling hot water. Put on the lid and let it simmer at low heat for 30 minutes.

> **Chef's Secret:** When boiling water touches the hot wok, it will bubble violently, which shakes the bones and accelerates gelatin dissolution. The strong activity breaks down the fat into micro drops, which will stabilize due to the gelatin that is released from the fish bones. This process is called emulsion. It will give the soup a creamy texture and a milky white color.

6. Let the fish soup go through a sieve to discard all the solid parts. Set the broth aside.











Cook the pickled mustard green

1. Slice the pickled mustard greens and pickled chilies thinly to release the flavor. Set them aside.

2. Place the wok over a medium-heat stove. Add 2.5 Tbsps oil, ginger, garlic, pickled chilies, and the pickled mustard greens, and then sauté for a few minutes.

3. Pour the fish broth into the wok and bring it to a boil. Switch the heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes to transfer the distinctive pickled flavor from the mustard greens to the broth.

4. Different brands of pickled mustard greens have different levels of saltiness; please taste before salting the broth.

5. Use a sieve to fish out all the solid ingredients and transfer them into a big serving bowl.

Poach the fish and serve

1. Keep the broth simmering, add the marinated fish slices, and gently stir the fish flesh to prevent sticking. Turn off the heat when the broth comes back to a simmer, not a full boil, or you risk overcooking the fish.

2. Pour everything (the fish and the broth) into the big serving bowl over the pickled mustard greens.

3. Sprinkle the diced garlic and scallions on top of the dish.

4. Add 4 Tbsps oil to the wok and heat it until smoking hot. Toss in the dried red chilies and the Sichuan peppercorns for 10 seconds, and then quickly pour everything over the diced garlic and scallions.

5. Serve with white rice.













Crispy Salt and Pepper Shrimp

jiāo yán dà xiā
椒 盐 大 虾

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 2-3 people

Jiaoyan (椒盐) is a type of dish in which the food is deep-fried until crispy and then sprinkled with the Jiaoyan seasoning. The pepper in the name refers to Sichuan peppercorns. Its unique citrus aroma and its numbing effect highlight the crispiness and make this dish special.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

For the Jiaoyan seasoning

- 51g / 3 Tbsps sea salt
- 12g / 3 Tbsps whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 5g / ½ Tbsp whole black peppercorns
- 5g / ½ Tbsp whole white peppercorns
- 3g / ½ Tbsp chili powder

For the marinade and to coat the shrimp

- 454g / 1 pound peeled and deveined shrimp
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps soy sauce
- 7g / 1.5 tsps Chinese cooking wine
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, grated
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, grated
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch for the marinade
- 120g / 1 cup cornstarch for the coating

For frying and finishing

- 440g / 2 cups oil for deep-frying
- 60g / about 2 red chili peppers
- 60g / about 2 green chili peppers
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic
- 15g / about 1 inch ginger
- 30g / about 2 scallions, diced

1. Add the sea salt, Sichuan peppercorns, black peppercorns, and white peppercorns to a wok and stir over low heat for 2-3 minutes. Let the mixture cool.

2. Add the toasted spices and salt to a spice grinder and grind until fine. Mix the fine mixture with red chili powder thoroughly. Store the Jiaoyan Seasoning in a sealed container and use as needed.

> **Chef's Secret:** We usually make more than we need as Jiaoyan stays good at room temperature for a few months. You can turn any crispy food into a Jiaoyan-style dish by simply sprinkling it on.

3. Use a paper towel to absorb the shrimp's excess moisture; otherwise, it will dilute the seasonings.

4. In a big mixing bowl, add the shrimp, salt, soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, grated ginger, garlic, and 1 Tbsp cornstarch and mix thoroughly.

> **Chef's Secret:** Please pay attention to the ingredient list when buying frozen shrimp. Most shrimp on the market is frozen with a salt solution. In that case, you must use less salt or rinse the shrimp thoroughly before seasoning.

5. Place ½ cup cornstarch at the bottom of a big container. Add the shrimp. Then cover the shrimp with ½ cup cornstarch. Put on the lid and shake well.

> **Chef's Secret:** The first Tbsp of cornstarch in the marinade acts like glue which will catch more starch while coating.

6. Put all the shrimp in a sieve and shake to eliminate the excess starch. Rest the shrimp on the side for 10 minutes so the starch has time to bond together.

7. While waiting, dice the scallions into ¼-inch long pieces; thinly slice the red and green chilies, garlic, and ginger.

8. Heat the oil to 360 °F / 182 °C. Fry the shrimp for 1-2 minutes, depending on the size. Remove the shrimp from the oil and rest it on a rack for 15 minutes. You may need to fry the shrimp in 2 batches; between each batch, please use a sieve to remove the starch bits from the oil.

9. Increase the oil's temperature to 400 °F / 204 °C. Add all of the shrimp again and fry for 1-2 minutes or until golden and crispy. This is called double-frying, which can reinforce the crust without overcooking the shrimp.

10. Remove the shrimp from the oil and use paper towels to absorb the excess oil.

11. Put the chili pepper, garlic, and ginger slices in a sieve and fry them in the hot oil for 30 seconds, then remove from the oil.

12. Combine the crispy shrimp, chilies, garlic, ginger, and diced scallions in a large mixing bowl. Sprinkle with 2 tsps Jiaoyan Seasoning and toss well. Serve as an appetizer.















Kung Pao Shrimp

gōng bǎo xiā rén
宫 保 虾 仁

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 2-3 people

Kung Pao Shrimp is a classic Sichuan dish, easy to make, and great to serve with white rice because the taste is flavorful, complex, and well-balanced. As a variant of kung pao chicken, one of the differences is that this dish is deep-fried, and kung pao chicken is stir-fried, so the shrimp is slightly crispy and coated with a glossy sauce.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

To marinate the shrimp

- 454g / 1 pound peeled and deveined shrimp
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 0.8g / ⅓ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 11.7g / 2.5 tsps Chinese cooking wine
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 80g / ⅔ cup cornstarch

To make the sauce (碗芡)

- 56g / 4.5 Tbsps sugar
- 3.8g / 1.5 tsps cornstarch
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 40g / 2.5 Tbsps Chinese black vinegar
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water

To deep-fry and stir-fry

- 330g / 1.5 cups oil
- 60g / ½ cup peanuts
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger
- 60g / about 4 scallions
- 8g / ⅓ cup dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 2.3g / ½ Tbsp Sichuan peppercorn powder (see page 18)
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)

Ingredient Tips

- The peanut is the key element of the kung pao dishes. If allergic, use walnuts or almonds.
- Chinese black vinegar can be replaced by white or rice vinegar, but you will miss some distinctive fermented taste.
- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use 1 tsp ginger juice + 1.5 tsps water.



1. Add the shrimp, salt, ground white pepper, Chinese cooking wine, and 1 Tbsp cornstarch to a mixing bowl and mix thoroughly. Chef's Secret: Please pay attention to the ingredient list when buying frozen shrimp. Most shrimp on the market is frozen with a salt solution. In that case, you must use less salt or rinse the shrimp thoroughly before seasoning.

2. Place ⅓ cup cornstarch at the bottom of a big container. Add the shrimp and cover with another ⅓ cup cornstarch. Put on the lid and shake well. Leave the shrimp in the container and set it aside for 15 minutes so the starch has enough time to bond together.

3. During this time, make the sauce (or what we call 碗芡): thoroughly mix the sugar, cornstarch, light soy sauce, Chinese black vinegar, and water in a bowl; then set it aside.

4. Cut the garlic and ginger into thin slices; dice the scallions and separate the white and green parts; cut some of the dried red chilies into ½-inch long pieces to release the flavor. Set everything aside.

5. After 15 minutes, put all of the shrimp into a sieve and shake to eliminate the excess starch. Set the shrimp aside.

6. Add the oil and peanuts to the wok. Turn the heat to medium-low and stir for 3 minutes or until the peanuts are slightly golden; remove the peanuts from the oil and set them aside. If your peanuts are roasted already, skip this step.

7. Heat the oil to 400°F /204°C and fry the shrimp in 2 batches for 2-3 minutes each. Crowding the wok risks overcooking the shrimp as it will quickly drop the oil's temperature.

8. Remove the shrimp from the oil and rest on a rack to drain the excess oil. Sieve the starch crumbs from the oil before frying the next batch of shrimp.

9. Once all the shrimp is done frying, remove most of the oil from the wok but leave 1.5 Tbsps behind. Add the garlic, ginger, the white part of the scallions, dried red chilies, and the Sichuan dou ban jiang. Stir over medium-low heat for a couple of minutes or until fragrant.

10. Add the Sichuan peppercorn powder and pour in the sauce. Keep stirring until the sauce is thickened.

11. Add the green part of the scallion, the peanuts, and the fried shrimp. Toss until everything is coated thoroughly. Serve with white rice.

Chef's Secret: This dish can be made without chilies, Sichuan peppercorns, and the dou ban jiang. That's what most Americanized takeout restaurants do. However, these three ingredients create the classic spicy and numbing flavor, which is the key to its authenticity.



Shrimp and Broccoli Stir-Fry

xī lán huā chǎo xiā rén
西 蓝 花 炒 虾 仁

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Shrimp and Broccoli Stir-Fry is a classic, healthy, and easy-to-make Cantonese dish. It's also low carb, perfect if you are on a weight control diet. There is only one thing you need to be aware of. When buying frozen shrimp, check the ingredient list for added salt. If present, use less salt or rinse the shrimp before seasoning. Otherwise, the dish will come out too salty.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

For marinating the shrimp

- 400g / 14 oz peeled and deveined shrimp
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 2g / 1 tsp paprika
- 0.8g / ⅓ tsp ground black pepper
- 9g / 2 tsps vegetable oil

For making the sauce

- 120g / ½ cup water
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 10.5g / ½ Tbsp hoisin sauce (see page 16)
- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce

For frying and finishing

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 340g / 12 oz broccoli
- 24g / about 8 cloves garlic
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced ginger
- 2g / about 4 dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 30g / 2 Tbsps water

1. Use paper towels to dry the shrimp so it doesn't dilute the seasoning.

2. In a big mixing bowl, add the shrimp, salt, paprika, ground black pepper, and a drizzle of vegetable oil. Mix well and set it aside.

3. Cut the broccoli into florets. Finely dice the garlic and ginger. Cut the dried red chilies into 1/2-inch long pieces.

> **Souped Up Swap:** You can also use chili flakes if you don't have whole chilies.

4. In a bowl, thoroughly combine all of the sauce ingredients and set them aside.

5. Turn the heat to high and heat your wok until it is smoking hot. Add the oil and swirl it around to cover the bottom. Toss in the shrimp and stir for a couple of minutes or until the shrimp turns pink. Remove the shrimp from the wok and leave the excess oil behind.

6. To the same wok, add the minced garlic, ginger, dried red chilies, and broccoli florets. Toss over medium heat for 2-3 minutes.

7. Add a splash of water to the wok and put on the lid to trap the steam so it cooks the vegetables through. This way, the broccoli is stir-fried and then semi-steamed, which tastes so much better than just blanched broccoli.

8. Pour in the sauce and introduce the shrimp back into the wok. Stir for a couple of minutes or until the sauce is thickened. Serve with white rice.













Cantonese White Boiled Shrimp

(Bak Cheok Har)

guǎng shì bái zhuó xiā
广 式 白 灼 虾

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 3 people

For poaching the shrimp

- 454g / 1 pound fresh head-on and shell-on shrimp
- 3 liters / 12.5 cups water
- 45g / about 3 scallions, crushed
- 15g / about 5 slices ginger
- 6g / about 4 square inches lemon peel
- 56g / ¼ cup Chinese cooking wine, optional

For making the dipping sauce

- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced ginger
- 6g / about 3 Thai bird's eye chilies, diced (see page 23)
- 3g / 1 Tbsp diced cilantro
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps hot vegetable oil
- 42g / 2.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar

White boiled is a popular cooking method in which shrimp is prepared by flash-blanching in boiling water and served with an aromatic soy dipping sauce. It is the best way to enjoy the fresh, sweet taste and the perfect tender texture of the shrimp. The best of all, this dish is so easy that even if you are a beginner, you can get in and out of the kitchen in no time.

1. Fill a big pot with water; add the ginger slices, scallions, and lemon peel, and then turn the heat to high. It will take about 10 minutes to come to a boil.
2. While waiting, devein the shrimp by sticking a toothpick into the neck underneath the vein and then pulling it out. Once done, rinse the shrimp and drain thoroughly.

Chef's Secret: Cantonese people like to cook with head-on and shell-on shrimp because it helps to keep the shrimp moist. However, this dish can also be made with peeled shrimp.

3. Add the shrimp and Chinese cooking wine to the boiling water and cook for 1 minute. Then turn off the heat and put on the lid. Let the shrimp poach in hot water for 2-3 more minutes, depending on the size. If using peeled shrimp, poach for 1-2 minutes.
4. Remove the shrimp from the pot and drain thoroughly. Optionally, trim off the messy shrimp legs and the sharp rostrum using a pair of kitchen scissors. You can serve this dish hot or cold, depending on the season. If serving it cold, cool the shrimp in an ice bath for a few minutes.
5. To make the dipping sauce, add the minced garlic, ginger, cilantro, and optionally diced Thai bird's eye chilies into a heat-proof bowl.
6. Heat the vegetable oil in a small saucepan until smoking hot and pour it onto the aromatics to activate the fragrance. Add the soy sauce and sugar. Stir thoroughly.
7. Serve the shrimp with the dipping sauce. If you're using shell-on shrimp, you or your guests will need to peel them by hand, which can be messy. In Canton, it is customary to provide hot, wet towels alongside this dish.

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The most important thing for White Boiled Shrimp is to get the freshest shrimp possible. I used to buy live shrimp from the wet market in Guangzhou; that was the best. Sadly, live shrimp is unavailable around where I live in the USA, so I usually find my shrimp at a farmer's market. They are freshly caught each day and flash-frozen right away, which is also great for this recipe.



Sesame Shrimp Toast

xiā duō shì
虾 多 士

Prep Time:
30 minutes

Cooking Time:
15 minutes

Serves:
4 people

Shrimp toast is a fusion food that appeared after the British colonized Hong Kong Island. It was first a popular dim sum item served in tea house restaurants. Being a free port, Hong Kong has brought this dish to many countries worldwide.

Usually, restaurants will deep-fry the toast, which is not recommended for home cooking because if you don't know how to monitor the heat, you will likely end up with a sponge soaked with oil. Pan-frying is so much healthier and easier to manage.

- 454g / 1 pound peeled and deveined shrimp
- 3g / 1 tsp grated ginger
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 12g / 2 tsps oyster sauce
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 1 g / ½ tsp sweet paprika
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 9g / 2 tsps sesame oil
- 11g / 1.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 1 egg white
- 57g / 2 oz diced bamboo shoot
- 57g / 2 oz diced carrot
- 30g / about 2 scallions, diced
- 16g / about 8 cilantro leaves
- 8 slices white toast
- 23g / 2.5 Tbsps raw sesame seeds
- 41-54g / 3-4 Tbsps cooking oil

Ingredient Tips

- Bamboo shoots providea a crunchy texture. If you don't have them, use any hard vegetables that you like such as carrots, lotus root, water chestnuts, celery, or green beans.
- Eggplant slices are a great keto option to replace the toast.

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1. Smash the shrimp one by one using a heavy-duty cleaver or a hammer meat tenderizer; then chop the shrimp finely and place into a big mixing bowl. You can also use a food processor if you have one.

2. Add the soy sauce, oyster sauce, salt, grated ginger, minced garlic, white pepper, cornstarch, sweet paprika, sesame oil, and the egg white and mix thoroughly. Keep stirring the shrimp in one direction for 5 minutes to develop the texture. Chill the mixture in the fridge for 20 minutes.

3. While waiting, dice the bamboo shoots, carrot, scallion, and cilantro, and then thoroughly mix them with the seasoned ground shrimp.

4. Divide the shrimp mixture into eight portions; evenly spread each portion on one side of the toast until all the bread is covered on one side.

5. Line all the toast on the working surface with the shrimp-side up and evenly sprinkle the raw sesame seeds. Then gently press the sesame into the shrimp paste so they don't fall off while cooking.

> **Meal prepping tip:** you can make a lot at once and stack the shrimp toasts with parchment papers between them to prevent sticking. Freeze them for up to three months. Whenever you want to eat them again, directly pan-fry them on medium-low heat without defrosting until both sides are golden brown and crispy, about 5-6 minutes per side.

6. Preheat a cast-iron skillet over medium heat for a minute. Add just enough oil to cover the bottom of the skillet. Don't use too much oil. Otherwise, the bread will absorb the grease, and you will end up with an oily sponge. You can also use butter instead to add a richer flavor to your toast.

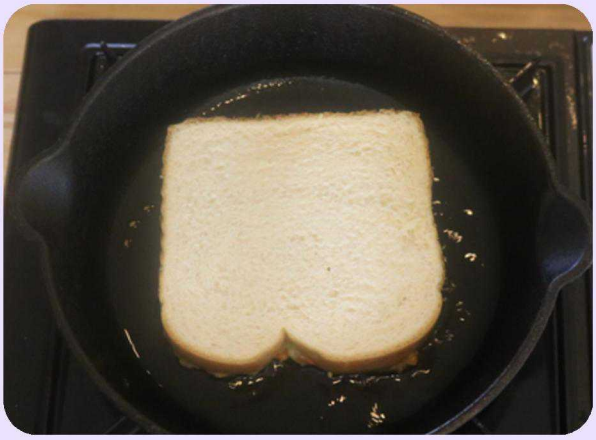
7. Place the shrimp toast into the skillet with the meat side down and pan-fry for a few minutes or until the shrimp is cooked. Then flip and pan-fry the other side for 2 minutes or until the bread is golden brown and crispy. During the cooking, rotate the toasts a few times so they can get an even crust.

8. You may be able to pan-fry 2-3 toasts at a time, depending on the size of your skillet. Serve the shrimp toast for breakfast or brunch with your favorite sides, such as fries, eggs, and sausages.











Shrimp Crackers

zhá xiā piàn
炸 虾 片

Prep Time: 1.5 days

Cooking Time: 130 minutes

Serves: 5 people

Even though this is called a cracker, it is more like shrimp-flavored chips – they are extremely crispy and hard to resist. I haven't met anybody who doesn't like them (LOL)! These crackers do take some time to make so I suggest you prepare a large batch at a time. They can stay good at room temperature for months.

- 150g / 5.3 oz peeled and deveined shrimp
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 26g / 1.5 Tbsps fish sauce
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced ginger
- 3g / 1 tsp garlic powder
- 2.3g / 1 tsp onion powder
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 30g / 1.1 oz crushed ice
- 240g / 2 cups of tapioca flour (see page 28)

Ingredient Tips

- Shrimp can be replaced by squid or other white fish meat.
- Fish sauce can be replaced with same amount of soy sauce.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO



1. Add the shrimp, salt, fish sauce, minced garlic, ginger, garlic powder, onion powder, five-spice powder, ground white pepper, and crushed ice to a food processor. Blend everything until smooth.

> **Chef's Secret:** I recommend buying smaller-sized shrimp if they are cheaper because you are grinding it anyway.

2. Add the tapioca flour into the food processor in batches and keep blending at low speed until a non-stick dough forms.

> **Chef's Secret:** Other types of starch, like mung bean, potato, and cornstarch, will also work, but tapioca is best due to its higher amylopectin content, making shrimp crackers puffier and crispier. Also, different brands and types of starch have different water absorption rates; the measurement I gave is for reference only. You should adjust the amount of tapioca flour depending on the consistency of the dough.

3. Roll the dough into a long, even, smooth log, and then cut the log into 2 manageable pieces.

4. Bring a pot of water to a boil and add the shrimp dough logs. They will sink to the bottom of the pot. Please stir gently so the dough doesn't stick to the bottom. After about 5 minutes, when the dough starts floating, you can stop stirring. Turn the heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes.

5. After 30 minutes, transfer the dough onto a rack and chill in the fridge uncovered for 30 hours or until the dough becomes hard and firm.

6. Slice the dough into 1-mm-thick pieces. Do not cut it too thick; otherwise, the crackers will be chewy and tough.

7. Place all the slices on a rack and fully dehydrate them by using one of the following methods.

   - Use a dehydrator to dry for 4-5 hours at 120°F / 49°C.
   - Put it in the oven and set the temperature at the lowest possible (3 hours at 150°F / 66°C).
   - Put the shrimp crackers under the ceiling fan overnight or until fully dried.

8. Store the dehydrated crackers in a sealed container for up to 6 months.

9. Whenever you want to eat the crackers, fry them in 400°F / 204°C oil for 30 seconds. Only fry 6-8 pieces at a time as the crackers grow big in volume.

10. Remove the crackers from the oil and use paper towels to eliminate the excess grease. Serve as a snack.



Pepper and Squid Stir-Fry

shuāng jiāo yóu yú huā
双 椒 鱿 鱼 花

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 2 people

The key to making perfectly tender squid is to cook it for less than 2 minutes or longer than 2 hours. This is a quick stir-fry recipe, so you really need to time it carefully. Otherwise, it will be tough and rubbery.

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For blanching the squid

- 340g / 12 oz squid, measured after removing all the inedible parts
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water
- 12g / about 4 slices ginger to blanch the squid

For stir-frying the squid

- 36g / 2 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 2.5g / 1 tsp cornstarch
- 15g / 1 Tbsp water
- 2.4g / 1 tsp ground black pepper
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 27g / 2 Tbsps oil
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced ginger
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 6g / 1.5 Tbsps diced scallions
- 120g / about ½ red bell pepper, cut into bite-size pieces
- 120g / about ½ green bell pepper, cut into bite-size pieces

Ingredient Tip

- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use 1 tsp ginger juice + 2 tsps water.

Prep the squid

1. If the squid skin remains, rub the edge to lose a little bit of tissue; use a paper towel to grab the tissue and pull the entire skin off.

2. Cut off the squid head and tentacles. Remove the quill, the hard transparent cartilage, by pulling it out of the squid tube.

3. Cut the squid hood open lengthwise. Let the inside of the tube face up. Score the flesh in a crisscross pattern by marking it and not cutting through it; this makes the squid more tender and allows flavors to cling to it.

4. Cut the scored squid into two 1.5-inch rectangular pieces. Cut the tentacles into bite-size pieces.

5. Fill a pot with water, add a few ginger slices, and then bring it to a boil.

6. Add the squid and blanch for only 10 seconds. Remove the squid from the pot, rinse under running water to cool, and set it aside to drain. Blanching helps remove the squid's slimy liquid and fishy smell.

Stir-fry squid

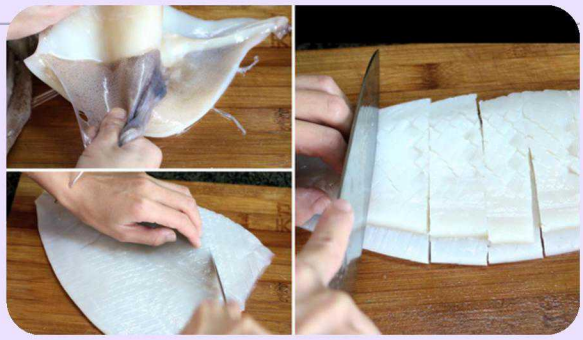
1. Thoroughly combine all the following ingredients in a bowl and mix well: the oyster sauce, soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, cornstarch, water, ground black pepper, sugar, and dark soy sauce. Set it aside

2. Heat the wok over high heat until smoking hot. Add the oil, minced ginger, garlic, and diced scallions, and stir until fragrant.

3. Add the bell pepper and stir to your desired doneness for an estimated 3 minutes.

4. Add the blanched squid. Stir for 1.5 minutes. The trick here is to use the highest heat possible. Otherwise, it will take longer to cook, and the squid will be rubbery.

5. Add the sauce and continue to mix for 20 seconds. Serve the dish with white rice.













Teochew Style Oyster Pancakes

cháo zhōu háo lào
潮 州 蚝 烙

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Teochew (潮汕), located in the Guangdong Province of China, has a reputation for its diverse and delicious street food offerings. One standout dish is the haolao (蚝烙), a savory oyster pancake that has become a staple of the local cuisine. Despite any initial reservations you may have about consuming oysters, the haolao's mouthwatering flavor is sure to impress even the most discerning palate.

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- 283g / 10 oz shucked oysters
- 23g / 3 Tbsps cornstarch
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp cooking oil to clean the oyster
- 21g / ⅓ cup diced scallions
- 75g / 10 Tbsps sweet potato starch
- 98g / 6.5 Tbsps water
- 23g / 4 tsps fish sauce
- 41g / 3 Tbsps pork lard
- 2 eggs
- 6g / 2 Tbsps diced cilantro
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 30g / 2 Tbsps sriracha for dipping

Ingredient Tips

- When you get shucked oysters from a can, be sure to buy a little bit more than you need, as they always come with lots of liquid. I only get 4-5 oz of oysters from an 8-oz can after I drain the water. It is best to buy smaller oysters because they are cheaper and can be evenly distributed throughout the whole pancake.
- Sweet potato starch is the key ingredient to create that iconic "QQ" texture -- slightly chewy, bouncy, but tender at the same time. You can buy sweet potato starch in almost any Asian grocery store. If you can't find it anywhere, tapioca starch will be a decent replacement.





1. In a big mixing bowl, add the shucked oysters, cornstarch, cooking wine, and 1 Tbsp cooking oil. Gently rub it to allow the starch to absorb the impurities.

2. Rinse the oysters with cold water several times to remove the starch. Make sure to let the tap water run into the bowl from the edge instead of hitting the oysters directly. Once the water becomes clear, drain the oysters completely and set aside.

3. In a separate bowl, add the sweet potato starch, water, fish sauce, and diced scallions. Whisk until no clumps remain. Then add the oysters and gently mix well.

> **Souped Up Swap:** If you don't like oysters, use shrimp or fish meat instead.

4. Heat the wok until smoking hot and add 3 Tbsps pork lard. Stir the oyster batter to loosen the starch and then pour it into the wok; let it fry for 2 minutes.

> **Souped Up Swap:** If you don't like pork fat, use butter or your preferred cooking oil.

5. Meanwhile, quickly crack 2 eggs and whisk them well. Pour the eggs into the wok to cover the oyster pancake and continue to fry over high heat for 20 seconds or until the egg is set.

6. Take a peek to check the bottom of the pancake; once it's golden, cut it into 4 quarters. Flip them to fry the other side until golden brown, taking about 2 minutes.

7. Sprinkle with ground white pepper to taste. Top with some diced cilantro as garnish. Serve the oyster pancake with sriracha.













Sizzling Rice Soup with Seafood

hǎi xiān guō bā
海 鲜 锅 巴

Prep Time: 40 minutes

Cooking Time: 4 hours

Serves: 3 people

Sizzling rice seafood soup is hearty and steaming warm, which makes it the ideal recipe for cold winter days. It's bound to make a good impression as it sizzles when you serve it, adding some playful interaction to your dining experience. Some of the rice crackers absorb the soup and become tender and savory, while the other parts of the crackers stay crispy. Therefore, it's filled with different textures and a depth of flavors.

In China, we usually buy semi-made rice crackers. If you don't have access, you have to make them from scratch.

For making the rice crackers

- 300g / 1.5 cups jasmine rice
- 480g / 2 cups water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 1.5g / ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper
- 440g - 660g / 2-3 cups oil to deep-fry

For marinating the seafood

- 300g / 10.6oz head-on and shell-on shrimp
- 113g / 4 oz scallops
- 113g / 4 oz squid tube
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 9g / 2 tsps cooking oil

For making the seafood soup

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps cooking oil to sear the seafood
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp cooking oil to fry the shrimp head
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, finely diced
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 45g / about 1 shallot, sliced thinly
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp of soy sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp of oyster sauce
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp of tomato paste
- 85g / 3 oz carrot, sliced
- 85g / 3 oz lettuce stem, sliced
- 85g / 3 oz oyster mushrooms
- 480g / 2 cups hot water
- 15g / 1 Tbsp room-temperature water
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch

Ingredient Tips

- I recommend using jasmine and sushi rice. Avoid basmati and brown rice because their grains don't stick together after cooking.
- For a budget-friendly option, purchase a bag of seafood mix in your local supermarket instead of buying different seafood individually.

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Make the rice crackers

1. Wash the rice several times and drain it thoroughly. Add the rice and water into a pot and bring it to a simmer over high heat. Don't go away because it only takes a few minutes, and if you forget the time, it will overflow.

2. Once simmered, put on the lid. Switch the heat to low and cook the rice for another 15 minutes.

3. After 15 minutes, add the salt, garlic powder, and ground black pepper to the rice and mix well.

4. Wrap a baking pan with parchment paper. Don't use tinfoil because the rice sticks to it.

5. Spread the rice evenly in the baking pan and press it down tightly to prevent the grains from separating during dehydration. Aim for a thickness of about ⅓ inch. If the rice is too thick, it takes forever to dehydrate.

6. Place the rice tray in the oven at 200°F / 93°C for 3.5 hours. Every 30 minutes, briefly open the oven to release steam.

7. Remove the rice from the oven and break it into bite-sized pieces. You can make rice crackers in advance and store them in a sealed jar for up to 6 months. When ready to eat, deep-fry them directly.

Make the seafood soup

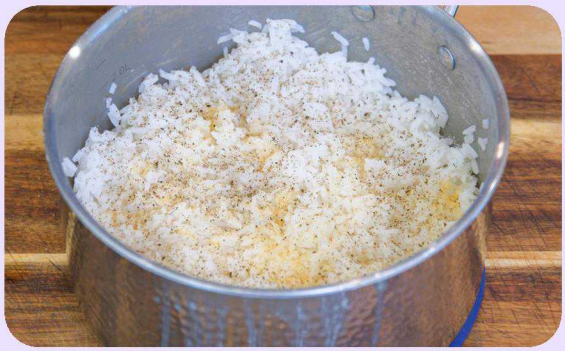
1. To prepare the shrimp, tear the head off, use scissors to cut the back open, and then peel the shell and remove the vein. Reserve the shrimp head and shells on the side.

2. Cut the squid hood in half lengthwise. Open it so the inside of the tube is facing up. Score the flesh in a crisscross pattern by marking it and not cutting through it; this makes the squid more tender and allows flavors to cling to it. Cut the scored squid into 1.5-inch rectangular pieces. Set it aside.

3. Use paper towels to dry the shrimp, squid, and scallops, and place them into a big mixing bowl. Add the salt, ground black pepper, and a drizzle of cooking oil to the seafood. Mix well and set the mixture aside.

4. For the vegetables, peel and slice a carrot into thin slices, slice a few pieces of bok choy into bite-size pieces, and tear the mushroom into bite-size pieces.











5. Turn the heat to high and heat a wok until smoking hot. Add the oil and swirl it around to create a non-stick bottom.

6. Add the seafood and sear over high heat until golden brown, taking about 1 minute per side. Remove the seafood to the side.

7. Add another drizzle of oil if needed. Toss in the shrimp heads, shells, garlic, ginger, and shallots. Stir for a few minutes or until the shrimp heads turn pink.

8. Add the soy sauce, oyster sauce, and tomato paste. Stir until everything is well mingled.

9. Switch the heat to high and pour in 2 cups hot water. Then switch the heat to low and simmer the broth for 4 minutes.

10. Use a sieve to remove the solid ingredients and leave the broth behind.

11. Add the carrot, mushrooms, bok choy, and seafood to the broth.

12. Quickly mix 1 Tbsp cornstarch with 1 Tbsp water until no lumps remain and pour it into the soup. Stir until it thickens. Give it a taste to adjust the saltiness. Set the soup aside for now.

13. In a separate wok (or pot), heat 2-3 cups oil to 400°F / 204 °C . Add the rice crackers and fry for 30-40 seconds or until the crackers are golden brown.

14. Fish out the rice crackers and put them on a serving plate. Immediately pour the seafood soup all over the rice crackers. You should be able to hear the sizzling sound.

15. Serve as a main dish.













Egg, Tofu, and Vegetables

180. HK Style Egg Foo Young / 芙蓉蛋
182. Chinese Tea Eggs / 茶叶蛋
185. Tomato and Egg Stir-Fry / 番茄炒蛋
186. Sichuan Mapo Tofu / 四川麻婆豆腐
188. Eggplant in Garlic Sauce / 蒜蓉拌茄子
189. Eggplant and Yard Bean Stir-Fry / 豆角烧茄子
191. Garlic Choy Sum / 蒜蓉菜心
192. Garlic Stir-Fry Bitter Melon/ 蒜蓉炒苦瓜
194. Bitter Melon and Canned Fish Stir-Fry / 豆豉鲮鱼炒苦瓜
196. Mixed Vegetables Stir-Fry in Oyster Sauce / 蚝油炒杂菜
197. Hot and Sour Shredded Potato Stir-Fry / 酸辣土豆丝
198. Hand-torn Cabbage / 手撕包菜
199. Stir-Fry Water Spinach in Fermented Bean Curd Sauce / 腐乳空心菜
200. Stir-Fry Oyster Mushrooms in Scallion Sauce / 葱油平菇
201. Spinach and Peanut Salad in Vinegar Sauce / 陈醋菠菜拌花生
203. Smacked Cucumber Salad / 拍黄瓜
204. Soy Stir-Fry Green Beans / 酱爆豆角丝
205. Green Bean Stir-Fry with Salted Egg Yolks / 咸蛋黄炒四季豆
206. Spicy Soy Sauce Edamame / 香辣毛豆
207. Stir-Fry Bean Sprouts / 炝炒豆芽
208. Three-Treasure Stir-Fry / 地三鲜
210. Sweet and Sour Pickled Radish / 酸甜腌萝卜
211. Dim Sum Radish Cake Lo Bak Go / 广式萝卜糕
214. Crispy Lotus Root Pancakes / 莲藕煎饼



HK Style Egg Foo Young

fú róng dàn
芙 蓉 蛋

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 1 person

Egg Foo Young is an easy and delicious Hong Kong-style omelet. It is the transliteration of the Cantonese pronunciation (芙蓉蛋). This is a classic item you can order in Cha Chaan Teng (茶餐厅), a type of Hong Kong-style café restaurant.

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- 57g / 2 oz shrimp
- 4.5g / 1 tsp oil to sauté the shrimp and bean sprouts
- 28g / 1 oz bean sprouts
- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch
- 15g / 1 Tbsp water
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 2 eggs
- 28g / 1 oz char siu meat, sliced thinly
- 20g / about 2 garlic chives
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil to pan-fry the Egg Foo Young
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps sweet soy sauce to serve on the side
- 3g / 1 Tbsp diced cilantro as a garnish

Ingredient Tips

- Garlic Chives (韭菜): Locals normally use yellow chives (韭黄), which are the same plant but grown without sun to suppress synthetic chlorophyll. Yellow chives taste sweeter and milder, which is friendly to people who don't like the smell of garlic chives. However, it is not easy to find yellow chives in the USA, so I'm using the green ones. If you don't have green garlic chives, use scallions or cilantro.
- Char Siu (叉烧): also known as Chinese BBQ pork (see page 72). If you don't want to spend the time, use your favorite leftover BBQ meat.
- Sweet Soy Sauce (甜酱油): You can make a replacement by dissolving ½ tsp brown sugar with 1.5 Tbsps regular soy sauce.

1. Butterfly the shrimp into halves, cut the garlic chives into 1-inch long pieces, and julienne the char siu meat.

2. Heat a wok until smoking hot. Add 1 tsp oil and the shrimp and stir over high heat until the shrimp turns pink.

3. Add the bean sprouts and continue to stir for another 15 seconds to remove the beany taste. Take the shrimp and bean sprouts out of the wok and let them cool.

4. Add the cornstarch, water, salt, and white pepper to a bowl. Crack in 2 eggs and beat them well until you don't see any obvious egg white.

5. Add the pre-cooked shrimp, bean sprouts, garlic chives, and the char siu into the beaten egg. Mix thoroughly. You can also use mushroom slices, julienned cabbage, or carrot instead.

6. Heat the wok again until smoking hot. Add 2.5 Tbsps oil. Swirl it around to cover the bottom. Switch the heat to medium and pour in the egg mixture. Let it fry on one side for a couple of minutes or until the bottom is golden brown. Flip it to fry the other side until golden. Chinese people love their eggs to be crispy and toasty. This is the biggest difference compared to the Western omelet. If you like yours to be soft and tender, you can fry it over low heat and don't make it crispy.

7. Serve it over white rice with a small dip of sweet soy sauce. Top with some cilantro as a garnish.











Chinese Tea Eggs

chá yè dàn
茶 叶 蛋

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4 people

Refrigerate 24 hours

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These aromatic tea eggs can be enjoyed alone or as a topping for noodle soup and rice dishes. In China, they are a popular breakfast item sold in 7-Eleven and breakfast stores, usually cooked for hours. That is because back when there were no refrigerators, street vendors had to keep the pot hot all day to prevent spoilage. While it's not necessary to boil them for that long today, many people continue to do so out of tradition, but with my method, you can cook the eggs to your preferred doneness while maintaining their flavor and beautiful marble pattern.

- 8-10 eggs
- 1.6g / 2 star anise
- 0.8g / 4 bay leaves
- 2.7g / 2 tsps whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 9g / 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1g / 2 dried red chilies, optional (see page 19)
- 100g / 6 Tbsps soy sauce
- 42g / 2.5 Tbsps dark soy sauce
- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 10g / 2 Tbsp black tea leaves
- 600g / 2.5 cups water

1. Take the eggs out of the fridge and let them sit on the counter for 30 minutes to reach room temperature.

2. Add the eggs, star anise, bay leaves, Sichuan peppercorns, cinnamon stick, dried red chilies (optional), garlic cloves, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, brown sugar, salt, black tea, and water into the pot.

> **Chef's Secret:** Please choose an appropriate-sized pot that fits all the eggs in one layer without leaving empty space. Otherwise, you have to add more water in order to immerse everything, which will dilute the seasonings.

3. Bring the pot to a boil over medium heat. Stay nearby to start timing as soon as the brine comes to a boil so you don't lose track of the doneness.

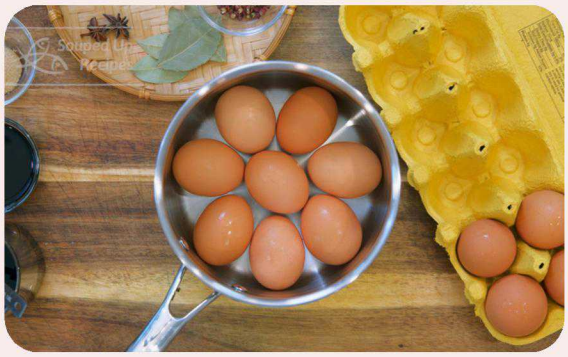
4. Boil the eggs for 4 minutes for runny yolk eggs, 7 minutes for medium-soft eggs, and 10 minutes for hard-boiled eggs. During the boiling, lightly tap each egg with two spoons to break the shells. This is an important step for the flavor to infuse deeply.

5. Transfer the eggs to an ice bath for 2-3 minutes to stop the cooking process. Meanwhile, let the bottom of the pot touch the ice water and swirl for a few minutes or until the brine cools to lukewarm.

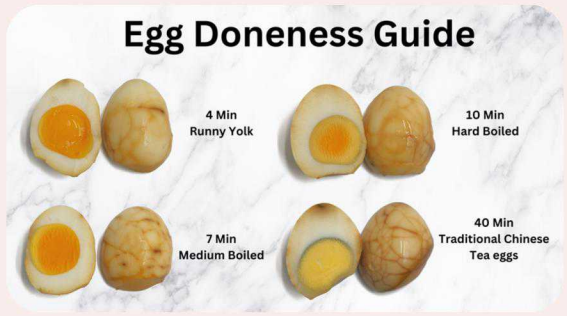
6. Pour the tea brine into a nonreactive container. Remove the eggs from the ice water and soak them in the tea brine in the fridge for at least 24 hours before eating. This allows the marinade to seep through the cracks, creating beautiful marble patterns.

7. Tea eggs can be kept refrigerated for up to 5 days. Just be aware that they will become more flavorful and saltier over time. They can be enjoyed cold or at room temperature. Reheating is possible, but it may alter the yolk's texture.

> **How to save and reuse the tea brine:**
> After eating all the eggs, strain out the spices and bring the brine to a boil. Store it in a sealed jar in the freezer for up to 4 months. When making tea eggs again, boil the eggs directly in the brine. Add more spices, tea leaves, seasonings, and water to taste, as the brine's flavor may have diminished.















Top, premade Rolled Omelet with Pork Filling sold in the market (see page 102 for the recipe); bottom, Chinese Tea Eggs sold in a breakfast store in Guangzhou, China (see page 182 for the recipe)



Tomato and Egg Stir-Fry

fān qié chǎo dàn
番 茄 炒 蛋

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 8 minutes

Serves: 2 people

This is one of the most famous dishes all over China, and almost every school canteen has it. You will be surprised that egg and tomato make such a tasty stir-fry. It is nice and saucy, which goes really well with white rice. As one of the early recipes that I learn to cook for my family, it is super easy to make. If you are a beginner, this is a perfect recipe for you to try.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

- 420g / about 3 medium tomatoes
- 3 eggs
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 12g / 3 Tbsps diced scallions

1. Use a sharp knife to cut a cross on top of the tomatoes. Carefully place them into boiling water for 20 seconds or until you see part of the tomato skin coming off.
2. Transfer the tomatoes into an ice bath to cool. Peel the skin and cut the tomatoes into bite size pieces.
3. Crack 3 eggs into a bowl and beat them well.
4. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add the oil and swirl it around to cover the bottom of the wok.
5. Add the egg and stir-fry until set, about 30-40 seconds. Break the egg into smaller pieces using a spatula. Remove the egg from the wok.
6. Add the tomato, sugar, and salt to the same wok. Stir over medium heat for a minute. Put on the lid and cook for a few minutes to allow the tomato to release its juice.
7. Introduce the egg back to the wok and sprinkle in the diced scallions. Stir until well combined and serve with white rice.

Sichuan Mapo Tofu

sì chuān má pó dòu fǔ
四 川 麻 婆 豆 腐

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 3 people

There are eight characteristics for an authentic mapo tofu, which are Ma (麻)、La (辣)、Xian (鲜)、Xiang (香)、Nen (嫩)、Hua (滑)、Cui (翠)、Zheng (整). These are translated as numbing, spicy, umami, fragrant, tender, smooth, green (garlic sprout as garnish), and whole (no broken tofu). It sounds mouthwatering, LOL! Unlike the Western takeout style of mapo tofu, the real one will make you sweat in just a few bites.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

- 5g / about 10 dried red chilies, cut in ½-inch-long pieces
- 4g / 1 Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 40g / 2.5 Tbsps Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)
- 4.2g / 1.5 tsps fermented black beans (see page 26)
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 454g / 1 pound soft tofu
- 1.5 liters / 6¼ cups water to blanch the tofu
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil
- 200g / 7 oz ground meat (chicken, pork, or beef)
- 60g / about 4 scallions, with the green and white parts separated and diced
- 18g / 2 Tbsps diced garlic
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps minced ginger
- 2g / 1 tsp paprika
- 8.3g / 2 tsps sugar
- 360g / 1.5 cups beef stock or water
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp of cornstarch
- 60g / ¼ cup water

Ingredient Tip

- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use the same amount of stock or water.



1. Toast the dried red chilies and Sichuan peppercorns in a wok over medium-low heat for a couple of minutes. Let them cool first and then blend until fine.

> **Chef's Secret:** This red chili and Sichuan peppercorn powder is called Dao Kou La Jiao (刀口辣椒), which means peppers under the blade; it's very useful for any type of Ma La (spicy and numbing) dishes.

2. Blend the Sichuan dou ban jiang, fermented black beans, and cooking wine in a blender until it turns into a fine paste. Set it aside.

> **Chef's Secret:** This is to grind the firm broad bean pieces in the dou ban jiang so the texture and the taste will be better.

3. Cut the tofu into bite-sized cubes. Add ½ tsp salt to 1.5 liters of boiling water. Blanch the tofu for 2-3 minutes. Set the tofu aside and discard the blanching liquid.

> **Chef's Secret:** Blanching will reduce the beany taste and make the tofu break less while stirring.

4. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until it is smoking hot. Add the cooking oil. Swirl it around to coat the bottom of the wok. Add the ground meat (beef, chicken, or pork) and stir until cooked through, taking 2-3 minutes.

5. Push the meat to the side. Add the dou ban jiang mixture and stir over low heat for 2 minutes to activate the umami flavor.

6. Add the minced garlic, minced ginger, the diced white part of the scallion, paprika, sugar, and half of the Dao Kou La Jiao; reserve the other half to add at the end. Stir everything until well combined and fragrant.

7. Pour in the beef stock or water and bring to a simmer. Taste and add soy sauce to adjust the flavor. It should be saltier compared to your normal taste because the tofu doesn't have that much flavor. This dish is normally served with white rice, so you need the flavor to be strong to pair well with the rice.

8. Add the tofu and simmer on low heat for 5 minutes.

9. Mix the cornstarch with ¼ cup water until no lumps remain. Pour it into the wok in 3 batches and stir to thicken everything. For better presentation, do your best not to break the tofu.

10. Sprinkle the reserved Dao Kou La Jiao and the diced green part of the scallion as garnish. Serve with white rice.















Eggplant in Garlic Sauce

suàn róng bàn qié zi
蒜 蓉 拌 茄 子

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

This eggplant salad is a great side dish that can go with almost everything. The purple color on the eggplant is due to the anthocyanin, which offers lots of health benefits, including being antioxidative and antimicrobial, as well as improving visual and neurological health. There is an easy way to retain its purple color.

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- 32g / 2 Tbsps white vinegar
- 500g / 1.1 pounds Chinese long eggplant
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 30g / about 10 cloves garlic
- 4g-6g / about 2-3 Thai bird's eye chilies, optional (see page 23)
- 2.7g / ½ Tbsp chili flakes, optional
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Chinese black vinegar (see page 16)
- 8.5g / ½ Tbsp fish sauce
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt or to taste
- 16g / ¼ cup diced scallion
- 15g / 1 Tbsp water

1. Cut the eggplant into 2 or 3 logs, depending on the length.

2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the vinegar and the eggplant logs and cook over high heat for 6-8 minutes. To retain the purple color, use a tool (such as a strainer or a plate) to push the eggplant under the water while cooking to avoid contact with oxygen.

3. Remove the eggplant from the water and let it cool.

4. Add the oil to a saucepan along with chopped garlic, diced Thai bird's eye chilies, and chili flakes. Stir over medium heat until fragrant.

5. Add the soy sauce, Chinese black vinegar, fish sauce, salt, diced scallions, and a splash of water. Mix well and remove from the heat.

6. Tear the eggplant into strips. Mix thoroughly with the garlic sauce. Serve as a side dish.






Eggplant and Yard Bean Stir-Fry

dòu jiǎo shāo qié zi
豆 角 烧 茄 子

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Eggplant is tricky to make. If you don't season it properly, it becomes firm and plain. In this recipe, I will show you a few secrets to make the best eggplant stir-fry, which should be tender, flavorful, and retain its purple color. These tips will improve your technique in a lot of ways.

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- 300g / ⅔ pound of eggplant
- 2.9g / ½ tsp of salt
- 150g / ⅓ pound of yard beans
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced ginger
- 4.2g / ½ Tbsp fermented black beans, roughly diced, optional
- 8g / about 4 Thai bird's eye chilies, diced (see page 23)
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp soy sauce
- 6g / 1 tsp oyster sauce
- 2.8g / ½ tsp dark soy sauce
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper, or to taste
- 3.8g / 1.5 tsps tapioca starch
- 80g / ⅓ cup water
- 41g / 3 Tbsps oil
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)

Ingredient Tips

- Yard beans can be replaced by green beans.
- Long skinny eggplants are my preference because they are very tender (some Asian markets call them Korean or Chinese eggplants). However, if you use the globe eggplant (a fattier and darker color version), it is best to peel the skin for a better texture.



1. Cut the eggplant into 3-inch-long strips and then place them into a big mixing bowl. Add the salt and toss thoroughly. Set the eggplant aside for 15 minutes to allow the sodium to soften the flesh, making it easier to cook, so you don't end up with firm and undercooked eggplant.

   Chef's Secret: If you stir-fry the eggplant directly without the salt preparation, it will absorb the oil immediately because eggplant acts like a sponge. Rubbing the eggplant with salt breaks down the sponge structure, so you don't need a lot of oil to stir-fry, which makes the dish much healthier.

2. While waiting, prepare the minced garlic, ginger, fermented black beans, and diced Thai bird's eye chilies. Cut the yard beans into 3-inch-long stalks.

3. Combine the soy sauce, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce, white pepper, tapioca starch, and ⅓ cup water in a bowl and stir until there are no lumps. Set the sauce aside.

4. Add oil to the wok and sauté the yard beans over medium heat for 3 minutes or until soft. Remove the yard beans to the side and leave the oil behind.

   Chef's Secret: It is best to cook the yard beans before the eggplant. If you do it in the opposite order, the eggplant tends to take most of the oil, and you have to add more when cooking the beans.

5. Squeeze the eggplant to eliminate the excess moisture, and then rinse under running water to wash off the salt. Drain the eggplant and squeeze again.

6. Arrange the eggplant strips on a plate and make sure the skin side is facing down. This way, when you slide the eggplant into the wok, the skin side will be in contact with the wok bottom. This is the trick to retain the beautiful purple color.

7. Slide the eggplant into the wok and cook over medium-high heat for 2 minutes or until soft. Turn off the heat and remove it to the side.

8. Add the minced garlic, ginger, diced Thai bird's eye chilies, fermented black beans, and the Sichuan dou ban jiang to the same wok. Stir over low heat until fragrant.

9. Introduce the yard beans and the eggplant back into the wok. Pour in the sauce and stir over low heat for 2 minutes or until the sauce thickens.

10. Serve with white rice.












Garlic Choy Sum

suàn róng cài xīn
蒜 蓉 菜 心

Prep Time:
5 minutes

Cooking Time:
5 minutes

Serves:
2 people

Choy sum is a type of Chinese flowering cabbage. It is one of our favorite greens for daily meals. Almost any family or restaurants know how to cook this dish. If you want to start making Chinese food and eating healthy, this is the recipe that you should try first.

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- 400g / 14 oz choy sum (see page 21)
- 2.4 liters / 10 cups water
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps oil to blanch the choy sum
- 22.5g / 2.5 Tbsps minced garlic
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil
- 42g / 2.5 Tbsps soy sauce

1. Depending on the size, split each of the choy sum stems in half or quarters partially, which makes the stems easier to cook through.

2. Bring 10 cups of water to a boil and add 1.5 Tbsps oil, which will keep the vegetables green.

3. Let the choy sum stems touch the water for 30 seconds because they are thicker. Then, immerse the choy sum leaves and blanch for another 20 seconds.

4. Remove the choy sum from the water and shake well. Place the choy sum on a serving plate. Sprinkle some minced garlic on top.

5. Heat 2.5 Tbsps oil to smoking hot, pour it over the garlic to activate the aroma, and drizzle the soy sauce to taste. Serve as a side dish.



Garlic Stir-Fry Bitter Melon

suàn róng chǎo kǔ guā
蒜 蓉 炒 苦 瓜

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 8 minutes

Serves: 3 people

I hated bitter melon when I was a little kid. My parents taught me a Chinese proverb that states that only those who endure the hardest become the highest (吃得苦中苦，方为人上人). Over time, I learned how to enjoy this pleasantly bitter taste as I started to understand their wisdom of life.

- 500g / 1.1 pounds bitter melon (see page 23)
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt to rub the bitter melon
- 4g / about 8 dried red chilies, cut into ½-inch-long pieces and seeds removed
- 6g-8g / about 3-4 Thai bird's eye chilies, diced (see page 23)
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, diced
- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil
- 1.3g / 1 tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- Salt to taste

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1. Cut the bitter melon in half and then quarter it. Remove the white spongy part with a knife first, and then scrape completely using a spoon.

2. Cut the bitter melon at a 45-degree angle into ⅓-inch thick slices.

3. Season the bitter melon with 1 tsp salt. Rub for a few minutes to reduce the bitter taste. Let it sit for 15 minutes.

4. Squeeze the excess moisture out of the bitter melon. Rinse the bitter melon with cold running water several times to remove the salt. Drain it, but it doesn't need to be thorough. A little bit of excess water will ensure the garlic doesn't burn as fast when stir-frying.

5. Add the oil and Sichuan peppercorns to a wok. Stir over low heat for a couple of minutes. As the temperature climbs slowly, the oil will be seasoned with the peppercorn flavor.

6. Once the color of the peppercorns turns dark, remove them from the wok and discard them.

7. Add the bitter melon, dried red chilies, Thai bird's eye chilies, and garlic. Stir over medium heat for 3 minutes and add some salt to taste. Serve as a side dish.

Chef's Secret: Although you rubbed the bitter melon with salt, you also rinsed it off, so adding salt to taste at the end is necessary. If you have never tried bitter melon before, I recommend seasoning it slightly saltier than your normal preference because the sodium can suppress the bitter taste.













Bitter Melon and Canned Fish Stir-Fry

dòu chǐ líng yú chǎo kǔ guā
豆 豉 鲮 鱼 炒 苦 瓜

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Bitter melon is a vegetable that probably every kid who grew up in southern China hated. It is nutritious and has lots of health benefits, so parents tend to force their kids to eat it. This is the recipe that my mom got me hooked on; that is how delicious it is. Her secret ingredient is fried dace cured with fermented black beans or what we call 豆豉鲮鱼. It tastes kind of like jerky but is made with fish, and it is packed with the umami flavor, which makes the bitter melon extra yummy.

- 184g / 1 can fried dace with fermented black beans (see page 26)
- 500 / 1.1 pounds grams bitter melon
- 8.6g / 1.5 tsps salt
- 30g / about 1 red chili pepper
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 12g / 2 tsps oyster sauce
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar

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1. Take the fish out of the can and break it into bite-size pieces. Reserve the oil and fermented black beans on the side. There is no need to remove the fish bones because they are fragile, tender, and edible.

2. Quarter the bitter melon lengthwise. Remove the white spongy part with a knife first, and then scrape completely using a spoon. Cut the bitter melon at a 45-degree angle into ⅓-inch thick slices.

3. Season the bitter melon with salt and rub for a few minutes to reduce the bitter taste. Let it sit for 15 minutes.

4. While waiting, slice a few cloves of garlic thinly and cut a red chili into small pieces. Set them aside. If you don't eat spicy food, use bell peppers.

5. Squeeze the excess moisture out of the bitter melon. Rinse off the salt with cold running water several times and drain thoroughly.

6. Add the reserved fermented black bean and oil mixture from the can and the garlic slices to a wok. Stir over medium heat until fragrant.

7. Add the canned fish and drained bitter melon to the wok and stir for 2 minutes.

8. Season the dish by adding oyster sauce, soy sauce, and sugar. Continue to stir for 3 more minutes to mix everything.

9. Before serving, add the red chili and mix well. Serve with white rice.

Mixed Vegetables Stir-Fry in Oyster Sauce

háo yóu chǎo zá cài
蚝 油 炒 杂 菜

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Stir-Fry Mixed Vegetables is a great and delicious way to clear out your fridge. Just put together all of your leftover vegetables, and you have a healthy side dish.



- 34g /2.5 Tbsps oil
- 454g / 1 pound mixed vegetables, cut into bite-size pieces
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps minced garlic
- 6g / 2 tsps minced ginger
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water to cook the vegetables
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper to taste
- 5g / 2 tsp cornstarch
- 30g / 2 Tbsps water to mix with the starch

1. Check your fridge and see what vegetables you have. Cut them into bite-size pieces. Divide the hard vegetables and the soft vegetables because they take different amounts of time to cook. For your reference, hard vegetables include carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, etc. Soft vegetables include lettuce, spinach, bok choy, etc.

2. Add oil to the wok along with the hard vegetables. Stir over medium heat for 3-5 minutes or until the vegetables are cooked through. You can add a splash of water and cover with a lid to create some steam, which will help to cook the vegetables faster.

3. Add the garlic, ginger, and the soft vegetables. Continue to cook over medium heat for a few minutes or until the vegetables reach your desired doneness.

4. Season with oyster sauce, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, and black pepper.

5. Quickly mix the cornstarch with 2 Tbsps water and add to the wok. Stir until the sauce thickens.

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Hot and Sour Shredded Potato Stir-Fry

suān là tǔ dòu sī
酸 辣 土 豆 丝

Prep Time: 25 minutes
Cooking Time: 15 minutes
Serves: 2 people

Although stir-frying may not be your usual way to cook potatoes, it is the most popular potato recipe in China. This simple dish is prepared in almost every Chinese household. I vividly remember my father teaching me how to julienne potatoes, which I found difficult because they kept rolling around, and my small hands were too small to keep them steady. He showed me how to slice off one side to create a flat surface, making them easier to cut. While I no longer need help with the basics, these memories will stay with me forever.

Ingredient Tip

- Chinese black vinegar can be replaced with balsamic vinegar.

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- 400g / 14 oz russet potato
- 32g / 2 Tbsps white vinegar
- 1.2 liters / 5 cups water
- 80g / about ⅓ of a bell pepper
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic
- 2g / about 4 dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 2g / ½ Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 4.3g / ¾ tsp salt or to taste
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 24g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese black vinegar
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil to stir-fry

1. Peel the potato, then slice it on one side to create a flat surface so the potato can stay still while cutting.

2. Cut the potato into ⅛-inch thick slices. Stack the potato slices and thinly julienne them into ⅛-inch thick strips. I don't recommend using a grater because the potato will come out with a rough cut surface, which produces too much starch while cooking.

3. Mix the white vinegar with 5 cups water. Soak the julienned potato in the mixture for 20 minutes. Drain the potato thoroughly.

Chef's Secret: The vinegar will react with the pectin that is exiting in between the plant cells which makes the potatoes crunchy instead of starchy.

4. While waiting, dice the white part of the scallion and cut the green part into 2-inch-long pieces. Slice the garlic thinly. Julienne the ginger and bell pepper thinly. Cut the dried red chili open and remove the seeds. Set everything aside.

5. Add the oil and Sichuan peppercorns to the wok. Turn the heat to low and heat the oil slowly. The Sichuan peppercorns will season the oil as the wok is getting hot. When the peppercorns turn to a dark brown color, sieve them out of the wok but leave the oil behind.

6. Switch the heat to medium. Add the garlic, ginger, red dried chilies, bell pepper, and the white part of the scallion and sauté until fragrant.

7. Add the well-drained julienned potato to the wok and toss over high heat for a few minutes. Season with salt, sugar, and Chinese black vinegar.

8. Add the green part of the scallion. Keep stirring until the potato shreds are slightly wilted. Serve as a side dish.



Hand-Torn Cabbage

shǒu sī bāo cài
手 撕 包 菜

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Baocai (包菜) is cabbage, and shousi (手撕) means ripped apart by hand. This dish is essentially a stir-fried cabbage, but is renowned as the most famous cabbage recipe in China. Any Chinese person you ask will likely know about it. When my dad was teaching me how to make this dish, I got quite frustrated and couldn't understand why we needed to tear the cabbage by hand instead of using a knife, which seemed much quicker. However, as I grew up, I realized that hand-tearing creates jagged edges that allow the flavors to infuse into the cabbage better, enhancing the dish.

- 650g / 1.4 pounds cabbage
- 24g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese black vinegar
- 4g / about 8 dried red chilies, seeded and cut into short pieces (see page 19)
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt or to taste
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps vegetable oil to stir-fry

Ingredient Tip

- Balsamic vinegar is a great replacement for Chinese black vinegar.

1. Cut the cabbage in half and carve out the hard center stem with a knife.
2. Use both of your hands to grab the cabbage in the center and then break it apart. Tear all the cabbage leaves into bite-size pieces.
3. Heat the wok over high heat until smoking hot and add the vegetable oil. Toss in the cabbage along with the garlic and dried chilies. Stir over high heat for 3-5 minutes or until the cabbage is wilted.
4. Add the soy sauce, salt, and 1 Tbsp Chinese black vinegar. Stir for a minute. Turn off the heat.
5. Before serving, add the ½ Tbsp Chinese black vinegar and mix thoroughly. This will stabilize the flavor because the vinegar evaporates a little bit during cooking.






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Stir-Fry Water Spinach in Fermented Bean Curd Sauce

fǔ rǔ kōng xīn cài
腐 乳 空 心 菜

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Unlike other veggies, water spinach contains a higher iron content, so when you cook it, the element will oxidize and make the water spinach turn gray. Using a method called water stir-fry, I will show you how to have beautifully cooked water spinach in a vivid green color all the time.

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- 400g / 14 oz water spinach
- 41g / 3 Tbsps oil
- 60g / ¼ cup hot water
- 12g / about 6 Thai bird's eye chilies, diced (see page 23)
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 10g / about 1 piece fermented bean curd (see page 17)
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 2.5g / 1 tsp cornstarch
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce

1. Wash and rinse the water spinach several times and drain thoroughly.
2. Remove the ends and cut the spinach into 2.5-inch-long stalks. Separate the stems and the leaves because they take a different amount of time to cook.
3. In a bowl, add the cornstarch, soy sauce, oyster sauce, and fermented bean curd and mix well. If you don't have fermented bean curd, use 2 tsps of miso paste or Korean soybean paste (Doenjang) as a replacement.
4. Heat the wok until smoking hot. Add a big drizzle of oil and wait until the oil is slightly smoking.
5. Pour in ¼ cup hot water and add the water spinach stems, garlic, and Thai bird's eye chilies at the same time and stir for 3 minutes.

Chef's Secret: Under high temperatures, the oil and water will form a stable mixture, which can cover the surface of vegetables, preventing the iron from oxidation, so your water spinach stays green.

6. Add the stir-fry sauce and water spinach leaves. Keep mixing until the leaves are wilted.
7. Serve as a side dish.



Stir-Fry Oyster Mushrooms in Scallion Sauce

cōng yóu píng gū
葱 油 平 菇

Prep Time:
10 minutes

Cooking Time:
5 minutes

Serves:
2 people

This is the easiest and the most delicious recipe to cook oyster mushrooms. Oyster mushrooms are my favorite kind of mushroom. I think they taste better than shiitake. Just in case you ask, yes, shiitake, enoki, chanterelle, and button mushrooms will also work for this recipe.

- 350g / 12.3 oz oyster mushrooms
- 45g / about 3 scallions, diced into ½-inch pieces
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce

1. Discard the ends of the oyster mushrooms where they contact the substrates. Brush the visible dirt using a silicone brush.
2. Quickly rinse the mushrooms with clean water and shake off the excess water.
3. Tear the mushrooms into bite-size pieces.
4. Add the cooking oil, diced scallions, and garlic slices to a wok. Stir over medium-low heat until the aromatics are golden brown.
5. Add the oyster sauce, soy sauce, and dark soy sauce and keep mixing over medium-low heat for 1-2 minutes or until the seasoning is condensed.
6. Add the oyster mushrooms and stir over medium-low heat for 3 minutes or until they are wilted.

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Spinach and Peanut Salad in Vinegar Sauce

chén cù bō cài bàn huā shēng
陈 醋 菠 菜 拌 花 生

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people

In China, a salad like this is served as an appetizer or a side dish. It often comes with a main meat dish, soup, and rice. You could eat it on its own as it is super delicious and healthy. The flavor of the dressing is so good. Once you try it, you will definitely want to put it on other salads. The peanut is very important to add a nice texture as the spinach is cooked and no longer crunchy.

- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps oil to blanch the spinach
- 454g / 1 pound spinach
- 9g / 2 tsps oil to roast the peanuts
- 40g / ⅓ cup raw peanuts
- 2 eggs
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, grated
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 1g / ¼ tsp sugar
- 4.5g / 1 tsp sesame oil
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Chinese black vinegar
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp Sichuan Red Chili Oil (see page 32)
- 6g / about 3 Thai bird's eye chilies, diced (see page 23)

Ingredient Tips

- Balsamic vinegar is a great replacement for Chinese black vinegar.
- Peanuts can be replaced by other nuts such as cashews and pecans.

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1. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add 1.5 Tbsps oil and the spinach and blanch for 20 seconds. The oil will lightly coat the spinach, which protects it from oxidation and keeps its bright green color.

2. Transfer the spinach to an ice bath to stop the cooking process. Squeeze out the moisture and set it aside.

3. Add 2 tsps oil to the wok, along with the peanuts. Stir over medium-low heat for 2-3 minutes or until crunchy. Take out the peanuts and leave the oil behind. Allow the peanuts to cool completely. Do not mix the peanut into the wet salad while it is still hot; otherwise, it will lose its crunch immediately.

4. Whisk 2 eggs until you don't see any obvious egg white.

5. Heat the same wok until it is smoking hot. Turn off the heat and pour in the egg. Slowly swirl it around to allow the egg to cover the whole bottom and create an egg crepe. The remaining heat should be enough to set the egg. If not, you can always turn the heat back on to cook the egg a little more.

6. Take the egg crepe out of the wok and cut it into ⅓-inch thick shreds. Souped Up Swap: Normally, I use mung bean noodles in this recipe, but when I want to take in more protein instead of starch, I use egg, which makes it Keto-friendly.

7. To make the dressing, mix the grated garlic, salt, sugar, sesame oil, soy sauce, Chinese black vinegar, diced Thai bird's eye chilies, and red chili oil in a bowl. Stir well.

8. Mix the dressing with the spinach and peanuts thoroughly. Add the egg last. If you mix the egg in too early, it will absorb most of the seasonings and leave no flavor for the spinach.













Smacked Cucumber Salad

pāi huáng guā
拍 黄 瓜

Prep Time:
20 minutes

Serves:
2 people

Smacked cucumber salad is simple and can be prepared in no time. You don't even need to turn on your stove. If you want to make this salad ahead of time, keep the cucumber and the dressing separate in the fridge and mix them right before serving. This is the best cucumber salad because the smacking creates many bruises and allows the seasonings to infuse into the cucumber.

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- 350g / 12.3 oz cucumber
- 4.3g / ¾ tsp salt
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic
- 6g / about 3 Thai bird's eye chilies (see page 23)
- 9g / about 3 Tbsps diced cilantro
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Chinese black vinegar or apple cider vinegar
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp red chili oil (see page 32)
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 4.5g / 1 tsp sesame oil

1. Smack the cucumber with a heavy-duty cleaver until the cucumber starts to split lengthwise. Then cut the cucumber diagonally into 2-inch-long pieces. If you don't have a cleaver, use a rolling pin or a hammer meat tenderizer. It is best to use cucumbers that have thin skin and tender seeds; otherwise, you have to remove the seeds and peel the skin for a better texture.

2. Add the cucumber and salt into a big mixing bowl and toss thoroughly. Let the mixture sit for 15 minutes to draw out some moisture.

3. While waiting, grate the garlic and dice the Thai bird's eye chilies and cilantro.

4. To make the dressing, combine the garlic, cilantro, Thai bird's eye chilies, soy sauce, red chili oil, vinegar, sugar, and sesame oil in a bowl and mix well.

Souped Up Swap: I recommend using Chinese black vinegar for authenticity. However, it is not easy to find outside China, so apple cider vinegar is the best option, as the slightly fruity flavor accompanies the cucumber well.

5. After 15 minutes, squeeze the cucumber as much as you can to discard the excess liquid.

6. Mix the cucumber with the dressing thoroughly and serve as a side dish.





Soy Stir-Fry Green Beans

jiàng bào dòu jiǎo sī
酱 爆 豆 角 丝

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Have you ever experienced green beans that smell like freshly mowed grass with a tough texture? That's because they are undercooked, and the seasoning didn't infuse well. The trick is to cut the green beans open before cooking so they cook faster and the seasonings can mingle well. Your green beans will come out with that soft, tender texture, and they will taste 10 times better!

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- 454g / 1 pound green beans
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 3g / 1 tsp minced ginger
- 3-4g / about 6-8 dried red chilies, cut open and seeded (see page 19)
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 17g / 1 Tbsp soybean paste
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water
- 27g / 2 Tbsps vegetable oil

1. Push all the green beans through the tool and split them in half. This is a specialized tool in China to split the beans in half lengthwise so you can maximize the cut surface and allow the seasoning to infuse into the green beans. If you don't have this tool, cut the green beans lengthwise with a knife. It just takes a little longer.

2. In a sauce bowl, combine the soy sauce, soybean paste, oyster sauce, and water. Set it aside.

3. Add the oil to the wok. You don't need to wait for the oil to get hot. Just directly add the red dried chilies, minced garlic, and ginger to the wok and stir over medium heat for a minute or until fragrant.

4. Add the green beans and continue to stir for 2 minutes. Turn the heat to medium-low and pour in the sauce. Let the beans cook in that delicious sauce for 3 minutes or until they are soft and pliable. Serve as a side dish.









Green Bean Stir-Fry with Salted Egg Yolks

xián dàn huáng chǎo sì jì dòu
咸 蛋 黄 炒 四 季 豆

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 2 people

I grew up eating salted egg yolks regularly. It has a rich, creamy, salty, and savory taste. Some people think it tastes a bit like cheese. One of my favorite ways to enjoy it is to stir-fry with green beans.

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- 27g / 2 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 227g / ½ pound green beans
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 6g / 2 tsp minced ginger
- 42g / about 3 salted egg yolks (see page 26)

1. Heat a wok over medium heat. Add the oil, green beans, and salt. Stir for 3 minutes to allow the salt to infuse fully; otherwise, the green beans will taste like freshly mowed grass.
2. Add the minced garlic and ginger. Keep mixing until fragrant.
3. Shave three salted egg yolks using a zester and add them to the wok. The salted egg yolks are preserved so they have a firm texture like cheese. That is why you can shave them. Just be careful not to cut your fingers because they are small.
4. Keep stirring until the egg yolks become foamy and cling to the green beans. Serve as a side dish.



Spicy Soy Sauce Edamame

xiāng là máo dòu
香 辣 毛 豆

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Refrigerate 6 hours

Serves: 3 people

Edamame are immature soybeans. It is hard to get fresh edamame in the United States, but you can find them frozen in your local Asian markets, usually available in 2 forms, one with the pods and one without. This recipe is the most popular way to enjoy them in Chinese cuisine.

- 400g / 14 oz edamame (with the pods)
- 27g / 2 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 1.3g / 1 tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 36g / ¼ cup minced garlic
- 8g / about 4 Thai bird's eye chilies, diced (optional)
- 80g / ⅓ cup water
- 89g / ⅓ cup soy sauce
- 48g / 3 Tbsps Chinese black vinegar (see page 16)

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1. Bring a big pot of water to a boil and add the frozen edamame without defrosting. Wait for the water to come back to a boil. Continue to simmer it for 2 minutes. If using fresh edamame, never frozen, simmer for 8 minutes.

2. Drain the edamame thoroughly and let it cool on the side.

3. Meanwhile, make the sauce. Add the vegetable oil, cinnamon stick, bay leaves, star anise, and Sichuan peppercorns to a saucepot. Stir over low heat for 1-2 minutes or until fragrant.

4. Add the minced garlic and diced bird's eye chilies. Keep stirring for 1-2 minutes. Add ⅓ cup water and then bring to a simmer.

5. Turn off the heat. Add the soy sauce and Chinese black vinegar. Pour the sauce into the edamame and toss thoroughly. Let it chill in the fridge for 6 hours (come back in 3 hours to stir it).

6. Serve as a cold appetizer. Note: The edamame pod is not edible. You have to open it and eat the seeds inside. It is very juicy and tender - it's fun to enjoy it with your friends and family.

Stir-Fry Bean Sprouts

qiàng chǎo dòu yá
炝 炒 豆 芽

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 3 people

If you want to enjoy fresh, crunchy bean sprouts, it is essential to eliminate as much excess water as possible after you wash and rinse the bean sprouts. Excess water will lower the wok's temperature, making the bean sprouts soft and soggy.

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- 400g / 14 oz bean sprouts
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 6g / 2 tsps minced ginger
- 30g / about 1 red chili pepper, thinly julienned
- 60g / 2.1 oz garlic chives, cut into 2-inch-long pieces
- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder
- 1.3g / ½ tsp cornstarch

1. Rinse the bean sprouts and drain thoroughly. I recommend using a salad spinner to eliminate the excess water.

2. Thoroughly combine the soy sauce, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce, five-spice powder, and cornstarch in a bowl. Set it aside.

3. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add the cooking oil, minced garlic, ginger, and red chili. Stir for 10 seconds or until fragrant.

4. Add the well-drained bean sprouts and garlic chives. Stir for 2 minutes.

5. Once the bean sprouts are a bit wilted, add the sauce. Keep stirring until the sauce is slightly thickened. Serve as a side dish.





Three-Treasure Stir-Fry

de sān xiān
地 三 鲜

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 35 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Di San Xian, also known as "three treasures from the ground," is a classic northern Chinese dish made of crispy potatoes, soft eggplants, and fresh peppers, tossed in a luscious sauce. Although these are the most common vegetables in any market, and the cooking method is rustic, this dish always brings out my fondest memory from my childhood. My mom would cook extra rice whenever she made this dish because this recipe increases your appetite.

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- 300g / 10.6 oz potatoes
- 960g / 4 cups of water to cook the potatoes
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch to mix with the water
- 180g / ¾ cup water
- 15g / 2 Tbsps cornstarch to coat the potatoes
- 110g / ½ cup oil to shallow-fry
- 300g / 10.6 oz eggplant
- 23g / 3 Tbsps cornstarch to coat the eggplant
- 57g / 2 oz green chili pepper, cut into bite-size pieces
- 57g / 2 oz red bell pepper, cut into bite-size pieces
- 9g / 1 Tbsp diced garlic
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallions, white part only
- 10.7g / 2 tsps Chinese black vinegar

Ingredient Tip

- I recommend using long, skinny eggplants because they are very tender (some Asian markets call them Korean or Chinese eggplants). However, if you use the globe eggplant (a fattier and darker color version), it is best to peel the skin for a better texture.



1. Peel and cut the potatoes into bite-size pieces. Add the potatoes and water to a pot. Turn the heat to medium and cook for 15-18 minutes or until the potatoes are fork-tender. Don't overcook because the potatoes will be deep-fried further.
2. While waiting, combine the soy sauce, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce, and white pepper in a bowl. Mix thoroughly and set it aside.
3. Combine 1 Tbsp cornstarch and ¾ cup water in a separate bowl and mix until no lumps remain. Set it aside.
4. Remove the cooked potatoes from the water and mix with 3 Tbsps cornstarch in a bowl until coated well.
5. Heat the oil in a wok to 360°F / 182°C and add the coated potatoes. Shallow-fry them until golden and crispy, about 2-3 minutes per side. Remove and set aside.
6. Use the roll-cutting technique to cut the eggplants into a size slightly bigger than the potatoes because eggplant shrinks after cooking.

> **Chef's Secret:** The reason you cut the eggplant right before cooking is to prevent the cut surface from oxidizing.

7. Add the eggplant to a big bowl. Use a spray bottle to spray some water to wet the surface of the eggplant. Sprinkle 3 Tbsps cornstarch in batches and toss thoroughly until the eggplant is coated well.

> **Chef's Secret:** Cornstarch creates a slightly porous, crispy shell, which can catch more sauce and make the eggplant more flavorful.

8. Increase the oil's temperature to 380°F / 193°C and then add the eggplant skin-side down. This retains the purple color.
9. Shallow-fry the eggplant until crispy, about 1 minute per side, and then remove and set it aside.
10. Keep the oil at 380°F / 193°C, add the green and red pepper, and stir for 10 seconds. Remove and set it aside.
11. Pour most of the oil out but leave 1.5 Tbsps in the wok. Add the diced garlic and the white part of the scallions, and sauté for 1 minute.
12. Pour in the seasoning sauce and stir over low heat for 1 minute. Pour in the cornstarch water and continue to stir until thickened.
13. Add the fried potato, eggplant, and pepper to the wok. Drizzle in 2 tsps Chinese black vinegar and mix well. Serve with white rice.



Sweet and Sour Pickled Radish

suān tián yān luó bo
酸 甜 腌 萝 卜

Prep Time: 40 minutes

Marinate overnight

Serves: 4 people

As one of the most popular appetizers in Chinese cuisine, pickled radishes are addictively delicious and easy to make. I used lemon juice instead of vinegar and put some lemon peel to heighten the taste. This recipe also works with cherry bell radishes, which give the end product an unconventional pink hue.

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- 454g / 1 pound daikon radish
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 3g / 2 square inches of lemon peel
- 25g / 2 Tbsps sugar
- 50g / 3 Tbsps soy sauce
- 45g / 3 Tbsps lemon juice
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 8g / about 4 Thai bird's eye chilies, diced (see page 23)
- 4.5g / 1.5 Tbsps diced cilantro

1. Peel the radish, quarter it lengthwise, and then slice it into thin fan-shaped pieces.
2. Add the radish slices and salt to a big mixing bowl and toss thoroughly. Set the radish aside for 30 minutes to allow the salt to draw out the moisture.
3. Use a fruit peeler to cut 2 square inches of lemon peel from a lemon carefully; avoid getting the white pith underneath. Thinly julienne the peel and set it aside.
4. Mix the sugar, soy sauce, lemon juice, julienned lemon peel, minced garlic, diced Thai bird's eye chilies, and cilantro in a mixing bowl and set the mixture aside.
5. Squeeze as much moisture as possible out of the radish and discard the excess liquid.
6. Thoroughly combine the dressing with the radish slices. Place a heavy plate on the top to make sure the radish is immersed completely. Let it sit in the fridge overnight
7. Serve it as a cold appetizer or side dish.



Dim Sum Radish Cake Lo Bak Go

guǎng shì luó bo gāo
广 式 萝 卜 糕

Prep Time: 2.5 hours

Cooking Time: 1.5 hours

Serves: 5 people

Refrigerate overnight

Although radish doesn't sound like a good match for a cake, with its savory taste and fragrance, lo bak go has an unshakable position in Cantonese dim sum. It is one of those items that may not win over a neophyte dim sum taster, but well-experienced gourmets will go straight for it.

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- 12g / 4 dried shiitake mushrooms (see page 24)
- 30g / 1.1 oz dried shrimp (see page 25)
- 30g / 1.1 oz dried scallops (see page 25)
- 100g / 3.5 oz Cantonese sausage
- 100g / 3.5 oz Cantonese cured pork belly
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, diced
- 180g / about 4 shallots, diced
- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil
- 800g / 1.8 pounds daikon radish
- 400g / 1 ⅔ cups soaking water to cook the radish
- 400g / 3⅓ cups rice flour
- 120g / 1 cup wheat starch
- 800g / 3⅓ cups water
- 11.4g / 2 tsps salt
- 8.3g / 2 tsps sugar
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper to taste

Ingredient Tip

- Cantonese sausage, aka lap cheong (腊肠), can be replaced with your favorite sausage. The flavor might be different, but it will still be delicious.
- Cantonese cured pork belly, aka lap yuk(腊肉) can be replaced with bacon, but pick the maple syrup flavor because Cantonese cured meat is always slightly sweet.
- Wheat starch can be replaced with cornstarch.

Prep before cooking

1. Soak the dried shiitake mushrooms, scallops, and shrimp with clean water for 2 hours or until fully rehydrated.
2. Squeeze the mushrooms to eliminate the water and drain the shrimp and scallops. Measure 1 ⅔ cups soaking water and reserve it for later use.
3. Finely dice the mushroom and mince the shrimp. Rub the scallops between your fingers until they are shredded. Set them aside.
4. Finely dice the Cantonese cured pork belly, sausage, shallots, and garlic; set them aside.
5. Peel the daikon radish and julienne it into 2-inch-long strips. Reserve half of it as julienned and then dice the other half.

> **Chef's Secret:** Julienned radish is a little stiff. By using two different shapes, it ensures that the diced radish will fill up the empty spaces of the cake.

6. In a large mixing bowl, combine the rice flour, wheat starch, salt, sugar, oyster sauce, sesame oil, white pepper, and water. Whisk until there are no lumps and set it aside.

Precook the ingredients

1. Add the oil, diced shallots, and garlic to a wok and sauté constantly over low heat for 4-5 minutes or until golden brown.
2. Use a strainer to remove the fried shallots and garlic, but leave the oil in the wok.
3. Add the diced mushroom, Cantonese cured pork belly, sausage, shrimp, and scallops. Stir over medium heat for 5 minutes. Remove everything from the wok and set it aside.
4. Add the radish and the reserved soaking liquid to the same wok and bring it to a boil; stir and cook over medium heat for five minutes or until the radish becomes translucent. Turn off the heat.
5. Thoroughly whisk the flour and starch mixture and pour a quarter of it into the wok; Mix everything with the heat off until the starch thickens.
6. Pour another quarter of the mixture into the wok and keep mixing until the liquid thickens.
7. Introduce all of the previously cooked ingredients back into the wok and pour in the rest of the flour and starch mixture. Keep stirring for a few minutes or until the final consistency becomes thick and creamy.











Steam the radish cake and stir-fry

1. Find a baking pan that can fit into your steamer. Fold a piece of parchment paper into the shape of the baking pan and place it in it to prevent sticking.

2. Fill the baking pan with the radish cake batter, and then give it a few light taps to let the mixture level out.

3. Steam the radish cake over medium-low heat for 40 minutes. Start counting the time after the water has come to a boil. Make sure your steamer has enough water so it doesn't evaporate until dry out.

4. Take the radish cake out of the steamer, cover the cake with a plate or a plastic film, and chill it in the fridge until the texture becomes firm.

5. Slice the radish cake into ½-inch thick slabs. This recipe makes about 60 of these little slabs.

6. Preheat a cast-iron skillet and add the oil. Pan-fry the radish cake over medium-low heat for a few minutes per side or until both sides are golden brown.

7. Garnish the radish cake with diced scallions and serve with sriracha or hoisin sauce.

Meal Prepping Tip: Since making radish cakes is complicated, I like to make a big batch and freeze the extra. Be sure to wrap each piece with parchment paper to prevent sticking. Whenever you want to eat them again, directly pan-fry them without defrosting over medium-low heat until golden brown.













Crispy Lotus Root Pancakes

lián ǒu jiān bǐng
莲 藕 煎 饼

Prep Time:
15 minutes

Cooking Time:
20 minutes

Serves:
2 people

This is a great breakfast item to try. Lotus root has a fairly high starch content, so these pancakes are crispy on the outside and tender on the inside, kind of like hash browns. You can serve them with your favorite chili sauce or ketchup, but they are delicious on their own.

- 300g / 10.6 oz lotus root (see page 22)
- 35g / ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallions
- 1 egg
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps soy sauce
- 7g / 1 tsp hoisin sauce
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 27g-41g / 2-3 Tbsps oil

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1. Peel the lotus root and then use the largest teeth on your grater to grate the lotus root into a big mixing bowl.

   Chef's Secret: There is usually a joint between every section of the lotus root, which should be discarded before cooking. However, don't trim it so you have something to gripe on, and safely grate the lotus root to the end.

2. Thoroughly combine the grated lotus root with all-purpose flour, diced scallions, and one egg.
3. Season the batter with the soy sauce, hoisin sauce, salt, and white pepper to taste. Mix well and roughly divide the batter into six batches.
4. Heat a heavy-duty frying pan until hot, and then drizzle a generous amount of oil and swirl it to cover the pan.
5. Add one portion of the lotus root batter to the pan. Use a spoon to flatten and round the batter into a 4-inch pancake. Do the same thing to the rest of the lotus batter. If your pan is not big enough, fry them in 2 batches.
6. Fry the pancakes over medium heat for 2-3 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Remove them from the frying pan and serve with your favorite dipping sauce.



Top left, lotus root; top right, shallot; bottom, various ginger in a wet market in Guangzhou, China.



Rice

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220. Shanghai Vegetable Rice / 上海菜饭
222. Chicken Fried Rice / 鸡肉炒饭
224. Shrimp Fried Rice / 虾仁炒饭
226. Teochew Beef Fried Rice with Chinese Broccoli / 牛肉芥蓝炒饭
228. Cantonese Fried Rice with Cured Meat / 广式腊味炒饭
231. Yangzhou Fried Rice / 扬州炒饭
233. Taiwanese Sticky Rice Youfan / 台湾油饭
235. Beef and Egg Clay Pot Rice / 滑蛋牛肉煲仔饭
238. Xinjiang Mutton Rice Pilaf / 新疆羊肉手抓饭
240. Pork Zongzi / 鲜肉粽子
242. Sticky Rice Wrapped in Lotus Leaf (Lo Mai Gai) / 糯米鸡
245. Pork and Century Egg Congee / 皮蛋瘦肉粥
247. Chicken and Mushroom Congee / 香菇滑鸡粥

How to Cook Fluffy White Rice

bái mǐ fàn
白 米 饭

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 4 people

Most Chinese people cook rice using a rice cooker, but I don't have one. It's not because I don't want to invest in one, but because cooking rice over the stove is just as easy. As long as you remember the water ratio and the cooking time, your rice will come out light, fluffy, and tender every time. This method works for long, medium, and short-grain white rice.



- 200g /1 cup jasmine rice
- 360g / 1.5 cups water

1. Please choose a proper cooking vessel, such as a stainless steel or Teflon-coated pot. The appropriate size should be 4-6 times the volume of the rice. Don't use a giant cauldron to cook small amounts of rice because water evaporates faster in a bigger pot.

2. Rinse the rice with running water several times and drain thoroughly.

3. Add the drained rice and water to the pot. In general, for every cup of rice, add 1.5 cups of water. However, there are many factors that affect the ratio, such as the types of rice, the cookware, and the altitude. You can always adjust the water amount based on your preference. Feel free to swap in chicken or vegetable broth for more flavor.

4. Turn the heat to high and bring the rice and water to a simmer without the lid. This will take just a few minutes. Don't leave the rice unattended because the water will overflow if you forget the time.

5. Cover the pot, switch the heat to low, and cook the rice until it's done. For one cup of rice, cook on low heat for 16 minutes. Add 2 more minutes for each additional cup of rice. Start the timer after the pot simmers. This timing ensures perfectly cooked rice without any burnt bottom. If you prefer a crispy layer at the bottom, cook for an extra 20 minutes.

   Note: Don't lift the lid or stir the rice while it's cooking. Lifting the lid will cause the steam to escape, which leads to undercooked rice. Stirring the rice will break down the grains and create extra starch, and you will end up with gummy rice.

6. Turn off the heat, fluff the rice, and serve. Fluffing the rice redistributes the moisture and makes the rice tender instead of gummy. If you don't fluff the rice, the grains will compact and gum up into a huge chunk after it becomes lukewarm.

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Multigrain Sweet Potato Rice

hóng shǔ zá liáng fàn
红 薯 杂 粮 饭

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 hour

Serves: 4 people

Soak Overnight

Other than plain rice, multigrain rice is a nutrient-rich staple to pair with any meal. There is no limitation on what grains to use. You can switch them to whatever you have and whatever you like, such as oat, barley, millet, sorghum, legumes, and white rice. Just be aware that white rice does not need to be soaked overnight

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- 200g / 1 cup brown rice
- 24g / 2 Tbsps wild rice
- 15g / 2 Tbsps raw peanut
- 24g / 2 Tbsps red beans
- 24g / 2 Tbsps mung beans
- 227g / ½ pound sweet potato
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps cooking oil
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps minced garlic
- 18g / 2 Tbsps minced shallot
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallion
- 600g / 2.5 cups chicken stock
- 9g / 3 Tbsps diced cilantro
- salt to taste

1. Rinse the brown rice, wild rice, raw peanuts, red beans, and mung beans thoroughly and soak them in water overnight; then drain completely.
2. Peel the sweet potato and dice into ½-inch cubes.
3. Add cooking oil, minced garlic, shallot, and scallions to a pot and saute over medium heat for 3 minutes.
4. Add all of the soaked grains and chicken stock to a pot. Stir well and bring it to a boil. Then turn the heat to low. Simmer with the lid covered for 30 minutes.
5. Add the sweet potato and continue to cook over low heat for 20 minutes.
6. Garnish with diced cilantro and add salt to taste. Serve as a foundation to pair with your favorite main dishes.



Shanghai Vegetable Rice

shàng hǎi cài fàn
上 海 菜 饭

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 4 people

This is a traditional Shanghai rice recipe, and it can be a healthy, flavorful foundation to pair with any meal. If you have been serving Chinese food with plain white rice, this is something new for you to try.

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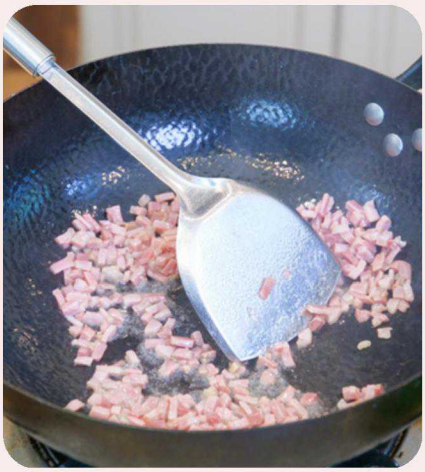
- 113g / 4 oz Jinhua ham or bacon
- 227g / 8 oz choy sum (see page 21)
- 300g / 1.5 cups jasmine rice
- 480g / 2 cups water
- 27g / 2 Tbsps pork lard
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps minced garlic
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt or to taste
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper or to taste

Ingredient Tips

- Jinhua ham is a special cured meat from Jinhua, Zhejiang province. It was listed as a tribute from the Song Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty. You can use Italian prosciutto as a replacement because it tastes similar. I also tried bacon, and it turned out delicious.
- Choy sum can be replaced with other green leafy vegetables that have crunchy stems, such as baby bok choy, Chinese broccoli, broccolini, and mustard greens.
- Pork lard can be replaced with your preferred cooking oil.





1. Finely dice the Jinhua ham and the choy sum. Separate the vegetable stems and the leaves because they take a different amount of time to cook. Set them all aside.
2. Wash the rice several times to remove the impurities and excess starch. Drain it thoroughly so you don't affect the water ratio.
3. Add the rice and water to a saucepan and bring it to a boil over high heat. This only takes a few minutes. Don't go away because if you forget, it will overflow.
4. Once the rice and water come to a simmer, put on the lid and continue to cook on the lowest heat for another 18 minutes. Please set a timer so you don't forget.
5. Heat a wok over high heat. Add the pork lard and Jinhua ham and sauté for 2 minutes. If using bacon as a replacement, please skip the pork lard, as you will get lots of fat from the bacon.
6. Add the minced garlic and the diced choy sum stems. Stir for a couple of minutes.
7. Add the choy sum leaves and continue to stir until the volume decreases.
8. The rice should be done cooking by now. Thoroughly combine it with the vegetables and ham.
9. Season with some salt and black pepper to taste. Every brand of ham (or bacon) has different sodium levels. Be sure to taste before salting to adjust the saltiness to your liking.



Chicken Fried Rice

jī ròu chǎo fàn
鸡 肉 炒 饭

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people

This chicken fried rice is a classic flavor that you can get from a Chinese takeout restaurant. It is easy to make, and it's absolutely delicious. So, if you don't know what to cook for dinner, this is it!

To marinate the chicken

- 200g / 7 oz chicken breast
- 2.5g /1 tsp cornstarch
- 5.5g / 1 tsp soy sauce
- 4.5g / 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 0.6g / ⅛ tsp baking soda

To complete the fried rice

- 2 eggs
- 41g / 3 Tbsps oil
- 283g / 10 oz cooked leftover rice
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 28g / 1 oz diced purple onion
- 43g / 1.5 oz peas
- 71g / 2.5 oz diced carrot
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 11g / 2 tsps dark soy sauce
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt or to taste
- 2g / ½ tsp chicken bouillon powder, optional
- 16g / ¼ cup diced scallions

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1. Dice the chicken breast into bite-size pieces and place it into a mixing bowl. Add the cornstarch, soy sauce, vegetable oil, and baking soda and mix well. Set it aside for 20 minutes.

2. During this time, crack two eggs and whisk them well; prepare the minced garlic, diced carrot, onion, scallions, and peas; crumble the leftover rice into loose grains; and gather all of the seasonings and sauces on the side. **Chef's Secret:** Chinese fried rice is a fast dish done over high heat. It is necessary to prep everything before turning on the heat so you don't rummage around while the wok is flaming hot.

3. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until it is smoking hot. Add 1 Tbsp oil and swirl it around so the oil covers the bottom.

4. Add the whisked egg and cook for 30-50 seconds or until it is set. Break the egg into bite-size pieces and remove it from the wok.

5. Add 1 Tbsp oil and the marinated chicken to the same wok. Stir over high heat for 2 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through.

6. Add the garlic, carrot, peas, and onion. Stir over medium heat for 2-3 minutes or until the vegetables are soft. Remove the chicken and vegetables from the wok and set them aside.

7. Heat the same wok to smoking hot. Add 1 Tbsp oil and the rice. Stir over high heat for 2-3 minutes or until you can smell the toasty rice aroma.

8. Season the rice with soy sauce, dark soy sauce, black pepper, salt, and chicken bouillon powder to taste. Stir the rice fast to incorporate the seasonings because the wok is hot, and the liquid will evaporate quickly.

9. Once all the white rice becomes brown, add the chicken, vegetables, and egg back into the wok. Sprinkle some scallions for extra flavor and toss until everything is well combined.





Shrimp Fried Rice

xiā rén chǎo fàn
虾 仁 炒 饭

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Most fried rice recipes recommend using day-old rice for a fluffy result. This recipe is an exception. You can use freshly cooked rice. It doesn't matter if your rice is wet and mushy, either, because mixing the egg with the rice keeps the grains from sticking to each other. Using frozen vegetables is handy because you don't have to cut a variety of vegetables. Also, since frozen ingredients can reduce the wok's temperature, you don't overcook the shrimp.

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- 150g / 5.3 oz peeled and deveined shrimp
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 6.8g / ½ Tbsp oil to marinate the shrimp
- 330g / 11.6 oz cooked leftover rice
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 15g / 1 Tbsp sambal oelek chili sauce
- 2 eggs
- 41g / 3 Tbsps oil to stir-fry
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 28g / 1 oz diced onion
- 85g / 3 oz frozen diced vegetables (green beans, peas, carrots, and corns)
- 12g / 3 Tbsps diced scallions

Ingredient Tip

Sambal oelek chili sauce is actually an Indonesian brand. Why am I using it then? Because in Chinese cuisine, people like to incorporate their homemade chili sauce into their cooking and I find Sambal works quite well in some recipes to replace our homemade version. If you don't have it, use your favorite brand of chili sauce.





1. Add the shrimp, salt, white pepper, and ½ Tbsp cooking oil to a mixing bowl and mix well. Set the shrimp aside for 15 minutes.

2. Combine the rice, soy sauce, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce, Sambal chili sauce, and eggs in a separate bowl and mix thoroughly.

> **Chef's Secret:** By seasoning the rice before cooking, you can take your time to get everything ready to avoid rummaging around when the heat is on.

3. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Drizzle in 1.5 Tbsps cooking oil and swirl it around. Add the shrimp. Stir for just a minute. Once the shrimp changes color, add the diced onion and garlic. Keep stirring until fragrant.

4. Add the frozen diced vegetables and stir for a few minutes or until cooked through. You can use frozen vegetables straight from the bag without defrosting to save time.

5. Remove the shrimp and vegetables from the wok. Drizzle in 1.5 Tbsps oil into the same wok and add the rice. Stir over medium heat for a few minutes. Don't use high heat, or you will burn the egg. The rice will be gluey in the beginning. As the egg starts solidifying, the grains will separate naturally.

6. When the rice becomes fluffy, introduce the shrimp and the vegetables back to the wok. Sprinkle some diced scallions and sesame seeds for extra flavor. Give it a final toss and serve.

Teochew Beef Fried Rice with Chinese Broccoli

niú ròu jiè lán chǎo fàn
牛 肉 芥 蓝 炒 饭

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Serves:
25 minutes	15 minutes	3 people

This is a fried rice recipe from Teochew, so it will use some unique ingredients (see notes) that are hard to find for people who don't have Asian grocery stores around. However, don't be put off because I do provide replacements. This dish is actually fairly easy, quick, and delicious.



To marinate the beef

- 227g / ½ pound beef
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 1.2g / ¼ tsp baking soda

For the seasoning sauce

- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 17g / 1 Tbsp satay sauce
- 0.6 / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste

For the stir-frying

- 113g / 4 oz Chinese broccoli
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 3g / 1 tsp minced ginger
- 85g / 3 oz carrot, diced
- 26g / 3 Tbsps diced Teochew-style salt-preserved radish, optional
- 2 eggs
- 454 g / 1 pound cooked leftover rice
- 41g / 3 Tbsps oil

Ingredient Tips

- Chinese broccoli, aka gai lan, can be replaced by regular broccoli or broccolini, a hybrid of broccoli and Chinese broccoli.
- Teochew-style salt-preserved radish can be replaced by other kinds of crunchy pickled vegetables, such as pickled mustard stem (zhacai榨菜), pickled mustard green (suancai 酸菜), or pickled yard beans (suandoujiao酸豆角). Just take a look and see what kind of pickles are available in your local Asian markets.
- Although any brand of satay sauce will work. I recommend using Lee Kum Kee or a Thai brand because Thailand has over 9 million Chinese individuals, most of whom came from Teochew and immigrated during the Ming, Qing, and Republican dynasties, so the cuisines are already deeply related since the 18th century.

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1. Dice the beef into ⅓-inch cubes and place them into a big mixing bowl. I recommend using beef chuck, flank, or sirloin steak.
2. Add the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, white pepper, and baking soda to the beef and mix thoroughly. Set the mixture aside for 15 minutes.
3. During this time, combine all of the seasoning ingredients (the soy sauce, oyster sauce, satay sauce, and white pepper) in a bowl and mix well. Set it aside.
4. Slice the Chinese broccoli stems into thin rounds and cut the leaf part into bigger pieces so they cook simultaneously. If using regular broccoli, use your judgment to dice it into pieces that are the same size.
5. Prepare the minced garlic, ginger, diced carrot, and preserved radish. Crack two eggs and beat them well.

> **Chef's Secret:** Chinese fried rice is a quick stir-fry. Once the heat is on, the dish will be done in 10 minutes. It is necessary to have everything ready beforehand so you avoid rummaging around while the wok is flaming hot.

6. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add 1.5 Tbsps oil and swirl it around so the oil covers the bottom.
7. Pour in the beaten egg. Stir for 30-50 seconds or until it is set, and then use the spatula to break the egg into smaller pieces. Turn off the heat. Remove the egg from the wok.
8. Turn the heat back to high. Add 1.5 Tbsps oil to the wok and stir the beef for 2-3 minutes or until nicely charred. Turn off the heat. Remove the meat from the wok. Make sure you tilt the wok so you can leave the oil behind.
9. Turn the heat back on low. Use the leftover oil to sauté the garlic, ginger, preserved radish, carrot, and the stem part of the Chinese broccoli. Stir for 2 minutes or until the vegetables are cooked through.
10. Switch the heat to high and add the cooked leftover rice. Stir this for 3 minutes or until you can see some rice grains jumping in the wok. That is the sign of fluffy fried rice.
11. Add the sauce and stir until well mixed. Add the egg, the beef, and the leafy part of the Chinese broccoli. Keep mixing until all the greens are wilted.
12. Taste and adjust the flavor before serving.



Cantonese Fried Rice With Cured Meat

guǎng shì là wèi chǎo fàn
广 式 腊 味 炒 饭

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Soak 2 hours

In Cantonese culture, there's a saying: "秋风起，吃腊味," which translates to "Autumn winds, eat preserved meat." As winter approaches, Cantonese households engage in the tradition of curing meat. In Guangdong, China, it's common to see balconies adorned with bacon, sausage, chicken, duck, and even fish. This practice is deeply rooted in my family's customs as well. I crave this special seasonal fried rice every winter because it is packed with umami flavor from the cured meat.

- 70g / 2.5 oz Cantonese cured pork belly
- 70g / 2.5 oz Cantonese sausage, sliced thinly
- 12g / about 4 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked for 2 hours (see page 24)
- 2 eggs
- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil
- 30g-45g / 2-3 Tbsps mushroom soaking liquid
- 120g / 4.2 oz Chinese broccoli
- 30g / about 2 scallions, finely diced
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, finely diced
- 42g / 2.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 500g / 1.1 pounds cooked leftover rice

Ingredient Tips

- Cantonese sausage, aka lap cheong (腊肠), can be replaced with a sweet, savory kind of sausage.
- Cantonese cured pork belly, aka Lap yuk(腊肉), can be replaced with bacon, but pick the maple syrup or honey flavor because Cantonese cured meat is slightly sweet.
- Chinese broccoli, aka gai lan (芥蓝), can be replaced by asparagus, green beans, or broccolini.

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1. Slice the Cantonese sausage, cured pork belly, and the soaked shiitake mushroom into ⅛-inch-thick slices and set them aside. Note: If the Cantonese cured pork belly comes with the skin, please remove it before cutting, as it is very tough.

2. Separate the leaves and the stems of the Chinese broccoli. Dice the stems into thin rounds. Roughly cut the leaves into bigger pieces.

3. Crack 2 eggs, whisk them well, and set aside.

4. Place the wok over a medium heat stove and add Cantonese sausage, cured pork belly, and shiitake mushrooms. Stir them without oil for 2-3 minutes or until the sausage and cured pork belly become slightly translucent; there should be a little bit of fat rendered out. Be careful not to overcook the meat; it can burn quickly due to the high sugar content.

5. Push the cured meats and mushrooms to one side and tilt the wok to let the fat run to the other side. Drizzle 2 Tbsps oil into the wok. Depending on how fatty your cured meat is, you may need more or less oil.

6. Pour the egg into the wok and stir for 30-40 seconds or until the egg is set, and then break it into small pieces.

7. Add the gai lan stems, garlic, and 2-3 Tbsps of the mushroom soaking liquid to the same wok. Stir everything for 2 minutes or until the water is evaporated

Chef's Secret: The steam helps to cook the vegetables faster and protects all the proteins so they don't dry out.

8. Add the day-old cooked rice to the wok and stir for 3 minutes or until you can see some of the rice grains dancing and jumping in the wok.

9. Add the soy sauce, sugar, the leafy part of the gai lan, and the diced scallions. Keep mixing until all of the greens are wilted.

10. Taste before serving so you can adjust the flavor because different brands of sausage and cured pork belly have different amounts of sodium.





Delicious Chinese cured meats

Yangzhou Fried Rice

yáng zhōu chǎo fàn
扬 州 炒 饭

Prep Time: 2 hours

ooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 3 people

A lot of people think Yangzhou fried rice is just egg fried rice, which is correct because there is egg in it, but it is not as simple as you think. This is an authentic industry-standard recipe. You didn't hear me wrong: Yangzhou fried rice has a very strict standard, which is published by the Yangzhou Quality and Technical Supervision Bureau. If the local restaurants don't follow the rules, they cannot name their fried rice after Yangzhou. So, stick with me and you will be surprised how much work and effort goes into this dish. Just so you know, the purpose of the standard recipe is to restrict the restaurants and make sure all the Yangzhou Fried Rice has the same taste and consistency. If you are cooking at home, it is totally fine to switch around the ingredients based on what you have.



- 600g / 1.3 pounds cooked leftover rice
- 2 eggs
- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil
- 43g / 1.5 oz fresh or canned bamboo shoots
- 43g / 1.5 oz carrot
- 43g / 1.5 oz peas
- 9g / about 3 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 12g / about 4 big dried scallops (see page 25)
- 43g / 1.5 oz Jinhua ham
- 43g / 1.5 oz chicken breast
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 43g / 1.5 oz shrimp
- 43g / 1.5 oz rehydrated dried sea cucumber
- 12g / 3 Tbsps diced scallions
- 7.1g / 1¼ tsps salt

Ingredient Tips

- Bamboo shoots (笋): You can replace them with any hard vegetables that you like, such as celery, asparagus, or green beans.
- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use the same amount of stock.
- Jinhua ham (金华火腿): It is a special cured meat from Jinhua, Zhejiang Province. It was listed as a tribute from the Song Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty. If you don't have access, a thick cut of Italian prosciutto will do just as well.
- Dried sea cucumber (海参): Rehydrating dried sea cucumber is a time-intensive process: soaking for 48 hours, simmering for 1-3 hours, then soaking for another 48 hours until it expands fivefold. Typically, only traditional local restaurants undertake this. To be honest, I don't recommend using it because sea cucumber is expensive, hard to find outside of China, and does not have that much flavor. Fresh scallops make a suitable alternative for their meaty texture, and they taste better (Note: fresh scallops are different from the dried scallops in this recipe).





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Prep before cooking

1. Soak the dried shiitake mushrooms and scallops in water for 2 hours in advance. Squeeze the mushrooms to remove the water and dice them finely. Put the soaked scallops in a blender and blend for 10 seconds or until they shred nicely. Set them aside.

2. Add the Jinhua ham, chicken breast, and Chinese cooking wine to a bowl and place it in a steamer. Steam them over medium heat for 20 minutes. Remove the ham and chicken breast. There will be about 2 Tbsps of steaming liquid in the bowl; reserve it for later use.

3. Finely dice the steamed Jinhua ham, chicken breast, rehydrated sea cucumber (or fresh scallops), shrimp, bamboo shoot, and carrot, ensuring all ingredients are diced small, allowing for even distribution in each bite.

4. Blanch the bamboo shoots, carrot, and peas in boiling water for about 40 seconds. Take them out and set them aside.

5. Crack 2 eggs and whisk them well. Set it aside.

> **Chef's Secret:** The measurements for each ingredient are small; that is because this is a standard recipe for restaurants. They usually process large amounts of the ingredients and use a little bit of each when they take an order from the customer. If making it at home, it is totally fine to skip or increase a couple of ingredients.

Make the fried rice

1. Heat your wok until smoking hot. Add 2 Tbsps oil and swirl it around so the oil covers the bottom of the wok. Pour in the egg and stir immediately with a pair of chopsticks as fast as you can or until all of the egg is crumbled into small bits. Remove the egg from the wok and set it aside.

2. Turn the heat back on high and add 1 Tbsp of oil to the same wok. Toss in the Jinhua ham, shredded dried scallops, diced shiitake mushroom, sea cucumber (or fresh scallops), shrimp, and chicken breast. Sauté for 2 minutes.

3. Add the cooked leftover rice and keep stirring on high heat for 3 minutes or until you can see some grains dancing and jumping at the bottom of the wok. That is the sign of fluffy fried rice.

4. Add the blanched bamboo shoot, carrot, peas, scrambled eggs, and the reserved steaming liquid. Keep stirring until everything is well-mixed.

5. Add some salt to taste, sprinkle the diced scallion, and toss everything thoroughly.

Taiwanese Sticky Rice Youfan

tái wān yóu fàn
台 湾 油 饭

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cooking Time: 65 minutes

Serves: 4 people

Taiwanese Sticky Rice is called Youfan (油饭) in the local dialect. People in Taiwan will gift this dish to their friends to celebrate newborn babies. You can also serve it whenever there is a family gathering. You can tell how delicious this dish is as it has such an important societal role in Taiwanese cuisine.

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- 400g / 14 oz glutinous rice (see page 31)
- 18g / about 6 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 25g / 3.5 Tbsps dried shrimp
- 200g / 7 oz skinless pork belly
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 75g / ⅓ cup Chinese cooking wine
- 75g / 4.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp sugar
- 120g / ½ cup mushroom soaking liquid
- 2g / 1 tsp five-spice powder
- 2.4g / 1 tsp ground white pepper
- 24g / ⅓ cup crispy fried shallots
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 1 lotus leaf, soaked in hot water until soft

Ingredient Tips

- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use the same amount of stock.
- Crispy fried shallots are one of the signature ingredients in Taiwanese cuisine. It adds so much flavor and makes everything smell wonderful. If you don't have it, you can check out the Taiwanese Braised Pork Belly recipe on page 76 to learn how to make your own.
- Lotus leaves are a bit difficult to find. If you don't have it, you can skip it or use banana leaves and corn husks.










1. Rinse and rub the glutinous rice several times until the water becomes clear. Soak the glutinous rice with clean water for 2 hours.
2. Soak the dried shiitake mushrooms and dried shrimp in clean water for 2 hours.
3. Fill a steamer pot with lots of water. Place a wet cheesecloth on the steamer. Drain the glutinous rice and evenly put the rice into the steamer on top of the cheesecloth. Poke some holes in the rice to allow the steam to go through. Then, steam over medium heat for 30 minutes (count the time after the water has been brought to a boil).
4. While the rice is steaming, drain the mushrooms and shrimp. Reserve ½ cup of their soaking liquid for later use. Slice the rehydrated mushroom thinly and keep the shrimp as is.
5. Slice the pork belly into ⅛-inch thick slices.
6. Place a wok on a medium-low heat stove and add the pork belly slices. Stir for 5 minutes or until 2-3 Tbsps of oil is rendered out from the pork.
7. Add the garlic, soaked shrimp, and mushroom slices. Sauté for a few minutes to activate the umami flavor.
8. Add the Chinese cooking wine, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, sugar, five-spice powder, white pepper, crispy fried shallots, and sesame oil. Stir for a minute to mingle everything.
9. Pour the reserved soaking liquid into the wok. Mix everything until well combined.
10. Transfer the cooked glutinous rice from the steamer to the wok and thoroughly mix the rice with all of the ingredients until you don't see any white color. Keep an eye on the sauce amount while you are stirring. Turn off the heat as soon as all of the liquid is absorbed by the rice, or else it will start sticking to the wok.
11. Place a piece of lotus leaf in the steamer and transfer the mixed glutinous rice onto the lotus leaf. Poke some holes all the way through the leaf for better circulation. Steam over medium heat for 20 minutes. All the ingredients are cooked already, so the purpose of the steaming is to infuse the rice with the lotus leaf aroma. Of course, if you skip the lotus leaves, you can skip this step as well.
12. Garnish with cilantro and some extra crispy fried shallots.

Beef and Egg Clay Pot Rice

huá dàn niú ròu bāo zǐ fàn
滑 蛋 牛 肉 煲 仔 饭

Prep Time: 40 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Clay pot rice, aka Baozai fan, is an iconic Cantonese street food packed with rich flavors and contrasting textures. Imagine a pot of fluffy, long-grain rice topped with savory, tender beef and perfectly cooked eggs; the bottom is carefully scorched until golden and crispy. My mouth is watering just thinking about it. So are you tired of the same old rice dishes and looking to try something new and exciting? Then this clay pot rice recipe is sure to impress.
Clay pot rice has many variations. Beef and egg is the classic choice; however, once you have the technique down, you can play around with other toppings, such as chicken, pork, sausage, fish, and shrimp.



To marinate the beef

- 283g / 10 oz beef
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine, optional
- 0.8g / ⅓ tsp ground white pepper
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 17g / 1 Tbsp satay sauce, optional (see page 17)
- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps minced garlic
- 10g / 2 Tbsps diced white part of the scallions
- 6g / 2 tsps minced ginger

To make the seasoning sauce

- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 8.5g / ½ Tbsp fish sauce
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 60g / ¼ cup water

To cook the rice

- 300g / 1.5 cups jasmine rice
- 360g / 1.5 cups water
- 27g / 2 Tbsps sesame oil to drizzle around the rims

To finish

- 1 egg
- 180g / about 6 baby bok choy, quartered and blanched
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced green part of the scallions as garnish

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1. Cut the beef into ⅛-inch thick slices and place into a large mixing bowl. I recommend using a tender cut, such as sirloin, ribeye, flank, or New York strip steak.

2. Add the salt, white pepper, baking soda, dark soy sauce, cornstarch, Chinese cooking wine, and optional satay sauce to the beef and mix well. Set the beef aside.

3. Add cooking oil, minced garlic, ginger, and diced scallions to a saucepan. Stir over medium-low heat until the aromatics are slightly golden. Turn off the stove and let it cool.

4. Pour the oil into the marinated beef, but leave the fried aromatics (garlic, ginger, and diced scallions) behind.

5. Mix the beef thoroughly until it is coated with the fragrant oil evenly. Set the mixture aside for 15 minutes.

> **Chef's Secret:** This step is the key to tender, juicy meat as the oil locks in moisture and provides a succulent texture. The beef is going to be steamed above the rice so it won't get that much of the Maillard reaction. Therefore, the fragrance from these fried aromatics is important, making the dish delectable.

6. While waiting, wash and rub the rice gently under running water several times and drain thoroughly.

7. Add the rice to the clay pot along with 1.5 cups water and soak for 15 minutes to allow the grains to fully absorb the moisture, which ensures fast and even cooking.

> **Why Use a Clay Pot?**
> The clay pot has a high heat capacity, which allows the rice to form a perfect crust on the entire bottom. If you don't have one, a heavy-duty cast-iron skillet will do the same job. If using a rice cooker or stockpot, it will be harder to achieve a crispy result.

8. While waiting, place the saucepan with the fried aromatics onto the stove and add the soy sauce, oyster sauce, fish sauce, dark soy sauce, sugar, and 4 Tbsps water. Bring it to a simmer and cook over low heat for 2 minutes. Turn off the heat and set the sauce aside.

9. Place the clay pot with the rice on the stove and cook over high heat for 10-14 minutes or until most of the water is evaporated. Try to resist the thought of opening the lid to check; you will know the water is evaporated when the edge of the pot stops popping out bubbles.

10. Turn off the heat and uncover the pot. Place the marinated beef slices onto the rice. There is no need to rush. You can take your time here.











11. Put on the lid and drizzle the sesame oil around the rims of the clay pot.

> **Chef's Secret:** a clay pot lid's diameter is shorter than the actual clay pot rim, which allows the oil to naturally drip down following the wall of the clay pot, creating that signature scorched rice base. If you use a Dutch oven or a cast-iron skillet, which has a bigger lid, then you will have to drizzle the oil along the inner edge of the cookware while the lid is open.

12. Turn the heat back to high and continue to cook for 3 more minutes. During this time, rotate the clay pot every 20 seconds to ensure an even crust. Please use oven mitts when holding the clay pot as the handles can get really hot.

13. Quickly open the lid and crack one egg in the center. Continue to cook on high heat and rotate the clay pot for 2 more minutes. This dish can be tricky because you want the rice, beef, and egg to finish cooking simultaneously without overcooking. I provided estimated times for each step, but everyone's preferences and stove heat vary. You'll need to practice and adjust based on your own experience. You'll know the crust has formed when you smell the nutty roasted rice fragrance.

14. Turn off the heat. Add some blanched baby bok choy around the edge of the clay pot, drizzle the seasoning sauce all over the rice, and sprinkle some diced scallions as garnish.













Xinjiang Mutton Rice Pilaf

xīn jiāng yáng ròu shǒu zhuā fàn
新 疆 羊 肉 手 抓 饭

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cooking Time: 70 minutes

Serves: 6 people

Pilaf (also spelled as polov) is a national dish popular in many countries in Central Asia, including the western part of China - Xinjiang. In the local catering culture, this dish is often served without utensils, and you have to eat it with your bare hands; that's the name origin. After being mentioned in a Chinese food documentary, "A Bite of China," this dish became famous, and I am excited to share it with you.

For making the pilaf

- 400g / 2 cups jasmine rice
- 1 whole big garlic bulb
- 283g / 10 oz purple onion
- 200g / 7 oz carrot
- 680g / 1.5 pounds lamb stew meat
- 54g / ¼ cup oil
- 720g-960g / 3-4 cups water, depending on your cookware
- 25.7g / 1.5 Tbsps salt
- 57g / 2 oz raisins
- 6.6g / 1 Tbsp cumin powder
- 11g / 2 tsps dark soy sauce

For making the salad

- 280g / about 2 medium-sized tomatoes
- 240g / about 1 green bell pepper
- 80g / about ⅓ medium-sized purple onion
- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp sugar
- 16g / 1 Tbsp vinegar
- 2.2g / 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt or to taste

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Prep before cooking

1. Wash 2 cups of rice several times until the water runs clear. Soak the rice for 1 hour. I recommend using basmati or jasmine rice.

2. Clean the messy roots of the whole garlic bulb. Peel off a few dried outer layers until you see the individual garlic cloves. Don't break the bulb apart.

3. Slice the onion into ¼-inch thick slices. Cut the carrot into strips that are 2 inches long and ¼ inch thick. Set them aside.

4. Cut the lamb into 1-cubic-inch pieces. Trim 2-3 Tbsps of lamb fat from the meat if you see any. Dice the fat into ¼-cubic inch pieces. Set them aside.

Make the pilaf

1. Add cooking oil, the diced lamb fat, onion slices, and garlic bulb to the wok. Turn the heat to low and stir everything for 8-10 minutes or until the onion is caramelized to a brown color. Use a sieve to remove everything from the wok but leave the oil behind.

2. Turn the heat to high and heat the oil until slightly smoking. Add the lamb meat and sear until golden brown, approximately 3 minutes on each side.

3. Add the browned onion and garlic bulb back to the wok and pour in 3-4 cups of water. The amount of water depends on the cookware you use. If your pot can seal well, use less water. I use a big wok in which water evaporates fast, so 4 cups of water are needed.

4. Bring the water to a boil and add salt to taste. Turn the heat to low and simmer the lamb for 20 minutes or until the meat is fork-tender.

5. Add the carrot sticks and mix well. Take the garlic bulb out of the wok and reserve it for later.

6. Drain the rice and then gently and evenly spread it on top of the lamb soup. Refrain from stirring the rice because you don't want the grains to drop to the bottom of the wok, or else they will burn.

7. Use chopsticks to create holes in the rice bed to allow better circulation. Place the garlic bulb on top of the rice. Put on the lid and cook over low heat for 10 minutes.

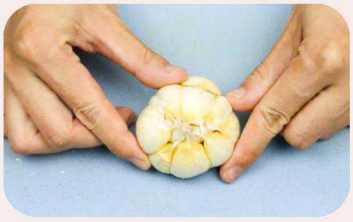
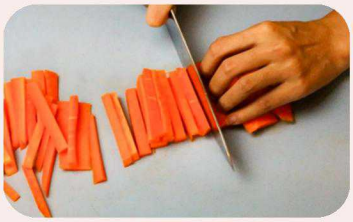
8. Use a turner to shovel and flip the rice because the top layer still needs to be cooked. Poke more holes in the rice bed for better circulation. Continue to cook on low heat for another 6 minutes.

9. Add the raisins, cumin powder, and dark soy sauce. Mix thoroughly and turn off the heat.

Make the salad and serve

1. Cut the tomato, green bell pepper, and purple onion into ¼-inch thick slices and then place them into a mixing bowl.

2. Add the salt, sugar, white vinegar, cumin powder, and black pepper and mix thoroughly. Serve the Lamb Rice Pilaf with the Onion-tomato Salad.








Pork Zongzi

xiān ròu zòng zi
鲜 肉 粽 子

Prep Time: 2.5 hours

Cooking Time: 2.5 hours

Makes: 12-15 zongzi

Eating Zongzi and racing dragon boats on the Dragon Boat Festival originated from commemorating Qu Yuan, a poet of the Chu State in the Warring States Period. Qu Yuan was ostracized for his loyalty to King Huai of Chu, was later exiled, and ultimately committed suicide by throwing himself into the Miluo River. Upon hearing the news, the people rowed boats to rescue the victims, but to no avail. They then rowed river after river to express their grief, which later evolved into a dragon boat competition. People also threw rice balls into the river to prevent fish from eating Qu Yuan's body, forming the custom of eating Zongzi.

Zongzi is a delicacy that has existed for 22 centuries and has developed many varieties. Though most recipes are complex and time-consuming, this one offers an easy version perfect for beginners.

For marinating the pork

- 340g / 12 oz pork shoulder meat
- 16.6g /1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 16.6g /1 Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 12g / 2 tsps oyster sauce
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 2g / 1 tsp five-spice powder

For seasoning the rice

- 680g / 1.5 pounds glutinous rice (see page 31)
- 1.2 Liters / 5 cups hot water (about 60°C / 140°F)
- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil
- 72g / ½ cup diced shallot
- 18g / 2 Tbsps diced garlic
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 24-30 bamboo leaves (see page 24)

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1. Cut the pork shoulder meat into bite-size pieces and place it into a mixing bowl. Add the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, oyster sauce, salt, and five-spice powder and mix thoroughly. Let the mixture sit in the fridge for 1 hour.

> **Souped Up Swap:** If you don't eat pork, feel free to change it to chicken thigh or beef.

2. Soak the glutinous rice in hot water for 40 minutes. Glutinous rice needs to be thoroughly soaked to cook properly. If not, the outer layer of the rice will gum up when heated and block the moisture from reaching the center. The soaking usually takes at least 5 hours. I found that hot water can speed up the process.

3. Fill a large pot with water and add the bamboo leaves. It is okay to bend the leaves, and you can use something heavy to press them under the water. Bring it to a boil, turn off the heat, and let the bamboo leaves continue to soak in the water while you are working on other things.

4. Add the oil, diced shallots, and diced garlic to a wok. Sauté over medium-low heat until the aromatics are lightly golden.

5. Drain the glutinous rice thoroughly and add it to the wok. Stir over medium heat for 2-3 minutes. This is not to cook the rice, but rather to make the grain slightly sticky, which will be so much easier to fold later.

6. Season the rice with soy sauce and dark soy sauce, and then remove it from the wok and set it aside.

7. Take the bamboo leaves out of the water and blot off the moisture with paper towels. As you are doing this, you should be able to distinguish the rough and smooth sides. The rough side has an obvious stem; it should not be in contact with the rice when wrapping.

8. Partially stack two bamboo leaves with the pointy tips facing each other and the smooth side facing up. Then fold the stacked leaves from one-third of the length into an ice cream cone shape. Be sure to overlap the corner so the rice will not fall out.

9. Put some glutinous rice in the bamboo cone. Add 2 pieces of marinated pork, and then fill up the rest of the space with more glutinous rice.

10. Use your thumb and forefinger to hold the shape, and then fold the upper leaves down. Continue to fold the leaves along the surface. Once done, you should get a pyramid-shaped zongzi. Tie it with a few circles of kitchen twine. Continue to wrap the rest of the zongzi.

11. Fill a large pot with water and add your zongzi. Make sure the water can fully immerse all of the zongzi. Bring the water to a boil and turn the heat to low. Simmer for 2.5 hours.

12. Remove the zongzi from the water. Unwrap the leaves and serve.

> **Meal Prepping Tip:** Freeze the extra zongzi for up to 6 months. Whenever you want to eat them, no need to defrost. Simply steam them over medium heat for 18 minutes or reheat them in a microwave until hot, about 3-4 minutes on full power.

Sticky Rice Wrapped in Lotus Leaf

(Lo Mai Gai)

nuò mǐ jī
糯 米 鸡

Prep Time: 3.5 hours

Cooking Time: 50 minutes

Makes: 8 rice dumplings

Lo mai means glutinous rice in Cantonese, and gai means chicken. This dish is a classic breakfast item that you can grab from street vendors while heading to school or work. It also serves as a dim sum dish in tea house restaurants, which were one of my favorite places to go on weekend mornings when I lived in China. I will be honest: This is a challenging recipe, but it is so delicious that it is definitely worth trying.

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- 500g / 2.5 cups glutinous rice (see page 31)
- 24g / about 8 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 30g / ¼ cup dried shrimp
- 320g / 1⅓ cups of water to soak the mushrooms and shrimp
- 4 dried lotus leaves
- 300g / 10.6 oz boneless and skinless chicken thighs
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 42g / 2.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 0.6 / ¼ tsp ground white pepper to taste
- 11g / 2 tsps dark soy sauce
- 80g / 2.8 oz Cantonese sausage
- 27g / 2 Tbsps oil to stir-fry the chicken
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine, optional
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt or to taste
- 540g / 2¼ cups water to cook the rice

Ingredient Tips

- Cantonese sausage, aka lap cheong (腊肠), can be replaced with your favorite kind of sausage.
- Dried shrimp and shiitake mushrooms are sundried and have complex tastes and aromas compared to fresh ones. You can use fresh shrimp and mushrooms, but the dish will have a different taste.
- Lotus leaves have a wonderful fragrance that adds authenticity to the lo mai gai. If you don't have it, you can use banana leaves, bamboo leaves, or corn husks as an alternative. The aroma is going to be different, but the taste will remain delicious.



Prep before cooking

1. Rinse and rub the glutinous rice to remove the excess starch, and then discard the liquid. Do this several times until the water becomes clear. Soak the rice for 3 hours.

2. Soak the dried shiitake mushrooms with 1 cup water; soak the dried shrimp with ⅓ cup water. Please be sure to measure the water precisely, as you will use the soaking liquid later.

3. Soak the lotus leaves for 2 hours or until they are soft and pliable. The leaves are big, so you may have to fold them and use something heavy to press them down under the water.

4. Cut the chicken thighs into bite-size pieces and place them into a mixing bowl. Lo mai gai is traditionally made with chicken, but you can use pork and beef if you prefer.

5. Add the oyster sauce, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, and white pepper to the chicken thighs and mix well. Let the mixture sit in the fridge for 2 hours.

6. After 2 hours, squeeze the mushrooms and slice them thinly. Drain the shrimp and finely mince them. Combine both soaking liquids and reserve on the side.

7. Slice the Cantonese sausage into thin pieces at a 45-degree angle and set it aside.

Precook the sausage, shrimp, mushroom and chicken

1. Place a wok over a medium-heat stove. Add the sausage slices and stir without oil for 2 minutes or until the sausage is slightly translucent. Note: Cantonese sausage is special because it turns translucent when cooked. If using a different type, cook until slightly charred.

2. Add the minced shrimp and stir for 1-2 minutes or until you can smell the seafood's umami flavor. Remove both ingredients from the wok and set them aside.

3. Heat the wok until smoking hot and add 2 Tbsps cooking oil. Toss in the marinated chicken thighs and stir over high heat for 2-3 minutes or until the chicken is cooked.

4. Add the mushroom slices and minced garlic and continue to stir for 2 minutes.

5. Pour the reserved soaking liquid and the Chinese cooking wine into the wok and turn the heat to low. Simmer the chicken for 3-5 minutes.

6. Taste the soup and add some salt to adjust the flavor. It should be a little saltier than your preference because you will mix it with the plain glutinous rice later.

7. Use a strainer to take the chicken and the mushrooms out, leaving the soup behind. Set everything aside for now.













Precook the glutinous rice

1. Once the glutinous rice is done soaking, drain it thoroughly. Add the glutinous rice and 2¼ cups water into a stockpot.

2. Put on the lid and bring the pot to a simmer over medium heat, which will take about 3-6 minutes. Do not go away because you have to turn the heat to the lowest setting as soon as the pot comes to a simmer. If you forget, the rice will overflow.

3. Continue to cook the glutinous rice on the lowest heat for 8-10 minutes or until you don't see any bubbling reaction in the pot. Turn off the heat and fluff the grains.

Wrap the lo mai gai and steam

1. Transfer the cooked glutinous rice into the wok and thoroughly mix with the reserved soup you used to cook the chicken and mushroom. Keep mixing until all of the liquid is absorbed; this will guarantee your lo mai gai will come out extra flavorful, gooey, and soft.

2. Use a pair of kitchen shears to cut the stem off the lotus leaf; then cut each leaf in half, making a total of 8 wrappers.

3. To wrap one lo mai gai, measure about ⅓ cup of the glutinous rice and place it on the lotus leaf. Shape the rice to form a rectangular bed. Then add some chicken, mushrooms, sausage, and shrimp on top of the rice bed. Try to fit as much as you can so your lo mai gai has an abundant filling. Cover the filling with another layer of glutinous rice.

4. Lift up one side of the lotus leaf and fold it over the rice. Tuck it tight and then fold the two sides to the middle. Roll over the rest of the leaf to make an envelope shape. Sometimes the lotus leaves may have some small cracks and holes, you don't need to worry as long as they are not too big.

5. Repeat the steps to wrap the rest of the lo mai gai.

6. Fill a steamer pot with water. Add all the lo mai gai into the steamer and steam them over high heat for 30 minutes. Since the filling and the rice are cooked, the steaming process infuses the lo mai gai with the unique lotus leaf aroma.

Meal Prepping Tip: Freeze the extra lo mai gai for up to 6 months. Whenever you want to eat them, no need to defrost. Simply steam them over medium heat for 18 minutes or reheat them in a microwave until hot, about 3-4 minutes on full power.















Pork and Century Egg Congee

pí dàn shòu ròu zhōu
皮 蛋 瘦 肉 粥

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 35 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Congee is a rice soup, also known as jook in Cantonese, and there are many versions. However, Pork and Century Egg Congee are probably the most popular ones.

Some of you may have seen century eggs (皮蛋/pídàn/) in the Asian markets many times, and you may be wondering if they are really preserved for 100 years. Of course not. They are just duck eggs that are pickled with sodium hydroxide and spices for just a few weeks, so they are not as scary as you think.
There are many reaction videos out there telling you how bad century eggs taste. That is because they are eating it wrong. Century egg has a light, earthy flavor and a sharp, alkaline taste, which will fade away once cooked in the rice congee, and you will be left with a mild umami taste. This recipe is the most common way to enjoy century eggs.

- 200g / 1 cup jasmine rice
- 1.9 -2.4 liters / 8-10 cups broth or water
- 400g / 14 oz pork loin
- 11.4g / 2 tsps salt to marinate the pork
- 3g / 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 egg white
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 4 century eggs, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces
- 9g / 1 Tbsp grated ginger
- 0.8g / ⅓ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallions as garnish



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1. Rinse the rice under running water a couple of times. Then soak the rice for 10-15 minutes. Congee can be made with leftover rice. You can check my Chicken and Mushroom Congee recipe (see page 247) to learn that method, but in this recipe, I will make congee directly from uncooked rice.

2. Add 8-10 cups of broth or water to a large pot and heat it over a medium heat stove.

3. Remove the fat and silver skin around the pork loin, and then slice the pork loin into ¼-inch thick slabs. Stack the slabs together and thinly julienne the pork.

4. Add the pork, 2 tsps salt, garlic powder, egg white, and cornstarch to a large mixing bowl and mix thoroughly. Let the mixture sit for 15-20 minutes.

5. Once the broth (or water) comes to a boil, drain the rice thoroughly and add it to the boiling broth (or water). Stir and wait for it to come back to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes.

6. After 15 minutes of simmering, the rice should be cooked through. Take a whisk and stir the rice for 1-2 minutes to break up the grains and thicken the soup. The longer you stir, the thicker the congee will be.

7. Add the century eggs, grated ginger, and marinated pork. Stir to loosen everything so they don't stick together. Once all of the pork has changed color, let it cook for a few more minutes.

8. Taste the congee and add salt to your liking if needed. Sprinkle some scallions as a garnish.



Chicken and Mushroom Congee

xiāng gū huá jī zhōu
香 菇 滑 鸡 粥

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 3 people

I grew up eating this porridge as breakfast because it is an affordable meal, and my family wasn't rich. As a firstborn, I had to help my parents by taking care of my little sisters. Jook, or congee, became our go-to meal for its comforting, delicious, and nutritious qualities. Making congee is super easy, but if you want to make it perfect, there are some tricks you need to know. Here I'll share some of my secrets with you.

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To cook the congee

- 500g / 1.1 pounds cooked rice
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups unsalted chicken stock or more if needed
- 142g / 5 oz fresh shiitake mushrooms
- 60g / about 2 baby bok choy
- 15g / about 1 inch of ginger, julienned
- 12g / 3 Tbsp diced scallion
- 11.4g / 2 tsps salt or to taste
- 6.3g / ½ Tbsp sugar
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil

To marinate the chicken

- 400g / 14 oz chicken breast
- 5.7g / 1 tsp of salt
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 1 egg white
- 15g / 2 Tbsps cornstarch
- 1.5g / ½ tsp garlic powder

Ingredient Tips

- Although your jook is only as good as your stock, you can use water.
- Jasmine rice is my preferred rice for making congee. Using leftover rice shortens the cooking time. If you don't have cooked rice, you can check the Pork and Century Egg Congee recipe (see page 245) to learn how to use raw rice to make congee.
- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use ½ Tbsp ginger juice + 1 Tbsp water.

1. Add 8 cups of chicken stock to a large pot and bring it to a boil over medium heat. Add the cooked rice and simmer for 10 minutes.

   Chef's Secret: To prevent the congee from overflowing during simmering, place a pair of chopsticks on the pot and put the lid on top.

2. While waiting, slice the chicken breast into ¼-inch thick pieces and place them into a mixing bowl. Add the salt, garlic powder, and Chinese cooking wine and mix for a few minutes or until the meat becomes sticky.

3. Add the egg white and cornstarch, and continue to massage the meat for a few minutes. Set it aside for 10 minutes.

   Chef's Secret: Using a cornstarch and egg white mixture in the marinade is a method called velveting in Chinese cuisine. It preserves the moisture of the meat while cooking, preventing the fibers from seizing up, and it gives you a juicy, tender texture that literally melts in your mouth. The Chinese name of this dish is called "香菇滑鸡粥". The word "滑" means smooth. It specifically refers to this velvety texture. Without that, your jook is never perfect.

4. While waiting, slice the mushrooms into ¼-inch thick pieces, dice the baby bok choy into ½-inch long pieces, julienne the ginger thinly, and dice the scallions.

   Chef's Secret: Ginger gives the jook a warm feeling and makes it comforting. If you don't like to actually bite into the ginger, you can grate it finely so it is not too strong.

5. Add the mushroom slices, julienned ginger, salt, and sugar to the rice soup.

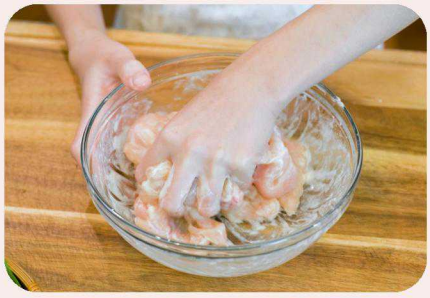
6. Use a whisk to stir the rice soup for a few minutes to break up the grains. The more you stir, the thicker and creamier your jook will come out. Check the consistency of your jook and decide if you need to add more stock or water. If you do, bring the stock or water to a boil on a separate stove before adding.

7. Add the marinated chicken to the rice soup. Stir well to make sure they don't stick together. Turn off the heat as soon as the chicken changes color. Let the rest of the heat cook the chicken through so you don't overcook your meat.

8. Add the baby bok choy, white pepper, sesame oil, and the diced scallion to the congee. Mix well and serve.















Noodles

251. Oyster Sauce Lo Mein / 蚝油捞面
252. Shanghai Scallion Oil Noodles / 上海葱油面
254. Chicken Lo Mein / 鸡肉捞面
256. Garlic shrimp Lo Mein / 蒜蓉虾仁捞面
258. Hong Kong Vegetable Chow Mein / 豉油皇炒面
260. Shanghai Pork Chow Mein / 上海肉丝炒面
262. Crispy Pan-Fried Noodles / 两面黄
265. Minced Pork Noodle Soup / 快手肉臊面
267. Chicken Noodle Soup / 快手鸡汤面
269. Tomato Egg Noodle Soup / 番茄鸡蛋面
270. Taiwanese Beef Noodle Soup / 台湾红烧牛肉面
272. Cantonese Wonton Noodle Soup / 广式云吞面
275. Braised Rib Noodles / 排骨焖面
277. Yibin Flaming Noodles / 宜宾燃面
281. Biang Biang Hand-pulled Noodles / 邋邋面
284. Pork Chow Fun (Pork Stir-Fry Rice Noodles) / 猪肉炒米粉
286. Singapore Stir-Fry Rice Noodles / 星洲炒米粉
288. Braised Pork Belly Noodle Soup / 扣肉粉
290. Hakka Stir-Fry Silver Needle Noodles / 客家炒银针粉
292. Beef Stir-Fry Rice Noodles (Chow Ho Fun) / 牛肉炒河粉
294. Cantonese Braised Beef Noodle Soup in Clear Broth / 清汤牛腩粉
297. Cabbage Stir-Fry Vermicelli Noodles / 包菜炒粉条
299. Stir-Fry Beef Udon Noodles in Black Pepper Sauce / 黑椒牛肉炒乌冬面
301. Hong Kong Satay Beef Noodle Soup / 港式沙爹牛肉面



Various noodles in the wet market. Top left, dried rice noodles, potato noodles, and sweet potato noodles; top right, dried wheat noodles and buckwheat noodles; bottom, fresh rice noodles in different shapes and thicknesses.



Oyster Sauce Lo Mein

háo yóu lāo miàn
蚝 油 捞 面

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2 people

As the easiest noodle recipe, this Hong Kong-style lo mein, with only a few ingredients, is excellent for beginners. Although it looks ordinary without any meat or vegetables, the taste is surprisingly delicious. You can serve it on its own or use it as a foundation to pair with any meal you want.

- 300g / 10.6 oz fresh egg noodles (see page 29)
- 27g / 2 Tbsps peanut oil
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 36g / 2 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce

1. Add the fresh egg noodles to boiling water and cook over medium heat for 2-3 minutes. If using dried egg noodles, please follow the cooking instructions on the package.

2. Meanwhile, heat a wok over medium heat until smoking hot. Add the oil, soy sauce, oyster sauce, and dark soy sauce. Mix thoroughly. Turn off the heat.

3. Remove the noodles from the water and shake off the excess moisture. Add the noodles to the hot wok and mix thoroughly with the sauce.

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Shanghai Scallion Oil Noodles

shàng hǎi cōng yóu miàn
上 海 葱 油 面

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 1-6 people

These scallion oil noodles are lovely on their own or they can be an excellent foundation for anything you want to add on top. Although the presentation may not look fancy, they are extraordinarily delicious. The taste is slightly sweet and extra savory, reflecting the cuisine of old Shanghai. As the name suggests, the scallion oil sauce is the soul, giving this dish a complex, fascinating aroma, and it can be made in bulk. So whenever you want to enjoy these noodles, they will be ready in minutes.

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For the scallion oil sauce

- 275g / 1¼ cups vegetable oil
- 360g / about 8 shallots, sliced thinly
- 18g / about 6 ginger slices
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 300g / about 20 scallions, cut into 2-inch-long stalks
- 133 g / ½ cup soy sauce
- 144g / ½ cup oyster sauce
- 42g / 2.5 Tbsps dark soy sauce
- 31g / 2.5 Tbsps sugar depends on your taste
- 14g / 1 Tbsp lard, optional

For one serving of noodles

- 150g / 5.3 oz fresh egg noodles (see page 29)
- 40g / 2.5 Tbsps the scallion oil sauce or to taste
- 2g / ½ Tbsp diced fresh scallions as garnish

Ingredient Tips

- Pork lard adds some creaminess to the sauce, and it can be replaced by a Tbsp of butter.
- Shallots can be replaced by purple onions.
- Although any type of noodles you have available will work, fresh egg noodles are classic for this dish.

Make the scallion oil sauce

1. Add the vegetable oil, shallots, ginger slices, star anise, bay leaves, and cinnamon stick to a wok. Stir constantly over medium-low heat for 12-15 minutes or until the shallots are golden.

> **Safety note:** Use big wide-open cookware instead of a small saucepan to prevent the oil from overflowing.

2. Use a sieve to fish out the fried shallots and leave the oil behind. Pick out the ginger slices, star anise, bay leaves, and cinnamon stick and discard them. Store the fried shallots in a sealed jar.

3. Add the scallion stalks to the oil. Stir over medium-low heat for 8-10 minutes or until the color becomes dark green with a light golden edge. Turn off the heat and use a sieve to remove the scallions from the oil. Store the fried scallions in a sealed jar.

4. After the deep frying, you should have about 2/3 cups of oil left in the wok. Add the soy sauce, oyster sauce, sugar, dark soy sauce, and pork lard to the oil. Continue to stir over low heat for 3 minutes so all the flavors can mingle well.

5. Store the scallion oil sauce in a sealed container and use it as needed. It will stay good in the fridge for two months. This amount is enough to season 6 servings of noodles.

Cook and season the noodles

1. Once the sauce is made, the rest of the steps are easy.

2. Bring a pot of water to a boil and cook the fresh egg noodles for 2-3 minutes or until al dente (firm bite). If using dried or different types of noodles, please cook according to the instructions on the package.

3. Drain the noodles thoroughly and mix them with the scallion oil sauce to taste. For every serving of noodles, you need about 2.5 Tbsps of the scallion oil sauce. You can simply multiply by how many people you want to serve.

4. Top the noodles with the reserved fried shallots and fried scallions. Sprinkle with some fresh diced scallions as garnish.















Chicken Lo Mein

jī ròu lāo miàn
鸡 肉 捞 面

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 4 people

This is a perfect recipe for when you come home from work and you've got hungry kids to feed. Everything can be ready within 30-40 minutes. It's truly better and faster than takeout. You can also take it to work as lunch because it reheats in the microwave really well. The flavor is impeccable; it is nutty and savory. The chicken is tender and soft. The noodles are very filling but well-balanced with the veggies.

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For marinating the chicken

- 350g / 12.3 oz chicken breast
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, julienned
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 7g / ½ Tbsp Chinese cooking wine, optional
- 0.8g / ⅓ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda

For making the lo mein sauce

- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 21g / 1 Tbsp hoisin sauce
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine, optional
- 8g / ½ Tbsp pure peanut butter
- 120g / ½ cup water

Others

- 454g / 1 pound fresh egg noodles (see page 29)
- 41g / 3 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 113g / 4 oz carrot, julienned
- 113g / 4 oz red bell pepper, julienned
- 113g / 4 oz button mushrooms, sliced thinly
- 113g / 4 oz snap peas
- 45g / about 3 scallions, cut into stalks

1. Slice the chicken breast thinly and place it into a big bowl. Add the garlic, ginger, salt, Chinese cooking wine, black pepper, and baking soda and mix thoroughly.

   Chef's Secret: The baking soda will break down the meat fibers and tenderize the chicken. It will give you that melt-in-your-mouth texture.

2. In a sauce bowl, combine all of the lo mein sauce ingredients and mix thoroughly.

   Chef's Secret: The peanut butter makes the sauce creamier and thicker, and helps the flavor to envelop the ingredients. You have to stir the peanut butter well so it doesn't clump up.

3. Bring a pot of water to a boil and cook the noodles for 3-4 minutes or until al dente (firm bite). Drain the noodles completely. Do not overcook the noodles; otherwise, they will turn soggy when you finish them in the wok with the lo mein sauce.

4. Meanwhile, turn the heat to high and heat your wok until smoking hot. Toss in the marinated chicken and stir for 2 minutes or until it just changes color.

5. Add all of the vegetables except for the scallions. Continue to stir for 2 minutes.

6. Add the well-drained noodles and the lo mein sauce to the wok. Keep stirring over medium heat until all of the sauce is absorbed. Turn off the heat as soon as the sauce is gone. Otherwise, the noodles will start sticking to the wok.

7. Add the scallions and toss thoroughly.

What's the Difference between Lo Mein and Chow Mein?

"Lo" means mix and stir in Cantonese, and "mein" is noodles. Lo mein is made by mixing noodles with lots of sauce and letting the flavor infuse and mingle well. It is supposed to be slightly saucy. "Chow" means stir-fry, a cooking method that requires you to use high heat and toss the noodles thoroughly. Therefore, the chow mein dish should be dry, airy, and toasty instead of saucy.













Garlic Shrimp Lo Mein

suàn róng xiā rén lāo miàn
蒜 蓉 虾 仁 捞 面

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 2 people

This Garlic Shrimp Lo Mein is easy and quick, and can be put together in 15 minutes. I often make it with egg noodles, but you can also use dried pasta or ramen noodles. The key to perfecting this recipe is to mince the garlic as fine as possible so the garlic bits can cling to the noodle string.

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For marinating the shrimp

- 227g / 8 oz peeled and deveined shrimp
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 2.5g / 1 tsps cornstarch
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 9.3g / 2 tsps Chinese cooking wine

To complete the noodles

- 300g / 10.6 oz fresh egg noodles (see page 29)
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps pork lard to stir-fry
- 45g / 15 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 28g / 1 oz garlic chives, cut into 2-inch-long pieces, optional (see page 22)
- 30g / about 1 red chili, julienned, optional

Ingredient Tip

- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use the same amount of ginger juice.

1. Combine the shrimp, salt, cornstarch, white pepper, and Chinese cooking wine in a large bowl and mix well. Set the mixture aside.

2. Bring a pot of water to a boil and add the noodles. Cook for a few minutes or until al dente (firm bite). If using dried noodles, please follow the package instructions.

3. Drain and rinse the noodles under running water to stop the cooking process.

Chef's Secret: In some of my other noodle recipes, I have suggested not to rinse the noodles; however, that is for chow mein because you don't want the excess water to ruin the wok hay flavor. "Hay" means "breath" or "energy," so wok hay means the energy or breath of the work. Since this recipe is lo mein, it is okay to rinse the noodles.

4. Heat the wok until smoking hot. Add 1.5 Tbsps pork lard and swirl it around so the oil covers the bottom of the wok. Add the shrimp and stir over high heat for a couple of minutes or until the shrimp changes color. Remove the shrimp from the wok.

5. Add another Tbsp of pork fat to the wok along with half of the minced garlic. Stir over low heat until the garlic is slightly golden, and then add the remaining garlic. This is called jin yin suan (金银蒜) in Chinese, which means golden and silver garlic. The deep-fried and raw garlic provides different tastes and aromas. Using a mix of them upgrades the flavor of this dish

6. Add the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, and oyster sauce and mix well.

7. Add the cooked noodles, shrimp, garlic chives, and julienned red chili pepper and mix until well combined.











Hong Kong Vegetable Chow Mein

chǐ yóu huáng chǎo miàn
豉油皇炒面

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 3 people



Noodles | 258

Chow (炒) means stir-fry. Mein(面) is noodles. Chi you huang (豉油皇) means "the king of soy sauce". I know it sounds weird, but we believe that if you cook this right, the soy sauce will caramelize and develop different depths of flavors, which brings this dish to the king level.

This is a classic dai pai dang (大排档) recipe. For those who don't know about it, dai pai dang is a type of open-air food stall in Hong Kong that plays an important role in the local catering culture. It is known for offering affordable but authentic and delicious street food.

For soaking the noodles

- 450g / 1 pound fresh egg noodles or 300g / 10.6 oz dry egg noodles (see page 29)
- 3 liters / 12.5 cups water
- A drizzle of vegetable oil to add to the water

For preparing the vegetables

- 61g / 4.5 Tbsps vegetable oil to stir-fry
- 120g / 4.2 oz bean sprouts
- 120g / 4.2 oz carrot, thinly julienned
- 120g /4.2 oz onion, julienned
- 120 g / 4.2 oz garlic chives, cut into 1.5-inch long pieces (see page 22)
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, julienned

For the sauce

- 50g / 3 Tbsps soy sauce
- 18g / 3 tsps oyster sauce
- 16.6g / 3 tsps dark soy sauce
- 3.1g / ¾ tsp sugar

Ingredient Tip

- The vegetables listed are the common items that Cantonese people will use for this dish. However, you can switch them with julienned cucumber, cabbage, zucchini, spinach, bok choy, or any other vegetables you prefer.

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Prep before cooking

1. Fill a big pot with 3 liters of water and bring it to a boil. Turn off the heat and add the oil and noodles to the hot water. Put on the lid and soak the noodles until al dente (firm bite). The timing depends on the types and thickness of your noodles. As a reference, dry egg noodles need about 4-5 minutes; fresh egg noodles need 3-4 minutes. Don't oversoak them; otherwise, they will turn soggy and stick to the wok while stir-frying.

2. Remove the noodles from the water and spread them on a rack for at least 10 minutes to evaporate the excess moisture.

> **Chef's Secret:** Many recipes recommend to rinse the noodles with cold water to stop the cooking process. Don't do that, as it will bring in too much water. Moisture is the number one enemy of chow mein; it makes the noodles stick to the wok.

3. Use scissors to cut the noodles into 8-inch-long pieces so they won't tangle with each other while stir-frying.

4. In a bowl, combine all the seasoning sauce ingredients and mix well.

5. Divide the noodles, vegetables, and sauce into three servings and set them aside.

> **Chef's Secret:** Most home stoves are not that powerful, which means it is best to cook one serving each time unless you have a commercial stove. If you cook multiple portions at one time, the ingredients will drop the wok's temperature, and you will not achieve the wok hay effect.
> Wok hay is known as the breath of the wok; it refers to a complex smoky aroma and taste that is created by properly cooking the food in a well-seasoned carbon steel wok over extremely high heat. Without that, your stir-fry is not authentic. Each serving only takes about 5 minutes to cook in the wok, so it is not like you are wasting a lot of time by cooking them individually.

6. Heat your wok until smoking hot. To cook each serving, add 1.5 Tbsps oil and swirl it around so the oil covers the bottom to create a non-stick layer. Add 1 serving of noodles and toss on high heat for 2-3 minutes or until the noodles are lightly toasted.

7. Add one serving of vegetables and drizzle in one portion of the sauce in batches. Stir for a couple of minutes or until the vegetables are soft.

8. Remove the noodles from the wok and continue to cook the rest of the servings.

> **Chef's Secret:** High heat not only helps to get the wok hay effect, but it also keeps your noodles from sticking to the wok. A lot of people don't know that, so their noodles always stick to the wok. When that happens, people tend to add more oil to prevent the sticking, but then the noodles will come out extra oily.











Shanghai Pork Chow Mein

shàng hǎi ròu sī chǎo miàn
上 海 肉 丝 炒 面

Prep Time: 40 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Shanghai cuisine is known for Nong You Chi Jiang (浓油赤酱), which means cooking the food heavily with oil and dark soy sauce. Therefore, Shanghai chow mein used to be oily, but nowadays, people tend to reduce the use of oil, so this recipe is a healthier version. Aside from that, dark soy sauce and Xian La Fen (鲜辣粉) are required for this recipe. Dark soy sauce gives the noodles a rich, brown, and appetizing color. Xian La Fen translates as umami and spicy seasoning and is the soul ingredient that will make this chow mein Shanghai style.



For making the Xian La Fen (umami spicy seasoning)

- 6g / ¼ cup dried red chili, cut into small pieces
- 2.8g / 2 tsps coriander seeds
- 3.3g / 1.5 tsps fennel seeds
- 2g / 1.5 tsps whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 1g / 1 square inch aged tangerine peel, broken into small pieces (see page 19)
- 4g / 2 tsps ginger powder
- 12g / 1 Tbsp chicken bouillon powder

For marinating the pork

- 200g / 7 oz pork loin
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 9.3g / 2 tsps Chinese cooking wine
- 2.5g / 1 tsp cornstarch
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste

For preseasoning the noodles

- 3 liters / 12.5 cups water
- 300g / 10.6 oz fresh egg noodles (see page 29)
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps dark soy sauce
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp pork lard

For stir-frying the noodles

- 90g / about 3 baby bok choy
- 90g / about 4 fresh shiitake mushrooms
- 60g / about ¼ of a medium-sized purple onion
- 27g / 2 Tbsps pork lard to stir-fry
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps Xian La Fen seasoning or to taste
- 9g / 1 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds

Ingredient Tips

- If you don't want to spend the time to make Xian La Fen, use a mixture of ¾ tsp five-spice, ½ tsp chili powder, and ¼ tsp MSG as a replacement.
- Although you can use other kinds of proteinlike beef and chicken, pork is the classic choice because this dish is also known as Shanghai julienned pork chow mein (上海肉丝菜炒面).
- It is best to use thick egg noodles or lo mein noodles to achieve a chewy texture. Other noodles, such as pasta, udon, or ramen, will also work.

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1. Toast the dried red chili, coriander seeds, fennel seeds, Sichuan peppercorns, and aged tangerine peel in a wok over medium-low heat for a few minutes. Then grind all the toasted spices in a blender into a fine powder.

2. Combine the spice powder with chicken bouillon powder and ginger powder thoroughly to make the Xian La Fen. This recipe uses 1.5 tsps of Xian La Fen. Store the extra in a sealed container for up to 5 months at room temperature. Besides using it on noodles, you can sprinkle Xian La Fen onto roasted pork, chicken, BBQ, and fries.

3. Julienne the pork into ¼-inch thick strips and place into a bowl. Add the salt, soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, white pepper, and cornstarch. Mix well and set it aside. The cornstarch will wrap around the pork and prevent the meat from drying out while cooking.

4. Slice the mushrooms into ¼ of an inch thick slabs; cut the onion into strips; slice the garlic thinly; and cut the bok choy diagonally into 1-inch-thick pieces. Set everything aside.

5. Bring a pot of water to a boil; add the noodles and cook until al dente (firm bite).

> **Chef's Secret:** The cooking time varies depending on the types and thickness of your noodles; please use your own judgment.

6. Drain the noodles thoroughly and place them into a big bowl. Add the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, and 1 Tbsp pork lard. Mix until the noodles are well seasoned and set them aside.

7. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add 2 Tbsps pork lard and swirl around so it covers the bottom of the wok.

8. Add the marinated pork and stir over high heat for a couple of minutes or until you don't see any pink color. Remove the pork from the wok. Be sure to tilt the wok to leave the oil behind.

9. Add the garlic, onion, and mushroom slices, and then sauté over medium heat for a minute.

10. Switch the heat to high and add the noodles. Stir with a pair of chopsticks or tongs for a few minutes or until the noodles have some charred marks.

11. Introduce the pork back to the wok and toss in the bok choy. Keep stirring until the vegetables are wilted.

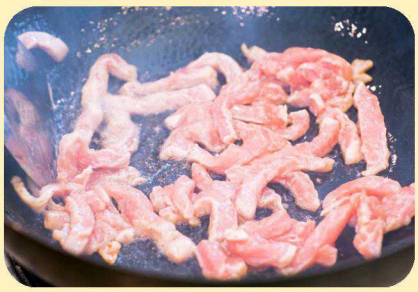
12. Sprinkle the toasted sesame seeds and Xian La Fen to taste. Toss thoroughly and enjoy!















Crispy Pan-fried Noodles

liǎng miàn huáng
两 面 黄

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 40 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Huang（黄）means golden brown. Liang Mian（两面）means double-sided. The name describes the look of this dish because the noodles are pan-fried on both sides until golden brown. It is like a crunchy version of chow mein that is topped with a saucy vegetable and protein soup.

The idea of this recipe is that some of the noodles will absorb the sauce and become tender and savory, while the other parts of the noodles stay crispy. That way, you get different textures and depths of flavors.

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For the noodles

- 2 servings of egg noodles
- 3 liters / 12.5 cups water,
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp soy sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 6.8g / ½ Tbsp vegetable oil to coat the noodles
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil to pan-fry the noodles

For the seafood

- 140g / 5 oz shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 140g / 5 oz scallops
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 0.7g / ⅓ tsp paprika
- 9.3g / 2 tsps Chinese cooking wine
- 6.8g / ½ Tbsp vegetable oil to marinate the seafood
- 0.8g / ⅓ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 6.8g / ½ Tbsp vegetable oil to sear the seafood

For the gravy

- 4.5g / 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 113g / 4 oz carrot, sliced thinly at a 45-degree angle
- 113g / 4 oz celery, sliced thinly at a 45-degree angle
- 98g / 3.5 oz mushrooms, sliced thinly
- 98g / 3.5 oz snow pea, cut in half
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, sliced thinly
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 480g / 2 cups water
- 38g / 2.5 Tbsps water
- 19g / 2.5 Tbsps cornstarch

Choose your Noodles

1. Egg noodles are what we normally use for this recipe. There are 3 common types of noodles you can find in an Asian market (from left to right).



- **Dried egg noodles (鸡蛋面):** These should be easier to find. I have seen them in regular non-Asian supermarkets. Just pay attention to the noodle aisle and you will find them. For your reference, 2 servings of dried egg noodles are about 200g / 7 oz.
- **Fresh egg noodles (全蛋云吞面):** Also known as wonton noodles or lo mein noodles, you can find them in the fridge or frozen section at your local Asian grocery stores. You can also check page 29 to learn how to make them at home. For your reference, 2 servings of fresh egg noodles are about 340g / 12 oz.
- **Hong Kong-style pan-fried noodles (港式熟炒面):** A type of pre-cooked noodles that are specifically made for this dish; sometimes these are labeled by the dish name liang mian huang (两面黄) on the package. These noodles are halfway cooked already, so you don't need to pre-boil them; just season them to taste and then pan-fry them. For your reference, 2 servings of liang mian huang noodles is about 340g / 12 oz.

Cook and pan-fry the noodles

1. Fill a big pot with 3 liters of water and bring it to a boil over medium heat. Turn off the heat.

2. If using fresh egg noodles, add them to the hot water and stir for 20 seconds - 1 minute, depending on the thickness. If using dried egg noodles, stir for 2-3 minutes.

3. Remove the noodles from the hot water, rinse them with cold water to stop the cooking process, and drain thoroughly.

Chef's Secret: In the previous Vegetable Chow Mein, I recommended not to rinse the noodles with cold water, which is the opposite of what we do in this recipe. That is because the cooking techniques are different. Stir-fry requires you to constantly toss the noodles in the wok. If the noodles are wet, the starch won't have enough time to sear, so it will stick to the wok. Pan-frying means you can let the noodles cook long enough until they can release from the wok surface, so even if the noodles are a little bit wet, it won't cause a bad sticking problem.









4. Mix the noodles with sugar, soy sauce, oyster sauce, and a drizzle of vegetable oil and stir well. Divide the noodles into 2 portions and set them aside.

5. Heat the wok until it is smoking hot. Add the oil and toss it around to create a non-stick layer. Switch the heat to medium and add one portion of noodles. Don't stir them immediately. Fry on one side for a minute. During this time, use chopsticks to carefully fluff the top layer of noodles because we don't want them to be compacted into a hard, chewy pancake. We want them to be light and airy.

6. Flip the noodles and fry the other side for a minute. Again, fluff the top layer for better texture. Keep repeating that 4-5 times or until both sides of the noodles are golden and crispy.

7. Place the crispy noodles on a serving plate and continue to pan-fry the other noodle batch.





Marinate the seafood and cook

1. Use paper towels to dab the shrimp and scallops to absorb the excess moisture. Place the seafood in a bowl and add the salt, paprika, Chinese cooking wine, vegetable oil, and ground black pepper. Mix thoroughly and let the mixture sit for 10 minutes.

2. Preheat a wok over high heat until smoking hot. Add the oil and the marinated seafood and sear for a minute. Remove the seafood from the wok and set it aside. It is best to undercook the seafood because you will cook it again later on. If they are fully cooked now, they will be overcooked when mixed with the vegetables.

3. To the same wok, add another tsp of oil, the garlic, and ginger slices. Stir over low heat until fragrant.

4. Add the carrot, celery, mushroom, and snow peas. Cook over medium heat for 2-3 minutes or until the vegetables are soft.

5. Season with soy sauce and oyster sauce. Then pour in 2 cups water and bring to a boil.

6. Quickly mix 2.5 Tbsps water with 2.5 Tbsps cornstarch until no lumps remain.

7. Introduce the seafood back to the wok. Add the cornstarch water to the wok and stir for 2-3 minutes or until the soup is thickened. Taste the soup to adjust the flavor.

8. Pour the vegetable seafood soup onto the crispy noodles and serve.







Minced Pork Noodle Soup

kuài shǒu ròu sāo miàn
快 手 肉 臊 面

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 4-5 people

Most people are super busy; they want to make a quick and delicious dinner. This minced pork noodle soup is very hearty and healthy. It is easy to make and it serves the whole family.

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- 41g / 3 Tbsps oil
- 30g / about 10 cloves garlic, minced
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, minced
- 45g / about 3 scallions, diced and the white and green parts separated
- 5.4g / 1 Tbsp red chili flakes
- 24g / 1.5 Tbsps Sichuan dou ban jiang
- 400g / 14 oz ground pork
- 28g / 2 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 60g / ¼ cup water
- 1.4 liters / about 6 cups water
- 4-5 servings of noodles
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt or to taste
- 120-150g / about 4-5 baby bok choy, cut in half
- 4-5 eggs

Ingredient Tips

- If you don't eat spicy food, you can switch the dou ban jiang with soybean paste and replace the chili flakes with sweet paprika.
- I use fresh ramen noodles, but any type will work, such as egg noodles, rice noodles, mung bean noodles, and instant noodles. For your reference, 4-5 servings are about 400-500 grams of fresh noodles or 250-300 grams of dried noodles.

1. Add the oil, garlic, ginger, the white part of the scallion, Sichuan dou ban jiang, and the chili flakes to the wok. Stir over medium heat for 2-3 minutes to activate the dou ban jiang flavor.

2. Add the ground pork and stir over high heat for a few minutes or until the meat is cooked through.

3. Season the ground pork with Chinese cooking wine, soy sauce, oyster sauce, and dark soy sauce. Then add ¼ cup water and let it mingle over low heat for 3 minutes.

4. Remove everything from the wok and set it aside.

   Chef's Secret: In Chinese, this is called saozi (臊子), a salty, savory noodle topping.

5. Add 6 cups water to the same wok and bring to a boil. Add 4-5 servings of noodles and cook for 3 minutes or follow the package instructions until al dente (firm bite). The cooking time may vary depending on the thickness and the brand.

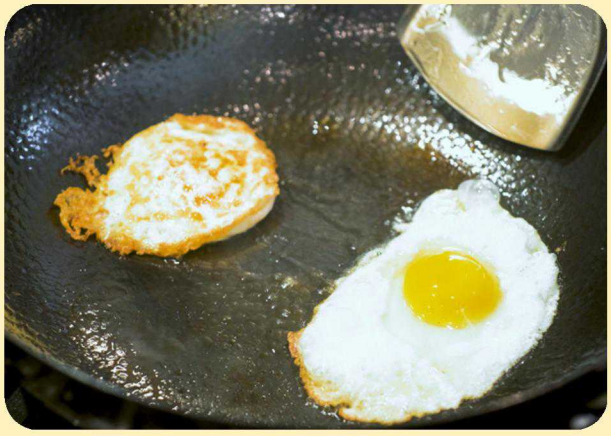
6. Add the baby bok choy to the noodle soup and blanch for 30 seconds. Add salt to taste.

7. Heat another pan on a separate stove over medium heat. Add oil and pan-fry some eggs to your desired doneness.

8. To make a serving, put one portion of noodles in a bowl along with the broth. Scoop a few big spoonfuls of minced pork on top. Add an egg and some baby bok choy to balance the meal. Sprinkle a little bit of scallions and then enjoy!









Chicken Noodle Soup

kuài shǒu jī tāng miàn
快 手 鸡 汤 面

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4 -5 people

This chicken noodle soup doesn't need hours to simmer because with this hot water method, you can get a 3-hour simmering result within just 10 minutes. The soup comes out rich, creamy, and hearty. You will be surprised by how flavorful it is. This recipe is also budget-friendly, and it is enough to feed a whole family.



- 907g / 2 pounds skin-on and bone-in chicken legs and thighs
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp cooking oil
- 28g / 1 oz Jinhua ham, optional
- 30g / about 2 inches ginger, sliced thinly
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, peeled and cut in half
- 90g / about 2 shallots, peeled and quartered
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 8.5g / ½ Tbsp fish sauce
- 1g / ⅓ tsp garlic powder
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 113g / 4 oz fresh shiitake mushrooms, sliced thinly
- 4-5 servings noodles
- 180g / about 6 baby bok choy, quartered
- 14.3g / 2.5 tsps salt or to taste
- 12g / 3 Tbsps diced scallion
- 40-50g / 4-5 Tbsps lao gan ma chili crisp, optional

Ingredient Tips

- Jinhua ham (金华火腿) is optional, but it brings in a rich umami taste. You can use other types of cured meat, such as Italian prosciutto
- Bone-in and skin-on chicken is required for the broth. The skin will help create the Maillard reaction, and the bones will build up the flavor foundation. I usually use chicken legs and thighs because they are affordable. If you don't like dark meat, you can use chicken breast and chicken stock instead of water.
- Any type of noodles will work here, such as pasta, egg noodles, rice noodles, mung bean noodles, and instant noodles. For your reference, 4-5 servings will be 400-500 grams of fresh noodles or 250-300 grams of dried noodles.

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1. Heat 2 liters of water on a spare stove until boiling.

2. Meanwhile, preheat the clay pot (or other heavy-duty stockpot) until nice and hot. Add the cooking oil and sear the chicken and Jinhua ham (optional) until both sides are golden brown, taking a few minutes on each side.

3. When you flip the chicken to fry the other side, add the ginger, garlic, shallot, and scallions; put them between the chicken pieces so they can be heated until fragrant.

> **Chef's Secret:** If you are making this for someone with a cold, increase the amount of ginger as it helps to ease the symptoms.

4. Pour the boiling water into the seared chicken. When the hot water touches the hot clay pot, it will bubble intensely, which shakes the meat and accelerates protein dissolution. This will instantly make your broth rich and flavorful.

5. Simmer the chicken on low for about 15 minutes.

6. After 15 minutes, remove the chicken from the broth and let it cool. Debone the chicken and shred the meat into bite-size pieces.

7. Season the chicken meat with soy sauce, fish sauce, oyster sauce, garlic powder, and sesame oil.

8. Discard the ginger, garlic, shallot, and scallions as they are soggy. Skim the chicken fat from the broth for a better taste.

9. Add the mushrooms and noodles to the broth and cook until al dente (firm bite). The cooking time may vary depending on the thickness and the brand; please use your own judgment.

> **Chef's Secret:** You can also cook the noodles in a separate pot and then transfer them into the broth so it doesn't thicken your soup. I prefer my noodle soup to be a little bit thick and silky, so I cook them in the broth directly.

10. When the noodles are almost done, add the baby bok choy and salt to taste and turn off the heat.

11. To make a serving, add the noodles, bok choy, and broth to a big bowl, top with the chicken meat, and lao gan ma chili crisp for an extra spicy kick. Enjoy!















Tomato Egg Noodle Soup

fān qié jī dàn miàn
番 茄 鸡 蛋 面

Prep Time: 8 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 3 people

As the first child in my family, I used to take care of my two little sisters. Tomato Egg Noodle Soup is the most frequent breakfast that I cook for us in the morning before going to school because it is quick and easy. Despite the simple ingredients, the combination is delicious - so flavorful and comforting. Unlike other Chinese dishes, this doesn't require any special ingredients. You probably have everything in your kitchen already.

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- 3 eggs
- 420g / 3 medium-sized tomatoes
- 41g / 3 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 33g / 2 Tbsps tomato paste
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 960g / 4 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 3 servings noodles
- 90g / about 3 baby bok choy
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce or to taste

1. Crack 3 eggs into a bowl and beat them well. Dice 3 tomatoes finely and set them aside.

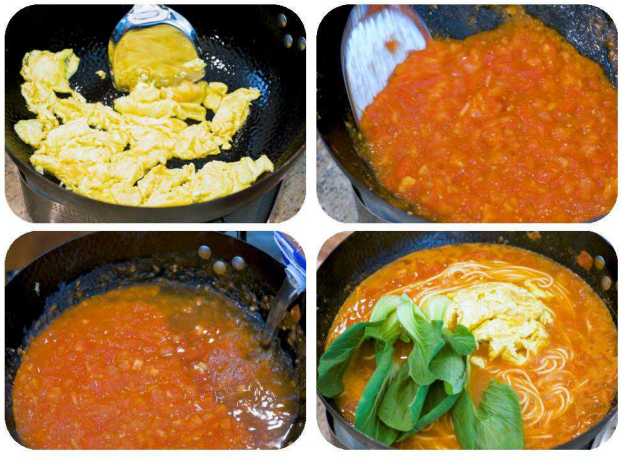
2. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add 2 Tbsps oil and swirl it around so it covers the bottom. Add the egg and stir-fry on high heat for 40 seconds or until set. Then break the eggs into bite-sized pieces. Turn off the heat. Remove the egg from the wok and set it aside.

3. Drizzle 1 more Tbsp oil into the wok. Add the diced tomato, minced garlic, and tomato paste. Stir to dissolve the tomato paste.

4. Season it with sugar and salt. Keep stirring over low heat for 3-5 minutes or until the tomato becomes soft and juicy.

5. Pour in 4 cups chicken stock and bring to a boil. Add three servings of noodles and cook to your desired doneness.

6. Add the baby bok choy and the egg to the wok. Before serving, taste the broth and add soy sauce to adjust the flavor. This recipe uses low-sodium stock. If you use unsalted stock, you will need to add more soy sauce or salt by taste.





Taiwanese Beef Noodle Soup

tái wān hóng shāo niú ròu miàn
台 湾 红 烧 牛 肉 面

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 2.5 hours

Serves: 4 people

This is a must-try recipe because nothing can be more satisfying than enjoying a bowl of hearty, savory noodle soup topped with tender, succulent beef. If you are looking for something fulfilling for dinner, this is it.

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For braising the beef

- 680g / 1.5 pounds beef stew meat (such as chuck, shank, and brisket)
- 680g / 1.5 pounds beef bones (such as beef neck, femur bone, or ribs)
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water
- 42g / 3 Tbsps Shaoxing wine
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps oil
- 38g / 3 Tbsps sugar
- 40g / 2.5 Tbsps Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)
- 33g / 2 Tbsps tomato paste
- 66g / ¼ cup soy sauce
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 18g / about 6 slices ginger
- 18g / about 6 cloves garlic
- 30g / about 2 scallions, cut into stalks
- 120g / about ½ medium size onion, cut into chunks
- 2.5g / about 1 stick cinnamon
- 0.6g / about 3 bay leaves
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 1g / about 1 square inch aged tangerine peel, optional (see page 19)
- 1.5g / about 3 dried red chilies
- 1.3g /1 tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste

For cooking the noodles and vegetables

- 4 servings of egg noodles (see page 29)
- 3 liters / 12.5 cups water
- 240g / about 8 baby bok choy, cut in half

Blanch the beef

1. Cut the beef into 1-inch cubes. Add 8 cups water, the beef, and beef bones to a stockpot. Partially put on the lid and then bring it to a boil.

2. Use a sieve to skim the foamy scum. Remove the beef and the bones from the pot and rinse under running water to eliminate the foamy scum that is attached to the beef. Drain and set the beef and the bones aside.

3. Let the blanching water go through a cheesecloth to remove the impurities. Then reserve the blanching liquid on the side.

Braise the beef

1. Add the oil and sugar to a clay pot and stir over low heat until caramelized, which takes 3-5 minutes.

2. When the caramelized sugar starts to produce foamy bubbles, add the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, Sichuan dou ban jiang, and tomato paste. Continue to stir over medium heat for a few minutes or until well combined.

3. Add the beef, bones, and Chinese cooking wine to the clay pot and stir well.

4. Pour in the reserved blanching broth. Turn the heat to high and bring it to a boil.

5. Meanwhile, put the ginger, garlic, scallions, onion, cinnamon stick, bay leaves, star anise, aged orange peel, dried red chilies, and Sichuan peppercorns into a spice bag, and then add it to the clay pot.

6. Turn the heat to low and simmer the beef for 2 hours or until tender.

> **Chef's Secret:** You can make this dish in a pressure cooker, slow cooker, or Dutch oven. Some cookware is air-tight some isn't, so the water evaporates differently. Please keep an eye on the braising liquid level to make sure it is not evaporating too much. If you need to add more water, add hot water.

7. After 2 hours, discard the spicy bag. Make sure to squeeze all of the liquid out of the spice bag so you don't waste anything.

8. Take the beef bones out. If there is any meat attached to the bones, take it off. Discard the bones and put the meat back into the clay pot.

9. Taste the broth and add salt to your preference. Set the clay pot aside while cooking the noodles.

Cook the noodles and serve

1. Fill a big pot with 3 liters of water and bring it to a boil over medium heat. Add 4 servings of noodles and cook until al dente (for reference, 4 servings are about 400 grams of fresh or 240 grams of dried noodles). If using fresh noodles, boil them for 2-4 minutes, depending on the thickness. If using dried noodles, follow the cooking instructions on the package.

2. Once the noodles are almost done cooking, add the baby bok choy and blanch for 30 seconds.

3. To make one serving, add a portion of noodles, bok choy, braised beef meat, and 1.25 cups beef braising broth in a big bowl and serve.










Cantonese Wonton Noodle Soup

guǎng shì yún tūn miàn
广 式 云 吞 面

Prep Time: 16 hours

Cooking Time: 2.5 hours

Serves: 5 people

For those who grew up in Guangzhou, China, it is a joy to walk into a noodle shop anytime and order a bowl of wonton noodle soup. I used to eat that for breakfast weekly. Although this dish is challenging to make at home, I break down the steps to achieve its authenticity and complexity, hoping all of you are able to enjoy this local Cantonese flavor in your kitchen.

Ingredient Tips

- Flounder Powder（大地鱼粉）is the key ingredient of Cantonese Wonton Noodle Soup; it acts as a natural MSG, giving the broth a smoky taste and umami flavor. 400g flounder only yields about 60g / 2.1 oz powder, so in Guangzhou, only time-honored restaurants will make it authentic. If you don't want to spend the time, use Japanese dashi powder as a replacement.
- If you don't eat pork, use beef bones and ground beef instead to make the broth and wonton filling.
- This dish traditionally uses Hong Kong-style wonton wrappers, which have a light yellow color due to the added egg. However, it is usually food coloring if you purchase it from the Asian market. So, unless you make your own wonton wrappers, there is no difference in taste between store-bought white and yellow wonton wrappers.

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For making the fish powder

- 400g / 12 oz flounder

For making the stock

- 27g / 2 Tbsps oil
- 57g / 2 oz shrimp shells
- 454g / 1 pound pork bones
- 454g / 1 pound chicken bones
- 2.5 liters / about 10 cups water
- 58g / 3.5 Tbsp soy sauce
- 51g / 3 Tbsps fish sauce
- 15g / 2.5 Tbsps Fish Powder
- 11.4g / 2 tsps salt or to taste

For making the wontons

- 283g / 10 oz ground pork
- 340g / 12 oz shrimp
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 17g / 1 Tbsp fish sauce
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 5g / 1 tsp ginger, minced
- 1 egg
- 45g / 3 Tbsps stock
- 6.8g / ½ tsp sesame oil
- 12g / 2 Tbsp fish powder
- 32g / ½ cup diced scallions
- 50 Hong Kong-style wonton wrappers

For cooking the wontons and noodles

- 3 liters / 12.5 cups of water
- 550g / 5 servings fresh egg noodles (see page 29)
- 15g / 3 Tbsps scallions as garnish
- 300g / about 10 baby bok choy

Make the flounder powder

1. Ask the butcher to scale the flounder, remove the guts and gills, and rinse the fish thoroughly. No need to fillet the fish, just directly chop it into a few big pieces. If you can't find flounder, use other types of white and lean fish.

2. Dehydrate the fish by using one of the methods below:

    - **Grill:** Light a small amount of charcoal and put the flounder on the grill rack, away from the heat, to avoid burning. Dehydrate on low heat overnight or until all the fish pieces are completely dried. The benefit of using a grill is that you can get a smoky flavor.
    - **Oven:** Set your oven to 150°F / 66°C. Put the flounder on a baking rack and dehydrate overnight or until all the fish pieces are completely dried.

3. Once dehydrated, the flounder still retains some resiliency, which is unsuitable for blending as it will turn into meat floss.

4. Roasted the dehydrated flounder over an open flame until charred and crispy. If you don't have a gas stove, cut the dried flounder into smaller pieces using a pair of scissors and add to a cast-iron skillet. Stir over medium-low heat for 3-5 minutes or until charred and crispy.

5. Blend the crispy flounder in a powerful blender until fine, and then use a sieve to eliminate the big pieces.

6. Store the flounder powder in a sealed container; it will stay good for three months in the fridge.

Make the stock

1. Soak the pork and chicken bones in clean water for 2 hours or until the water turns pink, and then discard the water.

    Chef's Secret: This step helps to remove some of the myoglobin and makes the broth super clear.

2. Peel and devein the shrimp; you will use the shells to make the stock. Please keep the shrimp in the fridge and use them to make the filling later.

3. Heat a big stockpot, add some cooking oil, and sauté the shrimp shells until pink. Add the soaked pork and chicken bones. Continue to sear until slightly browned.

4. Add 10 cups water and bring to a boil. Use a fine mesh strainer to eliminate any foamy scum. Turn the heat to low and simmer with the lid uncovered for 3 hours. This stock doesn't require any spices and aromatics, allowing the fish powder flavor to stand out.

5. Please return to strain the foamy scum several times during the simmering, keeping the stock clear. If the water level goes below the ingredients, slowly add hot water from the edge of the pot to avoid stirring the stock.











6. Once the stock is done simmering, discard all the bones using a strainer; let the stock go through a cheesecloth to eliminate the impurities.

7. Season the stock by adding the soy sauce, fish sauce, fish powder, and salt. Everybody's stove is different, so it's difficult to know how much water has evaporated. Please be sure to taste the broth while adding the seasonings.

8. Set the stock on the back stove to keep it hot while you cook the noodles and wontons.



Make the filling and wrap the wontons

1. While waiting for the stock, you can work on the wontons. Dice the shrimp into smaller bites and combine them with the ground pork and egg in a big mixing bowl.

2. Measure 3 Tbsps stock from the simmering pot and allow it to cool; then pour it into the shrimp, pork, and egg bowl.

3. Add the soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, oyster sauce, fish sauce, salt, sugar, minced garlic, grated ginger, sesame oil, and 1 Tbsp flounder powder and mix until everything is well combined. Then stir the filling in one direction for 4-5 minutes to develop the texture. Last, add the diced scallions and mix thoroughly.

4. If using frozen wonton wrappers, put them out on the counter 1 hour in advance to defrost.

5. To wrap a wonton, put 2 tsps filling in the middle of the wrapper, and then gather the edge together and pinch to close it. Set it aside and continue to wrap the rest.





Cook the noodles and wontons

1. Fill a separate pot with water and bring it to a boil over medium heat. Add the wontons first and cook over medium heat for 3-4 minutes or until the wontons float to the top of the water.

2. Add the noodles and continue to cook for 2-3 minutes; then add the baby bok choy and blanch for 30 seconds. Turn off the heat.

3. To make one serving, add 1 portion of cooked noodles, 6-10 wontons, a few pieces of bok choy, and 2 cups of stock to a big serving bowl. Garnish with some diced scallions and enjoy!







Braised Rib Noodles

pái gǔ mèn miàn
排 骨 焖 面

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 hour

Serves: 3-4 people

Men（焖）is a cooking method in which the ingredients are semi-braised and semi-steamed. The ribs are braising at the bottom, which lifts the noodles so they can be steamed right above that. Ultimately, we will mix everything together, making a flavorful and delicious one-pot meal. This is a super easy dinner, and it serves a whole family.

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- 907g / 2 pounds pork ribs
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 15g / about 5 cloves garlic
- 18g / about 6 slices ginger
- 19g / 1.5 Tbsps sugar
- 56g / ¼ cup Chinese cooking wine
- 66g / ¼ cup soy sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 480g / 2 cups hot water
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 2g / 1.5 tsps whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 2g / about 4 red dried chilies, optional
- 454g / 1 pound fresh noodles
- 227g / 8 oz snap peas
- 30g / about 1 red chili pepper, sliced thinly
- 12g / ¼ cup diced cilantro

Ingredient Tips

- Snap beans can be replaced by other hard vegetables such as yard beans, green beans, carrots, or broccoli.
- Fresh Noodles: Any fresh noodles will work. Dry noodles from a package contain a very low water ratio, so they won't cook right in the pot. Most Asian markets will carry fresh noodles in their fridge or frozen section. If using frozen noodles, please defrost them in advance. You can check page 29 to learn how to make your own noodles

1. Use the tip of the knife to loosen the edge of the silver skin on the back of the ribs. Grab it with a paper towel and rip the entire silver skin off. Slice the ribs between the bones into individual pieces.

2. Preheat heavy-duty cookware for 1 minute or until hot (I recommend using a clay pot or a Dutch oven). Add the cooking oil and the ribs. Sear over high heat for 2-3 minutes per side or until both sides are golden brown.

3. While you flip and sear the second side of the ribs, empty a center spot in the pan and add the garlic, ginger, and sugar. Let them cook with the ribs until fragrant. Mix everything until the sugar is melted.

4. Add the Chinese cooking wine, soy sauce, and dark soy sauce. Pour in 2 cups hot water. Adjust the position of the ribs so they stay below the water.

5. Put all of the spices (star anise, Sichuan peppercorns, cinnamon stick, bay leaves, and dried red chilies) into a spice bag and add it to the clay pot.

6. Simmer the ribs on low heat for 50 minutes or until tender. Please keep an eye on the braising liquid level to make sure it is not evaporating too fast. Add hot water if needed.

7. After 50 minutes, the braising liquid should be just slightly below the ribs. Everybody's stoves and cookware are different. If you have too much liquid, crank up the heat to reduce it. If you have too little, add more hot water.

8. Add the snap beans. Fluff the noodles and lightly place them into the clay pot above the snap bean layer. Do not pat the noodles down. You want them to be airy and fluffy, allowing circulation and even cooking. Put on the lid. Switch the heat to medium-low and let it cook for 5 minutes.

> **Chef's Secret:** This is the "Men 焖" technique I mentioned initially. The noodles do not touch the braising liquid directly. Instead, they are lifted by the ribs and cooked by steam. The texture is completely different than boiled noodles – it's pleasantly chewy and firm.

9. After 5 minutes, give it a nice mix to combine the sauce with the noodles. Keep an eye on the sauce amount. Turn off the heat when all the sauce is absorbed by the noodles. If you continue to cook, the noodles will start to stick to the bottom.

10. Add some red chilies and cilantro as garnish. Enjoy!









Yibin Flaming Noodles

yí bīn rán miàn
宜 宾 燃 面



Yibin Flaming Noodles

yí bīn rán miàn
宜 宾 燃 面


Prep Time:
1.5 hours


Cooking Time:
1 hour


Serves:
3 people

Ranmian（燃面）translates as flaming noodles or burning noodles - it sounds spicy, and it is spicy, but that is not how it got the name. These noodles are special. In the old days, people would light them up as a wick for kerosene lamps (I tested it, and it works, LOL!).

I think it is one of the most delicious noodle dishes; I love the sui mi ya cai and the roasted nut powder; they add different dimensions of flavor.

It is definitely a worth-trying recipe, but it consists of many different components, which makes it a bit complicated. Don't worry. I will break the steps down and go through them one by one as detailed as possible, so you can enjoy these local Chinese noodles in your kitchen.

Ingredient Tips

- Sui mi ya cai（碎米芽菜）is preserved and minced mustard greens. It has a crunchy texture, a nice fermented flavor, and an umami taste. If you don't have access to sui mi ya cai, you can use finely diced kimchi or other pickles as a replacement.
- Alkaline Noodles, or what we call jian shui mian（碱水面）, is a type of noodle that contains soda ash. It takes a lot of effort to make. If you don't have time, fresh egg noodles or ramen noodles are great replacements.
- Soda ash is also known as washing soda or sodium carbonate (Na2CO3), which raises the PH level of the dough and makes the noodles chewier. You can check Shaanxi Beef Burger (see page 328) to learn how to make it at home using baking soda.

For making the alkaline noodles (碱水面)

- 300g / 10.6 oz bread flour
- 1g / ⅓ tsp soda ash
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 140g / 4.7 fl oz water
- 30g / 4 Tbsps cornstarch to prevent sticking

For making the Seasoned Sweet Soy Sauce (复制酱油)

- 266g / 1 cup soy sauce
- 240g / 1 cup water
- 67g / ⅓ cup brown sugar
- 3g / about 1 dried shiitake mushroom
- 9g / about 3 slices ginger
- 45g / about 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- 15g / about 1 scallion
- 10g / about 5 cilantro leaves
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 0.2g / about 1 bay leaf
- 1.1g / ½ tsp fennel seeds
- 1.7g / ½ tsp whole white peppercorns (see page 20)
- 2g / ½ Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)

For making the Sichuan Red Chili Oil (油泼辣子)

- 275g / 1¼ cups cooking oil
- 15g / about 1 scallion
- 9g / about 3 slices ginger,
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 3g / 2 tsps Sichuan peppercorn powder (see page 18)
- 43g / ½ cup mild chili flakes
- 8.1g / 1.5 Tbsps spicy chili flakes
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps raw sesame seeds
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Chinese black vinegar
- 4g / 2 Tbsps Lithospermum root (Zicao紫草), optional

For making the roasted nut powder

- 40g / ⅓ cup roasted peanuts
- 20g / 2.5 Tbsps roasted pecans
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps roasted sesame seeds

For making the garlic water

- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic
- 60g / ¼ cup water

For making the seaweed soup

- 960g / 4 cups chicken stock
- 70g / 2.5 oz bean sprouts
- 4g / ½ cup dried seaweed
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper or to taste

For finishing

- 140g / 5 oz sui mi ya cai
- 32g / ½ cup minced scallions
- 24g / ½ cup minced cilantro

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Make the alkaline noodles (碱水面)

1. Thoroughly dissolve the soda ash and salt in the water. Pour the solution into the bread flour and mix until the water is well distributed.

2. Knead the dough using a stand mixer for 10 minutes at low speed or by hand for 10 minutes until smooth.

3. Divide the dough into three even parts and flatten each piece by hand so they can fit through the pasta roller.

4. Start with the thickest setting on the pasta roller and feed the dough through. Once the sheet comes out from the other side of the roller, fold it in half and feed it through the pasta roller again. Repeat 3-4 times until the dough sheet comes out smooth. Do that to all three pieces of dough.

5. Lower the thickness one level at a time and feed the dough sheets through the roller until they reach the desired thickness. For reference, I used level 4 on my KitchenAid pasta roller.

6. Apply a generous amount of cornstarch on the sheet surface to prevent sticking. Switch to a noodle cutter attachment. Feed the sheet through the machine, and uniform noodles will come out from the other side.

7. Coat the noodles with more cornstarch to prevent sticking. Cover and set the noodles aside.

Chef's Secret: Why use cornstarch instead of wheat to prevent sticking? Wheat flour prevents the sticking, but only for a short time, because the glutens tend to connect, which makes the noodles stick together. Cornstarch doesn't contain gluten, so it will separate the noodles for a long time.

Make the Seasoned Sweet Soy Sauce (复制酱油)

1. Seasoned Sweet Soy Sauce, or what we call "Fuzhi Jiangyou 复制酱油," is the prominent flavor of flaming noodles and is used in many Sichuan recipes, such as Mouthwatering Chicken (page 52) and Sichuan Pork Slices in Garlic Sauce (page 94). Unfortunately, it is difficult to buy this ingredient outside of China, and I have never found any appropriate replacement, so you have to make it yourself.

2. Add all of the Seasoned Sweet Soy Sauce ingredients to a sauce pot. Bring to a boil and then simmer on low heat without the lid for 20-30 minutes or until ⅗ of the liquid is evaporated. You don't have to measure it exactly. Just eyeball it.

3. Sieve out the spices and discard them. This is more than you need for the flaming noodles; store the extra Seasoned Sweet Soy Sauce in a sealed container for up to 6 months at room temperature.









Make the red chili oil (you po la zi 油泼辣子)

1. Add the Sichuan peppercorn powder, mild chili powder, spicy chili powder, raw sesame seed, salt, and Chinese black vinegar in a big bowl. Mix well and set it aside.

2. Add the vegetable oil, scallions, ginger slices, garlic slices, cinnamon stick, star anise, and bay leaves to a sauce pot. Heat it over medium heat until the aromatics are nicely charred, which takes 4-6 minutes. Sieve and discard all of the aromatics.

3. Optionally, put the Lithospermum root (zicao紫草) on the sieve and quickly swirl it in the hot oil for 20-30 seconds. Lithospermum root has no flavor but will dye the oil into a beautiful purple-red color.

4. Use a thermometer to check the oil's temperature. 400 °F / 204°C is ideal. If it is too hot, the spices will burn. If it is too low, it won't be able to activate the fragrance.

5. Pour the hot oil into the chili flake bowl in batches, stir well, and let cool. This is more than you need for the flaming noodles; store the extra in a sealed container for up to 4 months at room temperature or a year in the fridge. Use red chili oil to make Mouthwatering Chicken (see page 52), Sichuan Pork Slices in Garlic Sauce (see page 94), Spinach and Peanut Salad in Vinegar Sauce (see page 201), Smacked Cucumber Salad (see page 203), and Sichuan Wontons in Chili Oil (see page 387).

Prep the rest

1. To make the seaweed soup, bring 4 cups of chicken stock to a boil. Add the bean sprouts and seaweed. Season the soup with salt and black pepper to taste.

2. To make the nut powder, add the roasted pecans, peanuts, and sesame seeds to a blender and blend them into a rough powder. If your pecans and peanuts are raw, bake them in a 350°F / 177°C oven for 14-16 minutes. Bake the sesame seeds in a 350 °F / 177 °C oven for 12-14 minutes. Once done, let them cool before blending.

3. To make the garlic water, press the garlic cloves through a garlic press. Then mix with ¼ cup water and set it aside.

4. Add the Sui Mi Ya Cai into the wok and stir over medium heat for 3 minutes to evaporate some moisture. Set it aside.

Assemble one portion of flaming noodles

1. Cook the noodles in boiling water for 2-3 minutes or until al dente (firm bite), which means the center is still firm and chewy. Remove the noodles from the water and shake well.

2. To assemble one serving, place one portion of the cooked noodles into a big bowl. Add chili oil to taste (I used 3 Tbsps), 1.5 Tbsps Seasoned Sweet Soy Sauce, 2 tsps garlic water, 1.5 Tbsps roasted nut powder, 2 Tbsps minced cilantro, 2 Tbsps minced scallions, and 2 Tbsps Sui Mi Ya Cai and mix well. This recipe is enough to make 3 servings, so please repeat and make 3 bowls of noodles.

3. Serve the flaming noodles with the seaweed soup.











Biang Biang Hand-pulled Noodles

bjāng bjāng miàn
邇 邇 面

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Serves:
4 hours	15 minutes	2 people

Biang is an onomatopoeia, meaning the sound of noodles hitting the working surface when forcibly pulling noodles. This dish is a specialty from Shaanxi Province, which has 3,000 years of history. Although the ingredients are simple, it is tricky to make as hand-pulled noodles take practice. Here I will share with you all of my tips and tricks to ensure your success on the first try.

For making the noodles

- 300g / 10.6 oz bread flour
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 150g / 5 fl oz room-temperature water
- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil

For cooking and serving the noodles

- 90g / about 3 baby bok choy, cut in half
- 50g / 3 Tbsps soy sauce
- 48g / 3 Tbsps Chinese black vinegar
- 16g / ¼ cup diced scallion
- 11g / 2 Tbsps chili flakes
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste
- 54g / 4 Tbsps vegetable oil

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Notes before cooking

1. The flour's gluten content is essential when making hand-pulled noodles because it affects the elasticity of the dough, bonding it as a net to hold the starch together and forming the basic structure of the noodles.

2. In China, we use a specialized high-gluten noodle flour (高筋面粉), which is hard to find outside of China. However, the best choice for you will be bread flour, or you can check the nutrition facts and pick a brand with at least 10% protein.

3. Whole wheat flour does have a high protein content, but it doesn't work for this dish because the bran tears the strands of protein and inhibits gluten development.

Make the noodle dough

1. Add the salt and water to a cup and stir to dissolve.

2. Add the flour to a big mixing bowl. Slowly pour the salt solution into the flour in batches and stir to incorporate thoroughly. Different flour brands have different water-absorbing rates. Therefore, please adjust the reference water ratio based on your situation.

3. Continue to knead for 5 minutes or until you feel the resistance from the dough. Then, cover it and rest the gluten for another 15 minutes.

4. To get the best result, please repeat the kneading and resting process 3-5 times until the dough becomes elastic and pliable. By doing so, the gluten stretches and bonds repeatedly, eventually forming a network that gives a great texture to the noodles. This process is strenuous; use a stand mixer if you have one.

5. Divide the dough into six even pieces and then shape each into a smooth ball; cover with a plastic film so they don't dry out.

6. Add the cooking oil to a big plate and thoroughly coat all six pieces of dough. Place them in a single layer on the plate. Do not pile them on top of one another; otherwise, the dough will stick together.

7. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and gently push out as much air as possible so they don't form hard skin.

8. Let the dough rest for 2 hours at room temperature. If you chill it in the fridge overnight, you must take it out 1 hour in advance to bring it back to room temperature before starting the next step.













Pull the noodles and cook

1. Put one piece of the dough on the working surface and press with a chopstick in the middle, lengthwise.

2. Remove the chopstick and use both hands to slowly and evenly pull until the length reaches 10 inches. Do that to all six pieces of dough.

3. Lay the halfway-pulled noodles on the working surface, cover them with plastic wrap, and then let them rest for 15 minutes to relax the gluten.

4. Take one piece of noodle and continue to pull it carefully. At the same time, hit the noodles against the working surface to lower the chance of breaking. If the noodle is about to break or is bouncing against you, stop pulling; cover it with plastic wrap and let it rest for 10 minutes to relax the gluten; then you can pull it again without any issue.

5. Once the length of the noodles reaches 4 ft, rip it open right through the middle by following the chopstick mark, and you will get a thick flat noodle closed loop. Give it a few more swings and drop it into the boiling water to cook.

6. Quickly pull the rest of the noodles and add them to the boiling water one after another. Once the last noodle is in, continue to boil for one more minute. These noodles are nicely kneaded and hand-pulled, so you don't need to worry that the first piece cooks longer than the last one. They will all be equally chewy and delicious.

7. Add the baby bok choy and continue to cook for 20 seconds. Remove the noodles and the bok choy from the water and place them into a big serving bowl.

8. Add the soy sauce, Chinese black vinegar, diced scallions, red chili flakes, grated garlic, and some salt to taste.

9. Heat the cooking oil until it's smoking hot and pour it onto the spices and aromatics to activate the fragrance. Mix thoroughly and enjoy!















Pork Chow Fun

(Pork Stir-Fry Rice Noodles)

zhū ròu chǎo mǐ fěn
猪 肉 炒 米 粉

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

There was a noodle factory in my hometown, which was only a 5-minute walk from my house, so I grew up with fresh rice noodles. They are moist, tender, slightly chewy, fluffy, and don't break easily. However, I only have access to dried rice noodles since I moved to the USA. For this recipe, it is tricky to prepare thin rice noodles (angel hair thickness) for stir-fries; if you boil them, they break into short pieces easily; if you soak them in cold water, they lose their chewy texture. I found that soaking them in hot water for a short time is the best way to maintain the texture and length. The noodles turn out just as good as if they were fresh.

For marinating the pork

- 200g / 7 oz pork
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 1.2g / ¼ tsp baking soda
- 3.8g / 1.5 tsps cornstarch

For seasoning the noodles

- 150g / 5.3 oz dried rice noodles (angel hair thickness)
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 6.8g / ½ Tbsp pork lard

Others

- 27g / 2 Tbsps pork lard to stir fry
- 2 eggs
- 150g / 5.3 oz mixed julienned vegetables
- 9g / 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds as garnish
- 1.8g / 1 tsp chili flakes or to taste, optional

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1. Julienne the pork into strips and place it into a mixing bowl. I recommend using pork loin, tenderloin, or pork butt.

2. Add the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, baking soda, and cornstarch to the pork and mix thoroughly. Set the mixture aside while prepping other ingredients.

> **Chef's Secret:** The baking soda tenderizes the meat, and the cornstarch prevents the meat from drying while stir-frying; with both ingredients, you get a juicy, tender pork.

3. Bring a pot of water to a light simmer (not a full boil). Turn off the heat. Soak the angel hair rice noodles for 1 minute and then drain thoroughly. If you are using thicker noodles, they will take longer to soak.

4. Season the noodles by adding the soy sauce, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce, pork lard, and five-spice powder. Mix and fluff the noodles until most of the strings are loosened, and set them aside.

> **Chef's Secret:** Thin noodles like to tangle together. Pre-fluffing them makes the cooking much easier. Seasoning the noodles before stir-frying is beginner-friendly because you can take your time to prepare all the sauce to avoid rummaging around.

5. Prepare all of the julienned vegetables beforehand. Beat two eggs in a bowl and set aside.

> **Chef's Secret:** I used onion slices, bean sprouts, julienned carrots, and garlic chive stalks. Although you can use whatever you have in your fridge, I recommend mixing different vegetables with multiple colors and textures to make the dish tastier and prettier.

6. Turn the heat to high and preheat your wok until smoking hot. Add 1 Tbsp of pork lard and swirl it around to cover the bottom of the wok. Pour in the egg and fry over high heat for 30-40 seconds or until set. Break the egg into bite-size pieces and remove it from the wok.

7. Add 1 Tbsp of lard and the marinated pork to the same wok, and then stir over high heat for 2-3 minutes or until the meat changes color.

> **Souped Up Swap:** If you don't like animal fat, use the oil you prefer.

8. Add the onion slices and the julienned carrot and stir for a minute.

9. Add the rice noodles and the bean sprouts. Keep cooking and fluffing the noodles over high heat until you smell a toasty rice fragrance. If you are cooking with a carbon steel wok, high heat is the key to preventing the noodles from sticking to the bottom and getting that unique wok hay flavor.

10. Add the garlic chive stalks, egg, toasted sesame seeds, and chili flakes. Keep tossing until the chives are wilted. Enjoy!













Singapore Stir-Fry Noodles

xīng zhōu chǎo mǐ fěn
星 洲 炒 米 粉

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Despite being named after Singapore, this recipe was actually born in Hong Kong in the 1960s, when Hong Kong was a British colony. As Hong Kong became the transportation hub between Europe and Southeast Asia, lots of cuisines from all over the world started creating sparks on this little island. With influence from the Indian spices, this stir-fried curry rice noodle dish found its way and spread globally. This is a very interesting dish, and it shows how multicultural Cantonese cooking can be. The curry powder is pleasantly invasive, and it works so well on these spindly rice noodles.



- 200g / 7 oz dried rice noodles (medium thickness)
- 1.9 liters / 8 cups boiling water to soak the noodles
- 70g / 2.5 oz Cantonese Roasted BBQ Pork, thinly sliced
- 150g / 5.3 oz peeled and deveined shrimp
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 2 eggs
- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil
- 70g / 2.5 oz multi-color bell pepper, julienned
- 42g / 1.5 oz carrot, julienned
- 42g / 1.5 oz onion, sliced thinly
- 42g / 1.5 oz bean sprouts
- 28g / 1 oz garlic chive, cut 1.5 inches long (see page 22)
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 17g / 1 Tbsp fish sauce
- 12g / 2 tsps oyster sauce
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 2.7g / 1.5 tsps curry powder or to taste
- 2.6g / 1 tsp turmeric powder, optional

Ingredient Tips

- Cantonese Roasted BBQ Pork (叉烧 char siu): It is very popular in Hong Kong, and it has become the characteristic ingredient for a lot of Hong Kong-style dishes, such as egg foo young, char siu fried rice, char siu noodle soup, and char siu steamed bun. The closest replacement will be some sweet-savory BBQ meat, or you can check page 72 to learn how to make your own.
- Any type of curry powder or paste will work. You may need to adjust the spicy level, depending on the brand you use and your own taste buds.
- Turmeric is optional because curry powder already contains turmeric. If your curry powder is not giving the dish that bright yellow color, you can add turmeric to make the noodles look more appealing.

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1. Bring 8 cups of water to a simmer in a big stockpot and then turn off the heat. Add the medium-thick rice noodles and soak for 4-5 minutes or until al dente (firm bite). Don't over-soak the noodles; otherwise, they will break into short pieces while stir-frying.

2. Remove the noodles from the water and spread them on a cooling rack, allowing the rest of the heat to evaporate the excess moisture. This is the key to avoiding clumpy and sticky noodles.

3. Add the shrimp, salt, and ground black pepper to a mixing bowl and mix well.

4. In a separate bowl, crack 2 eggs and beat them well; set everything aside.

5. Thoroughly combine the soy sauce, fish sauce, oyster sauce, sugar, curry powder, and turmeric powder in a bowl. Set it aside.

6. Turn the heat to high and heat your wok until smoking hot. Add the cooking oil and swirl it around to create a nonstick layer. Pour in the egg and wait for it to set. Then break the egg into big pieces.

7. Push the egg to one side of the wok so you have room to add the shrimp. Stir for 20-30 seconds or until the shrimp turns pink.

8. Push the shrimp to one side of the wok and add the char siu slices. Stir for 10-15 seconds over high heat to reactivate the flavor. Remove all of the proteins from the wok and set them aside.

9. Add 1 Tbsp oil to the same wok and sauté the garlic and carrot for 1 minute. Add the noodles and stir over high heat for 3 minutes.

10. Pour in the sauce, add all of the vegetables except the garlic chives, and introduce the protein back into the wok. Stir until the seasoning is well combined.

11. Add the garlic chives and give it a final toss. Before serving, taste to adjust the flavor because different brands of curry powder and curry paste vary in taste.













Braised Pork Belly Noodle Soup

kòu ròu fěn
扣 肉 粉

Prep Time: 3.5 hours

Cooking Time: 2 hours

Serves: 4-5 people

Braised Pork Belly Noodle Soup (扣肉米粉) is a dish that I have had at least a thousand times, and the dish that I miss the most ever since I lived abroad. Whenever I get a whiff of the aromas, I'm instantly taken back to my hometown. It is an affordable and comforting breakfast dish that I used to eat on the way to school or work. I will be honest, we normally don't make it at home because it is complicated. The meat is prepared by four tiers of cooking - blanching, frying, dehydrating, and simmering until irresistibly tender.

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For blanching and dehydrating the pork belly

- 907g / 2 pounds pork belly
- 12g / about 4 slices ginger
- 42g / 3 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 1.3g / 1 tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 2.5 liters / about 10 cups water
- 11g / 2 tsps dark soy sauce

For frying and braising the pork belly

- 1.6g / about 4 slices dried sand ginger (see page 20)
- 0.2g / about 2 cloves
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 1.5g / about ½ a black cardamom
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 0.6g / about 3 bay leaves
- 1.5g / about 3 dried red chili
- 2.7g / 2 tsps whole Sichuan peppercorns
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp fennel seeds
- 15g / about 5 slices ginger
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic
- 73g / ⅓ cup oil to fry the pork belly
- 133g / ½ cup soy sauce
- 112g / ½ cup Chinese cooking wine
- 13.8g / 2.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp sugar
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water
- 14.3g / 2.5 tsps salt or to taste

For finishing the noodle soup and serving

- 400g / 14 oz thick rice noodles
- 240g / about 8 baby bok choy
- 57g / 2 oz pickled yard beans as a topping
- 16g / 4 Tbsps diced scallion as garnish

Ingredient Tips

- Thick rice noodles are the best fit for this recipe because they can be cooked much longer without losing their texture. Other types of noodles will also work, such as egg noodles, pasta, ramen noodles, mung bean noodles, or instant noodles.
- Pickled yard beans are served as a topping in this dish, and they do an amazing job at balancing the fattiness of the pork belly as well as providing a touch of fermented flavor. If you don't have pickled beans, use other kinds of pickled vegetables such as Korean kimchi, sour radish, pickled cucumber, or jalapeno.

Blanch and dehydrate the pork belly

1. Fill a pot with 10 cups of water. Add the pork belly, ginger slices, Chinese cooking wine, and Sichuan peppercorns. Bring it to a boil and then simmer the pork over low heat for 15 minutes.

2. Remove the pork from the pot. Quickly use a fork to poke as many holes in the skin as possible, and then wipe the moisture from the skin using paper towels.

3. Apply the dark soy sauce all over the pork while the meat is still warm. The color doesn't attach well when the skin becomes cold.

4. Dehydrate the pork skin using a dehydrator or a fan for 3 hours or until the skin becomes dry and firm. If you don't have a dehydrator or a fan, stick the pork belly into the fridge with the skin exposed for 24 hours.

Fry and braise the pork belly

1. Put the dried sand ginger, cloves, cinnamon stick, black cardamom, star anise, bay leaves, dried red chilies, Sichuan peppercorns, fennel seeds, ginger, scallions, and garlic in a spice bag.

> **Chef's Secret:** While it's best to use all of the recommended spices, I understand that buying all of them can be difficult, so it is okay if you miss one or two.

2. Add the oil to a wok and heat to 380°F / 193°C. Fry the pork skin-side down first for 2 minutes or until golden and crispy, and then flip to fry the other sides until lightly seared.

> **Chef's Secret:** Be careful with the hot oil splattering. I suggest putting on the lid when frying. You can also fry the pork belly in an air fryer (8 minutes at 400°F / 204°C) until the skin is golden and bubbly.

3. Take the pork out of the wok, let it cool, and then slice it into ⅔-inch thick slabs.

4. Add the pork belly slabs, the spice bag, soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, sugar, and 8 cups of water into a clay pot (or any other heavy-duty stockpot).

5. Bring it to a boil and add some salt to taste. Then simmer over low heat for 1.5 - 2 hours or until tender.

6. Twenty minutes before the pork belly is done, fill a separate pot with water, bring it to a boil, and then turn off the heat.

7. Add the thick rice noodles to the hot water and soak for 15-20 minutes. If using thin rice noodles, please decrease the soaking time.

8. Drain the noodles thoroughly, add them to the braised pork belly, and cook over medium heat for 1 minute. Add the baby bok choy and cook for 20-30 seconds.

9. Serve the noodle soup with spicy pickled long beans (酸豇豆) or other pickled vegetables.












Hakka Stir-Fry Silver Needle Noodles

kè jiā chǎo yín zhēn fěn
客 家 炒 银 针 粉

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Serves:
1 hour	20 minutes	2-3 people

This is one of those recipes that are unknown in the Western world but are incredibly delicious. These noodles are made with rice flour and tapioca flour and have a unique, bouncy, and chewy texture. Although this dish translates as silver needle noodles, it has an unappealing name called rat noodles (老鼠粄) in my hometown because the thickness of these noodles is just like the tail of the rat. LOL! Sometimes you probably find it very hard to empathize with the thoughts of how Chinese people name their food. Oh, well, I hope the name does not kill your interest in trying this recipe; otherwise, you are missing out.

For making the rice noodles

- 250g / 8.8 oz rice flour
- 80g / 2.8 oz tapioca starch
- 200g / 6.8 fl oz hot water
- 100g / 3.4 fl oz room-temperature water
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper

For marinating the beef

- 200g / 7 oz beef, sliced thinly
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 2.8g / ½ tsp dark soy sauce
- 0.5g / ¼ tsp five-spice powder
- 1.2g / ¼ tsp baking soda
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp cooking oil

For stir-frying the noodles

- 41g-54g / 3-4 Tbsps cooking oil as needed
- 2 eggs, beaten well
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 5.6g / 2 tsps fermented black beans, roughly diced
- 85g / 3 oz carrot
- 113g / 4 oz pickled mustard greens
- 60g / about 2 baby bok choy
- 1.8g / 1 tsp chili flakes to taste
- 6g / 2 tsps toasted sesame seeds

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Make the noodles from scratch

1. Combine the rice flour and tapioca flour thoroughly in a mixing bowl, and then add hot water and stir well. Make sure the water is as hot as possible so the heat can gelatinize the starch and make the dough easy to work with. Cover and let cool until lukewarm.

2. Add room-temperature water in batches and knead it until the flour forms a smooth, nonstick dough. Different flour brands have different water absorption rates; please adjust the water amount slightly based on your situation.

3. Divide the dough into six smaller pieces. Roll each one into a long, thin strip. Line all the dough strips together and roughly cut them into bite-sized pieces.

4. Shape each bite-sized dough into 4-inch-long pointy strips by rolling them back and forth on the cutting board. It will take 10–15 minutes in total to roll out all the noodles. If you get used to it, you can use both of your hands at the same time, and the process will go much faster.

5. Bring a big pot of water to a boil over high heat and add the noodles. Do not stir immediately, or else you will break the noodles. Instead, give it 30 seconds for the starch to set; then you can stir.

6. Once the noodles float to the top of the water, cook for one more minute, and then transfer them into an ice bath to firm up the texture.

7. Drain the noodles thoroughly and then season with oyster sauce, soy sauce, and some white pepper to taste; set it aside.

Stir-fry the noodles

1. Cut the beef into ⅛-inch thick slices and place them into a big mixing bowl. Add the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, five-spice powder, baking soda, and vegetable oil and mix well. Set the mixture aside for 15 minutes.

2. Slice the pickled mustard greens and carrot, and julienne them both. Cut the baby bok choy into bite-size pieces. Separate the bok choy leaves and the stems because they take different times to cook.

3. Heat the wok until smoking hot. Add 1 Tbsp oil and swirl it around to create a nonstick surface. Pour in the beaten egg and swirl the egg so it forms a crepe at the bottom of the wok. The egg will set in 30–40 seconds; flip it and cook the other side for 10 seconds.

4. Remove the egg crepe from the wok and cut it into ⅓-inch thick strips. Set it aside.

5. Turn the heat back on high and drizzle 2 Tbsps oil into the same wok. Add the marinated beef and stir over high heat for 2–3 minutes; remove the beef to the side. Make sure you tilt the wok to leave the excess oil behind.

6. Add the garlic, fermented black beans, pickled mustard greens, carrot, and the bok choy stems and sauté over medium heat for 2 minutes.

7. Add the seasoned silver needle noodles, beef, egg, and the leafy part of the baby bok choy to the wok. Stir over high heat for 2–3 minutes or until the noodles are hot.

8. Before serving, sprinkle some chili flakes and toasted sesame seeds to taste.

Beef Stir-Fry Rice Noodles

(Chow Ho Fun)

niú ròu chǎo hé fěn
牛 肉 炒 河 粉

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

As the most popular Chinese stir-fry noodle dish, beef chow ho fun is actually pretty easy to make. However, I grew up eating it, so I am pretty picky about it. There are 2 most crucial things in making the perfect chow ho fun: a carbon steel wok and a powerful gas stove. Why? Because when the oil touches the hot metal, it will create a non-stick coating. If your stove is not hot enough, your noodles will stick to the wok badly. Also, high heat is the requirement to achieving that classic street food wok hay effect, giving your dish a complex smoky aroma and taste. Without that, your stir-fry noodles have no spirit. Therefore, a non-stick wok is not recommended because Teflon can not tolerate high heat; otherwise, it will release toxic elements.



For marinating the beef

- 227g / 8 oz beef
- 0.8g / ⅓ tsp ground white pepper
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 3.8g / 1.5 tsps cornstarch
- 14g / 1 Tbsp cooking wine
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp oil to coat the beef

For seasoning the ho fun noodles

- 454g / 1 pound fresh ho fun noodles
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce

Others

- 27g / 2 Tbsps oil to stir-fry
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 57g / 2 oz red bell pepper, thinly julienned
- 57g / 2 oz purple onion, thinly sliced
- 57g / 2 oz garlic chives, cut into stalks

Ingredient Tips

- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use ½ Tbsp ginger juice + ½ Tbsp water.
- Garlic chives can be replaced by scallions.
- Ho fun (河粉) is a type of flat rice noodle, AKA pho noodles. Fresh ho fun can be used immediately without pre-cooking. However, it is hard to find fresh ho fun outside of China. You can use dried pho noodles as a replacement. If so, you need to soak them in hot water for 6-10 minutes, depending on the thickness, or until al dente, and then coat them with 1 tbsp cooking oil before cooking.



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1. Slice the beef into ⅛-inch thick slices and place them into a mixing bowl. Ideal cuts include sirloin, New York strip, flank steak, or chuck.

2. Add the salt, white pepper powder, dark soy sauce, cooking wine, cornstarch, and baking soda to the beef and mix for a few minutes or until the seasonings are well combined.

3. Add 1 Tbsp cooking oil and gently mix to coat the beef, preventing the slices from sticking together while cooking. Set the meat aside for 15 minutes.

4. Add the ho fun noodles, soy sauce, oyster sauce, and dark soy sauce to a big mixing bowl and mix until well combined. If you see some noodle strings sticking together as you mix, go ahead and separate them.

> **Chef's Secret:** It is important to season the noodles before cooking because you can take your time to get everything ready to avoid rummaging around when the heat is on.

5. Heat the wok over high heat until smoking hot. Add the oil and swirl it around to cover the bottom to create a non-stick layer. Add the beef and stir for 1-2 minutes.

6. Add the garlic, red chili pepper, purple onion, and garlic chives to the wok. Keep stirring for 1 minute or until the vegetables are slightly cooked.

7. Remove the beef and vegetables from the wok and set them aside. Clean the wok to remove the residue before cooking the noodles to prevent sticking.

8. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok to smoking hot again. Add 1 tbsp oil and swirl it around. Toss in the noodles and stir over high heat for 2 minutes or until the noodles are slightly charred.

> **Chef's Secret:** I recommend using chopsticks or tongs to fluff the noodles. If using a spatula, you will likely break the noodles more.

9. Introduce the beef and the vegetables back into the wok and toss thoroughly. Enjoy!













Cantonese Braised Beef Noodle Soup in Clear Broth

qīng tāng niú nǎn fěn
清 汤 牛 腩 粉

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 2 hours

Serves: 4 people

Soak overnight

This classic Cantonese beef noodle soup highlights the clean broth and purest beef flavor. The broth gets a light, sweet aftertaste from the daikon radish and the gancao slices. The daikon radish also has a mildly peppery taste, making the beef flavor stand out even more. Even though it looks like Vietnamese pho, they are different. The Vietnamese pho broth is much sweeter; the sweetness comes from the onion and maybe some sugar. It is usually served with lime, basil, chilies, and bean sprouts, while Chinese ho fun is topped with diced scallions, garlic oil, and maybe some pickles.

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For braising the beef

- 907g / 2 pounds beef brisket
- 680g / 1.5 pounds beef bones
- 2.4 liters / 10 cups water for soaking
- 2.4 liters / 10 cups water for blanching
- 1.3g / about ½ cinnamon stick
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 0.2g / about 2 cloves
- 1.5g / about ½ a black cardamom
- 1g / about 1 square inch aged tangerine peel
- 0.8g / about 2 slices dried gancao, optional
- 13.6g / 1 tbsp cooking oil
- 12g / about 4 garlic cloves, peeled
- 15g / about 5 slices ginger
- 45g / about 3 scallions
- 2.4 liters / 10 cups water for braising

For the garlic oil

- 36g / ¼ cup minced garlic
- 54g / ¼ cup oil

For serving

- 1134g / 2.5 pounds daikon radish
- 85g / 5 Tbsps fish sauce
- 300g / 10.6 oz dried ho fun
- 12g / 3 Tbsps diced scallions as garnish

Ingredient Tips

- Aged tangerine peel (陈皮 chén pí) can be replaced with fresh lemon or orange peel. Be sure to remove the white pith before using it.
- Gancao (甘草 gān cǎo), aka licorice root, gives the soup a lightly sweet aftertaste. It is optional; you can replace it with two drops of monk fruit extract.
- Daikon radish (白萝卜 bái luó bo) is the must-have item for beef soup in Cantonese cuisine. If you don't like it or you don't have access to buy it, use carrots instead.
- Ho fun (河粉 hé fěn) are wide, flat rice noodles, often found as Vietnamese pho noodles. If you don't have it, use any rice noodles that you have available. The texture might be different, but the taste should remain the same.



Braise the beef

1. Soak the brisket and beef bones in 2.4 liters of water and leave them in the fridge overnight. The soaking is optional; it draws out some of the myoglobin from the meat and gives you a clear broth. If you skip this step, your broth will come out brown instead of clear.

2. Fill a big pot with 2.4 liters of water, and then add the soaked brisket and the beef bones. Turn the heat to high and bring it to a boil.

3. Turn off the heat, remove the brisket and bones from the pot, and then discard the blanching water.

4. Put the cinnamon stick, star anise, bay leaves, cloves, black cardamom, aged tangerine peel, and gancao into a spice bag.

5. Preheat a clay pot or stockpot. Add the oil and sauté the ginger, garlic, and scallions until fragrant. Pour in 2.4 liters of water and bring it to a simmer.

6. Add the beef brisket, bones, and the spice bag. Turn the heat to low and simmer for 2 hours. The heat needs to be low enough that you only see some small simmering activity. We call it "虾眼水," which means the size of the bubbles should be like the size of the prawn's eyes. Every stove is different. Please come back occasionally to monitor the heat and ensure the pot is simmering instead of boiling; otherwise, the broth will turn out cloudy.

Make the garlic oil

1. Put the minced garlic in a strainer, rinse it under running water, and then shake off the excess water. You do not need to dab the garlic with paper towels. A little bit of moisture is necessary to prevent the garlic from burning.

> **Why Rise The Garlic?** When the garlic is crushed and chopped, it releases a sticky chemical called mercaptans, which is what we are trying to eliminate because it will bring a bitter taste when deep-fried.

2. Add the washed garlic and ¼ cup oil to a saucepot. Stir constantly over low heat for 8-10 minutes or until the garlic bits are slightly golden. Due to the water content, the oil might be foamy while sautéing, which hinders you from checking the color. Please spoon out the garlic bits for a better view.

3. Turn off the heat and set the garlic oil aside to cool. The rest of the heat will continue to fry the garlic and darken it into a full golden brown color.













Cook the radish and the noodles

1. Peel the skin off the daikon radish. After the skin is removed, peel another layer off. Cut the radish into big chunks.

> **Chef's Secret:** I found that the daikon radish in the United States is less sweet than the ones I get in China, giving the soup a bitter aftertaste. Since the skin contains most of the bitter elements, please double peel the skin if needed for a better taste.

2. When the beef brisket has simmered for 1.5 hours, add the daikon radish and fish sauce to taste, and then continue to simmer on low heat for 30 minutes.

3. Take the beef brisket out of the broth and let it cool for a few minutes. Then slice the beef into thick slabs.

4. Discard the aromatics, the spice bag, and the bones, but leave the radish in the soup. Optionally, sieve out the fat bits and the impurities to make sure the broth is clear and transparent.

5. Soak the ho fun noodles in warm water for 5-8 minutes or until soft. Drain thoroughly.

6. Bring the broth to a simmer, add the ho fun noodles, and then cook for 1 minute.

> **Chef's Secret:** Rice noodles don't release that much starch, so it is fine to cook them in the same broth.

7. To assemble the noodle soup, add the noodles and broth to a big serving bowl; top with a few pieces of beef and radish; add a drizzle of garlic oil, and then sprinkle on some diced scallions as garnish.















Cabbage Stir-Fry Vermicelli Noodles

bāo cài chǎo fěn tiáo
包 菜 炒 粉 条

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

Despite the simple ingredients, stir-fry cabbage vermicelli noodles are surprisingly delicious. This is my favorite noodle dish, not only because I am a huge fan of vermicelli noodles, which have such fantastic texture and taste. But this recipe itself is quick, easy, and full of flavors. There is no excuse not to give it a try.

- 200g / 7 oz vermicelli noodles
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups hot water
- 280g / 10 oz cabbage
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 3g / about 2 Tbsps dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 8g / about 4 Thai bird's eye chilies (see page 23)
- 33g / 2 Tbsps dark soy sauce
- 6.8g / ½ Tbsp vegetable oil to coat the noodles
- 170g / 6 oz skinless pork belly, cut into strips
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp oil to stir-fry
- 32g / 2 Tbsps Sichuan dou ban jiang (see page 16)
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce

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1. Soak the vermicelli noodles in 8⅓ cups hot water for 15 minutes or until soft.

2. While waiting, julienne the cabbage into ¼-inch thick pieces; slice the garlic and ginger thinly; separate the white and green parts of the scallions; dice the white part and cut the green part into 2-inch-long stalks; cut the dried red chilies into short pieces and dice the Thai bird's eye chilies. Set everything aside.

3. Julienne the pork belly into strips.

> **Souped Up Swap:** You can use thick cuts of bacon to get more flavor or skip the meat if you are vegan.

4. Drain the noodles thoroughly and season them with dark soy sauce to get the desired brown color. Add ½ Tbsp oil and stir to coat the noodles thoroughly to prevent sticking. Set the noodles aside.

5. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add 1 Tbsp oil and switch the heat to low. Add the pork belly strips and sauté over medium heat for 3 minutes or until golden brown and a few Tbsps pork fat is rendered.

6. Add the garlic, ginger, the white part of the scallions, dried red chilies, Thai bird's eye chilies, and 2 Tbsps Sichuan dou ban jiang to the wok and stir over low heat until the oil turns red.

> **Souped Up Swap:** If you can't eat spicy food, replace the Sichuan dou ban jiang with soybean paste and skip the chilies.

7. Add the cabbage and stir over medium heat for 2 minutes or until the cabbage is wilted.

8. Add the noodles and soy sauce. Keep mixing over high heat for 3-4 minutes or until everything is well combined.

9. Before serving, toss in the green parts of the scallions and mix well.















Stir-Fry Beef Udon Noodles in Black Pepper Sauce

hēi jiāo niú ròu chǎo wū dōng miàn
黑 椒 牛 肉 炒 乌 冬 面

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people

As a transportation hub, Hong Kong is also a cuisine melting pot, so this is a mind-blowing fusion recipe. Udon noodles are slightly bouncy and meaty, the beef is tender and succulent, and both pair well with the flavorful black pepper sauce.

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For marinating the beef

- 300g / 10.6 oz beef
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 2.5g / 1 tsp cornstarch
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine, optional
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce

For seasoning the udon noodles

- 400g / 14 oz udon noodles
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 17g / 1 Tbsp fish sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 7.2g / 1 Tbsp ground black pepper

For stir-frying the noodles

- 57g / 2 oz celery, julienned
- 57g / 2 oz carrot, julienned
- 57g / 2 oz purple onion, sliced thinly
- 57g / 2 oz multicolor bell pepper, julienned
- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil
- 30g / about 2 scallions, cut into 2-inch-long pieces
- 9g / 1 Tbsp finely minced garlic
- 9g / 1 Tbsp finely minced shallot
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced ginger

1. Slice the beef into ⅛-inch thick slices and place them into a bowl. I recommend using flank steak or sirloin. Add the salt, cornstarch, Chinese cooking wine, dark soy sauce, and baking soda and mix thoroughly. Let the mixture sit for 15 minutes.

2. Bring a pot of water to a boil, add the udon noodles, and gently stir for 30 seconds or until the noodle strings are loose.

3. Quickly remove the noodles from the water and spread them on a rack, allowing the rest of the heat to evaporate the excess moisture.

4. Season the udon noodles by adding soy sauce, oyster sauce, fish sauce, dark soy sauce, and ground black pepper, and mix thoroughly. If you are serving kids or those who don't like spicy food, you may want to reduce the amount of black pepper.

5. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add 2 Tbsps cooking oil to the wok and swirl it around so the oil coats the bottom. Add the marinated beef and stir over high heat for 2 minutes, and then remove from the wok. Do not cook the beef all the way through; otherwise, it will be overcooked when you introduce it back to the wok later.

6. Add 1 Tbsp oil, the minced garlic, shallot, ginger, celery, and carrot to the same wok and sauté over medium heat for 2 minutes or until the vegetables are cooked.

7. Add the udon noodles, purple onion, and bell pepper, and keep stirring for 3-4 minutes.

8. Add the beef and the scallion stalks and toss thoroughly.













Hong Kong Satay Beef Noodle Soup

gǎng shì shā diē niú ròu miàn
港 式 沙 爹 牛 肉 面

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Satay Beef Noodle Soup originated in Hong Kong during the 1960s when cha chaan teng restaurants were on the rise. The beauty of Hong Kong cuisine lies in its ability to embrace flavors and ingredients from all over the world, adapting them to suit the local taste, resulting in bold fusion foods like this satay beef noodle soup. You're gonna love perfect succulent beef immersed in a pungent but well-balanced gravy, then served over hot, steamy, and hearty noodles.

Cha chaan teng (茶餐厅) is a type of affordable cafe restaurant which are known for offering Chinese-Western fusion foods, as well as some dishes influenced by Southeast Asia cuisines.



For marinating the beef

- 340g / 12oz beef, sliced thinly
- 2.5g / ½ tsp ginger juice
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 11g / 1.5 Tbsps potato starch or cornstarch
- 1 egg white
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp cooking oil

For cooking the beef

- 27g / 2 Tbsps oil to pan-fry the beef
- 45g / about 1 shallot, minced
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, minced
- 26g / 1.5 Tbsps satay sauce (see page 17)
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 2.7g / ½ tsp shrimp paste
- 16g / 1 Tbsp creamy peanut butter
- 19g / 1.5 Tbsps sugar
- 0.5g / ¼ tsp curry powder (any brand will work)
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 240g / 1 cup water
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp potato starch

For cooking the noodles

- 3 liters / 12.5 cups water
- 3 packages of instant noodles
- 170g / 6 oz choy sum vegetable (see page 21)
- 12g / 3 Tbsps diced scallions as garnish

Ingredient Tips

- Non-alcohol replacements for Chinese cooking wine vary from recipe to recipe. For this particular dish, you can use the same amount of stock.
- Shrimp paste can be replaced by two anchovy fillets. Just pound them nice and fine before adding.
- Potato starch can be replaced with cornstarch.

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1. Slice the beef into ⅛-inch thick slices and place them into a bowl. I like to use New York strip steak, which has an obvious silver skin; please remove it before slicing. Besides that, you can also use flank steak, sirloin, and chuck.
2. Add the ginger juice, white pepper powder, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, potato starch, and egg white to the beef. Gently stir until everything is well combined, and then massage the meat for a few minutes until the texture becomes velvety.
3. Add 1 Tbsp cooking oil to the beef and mix well; this will separate the meat slices, making them easier to stir-fry.
4. Combine all of the seasonings in a bowl: soy sauce, dark soy sauce, sugar, satay sauce, shrimp paste, peanut butter, and curry powder.
5. Heat the wok until smoking hot and add 2 Tbsps cooking oil. Swirl the oil around to create a non-stick layer and then add the beef. The heat is on high, so you only need to cook for about 40 seconds. The meat should be nice and charred, but the middle should still be undercooked.
6. Remove the beef from the wok. Make sure you tilt the wok so you can leave the oil behind.
7. Add the minced shallot, garlic, and ginger. Stir over low heat until they are slightly golden on the edges.
8. Pour in the seasoning sauce and continue to mix, allowing everything to mingle together, creating sublime flavors. Your entire house should smell amazing by now.
9. Quickly mix 1 cup water with 1 Tbsp potato starch in a bowl until no lumps remain, and then pour it into the wok. You can also use beef stock if you want. Stir over low heat until the liquid thickens.
10. Introduce the beef back into the wok and mix well. Set it aside. This satay beef is very flavorful, so you have to serve it with a plain foundation.
11. Fill a big pot with water and bring it to a boil over medium heat. Add the instant noodles and cook for 1.5-3 minutes, depending on your preference. While the noodle almost reaches your desired doneness, add the choy sum or other green leafy vegetables and cook for 20 seconds.

> **Chef's Secret:** An authentic cha chaan tengs style satay beef noodle is served with instant noodles. You don't need the flavor packages that come with the instant noodles; you can save them for other meals.

12. Transfer the noodles and vegetables into a serving bowl and pour in just enough of the boiling liquid to immerse half of the noodles.
13. Spoon the satay beef, including the thick satay sauce, onto the noodles and sprinkle diced scallions as garnish.
14. To fully appreciate this dish, gently mix the noodles until they soak up the essence from the satay gravy.



Buns

304. Steamed Pork Buns / 鲜肉包子
307. Beijing Lazy Dragon Rolls / 北京懒龙
309. Steamed Chicken Buns / 鸡肉包子
312. Taiwanese Steamed Pork Belly Buns (Gua Bao) / 台湾褂包
315. Cantonese Roasted Pork Char Siu Bun / 广式叉烧包
319. Cantonese Steamed Custard Buns / 广式奶黄包
322. Shanghai Pan-fried Soup Buns / 上海生煎包
325. Xinjiang Baked Buns (Kao Bao Zi) / 新疆烤包子
328. Shaanxi Beef Burger (Rou Jia Mo) / 陕西肉夹馍



Steamed Pork Buns

xiān ròu bāo zi
鲜 肉 包 子

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Makes:
2.5 hours	20 minutes	12 Buns

I haven't met anyone who doesn't like steamed buns; it is one of those foods that everybody loves to eat but is challenging to make. People always ask me how to achieve a soft, fluffy, and delicate texture. Well, this step-by-step guide will ensure your success.

For making the wrapper dough

- 500g / 1.1 pounds all-purpose flour
- 250g / 8.5 fl oz lukewarm water
- 3g / 1 tsp yeast
- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp sugar

For making the filling

- 350g / 12.3 oz ground pork
- 3g / 1 tsp grated garlic
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 12g / 2 tsps oyster sauce
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 9g / 2 tsps sesame oil
- 80g / ⅓ cup unsalted chicken stock
- 32g / ½ cup diced scallion

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Make the dough

1. Add the sugar and instant yeast to the lukewarm water and stir until well-distributed.

2. Slowly pour the yeast sugar solution into the all-purpose flour and stir simultaneously until all the liquid is well-absorbed.

3. Gather all the flour together and knead the dough until smooth. If the dough feels tight, please cover and rest it for 15 minutes to relax the gluten, which will make it much easier to work with. If you own a KitchenAid, use the hook attachment and let it run on medium-low speed for 10 minutes without resting.

4. Cover the dough and let it proof for 1.5 hours. The proofing time varies based on your room temperature. You will know the dough is done proofing when you see one of the following signs: The dough is soft and doubled in size; the inside of the dough has a honeycomb structure; or you poke a hole in the middle of the dough, and the hole neither shrinks or collapses.

Make the filling

1. While waiting for the dough to proof, you can make the filling. Combine the ground pork, grated garlic, soy sauce, oyster sauce, salt, sugar, dark soy sauce, and sesame oil in a big mixing bowl and mix until the seasonings are well combined.

2. Add the unsalted chicken stock in batches and stir the pork in a circular motion in one direction for a few minutes or until all the liquid is well absorbed. Adding stock is the secret of a juicy and tender filling. If you use salted stock, please adjust the seasoning amount accordingly.

3. Add the diced scallions and keep mixing the filling until well combined. Although pork and scallions are the most popular filling for steamed buns, feel free to use cilantro, leek, onion, and chives if you prefer a different flavor.

4. Add 1 tsp of oil and 1 tbsp of filling to a frying pan and fry until cooked. Then taste it to adjust the flavor because there is no way to undo it after you wrap the buns. Set the filling in the fridge while you are working on the dough.

Knead the dough to eliminate bubbles

1. Once the dough is done proofing, thoroughly flour the working surface, and knead the dough for 8-10 minutes to eliminate the air bubbles. The technique involves repeatedly folding the dough in half, pressing it down against the working surface. Rotate the dough 90 degrees and continue to fold and press. Apply a strong force while pressing and squeezing the dough to push the air out. You should be able to hear the sound of bubbles breaking.

2. Cut the dough open and evaluate the cut surface. If you see big bubbles, continue to knead the dough; if you only see tiny, minute bubbles, move on to the next step.













Chef's Secret: Why is eliminating the bubbles important? The air bubbles that are formed during the first proofing are irregular, and you want to remove them. Kneading the dough again will redistribute the yeast, flour, and moisture, allowing the yeast to produce finer, regular, and fluffier bubbles. That is the key to soft and delicate steamed buns.

Wrap the buns and steam

1. Shape the dough into a round ball and poke a hole in the middle. Stretch the dough to enlarge the hole, and you will create a big ring. Cut the ring open to make the dough into a log shape.

2. Roll the log into a long, even strip and then divide it into 12 even pieces. Sprinkle some flour to prevent the dough pieces from sticking to each other. Cover the pieces with plastic wrap so they don't dry out.

3. Put one piece of dough on the working surface with the cut cross section facing vertically, and then flatten it into a small round patty. Use a rolling pin in one of your hands to roll the edge of the dough back and forth. Use your other hand to rotate the dough. Repeat that motion and you will get a round wrapper with a thick middle and a thinner edge. The diameter should be 4 inches.

Chef's Secret: Why does the steam bun wrapper have to be thick in the middle and thinner at the edge? You will gather the edges and fold pleats to close the buns. You don't want the edges and pleats to be too thick and doughy.

4. Put 2.5 Tbsps of the filling in the middle of the wrapper. One of your hands will lift the wrapper's edge and pinch to fold a pleat. The other hand will hold the bun and help to push and fold more pleats. Rotate the bun as you fold and continue until you finish the whole way around. When you get to the end, twist and seal the bun.

5. Put the buns into the steamer and continue to wrap the rest. If using a stainless steel steamer, oil the rack beforehand to prevent sticking; if using a bamboo steamer, put parchment paper under the buns.

6. Put on the lid and let the buns proof for the second time until they reach 1.5 times their size, which will take 15-20 minutes.

7. Fill the steamer pot with water and place the buns above it. Turn the heat to high and wait for the water to come to a boil. Once the water boils, start counting the time and steam the buns for 15 minutes.

8. Turn off the heat and let the buns sit in the steamer for at least 5 minutes before opening the lid. You don't want the buns to shrink and lose their fluffiness when contacting the cold air.

Meal Prepping Tip: Steamed buns are great for making ahead of time. After they are cooked, you can freeze them for up to 6 months and re-steam them over medium heat for 18 minutes without defrosting when you need an on-the-go breakfast!















Beijing Lazy Dragon Rolls

běi jīng lǎn lóng
北 京 懒 龙

Prep Time: 2.5 hours

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 4 people

This Northern-style roll is like the easy version of steamed buns. You don't need to wrap them individually.

For making the dough

- 400g / 14 oz all-purpose flour
- 200g / 6.8 fl oz lukewarm water
- 3g / 1 tsp yeast

For making the filling

- 27g / 2 Tbsps oil
- 32g / ½ cup white part of scallion, diced
- 18g / 2 Tbsps minced garlic
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced ginger
- 51g / 3 Tbsps soybean paste (see page 17)
- 12g / 2 tsps oyster sauce
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 350g / 12.3 oz ground pork

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Make the dough

1. Stir the yeast into the lukewarm water until well-distributed.
2. Slowly pour the yeast solution into the all-purpose flour and stir until all the liquid is well absorbed.
3. Gather all the flour together and knead the dough until smooth. If the dough feels tight and stubborn, please cover and rest it for 15 minutes to relax the gluten, which will make it much easier to work with. If you own a KitchenAid, use the hook attachment and let it run on medium-low speed for 10 minutes without resting.
4. Cover the dough and let it proof for 1.5 hours or until doubled in size.

Make the filling

1. Add the oil, the white part of the scallion, the minced garlic, and the ginger to the wok. Stir until fragrant.
2. Add the soybean paste, water, oyster sauce, Chinese cooking wine, white pepper, and dark soy sauce. Keep stirring over low heat for 3 minutes and then remove the sauce to the side. Let it cool.
3. Combine the sauce with the ground pork in a mixing bowl and stir in one direction for 3-5 minutes to develop the texture. Set the filling aside.

Wrap the lazy dragon and steam

1. Once the dough is done proofing, it should be doubled in size. Thoroughly flour the working surface and knead the dough for 8-10 minutes to eliminate the air bubbles. The technique involves repeatedly folding the dough in half, pressing it down against the working surface, and rotating it 90 degrees. Be sure to apply strong force while pressing and squeezing the dough to push the air out. You should be able to hear the sound of bubbles breaking.
2. Cut the dough open and evaluate the cut surface. If you see big bubbles, continue to knead the dough; If you only see tiny, minute bubbles, move on to the next step.
3. Shape the dough into a smooth round ball, cover it, and let it rest for 5 minutes.
4. The next step is to roll the dough into a 12-by-18-inch rectangle. Use a rolling pin to roll and push the dough in four directions, creating four corners. By doing so, you will create a perfect rectangular sheet.
5. Evenly spread the filling on the sheet and roll the sheet into a long log. Pinch the edge and squeeze both ends to seal the roll.
6. If using a stainless steel steamer, brush the rack with oil to prevent sticking. If using a bamboo steamer, cut a lot of small holes in the parchment paper and place it under the roll to prevent sticking. Put the lazy dragon roll in the steamer and leave enough space between the steamer walls because the roll will grow bigger.
7. Put the steamer on top of lukewarm water, cover it, and then let the lazy dragon rest for 15 minutes. Turn the heat to high and steam it for 25 minutes.
8. Turn off the heat, but do not open the lid. Let the lazy dragon sit for 5 minutes to prevent deflation.
9. Slice the lazy dragon into your preferred size and serve.



Steamed Chicken Buns

jī ròu bāo zi
鸡 肉 包 子

Prep Time: 3 hours

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Makes: 16 buns

Once you understand how to make the basic wrapper, you can change the filling to whatever you have on hand or whatever you're craving. This chicken version is one of my favorites.

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For making the wrapper

- 600g / 1⅓ pounds all-purpose flour
- 300g / 10.1 fl oz lukewarm water
- 7.5g / 2.5 tsps activate dry yeast
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 32g / 2 Tbsps butter

For making the filling

- 48g / 3.5 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 375g / about 1.5 medium-sized onion, diced
- 30g / about 10 cloves garlic, diced
- 60g / about 4 scallions, diced
- 400g / 14 oz ground chicken
- 2g / 1 tsp five-spice powder
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 17g / 1 Tbsp fish sauce
- 13.8g / 2.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 60g / ¼ cup chicken stock

Make the wrapper

1. Combine the lukewarm water, active dry yeast, and sugar in a big mixing bowl and stir thoroughly. Wait 5 minutes for the yeast to activate. If you are using instant yeast, you don't have to wait.

2. Add the all-purpose flour to the yeast water and stir until the liquid is evenly distributed. Keep mixing for 2 minutes or until a rough dough forms.

3. Add room-temperature butter and continue to knead for 8 minutes or until the dough becomes smooth and elastic. If you own a Kitchenaid, use the hook attachment and let the machine knead the dough at low speed for 8 minutes.

4. Cover the dough and let it proof for 1.5 hours or until doubled in size.





Make the filling

1. Add the oil and diced onion to a wok and sauté over medium-low heat for 6 minutes or until the onion is slightly golden.

2. Add the diced garlic and scallions. Continue to stir for 4-5 minutes or until all the aromatics are golden brown. Garlic burns faster than onion, which is why we are adding it after the onion is almost done.

3. Remove everything to a bowl, including the oil, and allow it to cool.

4. Add the ground chicken, five-spice powder, black pepper, soy sauce, oyster sauce, fish sauce, and dark soy sauce to a big mixing bowl and mix until the seasonings are well combined.

5. Pour the chicken stock into the ground chicken mixture in batches; stir the filling with a circular motion in one direction for 3-5 minutes or until all the liquid is absorbed.

6. Mix the ground chicken thoroughly with the caramelized onion, garlic, and scallions.





Wrap the steamed buns and steam

1. Once the dough is done proofing, punch it to eliminate the air bubbles. Once the bubbles are gone, knead the dough on the work surface for 6-8 minutes or until smooth.

2. Roll the dough into a long even log and then divide it into 16 pieces. Cover them so they don’t dry out.



3. Put one piece of dough on the work surface with the cut cross section facing vertically, and flatten it into a small round patty. Use one hand to hold a rolling pin, rolling the edge of the dough back and forth. Your other hand will rotate the dough. Repeat that motion and you will get a round wrapper with a thick middle and a thinner edge. The diameter should be 4 inches.

4. Put 2.5 Tbsps of filling in the middle of the wrapper. Use one of your hands to pinch the corner to create the first pleat. Use your other hand to help stretch, fold, and pinch the wrapper around the edge until the bun is closed.

5. If using a stainless steel steamer, brush the rack with oil to prevent sticking. If using a bamboo steamer, cut the parchment paper into 3-inch-square sheets and place them under the buns to prevent sticking.

6. Once you finish wrapping all the buns, put them in the steamer and cover them with a lid. Let them raise for another 20 minutes or until they are 1.5 times the size.

7. Fill the steamer pot with water and place the buns above it. Steam them over medium heat for 20 minutes (start counting the time after the water has come to a boil).

8. Turn off the heat and let the buns sit in the steamer with the lid on for at least 10 minutes before serving. If you open the lid immediately, the buns will shrink and lose their fluffiness when contacting the cold air.

Meal Prepping Tip: Steamed buns are great for making ahead of time. After they are cooked, you can freeze them for up to 6 months and re-steam them over medium heat for 18 minutes without defrosting when you need an on-the-go breakfast!











Taiwanese Steam Pork Belly Buns

(Gua Bao)

tái wān guà bāo
台 湾 褂 包

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cooking Time: 2 hours

Serves: 4-5 people

Taiwanese gua bao is also known as steamed pork bun hamburgers. It consists of a few components: the tender braised pork belly and the fluffy steamed buns. In order to elevate the flavor, we will serve it with pickled mustard greens and peanut powder. As a person who grew up eating steamed buns, I am hard to please, but this is insanely delicious.

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For the pork belly

- 907g / 2 pounds skin-on pork belly
- 48g / ⅓ cup roughly chopped shallots
- 27g / 3 Tbsps roughly diced garlic
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced ginger
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 31g / 2.5 Tbsps sugar
- 56g / ¼ cup Chinese cooking wine
- 83g / 5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp dark soy sauce
- 600g / 2.5 cups water

For the steamed lotus bun

- 400g / 14 oz all-purpose flour
- 25g / 2 Tbsps sugar
- 210g / ¾ cup + 2 Tbsps lukewarm water
- 6g / 2 tsps active dry yeast

For the rest of the components

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps pork belly fat skimmed from the braising liquid
- 227g / 8 oz pickled mustard greens, diced
- 40g / ⅓ cup roasted peanuts
- 38g / 3 Tbsps sugar
- 12g / ¼ cup diced cilantro
- 24g / ¼ cup diced red chili

Ingredient Tip

- Pickled mustard greens provide some crunch and a bit of acid to balance the fattiness of the pork belly. I think it is similar to people in the West who like to put pickled cucumber or jalapeno on their burgers. So, yes, if you can't find the pickled mustard greens, then pickled cucumber or jalapeno will work.



Braise the pork belly

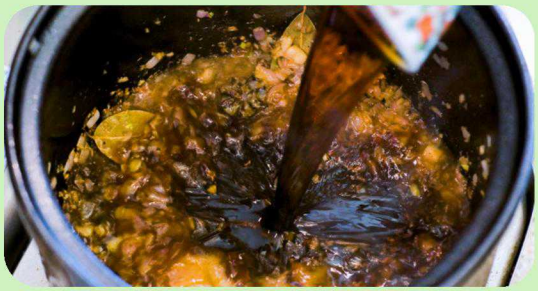
1. Slice the pork belly into ⅔-inch thick slabs.
2. Preheat a clay pot or other heavy-duty cookware over medium heat for 1 minute. Add the pork belly slabs and sear for 2-3 minutes. The purpose of this step is to render 1.5 Tbsps of fat. Don't brown the belly too much; otherwise, the meat will become stringy after braising.
3. Remove the pork belly from the pot, but leave the fat behind. Add the diced shallots, minced garlic, ginger, star anise, cinnamon stick, and bay leaves, and sauté over low heat for 2-3 minutes or until the aromatics become golden brown and the bottom of the pot feels a little sticky.
4. Add the five-spice powder, ground white pepper, sugar, Chinese cooking wine, soy sauce, and dark soy sauce.
5. Introduce the pork belly back into the pot, pour in 2.5 cups water, and bring it to a boil. Adjust the pieces so everything stays under the water. Turn the heat to the lowest and simmer for 1.5 hours.

Make the steamed lotus buns (荷叶饼)

1. Add the sugar, active dry yeast, and lukewarm water to a big mixing bowl and stir well. Wait 5 minutes for the yeast to bloom. If you are using instant yeast, you don't have to wait.
2. Add the all-purpose flour to the yeast sugar solution and stir until the liquid is evenly distributed. Gather the flour to form a rough dough and then knead it for 10 minutes or until the dough becomes smooth and non-sticky.
3. Cover the dough and let it proof for 1 hour, or until it has doubled in size.
4. Punch and knead the dough to deflate. Divide the dough into 12 pieces and then roll them into 12 round balls. Cover with a plastic wrap so they don't dry out.
5. Take one piece of dough and dust it with a little bit of flour to prevent stickiness. Use a rolling pin to roll it into a flat oval sheet. Brush some oil on ½ of the sheet and then fold it in half.
6. Put the lotus bun on parchment paper to prevent stickiness. Then place it into a steamer. Do the same thing to the rest of the buns.
7. Cover the buns with a lid and let them proof in the steamer for 20 minutes.
8. Fill the pot with water and place a steamer with the buns above it. Steam them over medium heat for 12 minutes (start counting the time after the water has come to a boil).













9. Turn off the heat and let the buns rest in the steamer for 10 minutes before you open the lid, or else they will shrink once they make contact with the cold air.

Make the rest of the components

1. To make the nut powder, add the roasted peanuts and sugar into a blender. Blend into a coarse powder and set it aside. You can do this while waiting for the dough to rise.

2. To prepare the pickled mustard greens, rinse them with running water to reduce the sodium level, squeeze the water out, and dice them.

> **Chef's Secret:** Store-bought pickled mustard greens are extra salty, but it depends on the brand. Taste yours before cooking.

3. Use a spoon to skim some fat from the pork belly braising brine and add it to a wok. Turn the heat to medium and add the diced pickled mustard greens. Stir for 3-4 minutes and set the pickled mustard greens aside.

Assemble the pork belly buns

1. Cut the braised pork belly into 2.5-inch-wide slabs or the same width as the buns.

2. Open one lotus bun, place a layer of the pickled mustard greens in between, and stuff a piece of pork belly on top. Drizzle a tsp of the braising liquid. Sprinkle the peanut powder on the top and then add some diced cilantro as garnish. Optionally, spice it up with some diced red chili. Enjoy!













Cantonese Roasted Pork Char Siu Bun

guǎng shì chā shāo bāo
广 式 叉 烧 包



Cantonese Roasted Pork Char Siu Bun

guǎng shì chā shāo bāo
广 式 叉 烧 包

Prep Time: 2 days

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Makes: 12 char siu buns

For the char siu bun starter (lao mian 老面)

Step 1:
- 50g / 1.8 oz cake flour
- 30g / 2 Tbsps water
- 1.6g / ½ tsp active dry yeast

Step 2:
- 50g / 1.8 oz cake flour
- 30g / 2 Tbsps water

Step 3:
- 100g / 3.5 oz cake flour
- 60g / 4 Tbsps water

For the char siu filling

- 170g / 6 oz char siu, finely diced
- 31g / 2.5 Tbsps sugar
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 10.5g / ½ Tbsp hoisin sauce
- 160g / ⅔ cup water
- 2g / 1 tsp red yeast powder, optional
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps oil
- 45g / about 3 scallions, cut into stalks
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 15g / about 5 slices ginger
- 60g / about ¼ medium-sized purple onion, sliced thinly
- 19g / 2.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 38g / 2.5 Tbsps water to mix with the cornstarch

For the char siu bun wrapper

- 320g / 11.3 oz char siu dough starter (lao mian)
- 133g / ⅔ cup sugar
- 19g / 4 tsps lard or room-temperature butter
- 8 drops of alkaline water
- 2g / ½ tsp food-grade ammonium carbonate
- 150-180g / 5.3 - 6.3 oz cake flour
- 14.4g / 1 Tbsp baking powder

It took me a long, long time to perfect this recipe because I didn't want to just throw it together. I grew up eating it, and I wanted the perfect roasted pork char siu bun, which should have a snowy white, cotton-like wrapper, cracked open at the top, and a bright-red, juicy filling.

In order to reach the high standards, I have been testing and improving my char siu buns on and off for years, and finally, here is the best recipe to guide you step by step, explain the whys behind the hows, to show you some failures and why they happened so you can avoid any possible mistakes, and to provide tips to ensure you achieve the restaurant-quality result right in your kitchen.

Ingredient Tips

- Char siu is the most popular roasted meat in Cantonese cuisine. You can buy it in Chinatown or make it yourself (see page 72). For a quicker option, use sweet, savory BBQ meat as a substitute.
- Red yeast powder (红曲粉) provides a nice color but doesn't affect the taste. You can skip it or use red food coloring.
- Alkaline water, aka kanshui (碱水 / 枧水), is available in almost any Asian market. If you don't have access to buy it, use a saturated solution of sodium carbonate (aka soda ash) as a replacement. Just stir as much soda ash into the water until it can no longer dissolve.
- Baker's ammonia (臭粉), also known as ammonium carbonate, is a powerful leavening agent that can explosively degrade to gaseous ammonia and carbon dioxide while heating, helping the steamed bun rise faster and crack open from the top. It is a must-have ingredient, and unfortunately, there are no replacements.





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Make the lao miam (chair siu bun starter)

1. Lao mian (老面) is the leftover dough from the previous char siu bun, used as a leavening agent in the char siu bun wrapper. Traditionally, lao mian takes seven days to accumulate. I think it is too time-consuming for home cooking, so I simplified the process to 3 steps and 2 days, but it still yields flavorful and perfect results.

    - **Step 1:** Combine ½ tsp yeast, 30g water, and 50g cake flour into a container. Mix until a rough dough forms. Cover the dough and let it proof at room temperature (around 75°F / 24°C) for 12-16 hours.
    - **Step 2:** Add 50g cake flour and 30g water to the previous dough. Mix until well combined. Cover the dough and let it proof at room temperature (around 75°F / 24°C) for another 12-16 hours.
    - **Step 3:** Add 100g cake flour and 60g water to the previous dough. Mix until well combined. Cover the dough and let it proof at room temperature (around 75°F / 24°C) for 12-16 hours.

Make the filling

1. Thoroughly combine the sugar, soy sauce, oyster sauce, hoisin sauce, water, and red yeast powder in a mixing bowl and stir well.

2. Add the oil, scallion stalks, minced garlic, ginger slices, and purple onion strips to a saucepan and sauté over medium heat for 3 minutes or until the garlic is slightly golden on the edges.

3. Pour in the sauce mixture and cover with a lid. Let it simmer at low heat for 5 minutes and then sieve out all the solid aromatics and discard them.

4. Mix 2.5 Tbsps cornstarch with 2.5 Tbsps water until no lumps remain, and then pour it into the saucepan. Stir over low heat for 2-3 minutes or until the liquid thickens. Turn off the heat.

5. Add the diced char siu and mix well. Transfer the char siu filling into a sealed container and chill it in the fridge overnight.

6. Portion the filling into 12 even pieces, about 30g each. Roll each one into a ball and set them in the fridge while working on the wrapper.

Make the wrapper dough

1. Combine the lao mian (char siu bun starter), sugar, room-temperature butter, and alkaline water in a big mixing bowl and stir with a rubber spatula for 5 minutes or until all the sugar is melted and the mixture becomes elastic. To measure 8 drops, simply dip a chopstick or a dining knife into the alkaline water and let the liquid naturally drop into the bowl. **Note:** Alkaline water helps to neutralize yeast-produced acids during fermentation.













Without it, the acid would react with the baker's ammonia, reducing its leavening ability.

2. Add the baker's ammonia and stir for 3 minutes or until it is fully dissolved.

> **Warning:** baker's ammonia smells awful; please turn your face away from it while stirring. However, once degraded, it doesn't leave anything behind, so don't worry about the final taste and smell.

3. Sieve in the baking powder and cake flour, and then knead the dough for 5 minutes. The given cake flour amount is a range due to varying water-absorbing rates in different brands. For first-time attempts, begin with 150g cake flour and add more gradually while kneading. The dough should have a smooth, non-stick consistency when quickly tapped, but will stick to your finger if touched for a bit longer. This represents the maximum moisture level without excessive sticking. More moisture results in a softer and fluffier bun.

4. Dust the dough with some flour to prevent sticking. Roll it into a long, even log and divide it into 12 even pieces. Cover them with an upside-down bowl so they don't dry out.

Wrap and steam the char siu buns

1. Flatten one piece of dough and roll the edge back and forth with a rolling pin. Your left hand rotates the dough. Repeat that until you get a 9cm / 3.5-inch round wrapper with a thick middle and a thinner edge.

2. Put the char siu filling on the wrapper and pinch the edge to create pleats all the way around until the bun is closed. Do the same thing to wrap the rest of the buns.

3. Put the buns in the steamer. If using a stainless steel steamer, oil the rack beforehand to prevent sticking; if using a bamboo steamer, put parchment paper under the buns. Char siu buns can be steamed right away without any further proofing.

4. Pre-boil the water in the pot and place the steamer above it. Steam the buns over the highest heat for 18 minutes. If you use low heat, the baker's ammonia will decompose incompletely, leaving a bad smell.

5. Once done steaming, allow the buns to stay in the steamer for 5 minutes before opening the lid. Enjoy!

> **Meal Prepping Tip:** Char siu buns are great for bulk-making ahead of time. After they are cooked, you can freeze them for up to 6 months and re-steam them without defrosting when you need an on-the-go breakfast!















Cantonese Steamed Custard Buns

guǎng shì nǎi huáng bāo
广 式 奶 黄 包

Prep Time: 3 hours

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Makes: 12 Buns

Refrigerate overnight

If you've ever had breakfast or brunch in a dim sum restaurant, you will fall in love with these lovely little buns. They have a super soft and fluffy texture, and the filling is sweet, creamy, and full of milk flavor. I will share all my tricks and tips to ensure you create this classic dim sum dish right in your kitchen.

For the custard filling

- 160g / 5.4 fl oz milk
- 65g / 2.3 oz butter
- 1 egg
- 3 egg yolks
- 100g / 3.5 oz sugar
- 40g / 1.4 oz cake flour
- 25g / 0.9 oz milk powder

For the wrapper

- 350g / 12.3 oz all-purpose flour
- 60g / 2.1 oz sugar
- 190g / 6.9 oz cold milk
- 10g / 0.4 oz milk powder
- 6g / 2 tsps instant yeast
- 14g / 1 Tbsp softened butter

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Make the custard filling

1. Add one whole egg and three egg yolks to a big mixing bowl and whisk well. You can use two whole eggs if you don't know what to do with the extra egg white. However, using more yolks makes a brighter yellow color for the filling.

2. Add the melted butter and milk to the whisked egg. Stir well and set it aside. I suggest using room-temperature milk to prevent the melted butter from solidifying.

3. In a separate bowl, combine the cake flour, sugar, and milk powder, and mix well. For allergy substitutes, use the same amount of coconut milk to replace the milk and use 1 tsp vanilla extract to replace the milk powder.

4. Combine the wet ingredients with the dry ingredients and stir to incorporate. Pour the mixture through a sieve into a non-stick saucepan to eliminate any lumps.

5. Stir the mixture over low heat constantly for 10-15 minutes. When the bottom of the liquid starts thickening, please speed up the stirring to ensure nothing burns. Continue to stir and cook until the mixture separates from the bottom of the saucepan.

6. Transfer the filling into a container, cover it with a plastic film, and push out the air so it doesn't form dry skin. Chill the filling in the fridge overnight or until the texture is firm.

7. Take the filling out of the fridge and divide it into 12 even pieces, 30 grams each. Use a scale if you want to be precise. Roll each piece in between your hands into a smooth ball. Cover them and stick them back into the fridge while you are working on the dough.

Make the dough

1. Add the sugar and yeast to the milk and stir well. Thoroughly combine the milk powder and the all-purpose flour in a big mixing bowl. Then pour the yeast milk solution into the all-purpose flour and stir until all of the liquid is absorbed.

2. Gather the flour and knead until a rough dough forms. Add the softened butter little by little and mix until the oil is well absorbed. Continue to knead for another 8 minutes until the dough becomes smooth. If you own a stand mixer, use the hook attachment and let it run on low speed for 8-10 minutes.

> **Chef's Secret:** Steamed buns are soft and fluffy when they come out of the steamer, but will be tough when cold. Adding butter prevents the starch from retrograding and keeps the buns soft when cold.

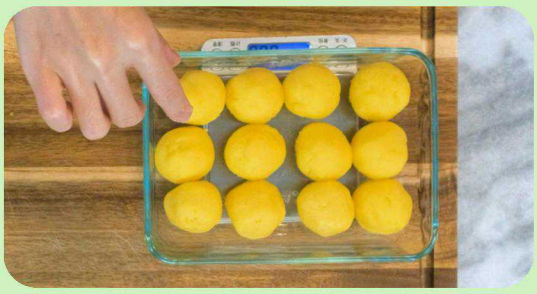
3. Cover the dough and let it proof for 1.5 hours or until doubled in size.













Wrap the buns and steam

1. Punch the dough for a minute to eliminate the big air bubbles. Then knead the dough on the work surface for 6-8 minutes or until the dough becomes smooth and elastic. Make sure you do your best to break up the air pockets so the buns will be fluffier.

2. Roll the dough into a long even log, divide it into 12 pieces (50 grams each), and then shape each piece into a smooth ball. Cover all of the dough balls so they don't dry out.

3. Start with the first ball that you shaped, dust it with some flour to prevent stickiness, and flatten it into a small round patty. Next, take a rolling pin in one hand to roll the edge of the dough back and forth. Use the other hand to rotate the dough. Repeat that motion, and you will get a round wrapper with a thick middle and a thinner edge. The diameter should be 4 inches.

4. Take the custard filling from the fridge, put one in the middle of the wrapper, and press it down to compact tightly. Next, use your forefinger and thumb to squeeze it around and push the wrapper up. When you get to the end, lightly wet the edge with water, and then pinch to close the bun.

5. Place the bun, rough side down, on a piece of parchment paper and continue to wrap the rest.

6. Place all of the buns into a steamer rack, leaving some space between each other; cover them and let them proof for 20 minutes.

7. Fill the steamer pot with water and turn the heat to high. Steam the buns for 8-10 minutes (start counting the time after the water comes to a boil).

8. Turn off the heat and wait 5 minutes to open the lid. If you open the lid too early, the buns will shrink when contacting the cold air, and you will lose the fluffiness.

Meal Prepping Tip: Steamed buns are great for making ahead of time. After they are cooked, you can freeze them for up to 6 months and re-steam them over medium heat for 18 minutes without defrosting when you need an on-the-go breakfast!













Shanghai Pan-fried Soup Buns

shàng hǎi shēng jiān bāo
上 海 生 煎 包

Prep Time: 2.5 hours

Cooking Time: 2.5 hours

Makes: 24 buns

Refrigerate overnight

Sheng Jian Bao is Shanghai's iconic food and a tourist must-try item because it has all of the best characteristics of all kinds of buns. The wrapper is soft and slightly fluffy; the filling is rich and soupy; and it is pan-fried, so the bottom is golden and crispy. Although it is a complicated dish, it is totally worth the effort.



For making the broth jelly

- 300g / 10.6 oz pork skin
- 3 liters / 12.5 cups water to blanch the pork skin
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 15g / about 5 slices ginger
- 45g / about 3 scallions
- 24g / about 8 cloves garlic
- 1.4 liters / about 6 cups water to braise the pork skin

For making the aromatic water

- 12g / about 4 slices ginger
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic
- 2g / ½ Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 60g / ¼ cup water

For making the filling

- 350g / 12.3 oz ground pork
- 7.1g / 1¼ tsp salt
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 9g / 2 tsps sesame oil
- 32g / ½ cup diced scallions

For marinating the shrimp

- 150g / ⅓ pound peeled and deveined shrimp
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 4.5g / 1 tsp cooking oil
- 0.6g / ⅛ tsp baking soda

For making the wrapper

- 400g / 14 oz all-purpose flour
- 1g / ½ tsp yeast
- 220g / 7.4 fl oz warm water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt

For making the dipping sauce

- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 48g / 3 Tbsps white vinegar
- 9g / 1 Tbsp thinly julienned ginger

To finish

- 16g / ¼ cup diced scallion for garnish
- 18g / 2 Tbsp toasted sesame seed for garnish
- 55g / ¼ cup oil to pan-fry the buns

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Make the broth jelly

1. Add the pork skin and 12.5 cups of water into a stockpot and bring it to a boil over medium heat.

2. Once boiled, discard the blanching water and wash the pork skin under running water to remove the unpleasant smell.

3. Trim off the fat, if any, and then cut the pork skin into thin strips.

Chef's Secret: The thinner the pork skin, the faster the gelatin dissolves.

4. Add the pork skin strips, 6 cups of water, scallions, ginger slices, and garlic cloves into the stockpot, and then bring it to a boil. Switch the heat to low and simmer for 2 hours or until the broth becomes milky white and creamy.

5. Drain the broth and discard the pork skin. Measure the broth to ensure you have 2 cups of liquid. If you don't have enough, add more water.

6. Pour the skin broth into a container and cover well. Chill it in the fridge for 6 hours or until it coagulates into a piece of jelly.

Chef's Secret: Pork skin jelly broth is what makes soup buns possible. The jelly will set when chilled and melt into a broth after being steamed.

Make the filling

1. To make the aromatic water, add the garlic cloves, ginger slices, Sichuan peppercorns, and ¼ cup water to a blender cup and blend into a puree. Let the puree go through a sieve to eliminate the solid parts.

2. Add the ground pork, aromatic water, salt, soy sauce, sugar, black pepper, and sesame oil to a big mixing bowl. Mix until the meat absorbs all of the liquid, and then stir the filling with a circular motion in one direction for 5 minutes to develop the texture.

3. Take the broth jelly out of the fridge and finely mince it. Please do this fast because the jelly may melt if your room temperature is too hot.

4. Add the minced broth jelly and diced scallions to the ground pork mixture. Stir for 3-5 minutes or until everything is well combined. Set the filling in the fridge.

5. Use paper towels to pat the shrimp dry and place them into a mixing bowl. Season the shrimp by adding salt, black pepper, olive oil, and baking soda, and mix well. Set the mixture in the fridge. This recipe yields enough to make 24 buns. If your shrimp is big, please cut it into smaller pieces so you have enough to portion for each bun.













Make the bun wrapper

1. Thoroughly combine the all-purpose flour and salt in a big mixing bowl.

2. Add the dry yeast to the water and stir well. Pour the yeast water into the flour in batches and mix until a rough dough forms. Cover the dough and let it rest for 10 minutes.

3. Knead the dough for 5 minutes or until smooth. Cover it and let it proof for only 10 minutes. Shengjian bao skin requires half-proof dough; overproof dough will soak up the soup and turn into a soggy mess.

4. Roll the dough into a long even log and then divide it into 24 even pieces. Flatten each one into a small round patty. Cover them so they don't become dry.

5. Take one piece of the dough and roll it with a rolling pin into a round wrapper. The diameter should be 4 inches. The yeast will rise as you roll and wrap the buns. If your room temperature is too hot, put some dough in the fridge to slow the proofing process.

Wrap the dumplings and cook

1. Put 1.5 Tbsps filling and 1 shrimp in the middle of the wrapper. Pinch the corner to create the first pleat. Continue to stretch, fold, and pinch the edge to create pleats all the way around until the bun is closed.

2. Thoroughly sprinkle the tray with flour before setting the buns aside to prevent sticking. Then continue to fold the rest of the buns.

3. Add a generous amount of oil to a cast-iron skillet. Swirl the oil so it covers the bottom of the pan. Place the buns in with some space between each other, as they will enlarge in size while cooking.

4. Turn the heat to medium. When the oil starts sizzling, add 3-4 Tbsps water and put on the lid. Let the steam cook the buns for 8-10 minutes or until all the water is evaporated. This way, the buns will be partially pan-fried and semi-steamed to achieve their desired textures.

5. Open the lid and sprinkle with the diced scallions and toasted sesame seeds. Continue to cook over medium heat for 3 minutes or until the bottom is golden brown.

6. You may need to pan-fry all the buns in 2-3 batches, depending on the size of your cookware, during which time, please put the uncooked buns in the fridge to prevent overproofing.

7. To make the dipping sauce, combine the soy sauce, vinegar, and julienned ginger in a bowl and mix well.

8. Here is the local way to enjoy these lovely treats: Drizzle some dipping sauce over the bun, bite a hole, and blow air to cool the soup. Then, sip all the soup and eat the bun last. If you eat this way like the locals, you will not burn your mouth as most tourists do when they first try soup buns.













Xinjiang Baked Buns

(Kao Bao Zi)

xīn jiāng kǎo bāo zi
新 疆 烤 包 子

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Makes: 16 buns

As the most popular street food in Xinjiang, Kao Bao Zi is commonly made with lamb meat and baked in tandoor ovens (Chinese: 馕坑). But, of course, it is totally fine to switch to beef. You can also use a pizza stone or a heavy-duty cast-iron skillet at home to achieve that crispy result. Although it does take some effort to make, trust me, you will fall in love with these crispy and roasted buns.

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For the aromatic water

- 120g / ½ cup water
- 15g / about 1 scallion, diced
- 9g / 1 Tbsp diced ginger
- 4g / 1 Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise

For the filling

- 680g / 1.5 pounds lamb meat
- 57g / 2 oz lamb fat trimmed from the lamb meat
- 6.8g / 1.5 tsps cooking oil
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 2g / 1 slice dried galangal, optional
- 400g / 14 oz sweet onion, diced
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 2.4g / 1 tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 13g / 2 Tbsps cumin powder
- 5.3g / 2 tsps cumin seeds
- 14.3g / 2.5 tsps salt
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce

For the wrapper

- 454g / 1 pound bread flour
- 1 egg
- 160g / 5.4 fl oz water
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 28g / 2 Tbsps room-temperature butter

For baking the buns

- 9g / 1 Tbsp raw sesame seeds
- 1 egg
- 240g / 1 cup water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt



Make the filling

1. To make the aromatic water, add the diced scallion, ginger, Sichuan peppercorns, star anise, and water in a small bowl, and let it sit for 1 hour. Drain and discard the spices and the aromatics. Save the liquid for the filling.

2. If there is any visible fat on the lamb, trim off about 2 oz and dice it.

3. Dice the lamb meat into soybean-size pieces and then set it aside. You can also use ground meat to save time. However, Xinjiang-style buns often use diced meat because it provides a better texture.

4. Add the oil and diced lamb fat to a wok and stir over low heat for 2-3 minutes or until the fat is rendered out and the lamb bits are golden brown. If you don't have lamb fat, use 3 Tbsps vegetable oil instead.

5. Add the star anise, dried galanga, bay leaves, cinnamon stick, and half of the diced sweet onions. Keep stirring over low heat until the onion becomes golden brown.

6. Remove everything from the wok. Discard the star anise, cinnamon, and bay leaves. Reserve the oil and caramelized onion to cool.

7. Thoroughly combine the diced lamb meat, minced garlic, cumin powder, toasted cumin seed, ground black pepper, salt, and soy sauce in a big mixing bowl. Then pour the aromatic water in batches and stir the filling in one direction for 3-5 minutes or until the liquid is well-absorbed.

8. Add the reserved diced sweet onion and the caramelized onion to the meat and then mix until well combined. Set the filling in the fridge while you work on the wrapper.

Make the wrapper and wrap the buns

1. In a stand mixer bowl, combine the bread flour, salt, egg, and room-temperature water and mix until the water is absorbed.

2. Use the hook attachment and let the stand mixer run at medium-low speed to knead the dough for 8-10 minutes or until the dough becomes smooth. If you don’t have a KitchenAid, you can knead it by hand, and it will take 10-12 minutes.

3. Add 2 Tbsps room-temperature butter and continue to knead the dough for another 10 minutes or until the butter is well-absorbed. If kneading by hand, it will take 10-12 minutes.

4. Wrap the dough with plastic film and let it rest for 30 minutes.

5. Divide the dough into 16 even pieces and roll each piece into a smooth ball. Use more flour to prevent sticking if needed. Cover them so they don't dry out.









6. Take one piece of the small dough ball and flatten it with your hand. Use a rolling pin to roll it into a 6-inch diameter wrapper with a thick middle and thinner edges. Do the same thing to all 16 pieces. When you pile the wrappers together, use enough flour to prevent them from sticking to each other.

7. Place a wrapper on the work surface and lightly dab the upside with water. Put 2 oz of filling in the middle of each wrapper and then fold it like an envelope to ensure the filling is sealed well.

8. Thoroughly flour a tray, set the bun aside, and then continue to fold the rest.

9. Whisk one egg well, brush it on top of the buns, and then sprinkle some raw sesame seed onto the buns.

Bake the buns

1. Place a pizza stone or a large cast-iron skillet into the oven. Preheat the oven to 450°F / 232°C.

2. Add salt and water to a bowl and stir to dissolve.

3. Take a bun, wet the bottom with salted water, and then quickly put it on the preheated pizza stone or cast-iron skillet. Please do this step fast because you will lose the heat while putting the buns into the oven.

4. Bake the buns for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown.









Shaanxi Beef Burger

(Rou Jia Mo)

shǎn xī ròu jiā mó
陕 西 肉 夹 馍

Prep Time: 1.5 hours

Cooking Time: 2.5 hours

Serves: 3 people

Rou jia mo is one of my favorite Chinese street foods. The bread is nice and chewy. The meat is incredibly juicy, soft, and flavorful. These delicious buns are often served with orange soda. These 2 items together are a classic pair, just like you want to drink Coke when you are eating a hamburger. If you like hamburgers, then you must try the Chinese version.



For braising the beef

- 680g / 1.5 pounds beef chuck
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water to blanch the beef
- 9g / 2 tsps oil
- 25g / 2 Tbsps sugar
- 960g / 4 cups water to braise the beef
- 66g / ¼ cup soy sauce
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt or to taste
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.2g / about 2 cloves
- 2.2g / 1 tsp fennel seed
- 3.3g / 1 tsp whole black peppercorns
- 1.2g / about 3 slices licorice root, aka gancao, optional
- 4g / 1 Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 9g / about 3 slices ginger
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic
- 45g / about 3 scallions, cut into stalks

For the white bun bai ji mo (白吉馍)

- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps active dried yeast
- 300g / 10.6 oz all-purpose flour
- 150g / 5 fl oz lukewarm water
- 1.2g / ¼ tsp baking soda
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsp cooking oil to rub the frying pan

To finish and serve

- Diced cilantro to taste
- Diced scallions to taste
- Chili sauce to taste
- Orange soda as needed

Ingredient Tip

- The gancao (甘草), aka licorice root, gives the soup a lightly sweet aftertaste. It is optional; you can replace it with 8.3g / 2 tsps sugar or two drops of monk fruit extract.

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Braise the beef

1. Add the beef to a big pot and fill it with 2 liters or enough water to immerse the meat. Partially put on the lid and bring it to a boil over high heat.
2. Once the water comes to a boil, remove the beef from the pot, discard the blanching water, and set the beef aside.
3. Add the oil and sugar to a separate pot and stir the sugar over low heat until caramelized; this will take about 3 minutes.
4. When you see the amber caramelized sugar is bubbling, pour 4 cups of water into the pot. Please use a lid to protect yourself because the hot caramel will splash everywhere.
5. Add the blanched beef, soy sauce, and salt to the caramel solution and bring it to a simmer over high heat.
6. Meanwhile, add the cinnamon stick, cloves, fennel seed, black peppercorns, licorice root, Sichuan peppercorns, garlic cloves, ginger slices, and scallion stalks into a spice bag.
7. Add the spice bag into the stockpot and switch the heat to low. Simmer the beef for 2 hours or until tender.

Make the white bun bai ji mo (白吉馍)

1. In a stand mixer bowl, thoroughly stir the yeast with the lukewarm water and wait for 5 minutes to allow the yeast to wake up.
2. Meanwhile, wrap the baking soda with a tin foil and place it into a cast-iron skillet. Heat it over medium heat for a few minutes.

> **Chef's Secret:** By doing this, you transformed sodium bicarbonate into sodium carbonate (aka soda ash) – an alkaline salt, which can improve the texture and Maillard reactions for bread.

3. Add the sodium carbonate to the yeast water and stir well. Add the all-purpose flour to the water and mix with a spatula until all the liquid is well absorbed.
4. Use the hook attachment and let the stand mixer run at low speed to knead the dough for 8 minutes. If you don't have a stand mixer, knead the dough by hand for 8-10 minutes or until the dough becomes smooth and elastic.



5. Cover the dough and let it proof for 20 minutes at room temperature. Bai ji mo (白吉馍) is a type of half-leavened bun, so we don't need the dough to rise fully.
6. Divide the dough into 6 even pieces and cover them so they don't dry out.
7. Take one piece of the dough and roll it into a long strip. Flatten the strip into a long ribbon by using a rolling pin. Roll the ribbon to make a cylinder, tucking the end under. Set it aside and apply the same technique to the rest of the dough pieces.
8. Flatten one piece of the cylinder and roll it into a thick round patty, about 3.5 inches in diameter. Set it aside and apply the same technique to the rest of the dough pieces.
9. Preheat a heavy-duty frying pan over low heat for a minute. Rub the bottom with a tiny bit of oil using a kitchen paper. Toast the bun patties over low heat for 2-3 minutes per side or until slightly golden. Please put on the lid when toasting the first side of the bun and remove the lid when flipped to toast the other side to keep the crispy texture. You may be able to cook 2-3 buns at the same time, depending on the size of your frying pan.
10. Do the same thing to toast the rest of the buns.

Assemble the rou jia mo burger

1. Once the beef is done braising, take it out of the stockpot and chop it finely on the cutting board, adding the braising liquid in batches until the meat can no longer absorb, about 5-6 Tbsps. This is the key step to a juicy rou jia mo.
2. Use a knife to cut a white bun (bai ji mo白吉馍) but stop in the middle. Then use the tip of the knife to wiggle the inside to create a pocket.
3. Stuff the chopped braised beef into the bread and add 1 Tbsp of the braising brine so the bread can soak it up and become soft.
4. Feel free to sprinkle diced scallions, cilantro, or your favorite chili sauce onto the burger.
5. Enjoy your rou jia mo with orange soda.

Dumplings

333. Make Dumplings From Scratch / 包饺子基础
335. Chicken Dumplings / 鸡肉饺子
337. 24 Ways to Wrap Dumplings / 二十四种包饺子的办法
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346. Three Dumpling Fillings / 三种基础的饺子馅
348. Shaanxi Hot and Sour Dumpling Soup / 陕西酸汤水饺
351. Steamed Dumplings with Pork and Sweet Corn Filling / 猪肉玉米蒸饺
354. Shanghai Xiao Long Bao Soup Dumplings / 上海小笼包
358. Beijing Doorknob Dumplings / 北京门钉肉饼
361. Chinese Chive Boxes / 韭菜盒子
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366. Cantonese Shrimp Dumplings (Har Gow) / 水晶虾饺
369. Teochew Crystal Dumplings (Fun Guo) / 潮州粉果
372. Hakka Rice Dumplings with Radish Filling / 客家萝卜粄
375. Crispy Fried Dumplings (Cantonese Ham Sui Gok) / 咸水角
378. Delicate Taro Puff Dumplings (Wu Gok) / 芋角



Top, various handmade dumplings and wontons; bottom, various pre-made fillings sold in Chinese wet market. People will buy it and make steamed buns, meatballs, wontons, and dumplings at home.

Make Dumplings From Scratch

1. Choosing the Right Flour is Half the Battle

In China, we always make dumplings with high-gluten flour (高筋面粉). Gluten is a protein found in wheat plants and other grains; it provides a pleasant texture and flavor. It also works as a binding agent to hold the dumpling's shape.

However, flour is not labeled by its gluten content in the United States. Therefore, I always recommend using bread flour to make dumplings because it has a higher protein content than all-purpose flour in general, but that doesn't mean you cannot use all-purpose flour at all. It depends on the brand; you can tell by reading the nutrition facts.

For example, in the first brand of all-purpose flour, every serving contains 4 grams of protein, which is 13.3%, while the second brand contains 3 grams of protein per serving, which is 3/31 ≈ 9.6%. They are both all-purpose flour, but the compositions are so different. In general, you want to pick something that has at least 10% protein; the higher the protein, the better.

What if all you have is low-protein flour? You can use a combination of egg and water to form the dough. By doing so, you are adding extra protein into the flour, which will improve the dough's texture.

2. Learn to Adjust the Water and Flour Ratio

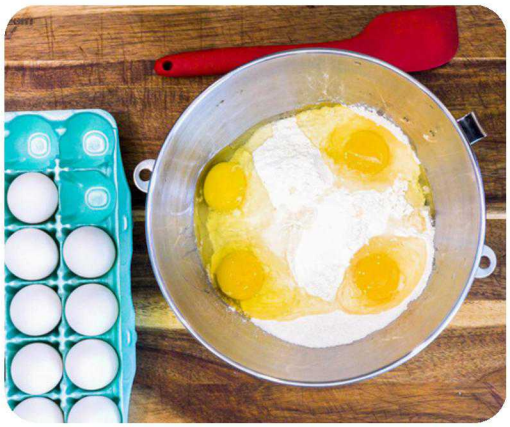
I like to be precise, so I always list the exact measurements for better success. When it comes to making flour dough, I get comments from my readers telling me that they follow the recipe, but the dough turns out to be too sticky or too dry. That is because different brands and types of flour have different water-absorbing rates. For example, higher protein content flour usually tends to absorb more water compared to lower-gluten flour. Therefore, adjusting the water ratio based on your situation is necessary.

For the dumpling wrapper, a 50% water ratio is a safe number, which means for every 400 grams of flour, use 200 grams of water. Based on that, please add the water to the flour little by little, so you can feel the consistency and make necessary changes. If the dough is too sticky, add a little flour; on the contrary, add more water. The basic rule is to use less water to form a smooth, elastic, and nonstick dough.

Once you have chosen a suitable flour and understand how to adjust the water ratio, you can start making dumplings.











Chicken Dumplings

jī ròu jiǎo zi
鸡 肉 饺 子

Prep Time: 1.5 hours

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Makes: 50 dumplings

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For the wrapper

- 400g / 14 oz bread flour
- 200g / 6.8 fl oz water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt

For the Filling

- 400g / 14 oz ground chicken
- 150g / ⅓ pound spinach
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 4g / 1 tsp chicken bouillon powder, optional
- 2g / 1 tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 10g / ⅓ cup diced basil
- 60g / ¼ cup chicken stock

For the dipping sauce

- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, grated
- 3g / 1 tsp grated ginger
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallions
- 5.4g / 1 Tbsp chili flakes
- 41g / 3 Tbsps oil
- 50g / 3 Tbsps soy sauce
- 16g / 1 Tbsp Chinese black vinegar (see page 16)

Make the dumpling wrapper dough

1. Add the salt to the water and stir to dissolve. Pour the solution into the flour in batches and mix simultaneously. Feel the moisture level of the flour to adjust the water ratio as needed.

2. Gather the flour until a rough dough forms; then knead the dough until smooth. When kneading by hand, if the dough feels tight and stubborn, cover and rest it for 15 minutes and then knead it again. Repeat the rest and kneading process until the dough becomes smooth and elastic.

> **Chef's Secret:** A proper resting period allows the gluten to expand and absorb water in the dough, making it more flexible and easier to work with. If you own a KitchenAid, use the hook attachment and let it run on medium speed for 10 minutes without resting.

3. Once the dough is smooth, shape it into a short log, cover it with a damp towel or a plastic film, and rest it for 30 minutes.

Make the filling

1. In a big mixing bowl, add the ground chicken, soy sauce, oyster sauce, salt, sesame oil, five-spice powder, chicken bouillon powder, and julienned basil. Mix until all the seasonings are well combined.

2. Add the chicken stock to the filling in batches and stir it in one direction for about 5 minutes, and set it aside.

> **Chef's Secret:** The stirring will gelatinize the protein, which helps the filling absorb the liquid and leads to a juicy and tender result.

3. Add the spinach to boiling water, blanch for 15 seconds, cool it down under running water, squeeze the water out, and dice it finely.

4. Add the spinach to the filling and mix thoroughly. Set the filling in the fridge.

Divide the dough and wrap the dumplings

1. After the dough has been rested for about 30 minutes, roll it into a long, even log, about 32-35 inches.

2. Divide the strip into 50 pieces, 12 grams each. There is no need to use a scale; just go by the feeling.

3. Sprinkle some flour to prevent the dough pieces from sticking to each other. Then cover them with plastic wrap so they don't dry out.

4. Put one piece of dough on the working surface with the cut cross section facing vertically, and then flatten it into a small round pancake. Hold a rolling pin with one hand













and roll the edge of the dough back and forth while the other hand rotates the dough. Repeat that motion until you have a round wrapper with a thick middle and a thinner edge.

Why is the dumpling wrapper thick in the middle and thinner at the edge? You will fold and pinch the edge when wrapping the filling to close the dumpling. You don't want the edge to be double the thickness and doughy.

5. To fold a classic half-moon shape dumpling, put some filling in the middle. Pinch the corner to create the first pleat. Then, with the help of your other hand, repeat the following actions: stretch the edge slightly, fold, and pinch to create more pleats until you reach the end. Half-moon shape dumplings take a lot of practice to be perfect; if you are a beginner, please check page 337 to find an easy folding method.

6. Thoroughly sprinkle the tray with flour before setting the dumplings aside to prevent sticking. Then continue to fold the rest.

Meal Prepping Tip: Dumplings are freezer-friendly. Make a big batch and freeze it for up to 3 months. Pan-fry the dumplings whenever you want without defrosting by following the same method, though it will take a bit longer.

Pan-fry the dumplings and serve

1. Add a general amount of oil to a frying pan and swirl it to cover the bottom. You don't need to wait for the pan to get hot; directly add the dumplings one by one and pan-fry over medium-low heat without the lid for 2-3 minutes or until the bottom becomes golden brown.

2. Pour in ¼ cup water and put on the lid. Let the steam cook the dumplings for 6-8 more minutes or until the added water is gone.

Chef's Secret: Don't worry that the dumpling will lose the crust due to the added water. Once the water is fully evaporated, the bottom will be crispy again.

3. While waiting, make the dipping sauce. Add the grated garlic, ginger, diced scallions, and chili flakes into a bowl. Heat 3 Tbsps of oil until smoking hot and then pour it onto the aromatics to activate the fragrance. Add the soy sauce and Chinese black vinegar, and then mix well.

4. Serve the dumplings with the dipping sauce.















24 Ways to Wrap Dumplings

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We all love dumplings, but not everybody knows how to wrap them. Here are 24 ways to fold dumplings, ranging from incredibly easy, classic methods to complicated but beautiful patterns. Although the shape doesn't affect the taste, it is fun to learn new ways to make them. I promise you, this is by far the most comprehensive guide, and you will never fail at folding dumplings again.

Homemade VS Store-bought Wrappers

One is not better than the other. However, knowing the differences between homemade and store-bought wrappers, you can choose accordingly.

The store-bought wrapper contains a low water ratio to prevent them from sticking together while sitting on the shelf. Therefore, they are stiff and less stretchy. If you want to fold complicated patterns, they don't do a good job. You may have to wet the edge to seal the wrapper because they don't stick easily. Due to the low water content, store-bought wrappers actually have a better texture. They usually come from the frozen section in your local grocery stores, so be sure to put them out 1 hour ahead to defrost.

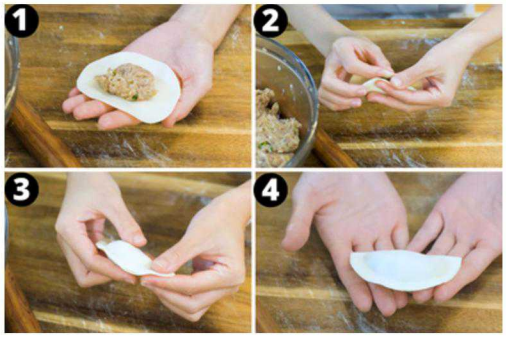
With homemade wrappers, you can fold your dumplings however you want, as they are moist and have high elasticity, but it is time-consuming to knead the dough and roll the wrappers.





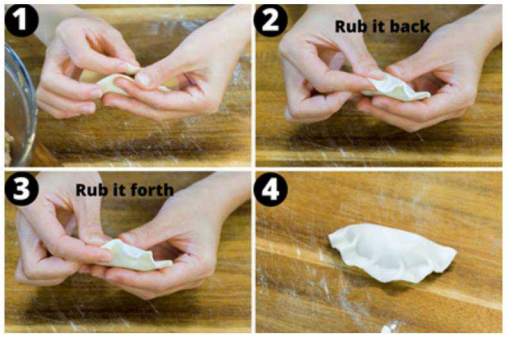
1. Fold-in-Half Dumplings

This is the easiest one. If you have never made dumplings before, you can start with this one. Fold the wrapper in half. You don't need any pleats. Just pinch the edge tightly and make sure to push out the air. If you want to have a weekend dumpling-making project with your kids, this is what you can teach them.



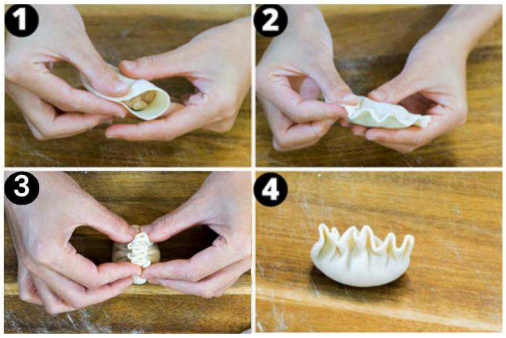
2. Fold in Half With Simple Pleats

If the dumpling doesn't have pleats, it has a higher chance of breaking while cooking. Based on the first one, you can make some super simple pleats. Use your forefinger and thumb. Rub it back and forth on the edge of the dumpling. The pleats will grip onto each other so the wrapper won't split open. Look how pretty that is.



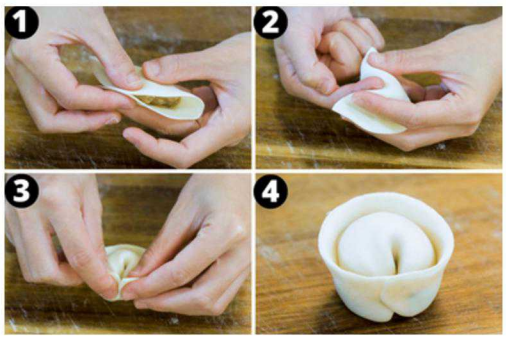
3. Standing Up Dumplings

Based on the second method, you can make a variation. Bend the two ends toward the middle and lightly press to keep the shape. That way, the dumpling can stand up; it's like a little bag. You can pan-fry them with the pleats pointing up, so even if the edge splits during cooking, the juice won't leak out.



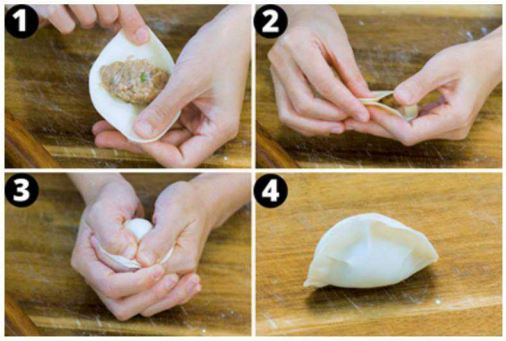
4. Shoe-Shaped Gold Ingot Dumpling

This is also a variation of the fold-in-half dumpling. It's super easy--you make a curve right in the middle and bend the dumplings to connect the two ends. Pinch tightly to make sure they don't separate. This looks like the ancient Chinese shoe-shaped gold ingot, which remains a symbol of wealth and prosperity. If you want to make dumplings for Chinese festivities or special events, this is the shape you should try.



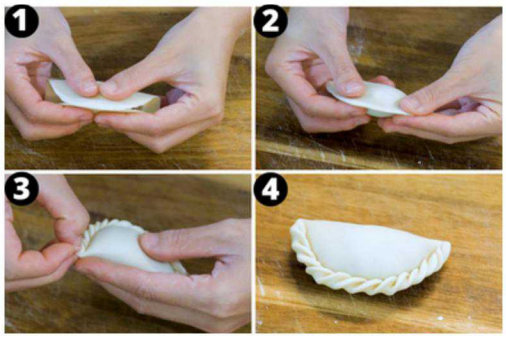
5. Fat Belly Dumpling

Use both hands to stretch the wrapper lightly, and then fold it in half. Pinch the edges together and squeeze the dumpling with the hollow of your palm. This way, you will get a dumpling that has a fat belly. This is a rustic method that is often used in dumpling restaurants because you can fold these dumplings super-fast once you practice. That is the only way to make the dumplings fresh and without people waiting. A professionally trained dumpling maker can wrap 30 of these in one minute.



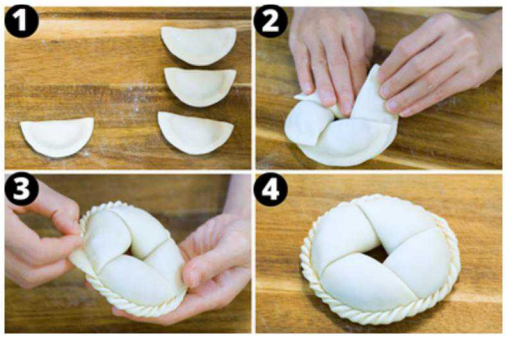
6. Classic Chive Box

This is also a variation of the fold-in-half dumpling. Fold a tiny edge at the corner and pinch. Continue to fold the more pleats from the pinched spot and repeat until the end. These pleats are exquisite, so it does take some practice.



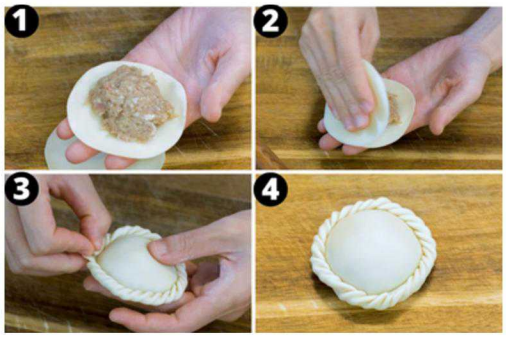
7. Copper Cash

Based on the chive box shape, you can make a massive dumpling. First, make four dumplings that are folded in half. Put them together one after another and connect the ends to create a circle. Match the edge to make sure it is perfectly round. Then you just pinch the pleats all the way around the edge like how you make the chive box. This looks like ancient Chinese copper cash. You can pan-fry these dumplings on both sides until golden brown. You will make your guests feel special if you serve them this.



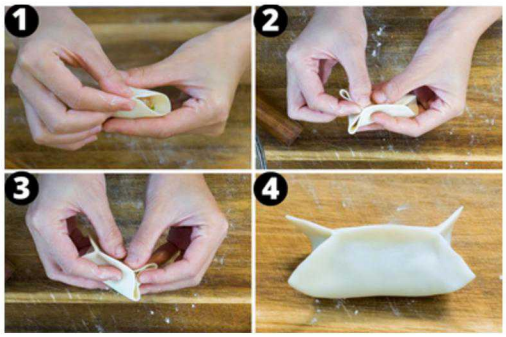
8. Sun Shape

This is similar to the chive box. Instead of folding the wrapper in half, you cover it with another wrapper right on top. Push out the air. Establish the edge tightly and start making pleats all the way around. This dumpling can hold a lot of filling, and it is especially perfect for pan-frying because it is so flat that you can easily get both sides golden and crispy.



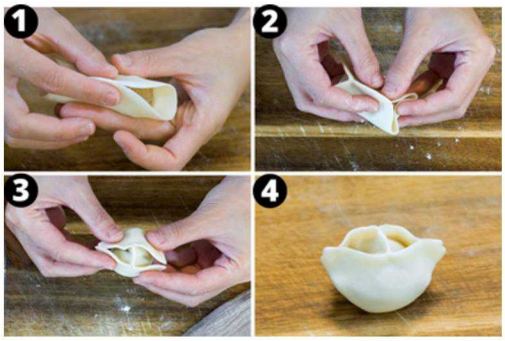
9. Pot Sticker Shape

This is classic, as you have seen in many potsticker recipes. Fold the wrapper in half. Pinch the middle to make sure it doesn't split. Push the end toward the center to create two corners. Seal those two corners and then do the same thing to the other side.

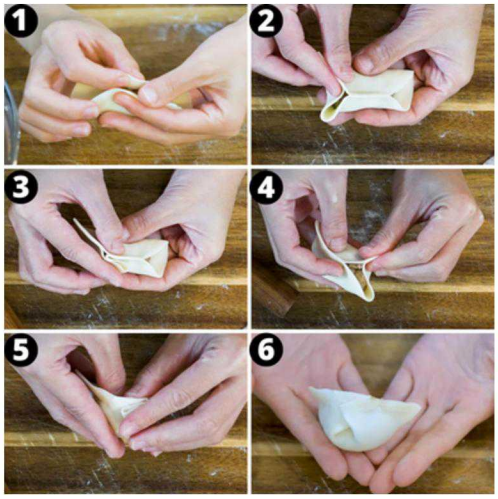


10. Pot Sticker Variation

This is the same method as before: Fold the wrapper in half and pinch the middle. Push the end toward the center to create two corners. Seal those two corners. Do the same thing to the other side. Then pinch two petals together on both sides.

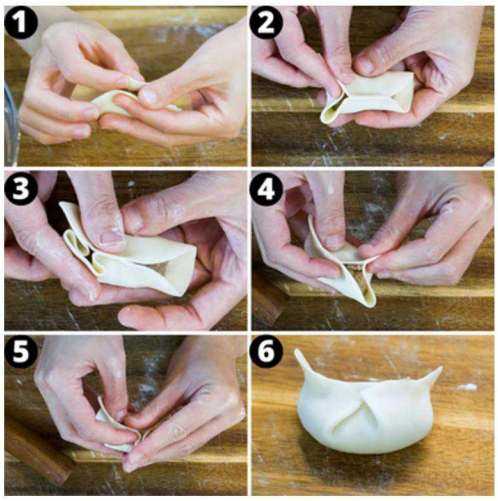


11. Half Moon with 2 Pleats



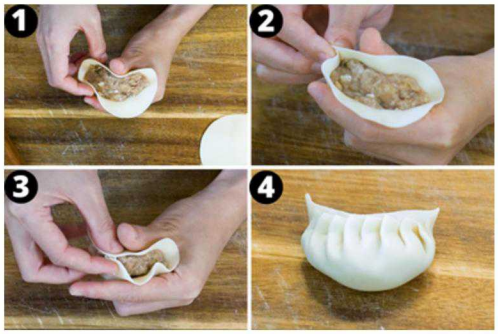
Now let's get to the most common look of a Chinese dumpling, which will be the half-moon shape. If you are a beginner, you can try the half moon with only 2 pleats. Fold the wrapper in half. Pinch the middle first to make sure the edges stick together. Push the end towards the center to create 2 corners. Pinch one corner tightly. Then flip the other corner toward the center to create one pleat. Do the same thing to the other side. This is kind of like the potsticker, but in the last step, we fold the pleats to the center so it becomes a half-moon shape.

12. Half Moon with 4 Pleats



Once you have mastered the 2 pleats, you can try 4 pleats. The first few steps are the same. Fold the wrapper in half. Pinch the middle. Push the end toward the center and pinch the first corner. Fold the other corner in a way that creates 2 pleats instead of one. Do the same thing to the other side. There you go.

13. Half-Moon Shape with However Many Pleats You Want



Use your thumb and forefinger to hold the dumpling like the picture. As you can see, it is already a half-moon shape. Pinch the corner to create the first pleat. Then fold and pinch again. Repeat that all the way until the end. This is a one-directional pleating method.

14. Leaf Shape Dumpling

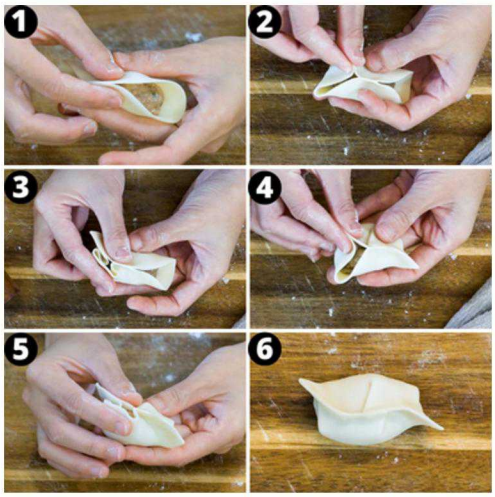


This is a bit similar to the many pleats half-moon shape dumpling. Instead of folding pleats on one side, you have to do it on both sides.

Put your forefinger and thumb parallel to each other. Put the wrapper with the filling on top. Pinch the right corner and lift it. Use your left forefinger to fold the pleats on the top half of the wrapper. Use your left thumb to create pleats on the bottom half of the wrapper. Repeat that all the way until the end. Rub the little tip to close the dumpling.

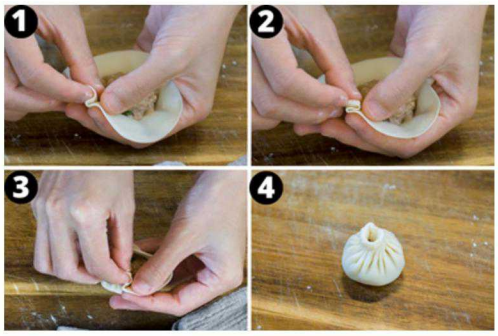
I normally don't use this method in my recipes because it is difficult for most people to learn, and it is time-consuming to fold. It does look pretty, though

15. S-shape Dumpling



This is similar to the half-moon 4-pleat method. The first few steps are the same. Fold the wrapper in half. Pinch the middle. Push the end towards the center, and you will create two corners. Pinch one and fold the other one in a way that creates two pleats. Do the same thing to the other side, but switch to the opposite direction. This way, you will have a 4-pleat dumpling, but it is an S shape instead of a moon shape.

16. Soup Dumpling Shape, AKA Steam Bun Shape

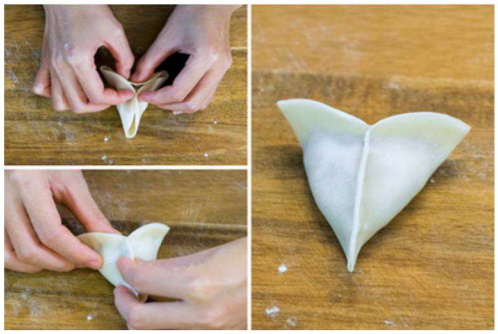


The right hand lifts the edge of the wrapper. The left hand helps to push to fold a pleat and pinch it. Lightly stretch the wrapper a little bit, and then fold it to create the next pleat. Continue to do that until you finish the whole way around.

When you get to the end, you will create a natural hole in the middle. Your first thought might be to close it because dumplings are supposed to be sealed completely. That is not true. Soup dumplings contain a lot of liquid, creating lots of steam while cooking. If the dumpling is completely sealed, it will explode. Instead, you need to leave a tiny hole open to allow the steam to escape, and because the hole is located at the top middle, the soup will not leak out. Of course, if you are not making soup dumplings, you can just pinch and close them.

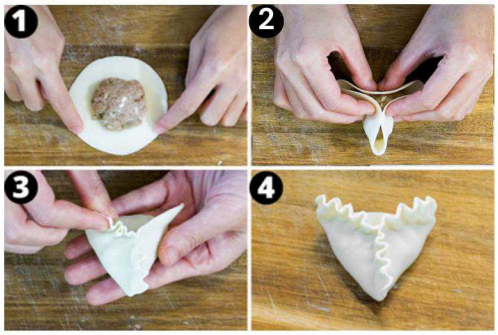
17. Triangle Shape

This one is easy. Place the wrapper with the filling on the working surface. Mark three points with equal distance on the wrapper and push them toward the center. This way, you create three corners. Pinch these three lines together and close the dumpling.



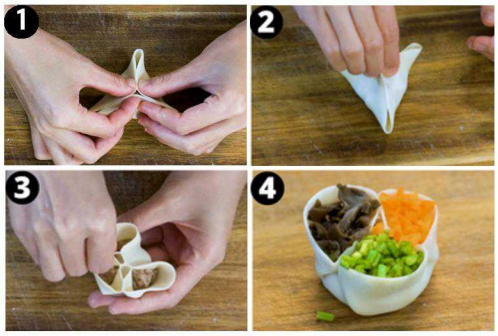
18. Triangle Dumpling with Pleats

This is based on the triangle shape. The first few steps are the same. Mark three points with equal distance on the edge of the wrapper and push them toward the center to create three corners. Pinch to seal it. Then make some simple pleats on these three lines so the dumplings won't break easily while cooking.



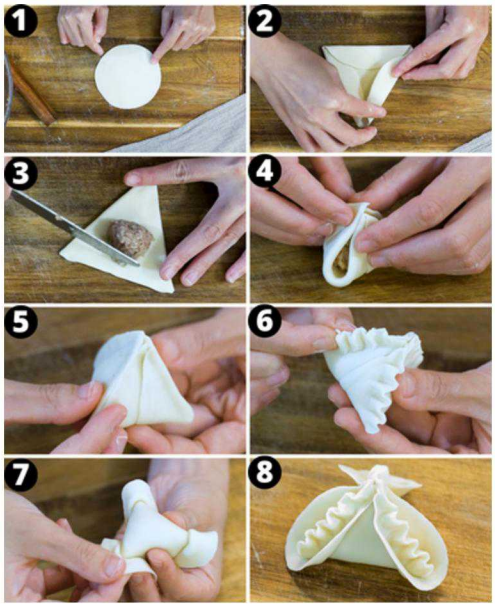
19. Three-Treasure Dumpling

This is based on the triangle shape. Mark three points with equal distance on the wrapper and push them toward the center to create three corners. Don't seal these three lines. Instead, pinch to stabilize the center. Next, open three corners and connect them to each other. This way, you will have three spots to fill with different toppings, such as diced cilantro stems, carrot, and wood ear mushroom. This dumpling is usually steamed or pan-fried on the bottom. Do not boil it because the filling will fall out.



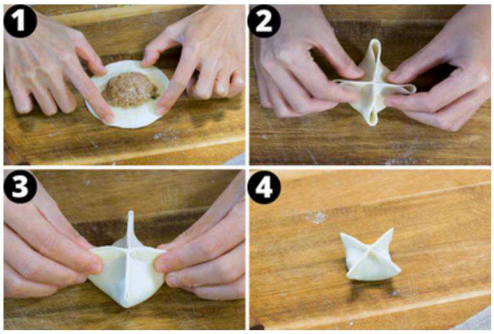
20. Triangle with Complicated Petals

Place the wrapper on the working surface. Mark 3 points with equal distance. Fold the edge to create a triangle wrapper. Flip to the other side. Put some filling in the middle. Fold the corners to the center. Seal the edge to create a tetrahedron. Keep pinching the lines to make some room for the pleats later. Do you still remember the simple pleats? That is what we are going to do. Just rub your thumb and forefinger back and forth on the edge of the tetrahedron. Do this to all 3 of them. Flip the dumpling and unfold all the edges carefully; you will have some beautiful petals. Using this method, you can create four petals and five petals, but three is the easiest one.



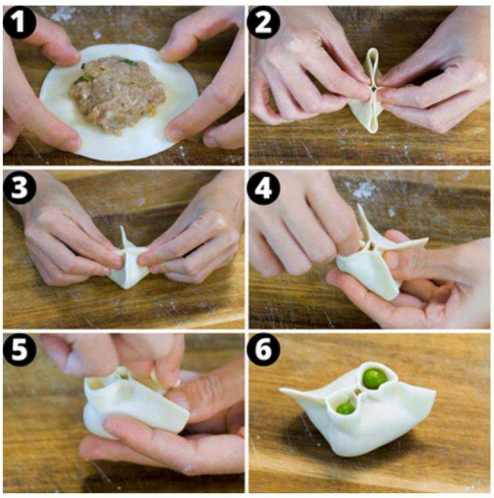
21. Square Dumpling

For this shape, you mark 4 points on the edge instead of 3. Push the points toward the center. Pinch the lines and you get a square dumpling. You will see this method used often on fried crab rangoon.



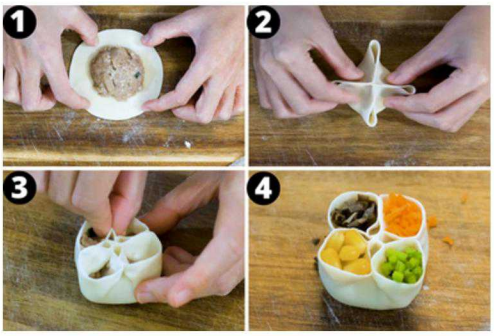
22. Square Dumpling Variation

The same as before, mark 4 points on the edge and push to the center. Pinch the lines to get a square dumpling. Curve one petal to the left. Curve the opposite petal to the right. You can decorate these two spots with peas or corn.



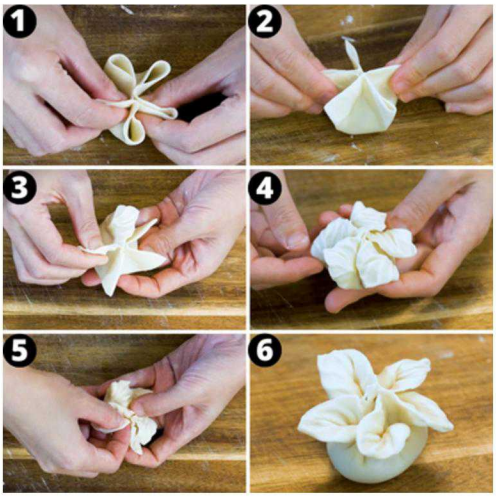
23. Four Joy Dumplings

The first few steps are the same. Mark four points at equal distances and push them toward the center to create four corners. Pinch to stabilize the middle. Open up these four corners and connect them with each other. This way, you will have four spots that you can fill with different toppings, such as cilantro, carrot, wood ear mushroom, and corn.



24. Cherry Blossom Dumpling

Mark 5 points on the wrapper at equal distances. Pinch the corners to create a pentagon. Then make some pleats on the petals. Remember the simple pleats that you used? This time, you won't rub it back and forth. You only rub in one direction. Don't reverse. Finish all five of them. Twist each piece to make it into the cherry petals.





Six Dumpling Dipping Sauces

Here are six dumpling dipping sauce recipes. I covered different styles from the north and south of China. Some are spicy; some are not. Some are sweet; some are savory, so you will definitely find something you like.

NO.1 - Chili oil dipping sauce (1-2 portions)

This dipping sauce is simple and classic. After making homemade dumplings, you are probably exhausted. This sauce can be ready in a minute, and it goes well with almost any type of dumpling.

- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 10.7g / 2 tsps Chinese black vinegar
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps Sichuan red chili oil (see page 32)

1. Thoroughly combine the soy sauce, Chinese black vinegar, and chili oil in a little bowl and serve with your favorite dumplings.

NO.2 - Sesame Peanut Dipping Sauce (3 portions)

This dipping sauce is nonspicy and kid-friendly. Not only can you serve it with dumplings, but it is also great for noodles, hot pots, and satay skewers. I love the sweet and nutty taste. It does add some heaviness to the dumpling, though, so you might want to have something to drink at the same time.

- 48g / 3 Tbsps pure peanut butter
- 16g / 1 Tbsp pure sesame butter
- 25g-37.5g / 2-3 Tbsps sugar to taste
- 15g / about 1.5 pieces fermented bean curd (page 17)
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste
- 60g / 4 Tbsps boiling hot water
- 1.5g / ½ Tbsp diced cilantro
- 3g / 1 tsp sesame seeds

1. In a mixing bowl, thoroughly combine the peanut butter, sesame paste, sugar, fermented bean curd, and salt. The peanut butter and sesame paste are pure, which means they don't contain salt and sugar. If you use flavored peanut butter, please adjust the seasoning to taste.

2. Add 4 Tbsps boiling water in batches and stir. The peanut butter will start to absorb the liquid. Continue to add a little more water and mix until the sauce becomes thick and creamy.

3. Taste to adjust the flavor. Sprinkle some sesame seeds and diced cilantro as garnish.

NO.3 - Spicy soy dipping sauce (1-2 portions)

I call this one an all-purpose dipping sauce. Not only can you use it for dumplings, but we also use it for hot pot and sometimes for salad, too.

- 66g / ¼ cup soy sauce
- 4g / 2 tsps diced Thai bird's eye chilies, optional (see page 23)
- 4.5g / 1.5 Tbsps diced cilantro
- 6g / 1.5 Tbsps diced scallion
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 6.8g / 1.5 tsps sesame oil
- 15g / 1 Tbsp water to adjust the saltiness

1. Thoroughly combine the soy sauce, diced hot chili, cilantro, scallions, minced garlic, sugar, and sesame oil in a mixing bowl.

2. Taste the sauce and add 1 Tbsp water to adjust the saltiness.

NO.4 - Vinegar ginger dipping sauce (1 portion)

This special dipping sauce is commonly served with soup dumplings. The taste is light but refreshing. It brightens up the dumpling itself, which is perfect for soup dumplings because you want to enjoy the broth, but, of course, it is also suitable for regular dumplings.

- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, thinly julienned
- 32g / 2 Tbsps white vinegar
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce

1. Thoroughly combine the julienned ginger, vinegar, and soy sauce in a small bowl.

NO.5 - Garlic vinegar sauce (1 portion)

This dipping sauce comes from Northern Chinese cuisine, and the fragrance is intense. The raw garlic paste brings a sharp, spicy kick to the taste.

- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste
- 1g / ¼ tsp sugar
- 9g / 2 tsps sesame oil
- 32g / 2 Tbsps vinegar
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- a few shakes red pepper flakes, optional
- 1.5g / ½ tsp sesame seeds

1. Press the garlic through a garlic presser. Then mix the garlic with salt and sugar until it becomes a sticky paste.

2. Add the toasted sesame oil, white vinegar, and ground white pepper, and then mix until well combined.

3. Sprinkle some sesame seeds and red pepper flakes as garnish. If you don't eat spicy food, skip the chili flakes.

NO.6 - Scallion ginger dipping sauce (2 portions)

This sauce is served initially with Cantonese white-cut chicken, which is a traditional dish from the south of China. However, I found it goes so well with dumplings as well. It is full of scallion flavor, and it smells incredible. The best part is that it doesn't overpower the meat flavor, so it is good when you want to enjoy the dumpling itself.

- 22.5g / 2.5 Tbsps grated ginger
- 16g / ¼ Tbsps diced scallion
- 1.5g / 1.5 tsps diced cilantro stem
- 27g / 2 Tbsps peanut oil
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste

1. Combine the diced scallions, grated ginger, cilantro stems, salt, and white pepper in a heat-proof bowl.

2. Heat the peanut oil over medium heat until you see a slight smoke coming out, and then pour it over the aromatics to activate the flavor and mix well. If you are allergic to peanut oil, use vegetable oil.

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Three Dumpling Fillings

NO.1 - Classic Pork & Cabbage Filling (40-50 Dumplings)

bái cài zhū ròu xiàn
白 菜 猪 肉 馅

This is probably the most popular dumpling filling. The cabbage provides a lot of moisture. As a result, you get an amazingly juicy and incredibly soft filling paired with pork. Based on this filling, you can make a variation; instead of using fresh cabbage seasoned with salt, try to replace it with Korean kimchi.

- 400g / 14 oz ground pork
- 1 egg
- 6g / 2 tsps grated ginger
- 16g / ¼ cup diced scallion
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 9g / 2 tsps sesame oil
- 40g / 2.5 Tbsps garlic chili sauce
- 600g / 21.2 oz cabbage, shredded
- 8.6g / 1.5 tsps salt to season the cabbage

1. Separate the cabbage stems and leaves. Thinly julienne the leaves and dice the stems.

2. Add salt to the cabbage in a big mixing bowl and toss thoroughly. Let it sit for 20 minutes, and then squeeze the cabbage to eliminate some of the moisture. You should have about 350 grams of cabbage left after the squeezing.

3. Thoroughly mix the ground pork, egg, grated ginger, soy sauce, sesame oil, and garlic chili sauce in a mixing bowl, and then stir the meat in one direction for a few minutes to develop the texture.

4. Once the meat becomes sticky, add the squeezed cabbage and the diced scallions. Continue to mix until well combined and the filling is done.

NO.2 - Spiced Beef Filling (40-50 Dumplings)

xiāng là niú ròu xiàn
香 辣 牛 肉 馅

For the Spice Powder

- 2.5g / about 5 dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.2g / about 1 bay leaf
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 1.5g / about ½ piece black cardamom
- 0.4g / about 4 cloves
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 2g / 1.5 tsps whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)

To complete the Filling

- 500g / 1.1 pounds ground beef
- 6g / 2 tsps grated garlic
- 3g / 1 tsp grated ginger
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 80g / ⅓ cup unsalted beef stock or water
- 21g / ⅓ cup diced scallion
- 57g / ½ cup diced onion
- 16g / ⅓ cup diced cilantro
- 27g / 2 Tbsps hot oil

1. Add the dried red chilies, cinnamon stick, bay leaf, star anise, black cardamom, cloves, white pepper, and Sichuan peppercorns to a cast-iron skillet.

2. Toast the spices over low heat for a few minutes. Be careful not to burn the Sichuan peppercorns, or else they bring a bitter flavor.

3. Put the spices in a blender and blend them into a fine powder. Set it aside.

4. In a big mixing bowl, thoroughly combine the ground beef, grated garlic, grated ginger, soy sauce, salt, the spice powder you just made, and the egg.

5. Pour ⅓ cup beef stock or water into the filling in batches. Stir the filling in one direction until all the liquid is absorbed.

6. Add the diced onion, scallions, and cilantro. Heat the oil to smoking hot and pour it over the aromatics to activate the fragrance. Mix them well, and then the filling will be done.

NO.3 - Chicken and Mushroom Filling (30-35 Dumplings)

xiāng gū jī ròu xiàn
香 菇 鸡 肉 馅

Chicken and shiitake mushrooms are a popular pairing in Chinese cuisine. Chicken meat is lean compared to pork and beef, so it is easy to get dry while cooking. The mushroom is soft and meaty, which helps bring texture and flavor. I recommend using dried mushrooms because they are intense in flavor.

- 12g / about 4 dried shiitake mushrooms (see page 24)
- 350g / 12.3 oz ground chicken
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 23g / 1.5 Tbsps the mushroom-soaking liquid
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 1 egg
- 113g / 4 oz diced carrot
- 12g / 3 Tbsps diced scallion
-

1. Soak the dried shiitake mushrooms in water for 2 hours or until soft. Squeeze the water out, and then dice the mushrooms finely. Set it aside.

2. In a large bowl, combine the ground chicken, soy sauce, mushroom-soaking liquid, salt, white pepper, and the egg. Mix it until well combined, and then stir the filling with a circular motion in one direction for a few minutes to develop the texture.

3. Add the diced shiitake mushroom, carrot, and scallions and mix thoroughly.

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Shaanxi Hot and Sour Dumpling Soup

shǎn xī suān tāng shuǐ jiǎo
陕 西 酸 汤 水 饺

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 5 people

Shaanxi Province has a large population of Hui nationality, who are devout Muslims. They have a different cuisine and culture from the Han nationality, so this recipe is usually made with lamb or beef since they do not consume pork or alcohol for religious reasons. Another uniqueness of this dish is that Shaanxi people enjoy these dumplings in a special hot and sour soup, while other cuisines in China serve their dumplings with dipping sauces.



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To make the spiced vinegar

- 384g / 1.5 cups Chinese black vinegar
- 120g / ½ cup water
- 19g / 1.5 Tbsps brown sugar
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 1.1g / ½ tsp fennel seeds
- 0.3g / about 3 cloves
- 0.2g / about 1 bay leaf
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic
- 1g / about 2 dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 1.3g / 1 tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)

To make the dumpling wrapper

- 400g / 14 oz bread flour
- 200g / 6.8 fl oz room-temperature water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt

To make the dumpling filling

- 500g / 1.1 pounds ground beef
- 80g / 2.8 oz diced fennel leaves
- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil
- 30g / about 2 scallions, diced
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 60g / ¼ cup water or beef stock
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 1 egg

Assemble 1 serving of dumpling soup

- 10 dumplings
- 8g / 2 Tbsps dried baby shrimp
- 4g / ½ cup dried laver (seaweed)
- 16g / ¼ cup diced scallion
- 12g / ¼ cup diced cilantro
- 9g / 1 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 48g-64g / 3 to 4 Tbsps spiced Chinese black vinegar
- 1 tsp beef fat
- salt to taste
- 480g / 2 cups dumpling cooking water
- 41g / 3 Tbsps red chili oil (see page 32)
- 4.5g / 1 tsp sesame oil

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Ingredient Tips

- Chinese black vinegar (陈醋 chén cù) is aged for years, giving the dish a complex flavor. In most cases, you can replace it with balsamic vinegar but not this recipe, as it is the key ingredient. However, you can get it in almost any Asian market.
- The dried laver (紫菜 zǐ cài) is a type of edible seaweed which is often used in all kinds of soups in Chinese cuisine. It carries a distinctive taste and aroma. Skipping it will not ruin the dish, but the taste will be slightly different. If you don't have it, you can sauté some diced shitake mushrooms until fragrant and then use as a replacement.
- Dried baby shrimp (虾皮 xiā pí) have a strong umami taste and go really well with the laver. If you don't have access, use Japanese dried bonito flakes as replacements. Be aware that the dried baby shrimp is salty, so please adjust the sodium amount if needed.
- It is a bit tedious to render a little bit of beef fat for one recipe, so you can replace it with butter instead.

Make the spiced vinegar

1. Add the Chinese black vinegar, water, brown sugar, fennel seeds, Sichuan peppercorns, cloves, cinnamon stick, star anise, bay leaf, crushed garlic, and dried red chilies to a saucepan. Stir thoroughly and bring the pot to a light boil.

2. Simmer at low heat without the lid for 15 minutes or until 25% of the liquid is reduced. You don't need to measure it; just eyeball it. You should have about 1 cup liquid left.

3. Fish out all of the spices and discard them. Set the spiced vinegar aside.

Make the dumpling dough

1. Add the salt and water to a cup and stir until dissolved. Pour the solution into the flour in batches and mix simultaneously. Feel the moisture level of the flour to adjust the water ratio as needed.

2. Gather the flour until a rough dough forms; then knead the dough. If the dough feels tight and stubborn, please cover and rest it for 15 minutes, and then knead it again. Repeat the rest and kneading process until the dough becomes smooth and elastic.

Chef's Secret: A proper resting period allows the gluten to expand and absorb water in the dough, making it more flexible and easier to work with. If you own a KitchenAid, use the hook attachment and let it run on medium speed for 10 minutes.

3. Shape the dough into a log, cover it with a damp towel, and rest for 30 minutes.

Make the filling

1. Add the ground beef and diced fennel leaves to a big mixing bowl. If you don't like fennel, use cilantro or parsley.











2. Add the cooking oil, diced scallions, and five-spice powder to a sauce pot, stir over low heat to activate the fragrance, and then add to the beef.

3. Add the soy sauce, oyster sauce, salt, black pepper, and egg and mix thoroughly.

4. Pour the beef stock in batches, and stir the filling with a circular motion in one direction until the liquid is absorbed. Set the filling aside.

Divide the dough and wrap the dumplings

1. After the dough has been rested for about 30 minutes, roll it into a long log and then cut it into 50 even pieces, about 12 g each.

2. Sprinkle some flour to prevent the dough pieces from sticking to each other. Then cover them with plastic wrap so they don't dry out.

3. Put one piece of dough on the working surface with the cut cross section facing vertically, and then flatten it into a small round pancake. Use one hand to roll the edge of the dough back and forth with a rolling pin while the other hand rotates the dough. Repeat that until you get a round wrapper with a thick middle and a thinner edge. During the rolling, use flour to prevent sticking as needed.

4. Put 1 Tbsp filling in the middle of the wrapper, use both your thumbs and forefingers to stretch the wrapper, and then fold it in half. Pinch the edge to seal the dumpling.

5. Thoroughly flour the tray and set the dumplings aside. Then continue to fold the rest.

Cook the dumplings and assemble the soup

1. Bring a pot of water to a boil over medium heat. Use a spatula to swirl the water to create a cyclone. Then add the dumplings to the cyclone and cook over medium heat for 3 minutes or until the water returns to a simmer.

2. Add ½ cup cold water to drop the temperature. Wait a few minutes for the pot to come back to a simmer again. Then add another ½ cup of cold water to drop the temperature. Once the water returns to a simmer the third time, the dumplings are cooked through, and you can turn off the heat. Adding cold water is called dian lengshui (点冷水), a traditional method that helps you to cook perfect dumplings.

3. To assemble one serving of dumpling soup, gather the following ingredients into a big serving bowl: dried baby shrimp, dried seaweed, diced scallion, diced cilantro, toasted sesame seeds, soy sauce, the spiced black vinegar, beef fat, salt, chili oil, sesame oil, 10 boiled dumplings, and 2 cups of the dumpling cooking water.

Chef's Secret: Hot and sour dumpling soup is usually assembled and served in single portions because you should adjust the vinegar and red chili oil to taste. This recipe is enough to make five servings. If you wish to assemble them all at once, please take the measurements listed above and multiply by 5.













Steamed Dumplings with Pork and Sweet Corn Filling

zhū ròu yù mǐ zhēng jiǎo
猪 肉 玉 米 蒸 饺

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Makes: 40 Dumplings

When you bite into this dumpling, you can really taste the result of the caramelized aromatics. Adding sweet corn to the filling is also interesting. The dipping sauce may look heavy, but it is well-balanced with this dumpling because you will make the wrapper very thin.

The biggest difference between the boiled and steamed dumplings is that steamed dumpling dough is formed with hot water. If you noticed, the water ratio for this dumpling wrapper is 64%, while the regular homemade dumpling wrapper is usually 55% or less. That is because hot water denatures some of the protein, and the flour can now absorb more water without being sticky. The dumpling does not contact the water directly while steaming, and with a little bit of extra water that we forced into the dough, the skin will come out nice and soft.

To make the wrapper

- 280g / 10 oz all-purpose flour
- 180g / ¾ cup hot water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 9g / 2 tsps vegetable oil

To make the filling

- 500g / 1.1 pounds ground pork
- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil
- 113g / 1 cup diced onion
- 48g / ⅓ cup minced garlic
- 22.5g / 2.5 Tbsps minced ginger
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 80g / ⅓ cup chicken stock or water
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 21g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper to taste
- 21g / ⅓ cup scallions
- 160g / 5.6 oz sweet corn

To make the dipping sauce

- 32g / 2 Tbsps peanut butter
- 11g / 2 tsps sesame butter
- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp sugar
- 60g / ¼ cup hot water
- 1.9g / ⅓ tsp salt
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp soy sauce
- 8g / ½ Tbsp Chinese black vinegar (see page 16)

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Make the wrapper dough

1. Add the salt and all-purpose flour to a big mixing bowl and stir well. Pour the boiling water into the flour in batches and mix until the water is well absorbed. Make sure the water is as hot as possible so the heat can gelatinize the flour. Let it cool for 3-4 minutes.

2. Form the flour into a rough dough. Add the vegetable oil and knead the dough until the oil is absorbed. Cover and rest the dough for 15 minutes to relax the gluten.

3. Knead it again for 3-5 minutes or until smooth. Shape it into a log and then cover and rest for 30 minutes.

Make the filling

1. While waiting, add the vegetable oil, diced onion, minced garlic, and minced ginger to the wok. Stir over medium-low heat for about 10 minutes or until the garlic bits are golden brown.

2. Turn off the heat. Add the chicken stock, soy sauce, oyster sauce, Chinese cooking wine, sugar, and black pepper to the wok and mix well.

3. Remove everything from the wok and mix it thoroughly with the ground pork. Stir the pork with a circular motion in one direction for 3-5 minutes to develop the texture.

4. Add the diced scallions and the sweet corn and mix thoroughly. Set the filling aside.

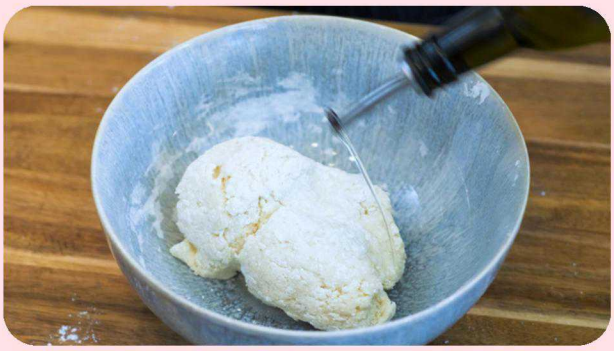
Wrap the dumpling and steam

1. After the dumpling dough has been rested for 30 minutes, roll it into a long, even log. Divide into 40 pieces, 11-12 grams each. Lightly dust some flour to prevent stickiness. Cover with a damp towel so the pieces don't dry out.

2. Dust one piece of small dough with a little bit of flour and flatten it into a small round patty. Use one hand to roll the edge of the dough forward and back with a rolling pin while the other hand rotates the dough. Repeat until the wrapper reaches 2.5 inches in diameter, and it should be thick in the middle and thin at the edge.

3. Put about 1.5 Tbsps of filling in the middle. Hold the wrapper and the filling in your left hand. Pinch the right corner and lift it up. Pinch a pleat on the bottom half of the wrapper, and then make one on the top half of the wrapper. Continue this method, one after another. Rub the little tip to close the dumpling. This is a leaf-shaped dumpling, which is one of the complicated folding methods. It











requires both of your hands to work together in balance. If you are a beginner, check page 337 to choose an easier folding method.

4. Line the steamer with a damp cheesecloth and place the dumplings in it. You can also use parchment paper to prevent sticking. Just make sure you poke some holes to allow the steam to escape.

5. Fill the steamer pot with water and place the steamer above it. Turn the heat to medium. Once the water comes to a boil, continue to steam for 12 minutes.

Meal Prepping Tip: Dumplings are freezer-friendly. Make a big batch and freeze it for up to 3 months. Steam them whenever you want without defrosting over medium heat for 18 minutes or until cooked through.

Make the dipping sauce and serve

1. While the dumplings are steaming, make the dipping sauce. Add the peanut butter, sesame butter, and sugar into a bowl.

2. Pour in ¼ cup boiling hot water in batches and stir until the mixture becomes smooth and creamy.

3. Season it by adding salt, soy sauce, and Chinese black vinegar. Mix thoroughly. Sprinkle some chili flakes and sesame seeds as garnish.

4. Serve the dumplings with the peanut dipping sauce.













Shanghai Xiao Long Bao Soup Dumplings

shàng hǎi xiǎo lóng bāo
上 海 小 笼 包

Prep Time: 1 day

Cooking Time: 3.5 hours

Serves: 32 Dumplings

Xiao long bao, aka Chinese soup dumplings, is the perfect single bite of food. It appears like a standard dumpling, but as you bite into its delicate wrapper, a mouthful of savory broth will burst out with a tender meatball floating inside.

As one of the finest Chinese dishes, xiao long bao isn't easy to make. Don't worry; I will explain every step in as much detail as possible. You will learn how to make that incredibly rich, tasty broth, and I have tips for you to make the dough extra stretchy in order to wrap perfect dumplings without breaking the wrapper. I also include lots of shortcuts and replacements to guarantee you the restaurant-standard result at home.

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To make the broth jelly

- 150g / 5.3 oz pork skin
- 454g / 1 pound pork bones
- 60g / 2.1 oz Jinhua ham (see page 25)
- 24g / about 8 slices ginger
- 45g / about 3 scallions
- 1.2 liters / 5 cups water

To make the wrapper

- 300g / 10.6 oz bread flour
- 150g / 5 fl oz room-temperature water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt

To make the filling

- 32g / ½ cup diced scallion
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 6g / 2 tsps minced ginger
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 0.4g / ¼ tsp Sichuan peppercorn powder (see page 18)
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil
- 9g / 1 Tbsp roasted sesame seeds
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 250g / 8.8 oz ground pork
- 60g / ¼ cup water

To make the dipping sauce

- 32g / 2 Tbsps apple cider vinegar
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 9g / 1 Tbsp julienned ginger

Make the broth jelly

1. Add the pork skin and bones to a big stock pot, fill it with water, and then bring it to a boil.

> **Souped Up Swap:** If you don't eat pork, replace the pork skin with 227g / 0.5 pound chicken feet; switch the pork bones with 454g / 1 pound chicken bones.

2. Discard the blanching water and rinse the pork skin and bones under running water to wash off the foamy scum.

3. Use a chef's knife to scrub any attached fat from the pork skin and then cut the skin into thin strips because smaller pieces encourage gelatin dissolution.

4. Fill another pot with 5 cups water and add the pork skin strips, bones, ginger slices, scallions, and Jinhua ham, and bring to a boil.

5. Simmer the soup over the lowest heat for 3 hours or until the broth becomes milky and creamy.

6. Pour the soup through a sieve into a measuring cup. If you have more than 1 ¾ cups (about 420g), reduce it on the stove. If you don't get enough, add some water.

7. Chill the broth in the fridge for at least 6 hours or until it is coagulated. Finely mince the broth jelly and set it in the fridge. Please do the mincing fast because the jelly will turn soft and melt if your room temperature is too hot.

> **Short Cut:** Here is an easy method to make the broth jelly, which only takes 10 minutes. Add 4.5 tsps gelatin powder, ¼ tsp salt, and 2 cups store-bought stock to a saucepan. To make up for the lack of taste, I recommend using a good-quality stock. Simmer the soup until the liquid reduces to 1¾ cups. Chill it in the fridge until it settles. However, pure gelatin powder doesn't give the soup that rich, sticky, velvety texture, so it is your choice to evaluate the up and downsides.

Make the wrapper dough

1. Add the salt to the water and stir to dissolve. Add the bread flour to a stand mixer's bowl. Pour the salt solution into the bread flour and stir until all the water is well absorbed.

2. Use the hook attachment and let the stand mixer run on medium speed to knead the dough for 10 minutes.













If you don't have one, you can knead the dough by hand for 12 minutes or until smooth. If the dough feels tight and stubborn, you can cover and rest it for 15 minutes and then knead it again. It should become elastic shortly.

3. Shape the dough into a log, cover it, and let it rest for at least 1 hour or longer.

Chef's Secret: It is necessary to give the starches and gluten enough time to expand and fully absorb the water so the dough becomes stretchy. Otherwise, the wrapper will have a higher chance of breaking, and the dumpling will leak.

Make the filling

1. Add the minced scallions, garlic, ginger, white pepper, Sichuan peppercorn powder, and roasted sesame seeds to a heat-proof bowl. Recommend lightly pounding the sesame seeds using a rolling pin to release the nutty flavor before adding to the bowl.

2. Heat 2.5 Tbsps vegetable oil in a saucepan over medium heat until it is smoking hot, and pour it onto the aromatics to activate the flavor. Mix well.

3. Add the aromatic mixture, salt, sugar, and soy sauce to the ground pork and mix thoroughly.

4. Pour ¼ cup water into the pork mixture in batches and stir the meat with a circular motion in one direction to develop the texture. Add a little bit more and continue to stir until all the water is well absorbed.

5. Combine the meat mixture with the minced jelly and mix for 3 minutes until well combined. Cover it and set it in the fridge.

Wrap the dumplings

1. Once the dough has been rested for 1 hour, roll it into a long, even strip. Divide the strip into 32 even pieces, about 14 grams each.

2. Sprinkle some flour to prevent sticking and cover them with a plastic film so they don't dry out.

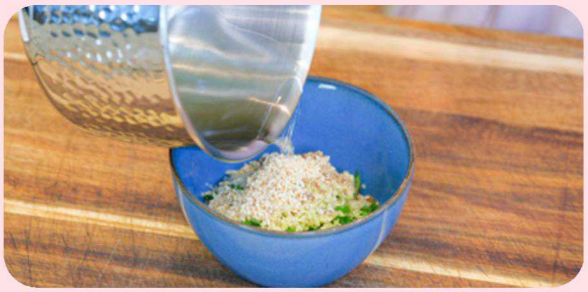
3. Put one piece of dough on the working surface with the cut cross section facing vertically and flatten it into a small round pancake. One hand uses a rolling pin to roll the edge of the dough back and forth while the other hand rotates the dough. Repeat that, and you will get a round wrapper with a thick middle and a thinner edge, about 7.5 cm / 3 inches in diameter.

4. Put some filling in the middle of the wrapper. Use your left hand to hold the dumpling. Use your right hand to pinch the edge, fold the pleats all the way around, and close the dumpling. Each pleat is about ⅕ inch wide. You should slightly pull the wrapper between each













pinch and fold, which is how you can get the dumpling to look tight and neat. The wrapper and filling ratio depend on your skill. You want the skin to be super thin and delicate, so you should wrap as much filling as you can. For a 14g wrapper, I use 25g filling, but that takes a lot of practice. For beginners, you may want to go down to 14g wrapper with 18g filling instead.

Steam the dumplings and make the dipping sauce

1. Place the dumplings into a steamer with parchment paper under them to prevent sticking.

2. Pre-boil a pot of water and place the steamer above it. Steam the xiao long bao over high heat for 15 minutes.
3. While waiting, make the dipping sauce by combining the soy sauce, apple cider vinegar, and julienned ginger.

Enjoy the soup dumplings with elegance

1. Xiao long bao is the art of dumplings. Recklessly taking a bite will probably cause the hot soup to spill all over your shirt. So instead, the local stream of people passes on a limerick, which perfectly explains how to eat them properly.

    - 轻轻提，慢慢移 Soup dumpling is delicate, so please pick it up by its topknot and carefully move it to your serving dish.
    - 先开窗，后喝汤 Make a small opening and tilt the dumpling so that the soup flows out. Blow to cool it and take a sip to enjoy the purest flavor.
    - 一口光，满口香 Add the dipping sauce and eat the rest in one bite, allowing the flavor to burst in your mouth.















Beijing Doorknob Dumplings

běi jīng mén dīng ròu bǐng
北 京 门 钉 肉 饼

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 12 Dumplings

Mending (门钉) means the doorknob on the gate of the Imperial Palace in Beijing, referring to the shape of this dumpling, which is the name origin. This recipe was created in the Qing Dynasty, and it was one of Empress Dowager Ci Xi's favorite dishes. This plus-size dumpling is like a meat pie. When you bite into it, you will be satisfied by the bursting juice, flavorful filling, and crispy skin.

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To make the wrapper

- 350g / 12.3 oz bread flour
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 110g / 3.7 fl oz hot water
- 110g / 3.7 fl oz cold water
- 9g / 2 tsps vegetable oil

To blend the aromatic water

- 6g / about 2 garlic cloves
- 12g / about 4 slices ginger
- 2g / ½ Tbsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 60g / ¼ cup water

To make the filling

- 400g / 14 oz ground beef
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp oil
- 6g / about 2 garlic cloves, grated
- 34g / 2 Tbsps soybean paste (see page 17)
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 8.3g / ½ Tbsp soy sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder (see page 19)
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper powder
- 30g / 2 Tbsps water
- 64g / 1 cup diced scallions
- 1 egg
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil

To pan-fry the dumplings

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsp vegetable oil

Make the dumpling dough

1. Add the salt and bread flour to a big mixing bowl and stir well. Pour the hot water into the flour in batches and stir to incorporate.

2. Add the room-temperature water in batches and stir well. Then gather all the flour together and knead until a rough dough forms. The dough contains 63% water, so it will be sticky, but no need to worry; cover and let it sit for 30 minutes; then, it will be softer and non-stick.

Why use half hot and half cold water to form the dough?
This is a common technique in China called Bantangmian (半烫面). This dumpling is bigger and thicker than a regular dumpling; if you use all cold water to form the dough, the wrapper might turn out tough and chewy. The hot water will denature some proteins, making the wrapper soft and tender.

3. Knead the dough on the working surface for 5 minutes or until it's smooth and elastic.

4. Shape the dough into a round ball and coat it with the vegetable oil. Wrap the oiled dough with plastic wrap and let it rest for 1 hour.

Blend the aromatic water

1. Add the ginger slices, garlic cloves, Sichuan peppercorns, and water to a blender cup. Then blend into a fine puree.

2. Let the puree go through a sieve to eliminate the soiled part and reserve the aromatic water aside. You will stir this into the filling, which makes the dumpling extra juicy and fragrant.

Make the filling

1. Thoroughly combine the soybean paste, oyster sauce, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, water, ground white pepper, and five-spice powder in a bowl and set it aside.

2 Add the grated garlic and oil to a saucepan and stir over medium heat for 1-2 minutes or until fragrant. Add the sauce mixture and continue to sauté over medium-low heat for 2-3 minutes or until you see the oil separates and floats above the brown sauce. Move the saucepan off the stove and let it cool.

3. Combine the sauce, ground beef, aromatic water, egg, and sesame oil in a big mixing bowl. Mix the filling with a circular motion in one direction for 3 minutes.

4. Add the diced scallions and mix thoroughly. Pre-divide the filling into 12 batches and set them aside.

Wrap the dumplings

1. Once the dough has been rested for 1 hour, poke a hole in the middle, stretch to enlarge the hole, and you will make a big ring. Cut the ring open to make the dough into a log.











2. Roll the log until the length reaches 12 inches, and then divide it into 12 even pieces. Flatten each piece into small pancakes and dust with flour to prevent sticking as needed. Cover them with plastic wrap so they don't dry out.

3. Take one piece of the dough and use a rolling pin to roll it into a 5-inch diameter wrapper. Then roll the edge until the wrapper becomes thicker in the middle and thinner around the edge.

4. Put one portion of the filling in the middle of the wrapper. Pinch the edge of the wrapper to fold a pleat and continue to fold more with the help of the other hand until you finish the whole way around. When you get to the end, pinch to seal the dumpling.

5. Thoroughly flour the tray and set the dumplings aside. Then, continue to wrap the rest.

Cook the dumplings and serve

1. Place a heavy-duty skillet on a low-heat stove. Add a drizzle of vegetable oil and swirl to cover the bottom. Place the dumplings rough-side down into the skillet. Leave space between each one so they don't stick.

2. Put on the lid and cook the dumplings over low heat for 16-18 minutes. Flip them every 2-3 minutes until both sides are golden brown.

> **Chef's Secret:** These dumplings are big and thick; if you fry them at high heat, the outside will burn before the inside gets cooked.

3. Serve these dumplings with your favorite dipping sauce.











Chinese Chive Boxes

jiǔ cài hé zi
韭 菜 盒 子

Prep Time: 1.5 hours

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Makes: 12 chive boxes

Jiucai is garlic chive, the main ingredient in this dish. Hezi means box or pockets. In this recipe, it refers to its wrapper; it's kind of like a dumpling but much bigger. You can think of it like a Chinese empanada.

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For the wrapper

- 350g / 12.3 oz all-purpose flour
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 140g / 4.7 fl oz hot water
- 90g / 3 fl oz cold water
- 0.4g / ⅛ tsp yeast
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp vegetable oil

For the filling

- 3 eggs
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps oil to cook the egg
- 80g / 2.8 oz mung bean noodles (see page 30)
- 720g / 3 cups boiled hot water
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 9g / 2 tsps sesame oil to coat the noodles
- 250g / 8.9 oz garlic chives
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps sesame oil to coat the garlic chives
- 24g / 6 Tbsps dried baby shrimp
- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, pressed through a garlic presser
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 2g / 1 tsp thirteen-spice powder (see page 19)
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste

For pan-frying the chive boxes

- 27g / 2 Tbsp of oil

Ingredient Tips

- Garlic chives (韭菜): Their scientific name is Allium Tuberosum. They look like chives, but the leaves are flat. They have a strong garlic flavor, which is how they got the name. Most Asian markets will carry them. There is no replacement because nothing tastes similar, but you can still make this recipe with other aromatics such as fennel leaves, cilantro, or diced onion. The flavor will be different, but you can call it fennel box, cilantro box, or onion box.
- Dried baby shrimp (虾皮): Dried baby shrimp has a strong umami taste and goes really well with the garlic chives. You can finely dice some fresh shrimp or rehydrate dried shiitake mushrooms as a replacement. Just be aware that the dried baby shrimp is quite salty. If you switch to a different ingredient, you will have to adjust the sodium amount.

Make the wrapper dough

1. Thoroughly mix the all-purpose flour and salt in a big mixing bowl. Mark a line through the middle of the bowl to roughly divide the flour in half.

2. Pour the hot water into one-half of the flour and stir to mix. Let it cool for 5 minutes.

3. Add the yeast and room-temperature water to a cup and stir well. Pour the yeast solution into the other half of the flour. Stir to mix. Knead all the flour into a rough dough.

> **Souped Up Swap:** Hot water denatures the protein and gives you an extra soft and tender dough. You will use a small amount of yeast, so the dough should be slightly leavened, which provides a texture that is a combination of pleasantly chewy and fluffy. It is important to add the hot water first. Let it cool and then work on the yeast water. If you reverse the steps, there is a risk of killing the yeast when adding the hot water.

4. Add 1 Tbsp vegetable oil to the dough and continue to knead until the oil is well absorbed. Cover and rest the dough for 10 minutes.

5. Knead the dough again until smooth. Shape it into a log and then wrap it with a plastic film. Let it proof for 20 minutes.

Make the filling

1. Crack 3 eggs into a bowl and whisk well.

2. Heat your wok over medium heat until it is smoking hot. Add 2.5 Tbsps oil and swirl it around to cover the bottom of the wok. Turn the heat to low and pour in the beaten egg. Stir the egg with a pair of chopsticks in a circular motion as fast as possible. By doing that, the egg will be scrambled into small bits. Take it out and set it aside.

3. Soak the mung bean noodles in 3 cups of boiling-hot water for 1-2 minutes. Drain and rinse with cold water to stop the cooking process.

4. Dice the mung bean noodles into ½-inch long pieces and place them into a bowl. Add dark soy sauce and 2 tsps sesame oil. Mix well and set the noodles aside.

5. Dice the garlic chives and place them into a bowl. Add 1.5 Tbsps sesame oil and stir well.













Chef's Secret: The oil will protect the chives so the sodium won't draw out too much moisture from the chives. Otherwise, your filling will turn out watery and soggy once you add the seasonings. You can use this trick for other vegetable fillings.

6. Combine the mung bean noodles, fried egg, diced chives, dried baby shrimp, soy sauce, thirteen-spice powder, and salt in a big mixing bowl. Press the garlic cloves through a garlic press and add to the mixing bowl. Stir everything until well combined. Set the filling aside.

Wrap the chive box and cook

1. Divide the dumpling dough into 12 even pieces, 45-50 grams each. Roll them into round, smooth balls and cover them so they don't dry out.

2. Take one dough ball and flatten it into a thick pancake, then roll it into a slight ellipse wrapper (5 inches in width and 5.5 inches in length). Sprinkle more flour to prevent sticking during rolling, if needed.

3. To wrap the box, put some filling on one half of the wrapper. Fold the other half over. Gently push out as much air as possible. Press the edge tightly and make pleats all the way around to seal the dumpling. Set it aside and continue to wrap the rest.

4. Place a heavy-duty frying pan over a medium-heat stove. Add a little bit of oil and swirl it to cover the bottom of the pan. Add the chive box and pan-fry for 2-3 minutes per side or until both sides are golden brown. You may need to cook all the dumplings in 3-4 batches, depending on the size of your pan.

5. Serve on its own as breakfast or a side dish.















Egg Wrapped Dumplings

(No Dough)

bō cài dàn jiǎo
菠 菜 蛋 饺

Prep Time: 1.5 hours

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Makes: 30 Dumplings

These egg dumplings are gluten-free and keto-friendly. You can serve them with your favorite dipping sauce or cook them in soups and hot pots. The egg wrapper has a porous texture that can soak up many flavors while cooking or dipping.

To make the filling

- 120g / 4.2 oz spinach
- 2.5 liters / about 10.5 cups water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt to blanch the spinach
- 250g / 8.8 oz ground pork
- 12g / 2 tsps oyster sauce
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 3g / 1 tsp grated garlic
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 16g / ¼ cup diced scallion

To make the wrapper

- 8 eggs
- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch
- 10g / 2 tsps water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- Vegetable oil as needed

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Make the filling

1. Fill a big pot with water and bring to a boil over medium heat. Add the salt and spinach. Blanch for 20 seconds.

2. Remove the spinach from the pot, let it cool, squeeze to eliminate the excess, and then finely dice it. Set it aside.

3. Add the ground pork, soy sauce, oyster sauce, salt, grated garlic, white pepper, and sesame oil to a big mixing bowl. Stir the meat in a circular motion in one direction for 3 minutes to develop the texture.

4. Combine the meat with the diced spinach and scallions and mix thoroughly.

5. Pre-divide the filling into 30 pieces and shape each into an ellipsoid. Set them in the fridge for now.

Chef's Secret: When you make the wrapper, the egg sets fast, so it is better to divide the filling ahead.

Make the wrapper and wrap the dumplings

1. Combine the cornstarch and water in a small bowl and mix until there are no lumps. Crack all the eggs into a big bowl and then add salt and the cornstarch water. Whisk the egg well.

2. To make the egg wrappers, you need a small non-stick egg frying pan, about 4.5 inches in diameter. If you don't have it, you can place a round cookie cutter in a non-stick frying pan.

3. Heat the egg frying pan over medium-low heat and add ½ tsp vegetable oil and just enough egg mixture to cover the bottom of the frying pan or the cookie cutter. For your reference, I used 2 Tbsps of the egg mixture for a 4.5-inch frying pan.

4. When the egg is partially set, add a piece of filling on the top. Carefully lift one side of the egg wrapper and fold it over to cover the filling. Cook for 15 more seconds to seal the dumplings. If the egg sets too fast and the dumpling is not sealed, add more egg mixture as needed.

5. Set the dumplings aside and continue to finish the rest. This process looks easy, but it is tricky. If you lift the wrapper too early while the egg is still soft, it will break; if you don't use a non-stick pan, the egg will stick to the bottom, so you have to practice a few times in order to make perfect egg dumplings.

6. Put all of the egg dumplings in a steamer and steam on high heat for 15 minutes. Serve with your favorite dipping sauce.

Meal Prepping Tip: Egg dumplings are freezer-friendly. Make a big batch and freeze them right after wrapping for up to 3 months. Then, whenever you want to eat them again, there is no need to defrost; directly add the egg dumplings to soup or hot pot and boil for 15 minutes.













Cantonese Shrimp Dumplings

(Har Gow)

shuǐ jīng xiā jiǎo
水 晶 虾 饺

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 32 Dumplings

Cantonese crystal shrimp dumplings, aka Har Gow, are one of the most iconic dim sum dishes in tea house restaurants. Since I first tackled this dish four years ago, I've been continuously improving this recipe, picking up lots of insider tips and tricks, and finally perfecting it, so consider this recipe a true culinary dim sum demo to help you achieve restaurant-quality results.

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To make the filling

- 142g / 5 oz skinless pork belly
- 300g / 10.6 oz peeled and deveined shrimp
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 0.8 g / ⅓ tsp ground white pepper
- 40g / ¼ cup minced baby bamboo shoot
- 38g / ¼ cup minced carrot
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps minced ginger
- 6g / 2 tsps minced garlic
- 6g / 1.5 Tbsps diced scallion
- 9g / 2 tsps sesame oil

To make the wrapper

- 185g / 6.5 oz wheat starch (see page 28)
- 57g / 2 oz tapioca starch (see page 28)
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 300g / 1¼ cups water
- 11g / 2.5 tsps room temperature pork lard
- 9g / 2 tsps vegetable oil to apply on the cleaver

Ingredient Tips

- The bamboo shoot has a unique, crunchy texture, which is essential for shrimp dumplings. However, I understand it is difficult to find bamboo shoots outside of China. You can replace it with hard vegetables such as jicama, celery, kohlrabi, and broccoli stems.
- Pork lard can be replaced by vegetable oil or butter.



Make the filling

1. Slice the skinless pork belly into ⅛-inch slabs. Stack the slabs together, cut them into thin strips, and then dice the pork belly. Set it aside. Although this is a shrimp dumpling, adding a bit of fatty pork belly brings in a rich taste.

2. Smash the shrimp one by one using a heavy-duty cleaver or a meat tenderizer. Once done, roughly chop the shrimp with the cleaver for about 40 seconds.

3. Add the chopped shrimp, soy sauce, white pepper, and sugar to a bowl and stir everything with a circular motion in one direction for a few minutes. Then, grab the shrimp paste and throw it against the bowl with force for a minute. This helps to gelatinize the protein and binds all the ingredients together.

4. Add the diced pork belly, carrot, bamboo shoots, minced ginger, garlic, scallions, and sesame oil to the shrimp paste.

5. Stir the filling with a circular motion in one direction again until everything is well combined. Chill it in the fridge as you are working on the wrappers.

Make the wrapper dough

1. In a bowl, combine the wheat starch and tapioca starch and mix well.

2. Add the water and salt to a non-stick pot, put on the lid, and then bring it to a boil over medium heat.

3. Move the pot off the stove. Quickly add ½ of the starch mixture to the hot water and stir with a rubber spatula to incorporate it until you don't see any dry flour.

4. Add the other half of the starch and continue to stir with a spatula for a couple of minutes. Cover the pot and let the starch rest in its own steam for 10 minutes or until it cools to lukewarm.

5. Scrape the starch onto a working surface and knead until a rough dough forms. Add the pork lard and continue to knead until the oil is absorbed and the dough becomes smooth, non-stick, and elastic.

6. Test the dough by slowly pulling it; you should be able to stretch it pretty long. The ductility will ensure you can wrap the dumplings without breaking. Every brand of starch has a different water-absorbing rate. Please adjust it depending on the consistency of the dough. If your dough comes out too sticky, add more starch. If your dough is too hard, add more water.

7. Roll the dough into a long log and divide it into 32 even pieces, 16g each, and then cover them to prevent them from drying out.

Press the wrappers

1. Put one piece of dough on the working surface with the cut cross section facing vertically, and flatten it into a small round pancake.

2. Rub a thin layer of oil on the cleaver using kitchen paper. Put the oiled cleaver blade on top of the dough, and apply heavy pressure until the dough is pressed into a round disk (2.5in / 6cm in diameter).















3. Move the cleaver in a circular motion with steady pressure 8-10 times or until you make a round wrapper, about 4 in / 10cm in diameter.

Why Not Use a Rolling Pin?

- Due to the lack of gluten, the starch dough doesn't work like wheat flour dough, so it isn't easy to form into a perfect circle if you use a rolling pin. The wrapper becomes irregular, and you have to trim it with a round cookie cutter.
- Using a cleaver is more professional, which is what dim sum masters do in tea house restaurants. However, it takes a bit of practice. If you don't know how to do it, use a tortilla press instead.

Wraps the dumplings and steam

1. Put 1 Tbsp filling on the wrapper, slightly off-center, and pack it tight.
2. Markdown 2 points with a 1.5-inch distance on the farther edge from the filling and start folding pleats. These 2 points will be where your pleats start and end.
3. Repeat making the pleats until you have 1.5 inches of wrapper left. Push the unpleated wrapper toward the pleats and seal the dumpling.
4. Place the dumpling on the working surface with the flat side down, gently pull back the belly, and you will have a classic shrimp dumpling. Do the same thing and wrap the rest of the dumplings.
5. Cut some small holes in a parchment paper or a banana leaf. Place it into the steamer to prevent sticking.
6. Place the dumplings in the steamer.
7. Fill the steamer pot with water and bring it to a boil over high heat. Place the steamer above the hot water and steam the dumplings for 8 minutes. Serve the dumplings with your favorite dipping sauce.

Meal Prepping Tip: Make a lot of dumplings and freeze them before cooking for up to 2 months. Steam whenever you want without defrosting, though it will take a bit longer.











Teochew Crystal Dumplings

(Fun Guo)

cháo zhōu fěn guǒ
潮 州 粉 果

Prep Time: 3.5 hours

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 24 Dumplings

As a popular dim sum item, Teochew Dumpling (aka Fun Guo) is known for its crystal wrapper, which is made with wheat starch instead of flour, giving it that beautiful transparent appearance, similar to Cantonese Hargow (page 366). The filling contains various proteins and vegetables, leading to complex but well-balanced flavors and textures.

Ingredient Tips

- Dried baby shrimp (虾皮 xiā pí) has a strong umami taste. If you don't have it, use Japanese dried bonito flakes as replacements. Be aware that the dried baby shrimp is salty, so please adjust the sodium amount if needed.
- Jicama, aka Spanish turnip, is available in many Hispanic produce markets. If you can't find it, replace it with carrots, daikon radishes, or water chestnuts.
- Satay sauce is optional for this recipe. If you skip it, add a tsp of peanut butter to make up for the nutty flavor.

To make the filling

- 12g / about 4 dried shiitake mushrooms (see page 24)
- 283g / 10 oz ground pork
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 11.3g / 2 tsps fish sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 17g / 1 Tbsp satay sauce, optional
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil
- 45g / about 1 shallot, diced
- 6g / 2 cloves garlic
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps minced ginger
- 35g / ¼ cup diced Teochew-style salt-preserved radish (see page 26)
- 57g / 2 oz diced pressed tofu (see page 27)
- 12g / 3 Tbsps dried baby shrimp
- 80g / ½ cup diced jicama (沙葛)
- 120g / ½ cup of the mushroom soaking water
- 15g / 2 Tbsps cornstarch
- 43g / 1.5 oz diced celery
- 120g / 1.5 cups diced garlic chives, or scallions (see page 22)
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps sesame oil

To make the wrapper

- 100g / 3.5 oz wheat starch
- 100g / 3.5 oz tapioca starch
- 25g / 0.9 oz cornstarch
- 9g / 2 tsps vegetable oil to add to the water
- 300g / 10 fl oz water
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp oil to oil the rack and rolling pin
- Extra cornstarch to prevent the dough from sticking

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Make the filling

1. Soak the dried shiitake mushroom with room temperature water 2 hours in advance or until fully rehydrated. Squeeze the mushroom to eliminate the excess water. Reserve the soaking liquid. Slice and dice the mushroom finely. Set it aside.

2. Add the ground pork, soy sauce, fish sauce, Chinese cooking wine, oyster sauce, satay sauce, sugar, and white pepper to a big mixing bowl and mix thoroughly. Set it aside. Unlike other dumpling fillings, you don't need to whisk the meat with a circular motion in one direction to develop the texture.

3. Heat the wok over medium heat. Add the cooking oil, diced shallot, minced garlic, and ginger and stir for 1 minute or until fragrant.

4. Add the diced shiitake mushroom, preserved radish, compressed tofu, and dried baby shrimp and stir for 2 minutes. These four ingredients need to be sautéed to activate the aroma.

5. Add the diced jicama and stir for a minute. Don't cook it too long as we want to keep its crunchy texture.

6. Push everything to the side of the wok so you have room to cook the ground pork. If the wok looks dry, add a little bit more oil and then add the pork. Keep stirring over medium heat until the meat has changed color.

7. Turn the heat to low. Quickly mix the reserved mushroom soaking liquid with 2 Tbsps cornstarch and pour it into the wok in batches. Stir to bind everything together.

8. Thoroughly mix the diced celery, garlic chives, and toasted sesame oil in a big bowl.

> **Chef's Secret:** The sesame oil here is not only for the nutty flavor, but it also prevents the celery and chives from releasing moisture after it touches the seasonings, so they will stay fresh and green even after steaming.

9. Once the pork is thoroughly cooled, combine it with the celery and garlic chives and mix well. Set the filling in the fridge while you are working on the wrapper.

Make the wrappers

1. Combine the wheat starch, tapioca starch, and cornstarch in a mixing bowl and stir well. Set it aside.

2. Add the vegetable oil and water to a nonstick saucepan and then bring it to a boil. Please keep the lid on so the water doesn't evaporate too much; otherwise, you won't have the correct measurement.

3. Remove the pot from the stove, add ⅓ of the starch mixture, and stir until the starch is transparent and clumpy.

4. Add another ⅓ of the starch. Continue to mix with a rubber spatula for 1 minute. Then add the rest of the starch. Keep mixing until a rough dough forms. Put on the lid and let the starch rest in its own steam for 5 minutes.













5. Transfer the dough to a heavy-duty pot or bowl. Dip one end of the rolling pin with some vegetable oil and use it to pound and knead the dough for 8-10 minutes. If the dough sticks, dip the rolling pin in the oil as needed and continue to pound.

Chef's Secret: By doing this, the starch chain will bind together in a deeper way and the wrapper will be gooey.

6. Once the dough becomes smooth, elastic, and nonstick, transfer it to a working surface and then roll it into a long, even log.

Chef's Secret: When making regular dumpling dough with wheat flour, I suggest making the dough first, so you can rest it while working on the filling. Chiuchow dumpling is the opposite. It is better to have the filling ready and then make the dough because it will lose its elasticity if you let it sit for a long time.

7. Put one piece of dough on the working surface with the cut cross section facing vertically and flatten it into a small round pancake. Then roll it with a rolling pin until the diameter reaches 3.5 inches. Sprinkle more cornstarch to prevent sticking if needed.

8. Roll the edge until the wrapper becomes thicker in the middle and thinner around the edge.

9. Do the same thing and continue to finish rolling the rest of the wrappers.

Wrap the dumplings and cook

1. To wrap a dumpling, put 2 Tbsps filling in the middle of the wrapper. Wet the edge with a bit of water and fold the wrapper in half. Be sure to push out the air and then pinch the edge to close the dumpling. Fold the edge to make pleats.

2. If using a stainless steel steamer, oil the rack to prevent sticking; if using a bamboo steamer, put parchment paper under the dumplings to prevent sticking. Place the dumplings in the steamer and continue to wrap the rest.

3. Fill the steamer pot with water and place the steamer above it. Steam the dumplings over high heat for 10 minutes. Start counting the time after the water comes to a boil.

4. After 10 minutes, open the lid, but do not touch the dumplings because the wrapper is very vulnerable. Instead, let them rest without the lid for 2 minutes before serving.

5. Enjoy the dumplings with your favorite dipping sauce.

Meal Prepping Tip: These dumplings are freezer-friendly. Make a lot and freeze for up to 6 months. Steam whenever you want without defrosting, though it will take a bit longer.













Hakka Rice Dumplings with Radish Filling

kè jiā luó bo bǎn
客家萝卜粄

Prep Time: 3.5 hours

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Makes: 12 Dumplings

These dumplings are also known as "Loh Pat Pan" in Hakkanese. Winter is the radish harvest season, so Hakka people typically make this dish on the winter solstice, an essential day aside from the Chinese lunar new year. Radish dumplings may sound unusual, but trust me: You'll be hooked on the crunchy and flavorful radish as soon as you take a bite. The sun-dried shrimp and pork lard dregs give it an extra kick of deliciousness. These dumplings are generously sized, so two will satisfy you, but trust me, you'll be reaching for more.

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To make the filling

- 454g / 1 pound daikon radish
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt to season the radish
- 90g / about 2 shallots
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic
- 9g / about 3 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked for 2 hours (see page 24)
- 85g / 2.5 oz tofu puff
- 15g / ¼ cup pork lard dregs
- 41g / 3 Tbsps pork lard or vegetable oil
- 12g / 3 Tbsps dried baby shrimp
- 170g / 5.3 oz ground pork
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper
- 16.7g / 1 Tbsps soy sauce
- 12g / 2 tsps oyster sauce
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce

To make the dumpling dough

- 113g / 4 oz tapioca flour (see page 28)
- 283g / 10 oz rice flour (see page 28)
- 350g / 11.8 fl oz hot water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt

To make the dipping sauce

- 3g / 1 Tbsp diced cilantro
- 4g / 1 Tbsp diced scallion
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 6g / 1 Tbsp diced Thai bird's eye chilies (see page 23)
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps hot oil
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce

Others

- Banana leaves as needed

Ingredient Tips

- Tofu puff (豆腐泡) is deep-fried tofu. If you don't have access to them, deep-fry some firm tofu over medium heat until golden brown and then thinly julienne it.
- Dried baby shrimp (虾皮) have a strong umami taste and go well with the daikon radish. I don't know the replacement, but you can finely dice the same amount of salami to provide a distinct salty flavor.
- Pork lard dregs (猪油渣) is the by-product left after rendering the pork fat. The best replacement is crushed crispy bacon bits.
- Banana leaves (蕉叶) can be replaced by corn husks or parchment paper.








Make the filling

1. Shred the radish using the largest hole on a vegetable grater and add to a big mixing bowl along with 1 tsp salt. Toss thoroughly and let it sit for 20 minutes, giving the salt enough time to draw out some moisture.
2. While waiting, dice the shallot, garlic, the soaked shitake mushrooms, tofu puff, and the lard dregs.
3. Squeeze the radish to eliminate the excess liquid and set it aside.
4. Heat the wok over high heat until smoking hot. Add the pork lard and let it melt. If you don't like animal fat, use vegetable oil instead.
5. Add the diced shallot, garlic, shiitake mushroom, sundry baby shrimp, and pork lard dregs. Stir for a few minutes or until fragrant.
6. Add the ground pork and stir for a couple of minutes or until the meat changes color.
7. Season the filling by adding the white pepper, soy sauce, oyster sauce, and dark soy sauce, and stir well.
8. Add the diced tofu puff and the shredded radish. Stir well and turn off the heat. Tofu puff is very absorbent. That's why you are adding it after everything else is infused with the seasonings; otherwise, it will soak up all the sauce.
9. Taste the filling to adjust the flavor and set it aside.

Make the dumpling dough

1. In a bowl, combine rice flour and tapioca flour and mix well.
2. Add the salt and water to a pot. Put on the lid and bring it to a boil. Immediately pour the hot water into the flour and stir simultaneously until well absorbed.
3. Cover the flour and let it cool to lukewarm, and then knead it for 5-6 minutes or until a smooth dough forms.
4. Divide the dough into 12 even pieces. Roll each one into a ball. Cover them with plastic film so they don't dry out.



Make the dumplings and steam

1. Flatten a small piece of dough into a round patty. Then roll it with a rolling pin. One hand holds and rotates the dough, while the other hand pushes the rolling pin back and forth. Repeat that until you get a big dumpling wrapper, about 5 inches in diameter.

2. Put some filling in the middle of the wrapper, about 50 grams. Fold the wrapper in half and pinch the edge to seal the dumpling. Set it aside and continue to wrap the rest of the dumplings.

3. Cut the banana leaves into rectangles, use them to wrap the dumplings to prevent sticking, and then place them into the steamer. If you don't have banana leaves, use parchment paper or corn husks.

4. Pre-boil the water in the steamer pot and place the steamer above the water. Steam the dumplings over high heat for 20 minutes.

Meal Prepping Tip: These dumplings are freezer-friendly. Make a lot and freeze for up to 6 months. Steam whenever you want without defrosting, though it will take a bit longer.

Make the dipping sauce

1. In a heat-proof bowl, add diced cilantro, scallions, garlic, and Thai bird's eye chilies.

2. Heat the cooking oil in a small saucepan until smoking hot, and then pour it onto the aromatics to activate the aroma. Last, add the soy sauce and mix thoroughly.

3. Serve the dumplings with the dipping sauce.

Crispy Fried Dumplings

(Cantonese Ham Sui Gok)

xiān shuǐ jiǎo
咸 水 角

Prep Time: 2.5 hours

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 20 Dumplings

This deep-fried dumpling is known for its crispy and gooey texture. The filling is extra flavorful and packed with umami flavor. It is one of the most popular dim sum items in Cantonese cuisine.



To make the wrapper

- 70g / 2.5 oz wheat starch (see page 28)
- 85g / 2.9 fl oz hot water
- 210g / 7.4 oz glutinous rice flour (see page 29)
- 60g / 2.1 oz sugar
- 155g / 5.2 fl oz room-temperature water
- 60g / 2.1 oz pork lard

To make the filling

- 200g / 7 oz skinless pork belly
- 60g / 2.1 oz jicama
- 15g / 2 Tbsps dried shrimp
- 9g / about 3 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked for 2 hours in advance
- 18g / 2 Tbsps Teochew-style salt-preserved radish (see page 26)
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 3g / 1 tsp minced ginger
- 27g / 3 Tbsps diced shallot
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 9g / ½ Tbsp oyster sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper
- 11g / 1.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 80g / ⅓ cup of the mushroom soaking water
- 6.8g / 1.5 tsps sesame oil
- 20g / ¼ cup diced garlic chives or scallions (see page 22)

Others

- 550g / 2.5 cups frying oil

Ingredient Tips

- The purpose of wheat starch is to balance the texture because glutinous rice flour is too sticky. If you don't have access or you cannot eat it due to the gluten content, you can use all glutinous rice flour. Of course, the texture of the wrapper will be stickier.
- Pork lard is traditional for making Ham Sui Gok, but you can definitely switch it to vegetable oil or butter.
- Jicama, also known as Mexican turnip, tastes almost like a water chestnut - sweet, crunchy, and juicy. If you don't have it, you can use water chestnut, carrot, daikon radish, or pear.

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Make the wrapper dough

1. Add the sugar and room-temperature water to a cup and stir until dissolved. Pour the sugar solution into the glutinous rice flour. Mix thoroughly and form a rough dough. Set it aside.
2. Pour the boiling water into the wheat starch and stir it well, then knead it into a smooth dough.
3. Combine the wheat starch dough and the glutinous rice dough, and then knead for 3 minutes or until smooth.
4. At this point, the dough's ductility is too low to wrap the dumplings. To fix this issue, take a small piece, about 40g, from the dough and cook it by following one of these methods: Cover the dough with a microwave-safe lid and microwave it on high heat for 25 seconds, or boil it in water for 2 minutes.
5. Mix the cooked dough back into the big piece of dough and knead for 3 minutes until smooth.

> **Chef's Secret:** The heat gelatinizes the starch and makes the dough gooey and sticky, binding everything together, so the dough will be malleable and elastic. This trick works for any type of starch, so it is really good when you want to make gluten-free dumpling wrappers.

6. Combine the dough with room-temperature pork lard and knead for 3 minutes or until well absorbed, and you should have a super soft and nonstick dough. Set it in the fridge for 40 minutes. This wrapper dough requires lots of kneading, which may look tiring. However, starch dough is way easier to work with compared to wheat flour dough.

Make the filling

1. Dice the soaked shiitake mushrooms finely. Save the soaking liquid for later use.
2. Dice the jicama, Teochew-style salt-preserved radish, and pork belly into ¼-inch bits.
3. Add the diced pork belly to the wok and stir over medium-low heat for 3-5 minutes or until 2-3 Tbsps fat is rendered out.



4. Push the pork to the side and then add the minced garlic, ginger, diced shallot, mushroom, and dried shrimp. Stir over medium heat for 3 minutes to activate all the fragrances.
5. Add the diced jicama, soy sauce, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce, sugar, and white pepper, and stir well.
6. Quickly mix 1.5 Tbsps cornstarch with ⅓ cup of the mushroom and shrimp soaking liquid until no lumps remain. Pour it into the wok and stir over low heat for 2 minutes to bind all the filling together.
7. Add the sesame oil and mix well.
8. Remove the filling from the wok and let it cool. Then mix with the diced garlic chives or scallions. Set the filling aside.

Wrap the dumplings and deep-fry

1. Take the dough out of the fridge and portion it into 20 even pieces, 30 grams each. Roll each one into a smooth ball.
2. Shape a ball into a little bowl. Put about 15 grams of filling in it. Fold the wrapper bowl in half and pinch the edge to close the dumpling.
3. Do the same thing to finish the rest of the dumplings.
4. Heat the frying oil to 380°F / 190°C, and then carefully add the dumplings and fry them for 5-8 minutes or until golden brown. Enjoy!

 **Meal Prepping Tip:** Make a lot of dumplings and freeze before frying for up to 6 months. Directly deep fry whenever you want without defrosting, though it will take a bit longer.

Delicate Taro Puff Dumplings

(Wu Gok)

yù jiǎo
芋 角

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 20 Dumplings

Refrigerate 1 day

This is a special dim sum dumpling because the wrapper is made with taro. After deep-frying, the outside will puff up into a beautiful, delicate crust while the middle layer maintains its soft and creamy texture. It is like a crispy, flaky mashed potato stuffed with a savory filling-- very delicious and interesting. Although this dumpling is mind-blowing, the recipe is complicated and challenging. Many skillful dim sum masters aren't able to achieve the perfect result. Therefore, I have included as many details and tips as possible to ensure your success.

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To make the wrapper

- 400g / 14 oz taro
- 200g / 6.8 fl oz water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 12.5g / 1 Tbsp sugar
- 160g / 1⅓ cup wheat starch (see page 28)
- 130g / about 9.5 Tbsps pork lard

To make the filling

- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp cooking oil
- 113g / 4 oz ground pork
- 40g / 1.4 oz Cantonese sausage (see page 25)
- 9g / about 3 dried shiitake mushrooms (see page 24)
- 60g / 2.1 oz carrot
- 113g / 4 oz shrimp
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper
- 12g / 2 tsps oyster sauce
- 13.8g / 2.5 tsps soy sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 6.3g / 2.5 tsps cornstarch
- 38g / 2.5 Tbsps of the mushroom soaking liquid
- 16g / ¼ cup scallions

Others:

- 440g-660g / 2-3 cups oil to deep-fry the dumplings

Safety Note: Most edible taro contains oxalic acid crystals, which can cause itchy skin for some people (I don't react to it, but my mom is sensitive to it). Oxalic acid crystals will dissolve once cooked and lose their effect. However, if you have never touched it, it is better to wear gloves to handle the corm.



Choose the right taro

There are more than 100 varieties of taro, but in the United States, you're most likely to only come across two of them:



- **Dasheen** (*C. esculenta var. esculenta*) is large, dense, and heavy (3-8 lbs) and has a higher starch content, which is excellent for this recipe. However, it is so large that you'll find it sold cut into smaller sections. Please avoid using the end section where it connects to the taro stems because it is low in starch.



- **Eddoe** (C. esculenta var. antiquorum) is smaller, ranging in size from a fingerling potato to a large lemon. It has a lower starch content and a moist texture once cooked. Technically, you can use it for this recipe, but the dumplings might be less crispy.

Make the dough

1. Peel the taro, slice it into ¼-inch thick slabs, stack the slabs, and cut them into strips.

2. Put the taro strips, salt, sugar, and water into a saucepan. Put on the lid, turn the heat to medium, and bring to a boil. Once it boils, turn the heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes.

3. Remove the pot from the stove and add the wheat starch immediately. Use a potato masher to mash the taro and combine it with the wheat starch until everything becomes crumbly.

Can corn starch, potato starch, or tapioca starch be a replacement? Yes, but you will have to test it many times to find the correct water-starch ratio and the perfect frying temperature in order to get the puffy appearance.

4. Add the taro and wheat starch mixture into a food processor and use the lowest speed to mix until a rough dough forms. If your food processor is small, do this in 2 batches.

5. Add the pork lard and continue to mix at low speed until all the oil is well absorbed. If necessary, stop the food processor a few times and mix with a spatula to help to incorporate everything. If you don't have lard, butter can be a replacement.

6. You are looking for a non-stick, soft, and super oily dough. Put it in a sealed container and chill it in the fridge for at least 24 hours.

Chef's Secret: The starch needs a long time to fully retrograde; otherwise, the dumplings will not puff perfectly.

Make the filling

1. Soak the dried shiitake mushrooms for 2 hours in advance. Dice them finely and reserve the soaking liquid.













2. Finely dice the carrot, Cantonese sausage, and shrimp; if you don't have Cantonese sausage, use your favorite sausage.

3. Turn the heat to high and heat the wok until smoking hot. Add the oil, ground pork, diced mushroom, and sausage. Stir for 2-3 minutes until the pork changes color.

4. Turn the heat to low. Add the carrot, Chinese cooking wine, white pepper, soy sauce, oyster sauce, and dark soy sauce. Continue to stir until well combined.

5. Quickly mix the cornstarch with 2.5 Tbsps of the mushroom-soaking liquid until no lumps remain. Pour it into the wok and stir to bind the filling slightly.

6. Add the shrimp and continue to cook until they change color.

7. Turn off the heat, add the diced scallions, and mix well. Set the filling aside.

Wrap the dumplings

1. Take the taro dough out of the fridge. As the lard solidifies, it becomes firm and loses some ductility. Knead it on the working surface for 3 minutes until it becomes soft and elastic.

2. Divide the taro dough into 20 even pieces, 35 grams each.

3. To wrap the dumplings, roll a taro dough in between your hands until it becomes a smooth ball, and then use your thumbs to shape it into a small bowl.

4. Put about 15 grams of filling in the bowl, carefully fold the bowl in half, and pinch the edge to close the dumpling; set it aside and continue to fold the rest.

Deep-fry the dumplings

1. Heat the oil and use a thermometer to monitor the temperature between 390°F / 199°C and 400 °F / 204°C.

2. Deep-frying is the trickiest part of this recipe. If the temperature is too low (below 370°F / 188°C), the wrapper will peel off and float everywhere; your dumpling will have no crust. On the other hand, if you fry it too high (over 420°F / 216°C), the surface will set too fast before it gets a chance to blossom.

3. If you don't have a thermometer, test the temperature by dropping a small piece of dough, about ½ tbsp, into the oil and letting it fry for 20 seconds. If the dough forms a porous crust, the temperature is correct.

4. Place the dumplings on a flat strainer with ½ inch of space between each other to allow them to puff; slightly press the dumplings against the strainer so they stick to the tool, preventing them from floating around while deep-frying.

5. With the help of the strainer, fully immerse the dumplings in the oil and fry until the taro wrap puffs into a golden honeycomb structure; this will take a few minutes. Please use large cookware and fry the dumplings in batches to prevent the oil from overflowing.

6. Remove the dumplings from the oil and use paper towels to absorb the excess grease. Serve immediately. You don't need any dipping sauce because it is delicious on its own.













Wonton, Siu Mai, and Egg Rolls

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384. Aromatic Chicken Wonton Soup / 千里香馄饨
387. Sichuan Wontons in Chili Oil / 四川红油抄手
389. Hot and Sour Wonton Soup / 酸汤馄饨
391. Crispy Fried Wontons / 炸云吞
392. Steamed Shrimp Siu Mai / 虾仁烧麦
395. Glutinous Rice Siu Mai / 糯米烧麦
398. Shanghai-Style Crispy Egg Rolls / 上海炸春卷





Golden Squash Wonton Soup

jīn tāng yún tūn
金 汤 云 吞

Prep Time:
35 minutes

Cooking Time:
5 minutes

Serves:
4 people

Most people think making wontons at home is a labor of love. This recipe is going to change your mind completely because I will show you the easiest and fastest folding method to wrap the wontons and a quick tip to upgrade your store-bought stock.

Ingredient Tip

- Kabocha squash can be replaced by other types of pumpkins that are good for making pies, such as Sugar Baby Pumpkin, Winter Luxury Pumpkins, and Pink Banana Squash.

To make the broth and cook the wontons

- 1.5 liter / 6¼ cups unsalted chicken broth
- 400g / 10 oz kabocha squash
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water
- 220g / 1 cup crushed ice
- 41g / 3 Tbsps cooking oil
- 45g / about 3 scallions, cut into 2-inch-long stalks
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, thinly sliced
- 8.6g / 1.5 tsps salt or to taste
- 120g / about 4 baby bok choy

To make the wontons

- 1 pack / about 50 wonton wrappers, defrosted in advance
- 227g / ½ pound ground pork
- 227g / ½ pound peeled and deveined shrimp
- 12g / ¼ cup diced cilantro
- 16g / ¼ cup diced scallion
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps minced garlic
- 6g / 2 tsps minced ginger
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 1g / ½ tsp five-spice powder
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water or chicken stock
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil

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1. Use a spoon to scoop out the ribbing and seeds from the squash, peel the skin, and cut the flesh into bite-size pieces. Note: the measurement of the squash is weighed after it's peeled and seeded.

2. Add the squash and a few tablespoons of water to a microwave-proof glass bowl. Cover it with an upside-down ceramic plate and microwave it on full power for 5-6 minutes or until tender. If you don't have a microwave, boil the squash in water for 15 minutes or until tender.

3. While waiting, you should have just enough time to put all the filling ingredients into a food processor (ground pork, shrimp, diced scallion, cilantro, minced garlic, ginger, soy sauce, oyster sauce, sugar, five-spice powder, sesame oil, and water).

4. Use the on and off mode to blend everything at low speed until just well combined, which will take 30 to 40 seconds. Leave the filling in the food processor but remove the blade. There's no need to transfer the filling into a different bowl unless you like to wash more dishes.

5. Take the squash out of the microwave, add crushed ice to cool it down, transfer the mixture into a small blender, and blend until smooth. Set it aside.

6. Add vegetable oil, scallion stalks, garlic slices, and ginger slices to a wok and stir over medium heat for a minute or until fragrant.

> **Chef's Secret:** Store-bought stock usually doesn't smell as fragrant because it has been sitting on the shelf for a long time. Adding aromatics is an easy way to upgrade it.

7. Pour in the squash puree and stir for a minute. Then add the chicken stock and bring it to a boil.

> **Chef's Secret:** Feel free to use beef, vegetable stock, or water. Squash contains a little bit of starch, so it makes the soup smooth and creamy as well.

8. Meanwhile, wrap all the wontons by using this fast folding method: Grab about ½ Tbsp filling with a pair of chopsticks. Put it on the wrapper and fold it over. Give it a solid squeeze as you pull the chopsticks out.

> **Chef's Secret:** This folding method is fast and does not require any practice. Your wontons may not come out the same size, which doesn't matter at all because wontons are not supposed to be so precise, and they do not need to be sealed completely.

9. When the broth comes to a boil, add the salt and all the wontons. Cook for 3-5 minutes over medium heat or until the wontons float to the top of the water.

10. Wash the baby bok choy and cut it in half. Add the wonton and cook for 20 seconds. Enjoy!

> **Meal Prepping Tip:** Make a lot of wontons and freeze them before cooking for up to 3 months. Boil directly from frozen whenever you want, though it will take a bit longer.













Aromatic Chicken Wonton Soup

qiān lǐ xiāng hún tún
千 里 香 馄 饨

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 4 people

It is a pity that I could not come up with an appropriate English translation for the name of this recipe. Calling it chicken wonton soup is not really appreciating the beauty of it. Huntun（馄饨）is wonton. Qian（千）means a thousand. Li（里）is an ancient unit of length, which equals 500 meters. Xiang（香）means fragrance or aroma. Hence, the name is trying to describe that this wonton is so fragrant that you can smell it from 500 kilometers away. That is a little bit exaggerated, but it does indeed smell amazing, and it tastes incredibly delicious.



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To make the wontons

- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 0.2g / about 2 cloves
- 1.5g / about 3 dried red chilies (see page 19)
- 54g / about 18 cloves garlic
- 330g / 1.5 cups vegetable oil
- 370g / 13 oz purple onion, diced
- 30g / about 2 inches ginger, thinly sliced
- 45g / about 3 scallions, cut into 2-inch-long stalks
- 200g / 7 oz peeled and deveined shrimp
- 300g / 10.6 oz ground chicken
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 26g / 1.5 Tbsps fish sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine, optional
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 100g / 3.5 oz garlic chives, diced
- 1 pack / about 50 wonton wrappers, defrosted in advance

To cook the wontons and serve

- 1.9 liters / about 8 cups chicken stock or water
- 17.1g / 1 Tbsp salt to season the broth
- 120g / ½ cup cold water to drop the temperature
- 120g / about 4 baby bok choy
- 16g / ¼ cup diced scallions as garnish
- 30g / ¼ cup diced pickled long beans, optional

Ingredient Tips

- Garlic chives（韭菜）are also known as Allium tuberosum. Nothing tastes similar, so I don't know any replacement, but you can still make this recipe with other aromatics such as diced fennel leaves, cilantro, and scallions.
- Pickled long beans are optional and can be replaced by other pickles such as carrot, cabbage, and radish.

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1. Soak the dried spices (the cinnamon stick, bay leaves, star anise, cloves, and dried red chilies) in hot water for 20 minutes and drain thoroughly.

> **Chef's Secret:** This gives the spices a little bit of moisture, which will allow them to transfer the flavor to the oil without burning.

2. Finely mince the garlic and put it in a sieve. Rinse the garlic with running water and then drain thoroughly.

> **Chef's Secret:** When the garlic is crushed or chopped, it will release a type of chemical called mercaptans, which makes your knife and cutting board sticky. This chemical is what you are trying to rinse off because it will bring a bitter taste when deep-fried.

3. Add 1.5 cups oil, the diced onion, the minced and rinsed garlic, ginger slices, scallion stalks, and the soaked but well-drained spices to a wok. Stir everything constantly over medium-low heat for 20-30 minutes or until the onion and garlic are golden.

> **Safety note:** Do not fry the aromatics in a small saucepan as it overflows easily. A wide-open wok is perfect. If you don't have a wok, use a large frying pan.

4. Pour everything through a sieve with a heat-proof bowl underneath to separate the aromatics and the oil. Discard the spices (the cinnamon stick, bay leaves, star anise, cloves, and dried red chilies), scallions, and ginger slices. Reserve the fried onion and garlic to make the filling later. We only need a few tablespoons of aromatic oil for this recipe. Please store the extra in a jar for up to 2 months in the fridge and use it as needed.

> **Other ways to use the aromatic oil:** drizzle it over wonton soup, noodle soup, or hot and sour soup. It will bring the dish to another level. I like to use it to sauté vegetables or make white rice. It adds so much fragrance. It can also be a replacement for sesame oil if you are allergic to sesame.

5. Roughly dice the shrimp into ⅓-inch thick pieces and place them into a big mixing bowl. Add the ground chicken, soy sauce, fish sauce, oyster sauce, Chinese cooking wine, and white pepper. Stir with a circular motion in 1 direction for 5 minutes to develop the texture. Then add the reserved fried onion and garlic and the diced garlic chives. Mix thoroughly.

6. To wrap a wonton, put ½ Tbsp filling in the middle of a wonton wrapper. Gather the edges together and give it a solid pinch to close it. Do the same thing to finish wrapping the rest of the wontons.











Meal Prepping Tip: You can make wontons in bulk and freeze them before cooking for up to 3 months. Boil directly from frozen whenever you want, though it will take a bit longer.

7. Bring 8 cups of chicken stock to a boil and season it with some salt to taste.

Chef's Secret: Homemade stock is better, but store-bought will not cut the quality of this recipe because the aroma from the fried onion and garlic will make up for the shortage.

8. Use a spoon to swirl the stock to create a cyclone. Then add the wontons.

Chef's Secret: By creating a cyclone, the wontons will flow with the water instead of sinking to the bottom directly. Otherwise, they will stick to the bottom and lose a part of the skin.

9. Cook over medium-low heat until the wontons float to the top of the water (estimated 2-3 minutes). Add ½ cup cold water to drop the temperature and continue to cook until the pot comes back to a simmer (estimated 1-2 minutes).

Chef's Secret: Adding cold water while boiling wontons and dumplings is a method called dian len shui (点冷水). It helps to keep the temperature below the boiling point. If the water is boiling too viciously, the moisture inside the wonton will evaporate fast, and the wrapper will inflate like a balloon. The skin might break due to the expansion.

10. Cut the baby bok choy in half and add to the wonton soup. Let them blanch with the wontons for 20 seconds.

11. Serve the wonton soup in a bowl. Sprinkle diced scallions as garnish, top with some pickled long beans, and a drizzle of the aromatic oil while the soup is hot so the heat can reactivate the fragrance.











Sichuan Wontons in Chili Oil

sì chuān hóng yóu chāo shǒu
四 川 红 油 抄 手

Prep Time: 50 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 4 people

We all love wontons, but have you ever tried the Sichuan version? This bowl of wontons is soaked in a flavorful chili oil. We added freshly ground Sichuan peppercorn powder, which gives you a tingling feeling -- it's weird but makes the wonton addictively delicious.

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To make the wontons

- 340g / 12 oz ground chicken
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps grated ginger
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps grated garlic
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 200g / 7 oz zucchini
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 21g / ⅓ cup diced scallion
- 1 pack / about 50 wonton wrappers, defrosted in advance

To cook the wontons

- 1.9 liters / about 8 cups chicken stock or water
- 120g / about 4 oz baby bok choy or other leafy vegetables

To assemble one serving of wonton soup

- 6g / about 2 cloves garlic, pressed through a garlic presser
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce
- 12g / 2 tsps oyster sauce
- 10.7g / 2 tsps Chinese black vinegar
- 0.5g / ⅓ tsp Sichuan peppercorn powder or to taste
- 13.6g-68g / 1-5 Tbsps red chili oil (see page 32)
- 120g / ½ cup of the wonton cooking broth
- 10-12 wontons
- 3g / 1 Tbsp diced cilantro as garnish
- 4g / 1 Tbsp diced scallion as garnish

Ingredient Tips

- Sichuan peppercorn powder (see page 18) can be overpowering and ruin the dish. Please taste and adjust the amount based on your tolerance.
- If you order this dish in Sichuan, the wontons are basically soaked in chili oil. That's the way Sichuan cuisine is. However, you should add chili oil based on your tolerance. If you can't handle spicy food at all, use the aromatic oil at page 385 as a replacement.

1. Shred the zucchini by using the largest holes on your grater. Place into a big mixing bowl. Add ½ tsp salt and toss thoroughly. Set the mixture aside for 10 minutes to allow the salt to draw out some moisture.

2. While waiting, add the ground chicken, grated ginger, grated garlic, soy sauce, oyster sauce, black pepper, and sesame oil to a big mixing bowl. Stir the meat in a circular motion in one direction for 3-5 minutes to develop the texture.

3. After 10 minutes, squeeze the zucchini to eliminate the excess moisture, add to the pork mixture, and stir well.

4. To wrap a wonton, put ½ tablespoon of filling in the middle of the wrapper. Wet the edge of the wrapper and then fold it in half. Push out all of the air and pack it tight. Make a curve in the middle and then pinch the two sides together.

Meal Prepping Tip: Make a lot of wontons and freeze them before cooking for up to 3 months. Boil directly from frozen whenever you want, though it will take a bit longer.

5. Add 8 cups chicken stock to a wok and bring it to a boil over medium heat. Stir the broth with a spatula to create a vortex. Then add the wontons.

Chef's Secret: by creating a vortex, the wontons will flow with the water instead of sinking to the bottom directly. Otherwise, the wontons will stick to the bottom and lose part of the skin.

6. Wait about 2 minutes for the wontons to float to the top of the water, and then turn the heat to low. Keep the pot at a slight simmer for a few minutes. Do not let the water boil violently. Otherwise, the wontons will start expanding, and the skin will break.

7. Cut the bok choy in half and add to the wok; let it blanch with the wontons for 20 seconds and turn off the heat.

8. Before serving, quickly make the chili oil sauce on the side. In a bowl, add garlic, sugar, soy sauce, oyster sauce, Chinese black vinegar, Sichuan peppercorn powder, and red chili oil depending on your preference.

9. To assemble the wonton soup, combine ½ cup of the broth with the flavorful chili oil base. Then add 10-12 cooked wontons and a couple of blanched leafy vegetables. Garnish with diced scallion and cilantro.

Chef's Secret: Sichuan wonton is usually assembled and served in single portions because you should adjust the red chili oil to taste. This recipe is enough to make four servings. If you wish to assemble them all at once, please take the measurements listed above and multiply by 4.













Hot and Sour Wonton Soup

suān tāng hún tún
酸 汤 馄 饨

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 2 people

You're going to love this special northern wonton soup, which has an amazing fragrance. The slight tartness in the broth is right on point to stimulate your appetite.

Ingredient Tip

- Seaweed (紫菜) is optional and can be replaced by mushroom slices. Although the mushroom texture is completely different, it also adds another dimension of flavor.

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Make the wontons (Makes 30-35 wontons)

- 227g / ½ pound ground pork
- 32g / ½ cup diced scallion
- 9g / about 3 cloves garlic, grated
- 8g / about ½ inch ginger, grated
- 0.8g / ⅓ tsp ground white pepper
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 6.8g / ½ Tbsp sesame oil
- 30-35 wonton wrappers

Make the sour broth

- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps pork lard or vegetable oil
- 18g / 2 Tbsps minced garlic
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced white part of the scallions
- 6g / 2 tsps minced ginger
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.4g / about 2 bay leaves
- 1.3g / 1 tsp whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)
- 960g / 4 cups water or stock
- 85g / ⅓ cup Chinese black vinegar
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 6.3g / ½ Tbsp brown sugar
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste
- 8g / 1 cup seaweed, optional

To cook the wontons and serve

- 3 liters / 12.5 cups water
- 41g / 3 Tbsps red chili oil, optional (see page 32)
- 9g / 3 Tbsps diced cilantro for garnish
- 12g / 3 Tbsps diced green part of the scallions for garnish



Make the wontons

1. Combine the ground pork, diced scallions, grated garlic, ginger, white pepper powder, soy sauce, oyster sauce, and sesame oil in a mixing bowl. Stir the filling in a circular motion in one direction for a few minutes to develop the texture.

2. If your wonton wrapper is frozen, defrost it in the refrigerator overnight or leave it on the countertop for 1 hour in advance.

3. Put 1.5 tsps filling in the middle of the wrapper, and then gather the edges and pinch them. Do the same thing to wrap the rest. Wontons don't need to be sealed completely, so don't worry about the shape. Set the wontons in the fridge for now.

Meal Prepping Tip: Make a lot of wontons and freeze them before cooking for up to 3 months. Boil directly from frozen whenever you want, though it will take a bit longer.

Make the broth

1. Add the pork lard, minced garlic, ginger, and diced scallions to a stockpot and sauté over medium-low heat for 2-3 minutes or until the aromatics are slightly golden on the edges.

2. Add the star anise, cinnamon stick, bay leaves, and Sichuan peppercorns and continue to stir for a minute or until the aromatics are golden brown.

3. Pour in 4 cups water or stock and bring it to a boil.

4. Season the soup by adding the Chinese black vinegar, soy sauce, brown sugar, and some salt to taste. If you use store-bought stock that is already salted, you may not need to add salt.

5. Add a bunch of dried seaweed and cook for 20 more seconds. Set the broth aside.

Cook the wontons and serve

1. Fill a separate pot with 3 liters of water and bring it to a boil. Use a spatula to swirl the water to create a cyclone. Then add the wontons and cook on medium-low heat for 3-5 minutes or until the wontons float to the top of the water. Avoid using high heat because you don't want the water to boil rapidly; otherwise, the wrapper will start breaking.

2. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the wontons into the sour broth. Add the diced scallions and cilantro as garnish. Drizzle in some red chili oil for a spicy kick.













Crispy Fried Wontons

zhá yún tūn
炸 云 吞

Prep Time:
30 minutes

Cooking Time:
15 minutes

Serves:
3 people

This is my go-to recipe whenever I want crispy wontons. It is easy to make and the result is stunning, creating an excellent appetizer for any meal. Double-frying is the secret to crispy wontons.



- 283g / 10 oz ground pork
- 1 egg
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 2g / ½ tsp chicken bouillon powder
- 6g / 2 tsps grated ginger
- 6g / 2 tsps grated garlic
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 64g / 1 cup diced scallion
- 40 wonton wrappers
- 550g / 2.5 cups oil to deep fry

1. Combine the ground pork, egg, soy sauce, oyster sauce, chicken bouillon powder, ginger, garlic, white pepper, sugar, and diced scallions in a big bowl and mix thoroughly. Stir the filling in one direction for a few minutes to develop the texture. Set the filling aside.

2. To wrap a wonton, put 1.5 tsps of filling in the middle of a wrapper. Lightly wet the edge of the wrapper with some water so it becomes easier to seal. Fold the wrapper in half diagonally into a triangle and pack it tightly. Wet the two ends and pinch them together. Do the same thing to wrap the rest of the wontons.

Meal Prepping Tip: Make a lot of wontons and freeze before cooking for up to 3 months. Boil or deep fry directly from frozen whenever you want, though it will take a bit longer.

3. Add oil to a wok and heat it to 360°F / 182°C over medium heat. Add the wontons and fry for 3 minutes or until the wrapper becomes hard. The color shouldn't turn golden at this time. Remove the wontons from the oil and let them rest for 5 minutes. The rest of the heat will continue to cook the filling through.

4. Increase the oil's temperature to 400°F / 204°C. Add the wontons back to the wok and double-fry them for 1 minute or until crispy and golden brown.

5. Remove the wontons from the oil and use paper towels to absorb the excess grease.

6. Serve the wontons with your favorite dipping sauce (see page 344).

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Steamed Shrimp Siu Mai

xiā rén shāo mài
虾 仁 烧 麦

Prep Time: 1.5 hours

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Shrimp Siu Mai is one of the must-order dim sum items whenever you go to a tea house restaurant. I will show you how to make it from scratch and give you some shortcuts if you don't want to put in so much labor.

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Make the Siu Mai filling

- 9g / about 3 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked for 2 hours in advance
- 127g / 4.5 oz pork belly
- 400g / 14 oz peeled and deveined shrimp (medium size, 51/60 per pound)
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 1 egg
- 32g / ¼ cup diced scallions
- 11g / 1.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 13.8g / 2.5 tsps soy sauce
- 15g / 2.5 tsps oyster sauce
- 2.1g / ½ tsp sugar
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps minced garlic
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps minced ginger
- 9g / 2 tsps sesame oil
- 28g / 1 oz finely minced carrot for garnish, optional

Make the Siu Mai wrapper

- 127g / 4.5 oz all-purpose flour
- 1.4g / ¼ tsp salt
- 57g / 1.9 fl oz water
- 1.3g / ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 15g / 2 Tbsps cornstarch to prevent sticking

Make the dipping sauce

- 9g / 1 Tbsp julienned ginger
- 24g / 1.5 Tbsps Chinese black vinegar
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce

Make the filling

1. Squeeze the soaked mushrooms to eliminate the water and then dice them finely.

> **Replacement Tip:** If you cannot find dried shiitake mushrooms, replace them with fresh mushrooms.

2. Slice the pork belly into ⅛-inch thick slabs, julienne the slabs into strips, and then finely dice them. Set the pork belly into a big bowl.

> **Chef's Secret:** Although this is a shrimp siu mai, mixing it with some pork will balance the texture and the flavor.

3. Add the shrimp, ½ tsp salt, and white pepper to a mixing bowl and mix well. Reserve half of the shrimp in the fridge. You will keep them whole for the presentation.

4. Use a cleaver to smash the other half of the shrimp one by one, and then roughly grind them into a paste. Shrimp is delicate, so this won't take too long. If you don't have a cleaver, use a meat tenderizer.

5. Combine the ground shrimp, diced pork, mushrooms, egg, scallions, and cornstarch in a big mixing bowl.

6. Add the soy sauce, oyster sauce, sugar, minced garlic, ginger, and sesame oil. Mix the filling in one direction until the paste becomes gluey and sticky, and then chill it in the fridge while making the wrappers.

Make the wrappers

1. Add the turmeric powder, salt, and water to a cup and stir well. Pour the mixture into the all-purpose flour slowly and mix at the same time until the water is well absorbed.

> **Chef's Secret:** The classic Cantonese siu mai wrappers have a yellow color, which comes from turmeric or food coloring. Some recipes use egg yolk, but then you will end up with extra egg white, so I recommend using turmeric.

2. Gather the flour and knead it for a few minutes until a rough dough forms.

3. Set the pasta roller at the thickest setting and feed the dough through until a rough sheet comes out. Fold the sheet and feed it through the roller again. Repeat this process 6-8 times or until the sheet becomes smooth.

4. Gradually lower the thickness of the pasta roller and feed the sheet through until it becomes 1 mm thick.











5. Use a 3.5-inch round cookie cutter to cut the wrapper into circles. Then recombine the scraps and feed them through the pasta roller to make more wrappers. If you don't have a pasta roller, feel free to cut the store-bought wonton wrappers into circles and use them as a replacement. Do not use dumpling wrappers because they are too thick for making siu mai.

6. This recipe needs 20 siu mai wrappers. Dust them with cornstarch to prevent sticking and set them aside.



Wrap the siu mai and steam

1. To wrap a siu mai, put 1.5 Tbsps filling in the middle of the wrapper and pack it tightly. Push up the edges and then use your forefinger and thumb to surround the siu mai and make it into a cylinder.



2. Cut parchment paper to fit into your steamer and poke holes to allow the steam to go through. Line the parchment paper in the steamer and place the siu mai on it.

3. Top each siu mai with a piece of whole shrimp that you reserved and garnish it with ½ tsp minced carrots. Continue to wrap the rest.



Chef's Secret: High-end dim sum restaurants usually use delicate fish roe as garnish. If you have access to purchase fish roe, give it a try.

4. Fill the steamer pot with water and bring it to a boil over high heat. Place the siu mai above it and steam for 6 to 8 minutes.

5. Meanwhile, combine the julienned ginger, Chinese black vinegar, and soy sauce and stir well.



Chef's Secret: This dipping sauce is non-spicy and is classic for all kinds of steamed dim sum.

6. Serve the siu mai with the dipping sauce.



Meal Prepping Tip: Make a lot of Shrimp Siu Mai and freeze for up to 2 months. Steam directly from frozen, though it will take a bit longer.



Glutinous Rice Siu Mai

nuò mǐ shāo mài
糯 米 烧 麦

Prep Time: 2.5 hours

Cooking Time: 40 minutes

Serves: 4 people

Glutinous rice is an unusual filling, but the taste is surprisingly delicious. Unlike the Cantonese style, this Glutinous Rice Siu Mai from Jiangsu Province has a thinner, softer wrapper. The shape looks like an elegant dress. Although the preparation is complicated, the combination of glutinous rice, sesame oil, shiitake mushroom, dried shrimp, and sausage is so delicious and worth trying.

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Make the filling

- 200g / 1 cup glutinous rice (see page 31)
- 12g / about 4 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 28g / 1 oz dried shrimp
- 80g / 2.8 oz Cantonese sausage (see page 25)
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps sesame oil
- 210g / 7.1 fl oz mushroom-soaking liquid
- 27g / 2 Tbsps cooking oil
- 170g / 6 oz ground pork
- 33g / 2 Tbsps soy sauce
- 8.3g / 1.5 tsps dark soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 21g / ⅓ cup of diced scallions
- 50g / ⅓ cup of diced carrot

Make the wrapper

- 250g / 8.8 oz all-purpose flour
- 150g / 5 fl oz boiling hot water
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt
- 30g / ¼ cup cornstarch to prevent sticking

Ingredient Tips

- Dried shrimp and shiitake mushrooms have complex tastes and aromas compared to fresh ones. You can use fresh shrimp and mushrooms, but the dish will come out with a completely different flavor.
- Cantonese sausage can be replaced with maple syrup flavored breakfast sausage.



Make the filling

1. Rub the glutinous rice with water to remove the excess starch, rinse several times until the water is clear, and then soak the rice for 2 hours.
2. Soak the dried shrimp and shiitake mushrooms in clean water for 2 hours. Drain the mushroom and shrimp and reserve the soaking liquid.
3. Mince the shrimp and dice the mushrooms and the Cantonese sausage. Set them aside.
4. Drain the glutinous rice thoroughly, add it to a nonstick pot with a drizzle of sesame oil, and mix it well. Sesame oil helps to keep the grains separate from each other and gives the rice a pleasant nutty taste.
5. Pour in the mushroom-soaking liquid and bring it to a boil over high heat. Turn the heat to the lowest setting and simmer the rice for 10 minutes.
6. Remove the rice from the stove and fluff the grains to release excess moisture. Set it aside.
7. Add the cooking oil, diced mushroom, Cantonese sausage, and minced shrimp to the wok and sauté over low heat for 2-3 minutes or until fragrant.
8. Push all the ingredients to the side of the wok to make space, add the ground pork, and stir until the meat changes color. Mix everything until well combined.
9. Add the cooked glutinous rice, use a spatula to break up the chunks, and separate the grains as much as possible.
10. Season the filling by adding the soy sauce, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce, and black pepper; mix well. Add the diced carrot and scallions and toss thoroughly. Remove the filling from the wok and set it aside.

Make the wrapper

1. Add salt and hot water (as hot as possible) to a bowl and stir to dissolve. Pour the solution into the all-purpose flour, and stir until all the water is absorbed. Put on the lid and let it sit for 10 minutes.



While shrimp siu mai uses room-temperature water, why does this recipe use hot water?
You want the wrapper to be firm and chewy when the filling is meat. Glutinous rice is sticky, gooey, and full of carbs already, so it is best to pair it with softer wrappers. Hot water will denature the flour's proteins, leading to soft and tender wrappers.

2. Gather the flour and knead it for 10 minutes until smooth. Cover the dough and let it rest for 40 minutes.

3. Roll the dough into a long even log, divide it into 32 even pieces, and flatten each piece into small patties. Sprinkle cornstarch to prevent sticking as needed. Cover them with plastic wrap so they don't get dry.

4. Use a rolling pin to roll each dough patty into a 3-inch diameter disk.

5. Stack 4 similar-sized dough disks together and put cornstarch in between to prevent sticking. Use a rolling pin to roll four of them at one time. As you do so, you will find that the top and the bottom pieces will be smaller than the two pieces in the middle. Switch positions by putting the smaller ones in the middle and keep rolling until all four wrappers are almost the same size and reach 4.5 inches in diameter.

6. Put the wrappers away and continue to roll the rest using the same method.

Wrap the siu mai and steam

1. Take one piece of the wrapper and put 3 Tbsps filling in the middle. Push up the edges and then use your forefinger and thumb to squeeze the siu mai to create a slender waist.

2. If using a stainless steel steamer, oil the rack to prevent sticking; if using a bamboo steamer, put parchment paper under the siu mai to prevent sticking. Place the siu mai into the steamer and continue to wrap the rest.

3. Steam the siu mai on high heat for 10 minutes. Start counting the time after the water has come to a boil.

Meal Prepping Tip: Make a lot of Glutinous Rice Siu Mai and freeze for up to 6 months. Whenever you want to eat it again, steam directly from frozen, though it will take a bit longer.



Shanghai-Style Crispy Egg Rolls

shàng hǎi zhá chūn juǎn
上 海 炸 春 卷

Prep Time:	Cooking Time:	Makes:
2 hours	35 minutes	40-50 egg rolls

This is a traditional Shanghai-style egg roll. It has a perfect airy crust and a velvety filling. These contrasting textures create such an interesting mouthfeel and make your egg rolls irresistible.

Ingredient Tips

- Garlic Chive: Its scientific name is Allium Tuberosum. It looks like chives, but the leaves are flat. It has a strong garlic flavor, which is how it got the name. Most Asian markets will carry it, and I don't know any replacement because nothing tastes similar, but you can still make this recipe with other vegetables such as julienned cabbage, carrot, or zucchini.
- Dried shiitake mushrooms can be replaced by fresh shiitake mushrooms.

For the aromatic water

- 320g / 1⅓ cups mushroom soaking liquid
- 16g / ¼ cup diced scallions
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps diced ginger
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps diced garlic
- 1.3g / 1 tsp of whole Sichuan peppercorns (see page 18)

To marinate the pork

- 454g / 1 pound pork loin
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt
- 1.6g / ⅓ tsp baking soda
- 11g / 1.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 7g / ½ Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp vegetable oil

To complete the filling

- 54g / ¼ cup cooking oil
- 24g / about 8 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked in water for 2 hours
- 350g / 12.3 oz garlic chives, cut into 1-inch stalks
- 120g / 4.2 oz bean sprout
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 27g / 1.5 Tbsps oyster sauce
- 13.6g / 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 38g / 5 Tbsps of cornstarch

For wrapping and deep-frying

- 40-50 sheets of egg roll wrappers (size 15cm by 15cm), defrosted in advance
- 18g / 2 Tbsps all-purpose flour
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water
- 440g / 2 cups cooking oil
- Worcestershire sauce for dipping

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Make the filling

1. Squeeze the soaked shiitake mushrooms to eliminate the water, and then dice the mushrooms finely. Reserve the soaking liquid. If using fresh shiitake mushrooms, there is no need to soak them; please dice them directly.

2. To make the aromatic water, add the scallions, ginger, garlic, Sichuan peppercorns, and 1⅓ cups mushroom soaking liquid into a blender. Blend into a puree and then pour through a sieve to eliminate the solid part.

3. Measure 2 Tbsps of the aromatic water and mix it with 1.5 Tbsps cornstarch in a bowl until no lumps remain; reserve it to marinate the pork

4. Mix the rest of the aromatic water with 5 Tbsps cornstarch in a bowl until no lumps remain; reserve it to bind the filling later.

5. Julienne the pork loin into thin strips and place them into a big mixing bowl. Add the salt, baking soda, Chinese cooking wine, black pepper, and the cornstarch aromatic water and mix thoroughly. Drizzle in 1 Tbsp vegetable oil and mix again. The oil will separate the meat strips and prevent them from sticking to each other while cooking. Set the meat aside for 15 minutes.

6. Turn the heat to high and preheat the wok until smoking hot. Add 2.5 Tbsps cooking oil and the marinated pork. Stir for 3 minutes or until most of the meat has changed color. Remove the pork from the wok and set it aside.

7. If the wok looks dry, drizzle ½ Tbsp oil. Add the diced mushrooms and bean sprouts. Stir over medium heat for 2 minutes. Season them by adding the soy sauce and oyster sauce, and mix well.

8. Add the garlic chives, the cooked pork, and sesame oil. Stir until everything is well combined.

9. Loose filling cannot be easily wrapped into the egg rolls. Therefore, you will use the cornstarch aromatic water to bind the filling together. Please stir the mixture before adding it to the wok because the cornstarch will sink to the bottom. Make sure to pour it into the wok in batches and mix over medium-low heat until the filling becomes a bit sticky.

10. Remove the filling from the wok and set it aside.

Wrap the egg rolls and deep-fry them

1. Before you start the wrapping, separate the sheets from each other by peeling them off carefully. Cover the egg roll wrappers with a damp towel.











2. Mix 2 Tbsps all-purpose flour with 3 Tbsps water in a small bowl until no lumps remain; set it aside; you will use it as the glue to seal the egg rolls.

3. To wrap the egg rolls, lay a wrapper on a cutting board and put 2-3 Tbsps filling in the middle of the wrapper diagonally. Lift one corner, fold it over, and then pull it back tightly to compact the filling. Give a solid press on each side. Fold both sides to the middle. Apply some all-purpose flour slurry on the last corner as glue. Roll over the rest of the wrapper and seal it. Do the same thing to wrap the rest of the egg rolls.

4. Heat 2 cups cooking oil in a wok over medium heat to 370°F / 188°C. Add the egg rolls and deep-fry them for 5-6 minutes or until golden brown. The filling is cooked already so you just need to fry the wrapper until crispy. I recommend frying them in 2-3 batches to avoid crowding the wok.

Meal Prepping Tip: Make a bulk amount of egg rolls and freeze them before frying for up to 6 months. Deep fry directly from frozen, though it will take a bit longer.

5. Serve the egg rolls with Worcestershire sauce.

Fun History: In Shanghai, egg rolls are usually dipped in something called "spicy soy sauce." It is actually a variant of Worcestershire sauce, which was brought from England in the 19th century. As it got more and more popular, the locals started producing their own. Because the color looks dark, like soy sauce, and it is slightly peppery, they name it 辣酱油，which means spicy soy sauce in Chinese.













Soups

402. Egg Drop Soup / 蛋花汤
403. Tomato Tofu Soup / 番茄豆腐汤
405. Chicken and Vegetable Soup / 时蔬鸡肉汤
406. Hot And Sour Soup / 酸辣汤
408. Pork Meatball Soup with Radish / 肉丸萝卜汤
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Egg Drop Soup

dàn huā tāng
蛋 花 汤

Prep Time:
5 minutes

Cooking Time:
10 minutes

Serves:
2 people

This is the most basic egg drop soup that you will find in your local Chinese restaurants, and you have probably ordered it many times already. Now you can make it at home with just a few ingredients.

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- 720g / 3 cups chicken stock
- 15g / about 3 scallion stalks, white part only
- 15g / about 3 slices ginger
- 11g / 1.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 45g / 3 Tbsps water
- 2 eggs
- 2.9g / ½ tsp salt or to taste
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp white pepper powder
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallion, green part only

1. Add the chicken stock, white scallion stalks, and ginger slices into a pot and bring to a boil over medium heat.
2. Mix the cornstarch with water thoroughly until no lumps remain; pour it into the pot and stir until the soup is slightly thickened.
3. Crack the eggs into a bowl and beat well. Pour the egg into the soup slowly while stirring it at the same time.
4. Turn off the stove and let the remaining heat cook the egg so your soup will come out silky.
5. Add salt and white pepper to taste. Sprinkle diced scallions as a garnish.



Tomato Tofu Soup

fān qié dòu fǔ tāng
番 茄 豆 腐 汤

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 2 people

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Tomato Tofu Soup is a hearty and delicious soup that you can prepare in 10 minutes. As a staple recipe for home cooks, it doesn't require special ingredients or amazing culinary skills --it's perfect for beginners or on a busy day.

- 400g / 14 oz tomatoes
- 400g / 14 oz firm tofu
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps cooking oil
- 18g / 2 Tbsps minced garlic
- 6g / 2 tsps minced ginger
- 33g / 2 Tbsps tomato paste
- 11.4g / 2 tsps salt
- 6.3g / ½ Tbsp sugar
- 600g / 2.5 cups chicken stock
- 30g / 2 Tbsps water
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 4g / 1 Tbsp diced scallions as garnish

1. Cut a cross on each tomato and soak them in boiling water for 30 seconds. Transfer the tomatoes to cold water and peel off the skin. This is an optional step because the skin is edible.

2. Roughly dice the tomato and set it aside.

3. Cut the tofu into cubes. I recommend using firm tofu because we are going to sear it in the pan.

4. Heat the wok until smoking hot over medium heat. Add oil and swirl it around to create a nonstick layer. Add the tofu cubes and sear them for 2 minutes on each side or until both sides are slightly golden. Remove the tofu from the wok.

5. There should be some oil left in the wok. Add the garlic, ginger, and tomato paste. Stir over medium heat until fragrant.

6. Add the diced tomato, salt, and sugar. Keep cooking until you can see a lot of tomato juice coming out.

7. Add the tofu back into the wok, pour in the chicken stock, and then bring it to a boil.

> **Souped Up Swap:** You can use vegetable stock if you want to keep this dish vegan.

8. Quickly mix the cornstarch with water in a small bowl until there are no lumps. Pour it into the soup and stir to thicken.

9. Before serving, add ground white pepper to taste and sprinkle some diced scallions as a garnish.















Chicken and Vegetable Soup

shí shū jī ròu tāng
时 蔬 鸡 肉 汤

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 4 people

This is a quick, easy, and healthy recipe. Besides serving it as a delightful addition to any dinner, you can also use it as a versatile foundation for creating delectable wonton soup or flavorful noodle soup.

- 227g / ½ pound chicken breast
- 8.6g / 1.5 tsps salt
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced ginger
- 0.6g / ¼ tsp ground white pepper or to taste
- 34g / 2.5 Tbsps vegetable oil
- 227g / ½ pound tomatoes
- 113g / 4 oz carrot
- 142g / 5 oz button mushrooms
- 85g / 3 oz green leafy vegetables
- 840g / 3.5 cups chicken stock or water
- 26g / 3.5 Tbsps cornstarch
- 53g / 3.5 Tbsps water

1. Slice the chicken breast thinly and place into a big mixing bowl. Add the salt, minced garlic, ginger, and white pepper and mix thoroughly. Let the mixture sit aside for 10 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, cut the tomatoes into bite-size pieces, slice the carrot and mushroom thinly, and chop the green leafy vegetables (such as bok choy, cabbage, spinach, kale, and choy sum) into pieces that are 1.5 inches long.
3. Heat the wok over high heat until smoking hot. Add the oil and the marinated chicken. Stir over high heat for 2-3 minutes or until the meat is slightly charred.
4. Add the tomatoes, mushrooms, carrot slices, and chicken stock, and bring everything to a boil over medium heat.
5. Toss in the green leafy vegetables and stir for 10 seconds.
6. Quickly mix the cornstarch with water until no lumps remain and pour it into the soup. Stir until the broth thickens.
7. If using this as a foundation, boil 3-4 servings of wonton or noodles in a separate pot and combine them with the chicken soup.

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Hot and Sour Soup

suān là tāng
酸 辣 汤

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 3 people

Originally, Hot and Sour Soup was popular among poor civilians; it was heavily seasoned with white pepper to warm themselves so they could survive through the winter. Nowadays, this soup has lost its authenticity because most takeout restaurants cut down on the use of white pepper. Here is my suggestion: if you serve kids, use 1 tsp or less. If you want to enjoy the soup thoroughly and be dripping with sweat after dinner, use 1 Tbsp or more.

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- 6g / about 2 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked in water for 2 hours
- 8.5g / 0.3 oz dried wood ear mushrooms, soaked in water for 2 hours
- 100g / 3.5 oz pork
- 11g / 2 tsps soy sauce (to marinate the pork)
- 5g / 2 tsps cornstarch (to marinate the pork)
- 142g / 5 oz silken or soft tofu
- 57g / 2 oz carrot
- 2 eggs
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced ginger
- 4.5g / ½ Tbsp minced garlic
- 15g / 2 Tbsps cornstarch
- 30g / 2 Tbsps water
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 5.5g / 1 tsp dark soy sauce
- 4.2g / 1 tsp sugar
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt or to taste
- 2.4g - 7.2g / 1-3 tsps ground white pepper
- 48g / 3 Tbsps Chinese black vinegar
- 840g / 3.5 cups water or stock
- 6.8g / 1.5 tsps sesame oil
- 6g / 2 Tbsps diced cilantro
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallion

Ingredient Tips

- Dried shiitake and wood ear mushrooms are classic items to put into Hot and Sour Soup; you can replace them with other mushrooms or your favorite vegetables.
- Chinese black vinegar is aged and has a complex taste and aroma. The closest replacement is balsamic vinegar. You could use rice vinegar, but you will lose some authentic taste.

Prep before cooking

1. Squeeze the water out of the shiitake mushrooms and drain the wood ear mushrooms. Reserve the soaking liquid for later use. Slice both of them thinly and set them aside.
2. Thinly julienne the pork and place it into a bowl. Add the soy sauce and cornstarch and mix thoroughly. Let the pork rest for 15 minutes.
3. Thinly julienne the tofu and carrot; thoroughly whisk two eggs in a bowl and set them aside.
4. Combine the cornstarch, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, sugar, and salt in a bowl and whisk well. Set the sauce aside.
5. Combine the ground white pepper and Chinese black vinegar in a separate bowl. I recommend adding these two ingredients before turning off the heat because the flavors will fade if cooked too long.

Make the soup

1. Heat the wok until smoking hot. Add the oil, garlic, and ginger and stir until fragrant.
2. Add the shitake, wood ear mushrooms, and carrot to the wok, and stir for a couple of minutes.
3. Pour in 3.5 cups water or stock and bring to a boil.
4. Add the tofu and marinated pork and cook for 2 minutes or until the soup comes back to a boil.
5. Take the cornstarch mixture that was set aside and give it a quick whisk before pouring it into the wok. Stir the soup simultaneously until the broth is thickened.
6. Pour in the beaten eggs while stirring the soup simultaneously to create an extra smooth and silky texture. If you wish to enjoy big pieces of egg, don't whisk the soup while adding the egg.
7. Add the white pepper and vinegar mixture to the wok, stir for 10 seconds, and then turn off the heat.
8. Before serving, add diced scallions, cilantro, and sesame oil and stir well.

Pork Meatball Soup with Radish

ròu wán luó bo tāng
肉 丸 萝 卜 汤

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 2 people

This is a 3-in-1 pork meatball soup. A standard Chinese dinner usually includes a meat dish, a vegetable, and a soup. This recipe has it all. Although we used store-bought chicken stock, the soup is surprisingly fragrant thanks to the sautéed aromatics. Plus, it's easy to make and can be done within 15 minutes.



- 300g / 10.6 oz ground pork
- 25g / 1.5 Tbsps soy sauce
- 18g / 1 Tbsp oyster sauce
- 14g / 1 Tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper
- 1.5g / ½ tsp garlic powder
- 7.5g / 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 20g / 1.5 Tbsps oil
- 13.5g / 1.5 Tbsps minced garlic
- 9g / 1 Tbsp minced ginger
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced white part of the scallion
- 960g / 4 cups unsalted stock (chicken, beef, or vegetable stock all work)
- 300g / 10.6 oz daikon radish, julienned
- 8g / 2 Tbsps diced scallion, green part only for garnish
- 6g / 2 Tbsps diced cilantro
- Salt to taste

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground pork, soy sauce, oyster sauce, Chinese cooking wine, garlic powder, white pepper, and cornstarch. Stir in one direction for 5 minutes to develop the texture.

2. Add the oil to a preheated clay pot or stockpot and then swirl it around so the oil covers the bottom. Add the minced garlic, ginger, and white part of the scallions and sauté over medium-low heat for 2 minutes or until the aromatics are slightly golden.

3. Pour in the stock, bring to a light simmer, and switch the heat to low.

4. Use your hand to grab some ground pork and squeeze it. The mixture will come out between your forefinger and thumb and naturally form into a round ball. Dip a spoon in the stock to prevent sticking, use it to scrape the meatball off your hand, and drop it into the stock. Repeat until all of the meatballs are formed.

5. Add the julienned daikon radish and bring to a boil over medium heat. Continue to cook for 4-5 minutes.

6. Season the soup with salt to taste and garnish with the diced green part of the scallions and cilantro. Serve with white rice.

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Fuzhou Meatball Soup

fú dǐng ròu piàn tāng
福 鼎 肉 片 汤

Prep Time: 40 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 3 people

These meatballs are made by scraping the filling into the soup using a chopstick. Although the shape looks nothing like a meatball, the Fuzhou people call it a meatball. The original method was to make round meatballs, but later on, they found this way to be a lot faster, and the taste was the same. These meatballs contain quite a lot of sweet potato starch, so they have a unique texture, very bouncy and gelatinous.

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For making the pork meatballs

- 454g / 1 pound lean pork shoulder meat
- 8.6g / 1.5 tsps salt
- 16.6g / 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 8.3g / 2 tsps sugar
- 2.4g / ½ tsp baking soda
- 4.5g / 1.5 tsps garlic powder
- 1.2g / ½ tsp finely ground white pepper or to taste
- 28g / 1 oz crushed ice
- 12g / about 4 cloves garlic
- 9g / about 3 slices ginger
- 15g / about 1 scallion
- 150g / 5 fl oz cold water
- 150g / 5.3 oz sweet potato starch (see page 28)
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups stock (chicken, beef, or vegetable stock all work)

For seasoning the soup

- 22.5g / 2.5 Tbsps minced ginger
- 36g / 4 Tbsps finely minced garlic
- 102g / 6 Tbsps fish sauce (see page 16)
- 96g / 6 Tbsps Chinese black vinegar (see page 16)
- 31g / 2.5 Tbsps sugar
- 24g / ½ cup diced cilantro
- 9g / 1.5 Tbsps diced Thai bird's eye chilies (see page 23)
- 16g / 4 Tbsps dried baby shrimp, optional (see page 25)
- 14g / ½ oz dried seaweed, optional (see page 24)
- 27g / 2 Tbsps pork lard
- 1.2g / ½ tsp ground white pepper or to taste



1. Trim off the fat and silver skin from the pork shoulder. Cut the meat into bite-size pieces and then use a food processor to grind the meat until smooth.

> **Chef's Secret:** Buy the freshest meat possible and don't use pre-ground pork because the texture does not come out the same. This recipe calls for 1 pound of meat, but I recommend buying a little bit more so you have enough after the trimming.

2. Transfer the ground pork into a big mixing bowl and add the salt, soy sauce, sugar, baking soda, garlic powder, and freshly ground white pepper.

3. Add the crushed ice and stir the ground pork in one direction for 8 minutes or until the meat becomes sticky and gluey.

> **Chef's Secret:** Stirring the meat will create a lot of heat, and adding ice will make sure your meat stays fresh and cold. Since this step is very tiring, I recommend using a stand mixer with the paddle attachment if you have one.

4. In a blender, add the garlic, ginger, scallions, and cold water. Blend everything into a smooth puree and let it go through a sieve to eliminate the solid parts. Mix the aromatic liquid with the sweet potato starch in a bowl until no lumps remain.

5. Pour the sweet potato starch puree mixture into the meat in 3 batches and stir in one direction for 5 minutes or until all the liquid is absorbed. If using a stand mixer, you must use a spatula to scrape the meat from the edge and flip the meat from the bottom of the bowl to ensure even mixing.

6. Add the stock to a pot and bring to a simmer over medium heat.

7. Spread the meat mixture onto a flat plate. Use a chopstick to scrape the meat mixture into the stock little by little. Between every scrape, dip the chopstick into the stock to prevent sticking.

8. Bring the pot to a boil and then continue to cook for 3-5 minutes over medium heat.

9. Gather the julienned ginger, minced garlic, fish sauce, Chinese black vinegar, sugar, diced cilantro, Thai bird's eye chilies, dried baby shrimp, seaweed, pork lard, and white pepper in a big soup bowl. Then pour in the meatball soup and stir well.

Rib and Lotus Root Soup

lián ǒu pái gǔ tāng
蓮 藕 排 骨 汤

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 1.5 hours

Serves: 3 people

Lotus root rib soup was rated as one of the top ten classic dishes in Hubei, a province known for its rich lotus root. Unlike the thick and creamy types of soup in Western cuisines, this soup is light, clear, delightful, and healthy. Why is that? Chinese people like to drink soup before eating; we believe that the broth will smooth the stomach, which is good for the body.

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- 454g / 1 pound pork short ribs
- 35g / 2.5 Tbsps Chinese cooking wine
- 1.5 liters / 6¼ cups water to blanch the ribs
- 18g / about 6 slices ginger
- 45g / about 3 scallions
- 3.3g / 1 tsp whole white peppercorns
- 454g / 1 pound lotus root (see page 22)
- 18g / about 6 dried jujube dates
- 6g / 1 Tbsp goji berry, optional
- 5.7g / 1 tsp salt

1. Cut the scallions whites into 1-inch stalks; dice the green part and reserve it as a garnish.
2. Discard the ends of the lotus root, peel the skin, and cut the lotus root into bite-size pieces.
3. Slice the short ribs between the bones into individual pieces.
4. Add the ribs, cooking wine, and 1.5 liters of water to a pot and bring it to a boil.
5. Remove the ribs from the pot and set them aside.
6. Pour the blanching water through a cheesecloth to eliminate the impurities. This will make sure the soup comes out clear.
7. Pour the clean broth into a clay pot. Then, add the blanched ribs, lotus root, ginger slices, the white part of the scallion stalks, white peppercorns, and jujube dates and simmer on low heat for 1.5 hours.
8. Before serving, add salt to taste and garnish with diced scallions and goji berries.



Yunnan Herb Braised Beef Soup

yún nán niú bā hū
云 南 牛 扒 烀

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 1.5 hours

Serves: 5 people

Yunnan is a special province; it has the largest number of ethnic minorities, so there are lots of different cultures there. It borders Myanmar, Vietnam, and Laos, and it is connected with Thailand and Cambodia through the Lancang-Mekong River. With lots of catering collisions, Yunnan developed an interesting cuisine. In the local dialect, "niu" refers to beef, and "pahu" signifies braising until tender. This hearty soup is heavily seasoned with various herbs, delivering a complex, tropical, and pungent flavor profile.

To make the beef soup

- 2kg / 4.4 pounds beef stew cuts
- 2 liters / 8⅓ cups water
- 30g / about 2 inches ginger, sliced thinly
- 30g / about 2 scallions, cut into stocks
- 2.5g / about 1 cinnamon stick
- 0.8g / about 1 star anise
- 0.8g / about 4 bay leaves
- 6.7g / 2 tsps whole white peppercorns

To complete the soup

- 36g/ about 12 cloves garlic
- 15g / about 1 inch ginger
- 30g / about 2 scallions
- 90g / about 2 shallots
- 12g / about 6 Thai bird's eye chilies (see page 23)
- 113g / 4 oz celery, diced
- 10g / about ⅓ cup mint leaves
- 12g / about 6 culantro leaves
- 12g / about 6 cilantro leaves
- Lime juice from 2-3 limes, to taste
- 3g / 2 tsps Sichuan peppercorn powder (see page 18)
- 17.1g / 1 Tbsp salt or to taste

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Ingredient Tips

- I used many beef cuts, including honeycomb tripe, tendon, ribs, beef stew meat, and bones for this recipe. If you don't like tripe, it is ok to leave it. However, I encourage you to do your best to collect multiple cuts so you can have different textures and flavors in one pot.
- Culantro (Eryngium foetidum) is an herb that has a similar aroma and flavor to cilantro, but they are not the same plant. Culantro has long, serrated leaves. If you don't have it, use more cilantro instead.

1. To blanch the beef, fill a big pot with water and add all of the beef cuts. Bring it to a boil. Skim off the scum.

2. While waiting for the beef, put the following aromatics and spices into a spicy bag: ginger slices, scallion stalks, cinnamon stick, star anise, bay leaves, and white peppercorns.

3. Once the pot comes to a boil, transfer the beef cuts into a separate pot and discard the blanching liquid.

Chef's Secret: If using beef tripe, discarding the liquid is necessary due to its strong smell. If not using tripe, skim the scum with a fine sieve and continue to use the blanching water for braising.

4. Fill the new pot with 2 liters of water. Add the spice bag and put on the lid. Bring it to a boil. Simmer on low heat for 1.5 hours or until tender.

5. Finely dice the garlic, ginger, scallions, shallot, celery, Thai bird's eye chilies, mint, culantro, and cilantro. Squeeze the juice from a few large limes. If you cannot collect all these herbs, it is fine to use other herbs you like.

6. Remove all the beef from the pot and leave the broth behind. Take the spice bag out and discard it. If you use any cuts containing bones, this is the time to debone and discard the bones.

7. Cut the meat into bite-size pieces and place it back into the broth. Bring it to a boil again. Add all the diced garlic, ginger, scallions, shallots, celery, Thai bird's eye chilies, mint, culantro, cilantro, Sichuan peppercorn powder, and salt to taste.

8. Add the lime juice gradually and taste the soup to adjust the flavor.













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