

Recipe Packet: Basic Chinese Cuisine – Week Three

Won Ton Broth

Makes roughly 1 quart of broth

2 pounds chicken backs, wingtips and other chicken bones
1 ½ pounds pig's trotters, split or chopped into chunks
3 ounces Chinese ham or salt pork
1 quart low-sodium chicken broth
1 strip of Kombu
1 ounce dried shrimp
8 green onions, whites and greens reserved separately
1 4-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled
½ head Napa cabbage, cut into chunks
1 star anise
Kosher salt

Combine the chicken bones, pigs trotters and ham in a large stockpot and cover with water. Bring to a boil for 10 minutes, then dump the contents into a strainer set in the sink. Let the liquid drain away and run cold water over the bones and meat – cleaning and rinsing away any coagulated blood and scum. Return everything to the stockpot.

Add the chicken stock, and enough water so that the liquid is 1-inch above the surface of the bones. Add the kombu, dried shrimp, scallion whites only, the fresh ginger and the cabbage.

Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to low and simmer the broth, uncovered, for about 2 hours.

Using tongs or a skimmer, discard the solid pieces and strain the broth through a fine mesh strainer lined with cheesecloth into a large saucepan. You can skim any of the fat off the top of the broth with a large spoon, or you can chill the broth in the fridge overnight and skim the fat off the next day. The fat will solidify and you can use a spoon to remove the fat off the top of the broth. The chilled broth may look quivery and jelly-like and that's exactly what you want! Reheat the broth when you are ready to serve.

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Pork and Shrimp Wontons

Makes 24 -36 wontons

24 small shrimp, shelled and de-veined
Kosher salt and white pepper
½ teaspoon baking soda
1 pound ground pork
2 teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon light soy sauce
2 teaspoons sesame oil
1 tablespoon fresh ginger peeled and finely minced
1 scallion, white and green parts finely minced
1 package thin wonton wrappers

Place the shrimp in a bowl add baking soda, 1 teaspoon of salt and ¼ cup of water and mix together. Let the shrimp sit for at least 15 minutes. Drain when you are ready to add to the wonton filling mixture.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the pork, ginger, sugar, soy sauce, sesame oil, scallions and 1 teaspoon of salt and a pinch a white pepper. Use your hands to mix together until everything is thoroughly combined. Drain and dry the shrimp by pressing them with paper towels, roughly chop to retain pieces of shrimp, and add to the pork mixture.

Place one wonton wrapper on a clean work surface and place a tablespoon-sized portion of the filling. Dip your index fingertip in a small bowl of water and moisten the edges of the wonton wrapper.

Lift the two opposite corners up to meet at a point, and use your fingertips to seal the rest of the sides, forming a triangle – squeeze as much air out as possible. Pull the opposite corners towards each other and pinch together (use a dab of water to keep them together). Transfer to a plate and repeat with the remaining wonton wrappers and filling.

To serve, bring the soup to a boil. Add the wontons and 1 cup of shredded Napa cabbage and cook until the wontons are cooked through, about 3-4 minutes.

Evenly divide the wontons and broth into warmed bowls and garnish with sliced scallions. Cool for at least 1 minute and serve.

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Steamed Whole Fish with Sizzling Ginger Oil

Serves 4

I like steaming any type of bass, red snapper, yellowtail snapper, rock fish, trout, halibut (basically any white fish). I've also steamed salmon this way too with great success.

1 whole fish, about 1 pound
½ cup kosher salt (for cleaning)
kosher salt and ground white pepper
3-4 scallions, sliced into 3-inch pieces
4" piece of peeled ginger, sliced into ¼-inch slices
½ bunch cilantro
2 tablespoons Xiao Shing rice wine
kosher salt and ground white pepper
1 tablespoon sesame oil
2 tablespoons light soy sauce
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 scallions, thinly sliced on the bias
2 tablespoons peeled fresh ginger, finely julienned into thin strips

Special Equipment:

Large, wide skillet pan with straight sides and lid
Steamer basket, or shallow pan
Wide, rimmed plate for the fish

If the fish still has scales remaining on its skin, run a sharp knife in the opposite direction to flake off any remaining scales – do this against towards the wall (and tape a paper bag across the wall to protect the finish of your wall!) Clean the fish by rubbing it inside and out with kosher salt. Rinse the fish and pat dry with paper towels.

Season the fish inside and out with salt and pepper. Make a bed on the steaming plate with half of the scallions, cilantro and ginger and lay the fish down. Stuff the remaining half inside the fish. Pour the Xiao Shing wine over the fish.

Pour 2 inches of water into the wide skillet and bring to a boil. Do not cover the skillet – the steam condensation shouldn't collect and drip down over the fish when cooking. That would dilute the flavor of the fish.

Place the fish into the pan and cover. Steam the fish on medium heat for 12 minutes (add 2 minutes for every half pound more). To check, poke the fish with a chopstick near the head – if the flesh flakes, it's done. If the flesh still sticks together, steam for 2 minutes more. Warm the soy sauce, sesame oil in a small pan and set aside.

When the fish has cooked, gently lift the fish off the steaming plate and transfer to a clean platter. Pour the warm soy sauce mixture over the fish (you want to discard the cooking juices and aromatics).

Prepare the sizzling oil by heating the vegetable oil in a small saucepan. Just before it starts to smoke, add the ginger and scallions and fry for 10 seconds. Pour the hot sizzling oil over the top of the fish. Garnish with remaining scallions and cilantro.

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Singapore Noodles

Serves 6

½ pound dried rice vermicelli noodles (soaked in cold water until pliable)
24 – 30 small shrimp, peeled and deveined
3 tablespoons coconut oil
1 small white onion, lyonnaised
1 cup frozen peas, thawed
2 teaspoons curry powder
½ pound Char Shiu (Chinese roast pork), sliced into thin strips
2 tablespoons fish sauce
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
8-10 sprig cilantro, trimmed

Bring a large pot of water to boil over high heat. Remove the noodles from the soaking water and cook until they are tender and firm, about 10 seconds. Don't drain the noodles – use a scoop strainer to remove the noodles from the cooking water. Set aside in a mixing bowl. In the same cooking water, cook the shrimp until they are opaque (about 1 minute). Drain and set aside.

Heat 1 tablespoon of coconut oil in a wok over high heat. Stir fry the onion until they are soft, about 3-5 minutes. Add the remaining oil and add the noodles and peas. Sprinkle the curry powder over the noodles and stir fry until combined. Toss well and make sure all of the noodles have turned yellow. Add the pork, shrimp, fish sauce and season with salt and pepper. Garnish with cilantro.