



# TOP 25 RECIPES

*a culinary genealogy*

**THE WOKS OF LIFE**

*To anyone who has ever read our blog,  
commented on a post,  
or tried one of our recipes,*

*Thanks for following along with our family.*



# contents

<a href="#">Introduction</a> .....	4
<a href="#">15-Minute Coconut Curry Noodle Soup</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Chili Oil</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Cantonese Soy Sauce Pan-Fried Noodles</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Shanghai Braised Pork Belly</a> .....	12
<a href="#">Mongolian Beef</a> .....	14
<a href="#">Thai Basil Chicken (Pad Kra Pow)</a> .....	16
<a href="#">General Tso's Cauliflower</a> .....	18
<a href="#">Hot and Sour Soup</a> .....	20
<a href="#">The Only Dumpling Recipe You'll Ever Need</a> .....	22
<a href="#">Egg Fried Rice</a> .....	24
<a href="#">Classic Pork Fried Rice</a> .....	26
<a href="#">Dan Dan Noodles</a> .....	28
<a href="#">Steamed BBQ Pork Buns</a> .....	30
<a href="#">Cantonese Roast Pork Belly</a> .....	32
<a href="#">Asian Milk Bread</a> .....	34
<a href="#">Thai Basil Beef</a> .....	36
<a href="#">Simple Wonton Soup</a> .....	38
<a href="#">Drunken Noodles</a> .....	40
<a href="#">Char Siu</a> .....	42
<a href="#">Spicy Beef Noodle Soup</a> .....	44
<a href="#">Egg Drop Soup</a> .....	46
<a href="#">Vegetable Dumplings</a> .....	48
<a href="#">Turnip Cake</a> .....	50
<a href="#">Fried Chicken Wings (Takeout Style)</a> .....	52
<a href="#">Vegetable Lo Mein</a> .....	54
<a href="#">Resources</a> .....	55

# introduction

Our family started our recipe blog, [The Woks of Life](#), in June 2013. An amalgamation of family album, cookbook, diary, and forum, the blog truly is how we describe it—a culinary genealogy.

We're not only sharing recipes. We're sharing family histories. Stories that can spark old memories and create new ones. And it's not just our family's story either.

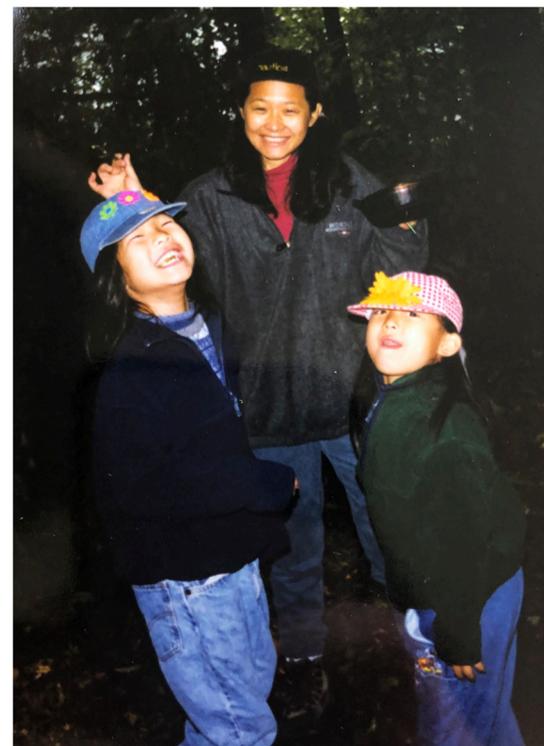
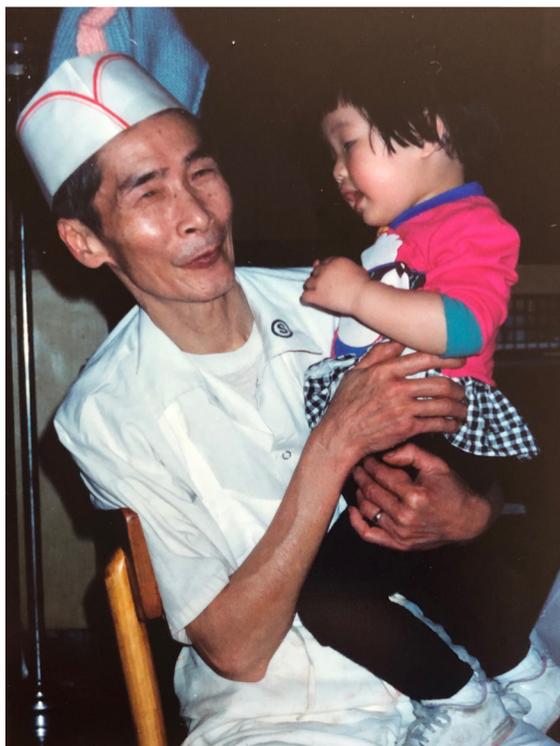
Our blog is a reflection of many family histories out there—kids of immigrant parents making dishes from their childhoods, expats discovering how to cook local cuisines in their own kitchens, families connecting on a different level with homesick exchange students, and home cooks simply looking to spice up weeknight dinners.

The Woks of Life has become bigger and meant more to people than we thought it would when we started it years ago, and we're very glad we did.

This eBook is a collection of our Top 25 most popular recipes from when we first began posting in 2013 through today. You'll see that it includes a wide range of recipes, including our family's versions of traditional Chinese dishes, Chinese American takeout classics (from our family's restaurant days!), and quick and easy meals.

We hope you enjoy these favorite recipes as much as we and other readers have!

- Bill, Judy, Sarah & Kaitlin





SERVES 3

## #1: 15-MINUTE COCONUT CURRY NOODLE SOUP

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, grated
- 3 tablespoons Thai red curry paste
- 8 oz. boneless chicken breast or thighs, sliced
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup coconut milk
- 6 oz. dried rice vermicelli noodles
- 1 lime, juiced
- Sliced red onion, red chilis, cilantro, scallions to garnish

*As ardent fans of anything having to do with noodles and hot soup, we consider *The Woks of Life* to be somewhat of an authority on the subject. Despite how quickly this coconut curry noodle soup can be made, it has an amazingly complex flavor. It can all be made in one pot, because the thin rice noodles cook directly in the soup right at the end. Hundreds of *Woks of Life* readers have tried and loved this noodle soup, and you won't be disappointed, either. It truly is a restaurant quality dish! [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

In a large pot over medium heat, add the oil, garlic, ginger, and Thai red curry paste. Fry for 5 minutes, until fragrant.

Add the chicken and cook for a couple minutes, just until the chicken turns opaque.

Add the chicken broth, water, fish sauce, and coconut milk. Bring to a boil.

At this point, taste the broth for salt and adjust seasoning accordingly (add salt if needed, or if it's too salty, add a bit of water).

Pour the boiling soup over the dried vermicelli noodles in your serving bowls, add a squeeze of lime juice and your garnishes, and serve. The noodles will be ready to eat in a couple minutes.

(Alternatively, you can add the noodles to the boiling broth to cook them, and then divide among serving bowls).



MAKES ABOUT  
2 1/4 CUPS

## #2: HOMEMADE CHILI OIL

- 1½ cups vegetable or canola oil
- 5 star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick, preferably cassia cinnamon
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 tablespoons Sichuan peppercorns
- ¾ cup Asian crushed red pepper flakes (Sichuan chili flakes are the best)
- 1 - 1½ teaspoons salt (to taste)

*Our philosophy is that pretty much everything can be improved with some chili oil. A plate of noodles or a bowl of fried rice just isn't as good without some on top. If you go to any Chinese restaurant (in the US or in China) worth their salt and ask for chili oil, they will bring out a deliciously fragrant, dark red, viscous chili oil that could make even a piece of shoe leather taste good. What's surprising is, a truly excellent chili oil is actually pretty simple to make at home. Our family makes big batches of the stuff every few months. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Heat the oil, star anise, cinnamon stick, bay leaves, and Sichuan peppercorns in a small saucepan over medium high heat.

When the oil starts to bubble slightly, turn the heat down to medium low. The ideal heat should be about 225 to 250 degrees F so as not to burn the oil and spices. Caution that the oil and spices can burn really easily, so it's best to get a candy thermometer to monitor the oil temperature.

Let the oil cook for 30 minutes like this. If you start to see that slight bubbling die down, periodically turn the heat back up to medium-high, then back down to low if it gets too hot.

When the oil is done cooking, the seeds and pods should be darker in color, but not blackened (that means they burned, which results in subpar chili oil). Let the oil cool for 5 minutes if it is too hot - the temperature should still be 225 to 250 degrees F. In a separate heat-proof bowl, measure out the crushed red pepper flakes and salt.

Remove the aromatics from the oil using a slotted spoon or fine mesh strainer. Slowly pour the oil over the chili flakes, and stir well.

When completely cooled, transfer to a jar, and store in the refrigerator. The oil will keep for up to 6 months when stored this way (always remember to use a clean spoon to dip into the jar!)



SERVES 2

## #3: CANTONESE SOY SAUCE PAN-FRIED NOODLES

- 1 1/2 cups bean sprouts
- 2 scallions
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon dark soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 tablespoon shaoxing wine
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
- 8 oz. fresh thin Hong Kong Style Egg Noodles (for pan-frying, not to be mistaken for “wonton noodles”), or 3 small bundles of dried Hong Kong Style Egg Noodles for pan-frying
- 3 tablespoons oil

*It's a Chinese noodle dish that we have to order every time we go out to dim sum. Perk up your ears while you're getting your next dim sum fix. You might hear some people ordering something that sounds like “see yow wong chow meen.” Which is a bunch of fancy foreign words for “soy-saucy-pan-fried-noodles-that-are-the-most-awesome-thing-in-the-whole-wide-world.” And that's a direct translation. Here's our recipe for it. Just remember, you really need a HOT wok when making this dish to achieve that signature “wok hay” flavor. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Bring 2 quarts of water to a boil. Rinse the bean sprouts in cold water and drain. Julienne the scallions. Mix the soy sauces, sesame oil, salt, sugar, wine and white pepper into a small bowl and set aside.

Boil the noodles. Fresh noodles should be boiled for about 1 minute. For dried noodles, boil for 2-3 minutes. Rinse in cold water and drain very well.

Heat a wok over high heat and add a tablespoon of oil to coat the wok (a large non-stick pan also works nicely). Spread the noodles in a thin, even layer on the wok and tilt the wok in a circular motion to distribute the oil and crisp the bottom layer of the noodles evenly. It should take about 3-5 minutes for the first side.

Flip the noodles over and add another tablespoon of oil around the perimeter of the wok and let the other side crisp up. Don't stress if you can't turn the noodles over in one shot, The goal here is just to get an even, light crispiness and to dry out the noodles during this cooking stage. Set aside the noodles on a plate.

Heat the wok over high heat. Add a tablespoon of oil and all of the white parts of the scallion to the pan and cook for about 15 seconds. Next, add the noodles to the wok and toss them well, breaking up the noodles so they're not all in one big clump. Add the soy sauce mixture and toss continuously for a couple minutes using a pair of chopsticks or a set of tongs. Keep the heat on high.

After the noodles are uniformly golden brown, add the bean sprouts and toss. Add the rest of the scallions and toss the mixture again for another 1 to 2 minutes until you see the bean sprouts just starting to turn transparent. You want the sprouts to be cooked but still crunchy. Be careful not to overcook them or they will become limp and soggy. High heat is a key requirement for this dish.

Plate and serve!



SERVES 3

## #4: SHANGHAI BRAISED PORK BELLY (HONG SHAO ROU)

- 3 /4 lb. of lean pork belly, skin-on
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 tablespoon sugar (rock sugar is preferred if you have it)
- 3 tablespoons shaoxing wine
- 1 tablespoon regular soy sauce
- ½ tablespoon dark soy sauce
- 2 cups water

*Shanghai-Style Braised Pork Belly (hong shao rou), or “red cooked pork,” is a very famous dish in China. Everyone knows it, and there are many versions and twists based on the original. Some of the more well-known variations include the addition of squid (sounds odd, but boy, is it tasty), hard boiled eggs, and tofu knots (one of Sarah’s favorites). But since Judy is from Shanghai, we often like to cook this original, un-embellished Shanghai-style version. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Start by cutting your pork belly into 3/4-inch thick pieces.

Bring a pot of water to a boil. Blanch the pork belly pieces for a couple minutes. This gets rid of impurities and starts the cooking process. Take the pork out of the pot, rinse, and set aside.

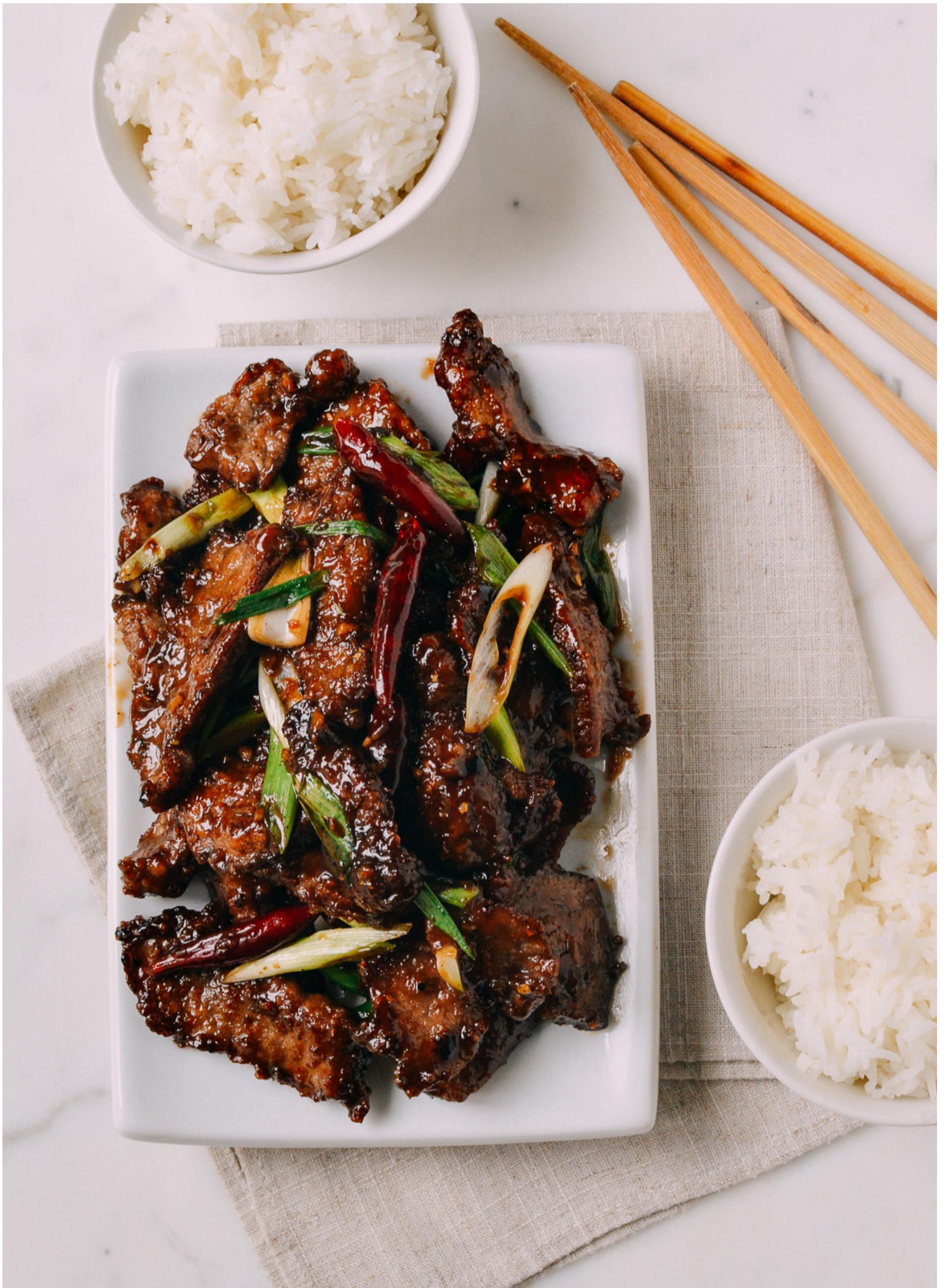
Over low heat, add the oil and sugar to your wok. Melt the sugar slightly and add the pork. Raise the heat to medium and cook until the pork is lightly browned.

Turn the heat back down to low and add shaoxing cooking wine, regular soy sauce, dark soy sauce, and water.

NOTE: It’s very important to the color and flavor of this dish that you have both kinds of soy sauce! Just head to your local Asian market, buy a bottle of each, and it will last you a year!

Cover and simmer for about 45 minutes to 1 hour until pork is fork tender. Every 5-10 minutes, stir to prevent burning and add more water if it gets too dry.

Once the pork is fork tender, if there is still a lot of visible liquid, uncover the wok, turn up the heat, and stir continuously until the sauce has reduced to a glistening coating.



SERVES 2

## #5: MONGOLIAN BEEF

- 8 ounces flank steak, sliced against the grain into 1/4-inch thick slices
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil, plus 1/3 cup for frying
- 1 teaspoon low sodium soy sauce, plus 1/4 cup
- 1 tablespoon plus 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon minced ginger
- 5 dried red chili peppers (optional)
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/4 cup water or low sodium chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- Cornstarch slurry (1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 1 tablespoon water)
- 2 scallions, cut into 1-inch long slices on the diagonal

Soon after it was published on the blog, this Mongolian Beef quickly rose to become one of our most popular recipes. While it's definitely not Mongolian (chalk it up to the American restaurateurs, menu planners, and marketers who probably gave the dish its name), it doesn't take a genius to know that despite their somewhat misleading names, these Chinese-American dishes can be GOOD! Our version is a crispy, flavorful homemade version that's less sweet than the gloopy restaurant version you might be used to. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)

Marinate the beef for 1 hour in 1 teaspoon oil, 1 teaspoon soy sauce, and 1 tablespoon cornstarch.

Once marinated, dredge the meat in the remaining 1/4 cup of cornstarch until lightly coated.

Heat 1/3 cup vegetable oil in the wok over high heat. Just before the oil starts to smoke, spread the flank steak pieces evenly in the wok, and let sear for 1 minute (depending upon the heat of your wok). Turn over and let the other side sear for another 30 seconds. Remove to a sheet pan; tilt it slightly to let the oil drain to one side (lean it on a cookbook or cutting board). The beef should be seared with a crusty coating.

Drain the oil from the wok, leaving 1 tablespoon behind, and turn the heat to medium-high. Add the ginger and dried chili peppers, if using. After about 15 seconds, add the chopped garlic. Stir for another 10 seconds and add the 1/4 cup low sodium soy sauce and chicken stock (or water).

Bring the sauce to a simmer, add the brown sugar, and stir until dissolved.

Let the sauce simmer for about 2 minutes and slowly stir in the cornstarch slurry mixture--until the sauce coats the back of a spoon.

Add the beef and scallions and toss everything together for another 30 seconds. There should be almost no liquid, as the sauce should be clinging to the beef. If you still have sauce, increase the heat slightly and stir until thickened.

Plate and serve with steamed rice!



SERVES 4

## #6: 10-MINUTE THAI BASIL CHICKEN (GAI PAD KRAPOW)

- 3 to 4 tablespoons oil
- 3 Thai bird or holland chilies, de-seeded (if desired) and thinly sliced
- 3 shallots, thinly sliced
- 5 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 pound ground chicken
- 2 teaspoons sugar or honey
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- ½ cup low sodium chicken broth or water
- 1 bunch holy basil or Thai basil leaves

*There are a select few really good meals in this world that take just 10 minutes to prepare from start to finish. This Thai Basil Chicken (Gai Pad Krapow) is one of them. Perfect for busy weeknights and budget-conscious cooks looking to replicate takeout for a fraction of the cost, it isn't a frantic rush to cook this dinner, either. Just 10 ingredients and a relaxed 10 minutes of cooking later, and you have a restaurant-quality meal. All you need is a bowl of rice! [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

In a wok over high heat, add the oil, chilies, shallots and garlic, and fry for 1-2 minutes.

Add the ground chicken and stir-fry for 2 minutes, breaking up the chicken into small bits.

Add the sugar, soy sauce, and fish sauce. Stir-fry for another minute and deglaze the pan with the broth. Because your pan is over high heat, the liquid should cook off very quickly.

Add the basil, and stir-fry until wilted.

Serve over rice.



SERVES 4

## #7: GENERAL TSO'S CAULIFLOWER

### *For the cauliflower:*

- 1 small head cauliflower
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- Pinch of white pepper
- ¼ cup water
- 1 cup rice flour
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame seeds
- 2 to 3 cups peanut or canola oil, for frying

### *For the sauce:*

- 1 tablespoon peanut or canola oil
- 2 teaspoons finely minced ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 5 whole dried red chili peppers (optional)
- ½ tablespoon Shaoxing wine
- ½ teaspoon sesame oil
- 1½ tablespoons light soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons rice wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup water (or chicken stock)
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch, mixed with 1 tablespoon water
- 1 scallion, cut at an angle into half-inch pieces

*Just when you thought the world had run out of ways to cook cauliflower (cauliflower pizza dough, cauliflower rice, cauliflower dips, cauliflower soup, etc.), General Tso's Cauliflower has arrived to once again change your perception of this humble vegetable. A vegetarian version of everyone's favorite takeout dish, General Tso's Chicken, the cauliflower is crispy on the outside and moist on the inside, tossed in a tasty sauce. We were introduced to this idea by an old family friend who became vegan years ago. Of course, the second we'd tried it, we decided to blog the recipe, and the rest is history. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Cut the cauliflower into 1- to 2-inch chunks. Mix the cornstarch, baking soda, salt, sesame oil, white pepper, water, and ¾ cup of rice flour in a large bowl until it forms a batter.

Toss in the cauliflower and fold together until the cauliflower is well coated. Sprinkle the remaining ¼ cup of rice flour over the cauliflower, and stir until everything is sticking to the cauliflower. There should be no more batter at the bottom of the bowl. If there is, just add a little bit more rice flour.

Next, sprinkle the toasted sesame seeds evenly over the cauliflower. Heat the oil to 375 degrees in a cast iron pan or small pot. Fry the cauliflower in batches until light golden brown and crunchy (about 3 minutes), and transfer to a baking sheet lined with paper towels.

Make the sauce. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in your wok over medium heat. Add the minced ginger, and fry for 15 seconds. Add the garlic and dried red chilies (if using). Stir for 10 seconds. Add the Shaoxing wine, sesame oil, soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, sugar, and water (or chicken stock). Turn the heat down to low, letting the entire mixture come to a simmer.

If you fried the cauliflower in advance and want the pieces to be extra crispy, re-fry the cauliflower in batches for about 20 seconds or until golden brown, and drain on paper towels. Add the cornstarch slurry gradually to the sauce while stirring constantly, and simmer for 20 seconds. The sauce should be thick enough to coat a spoon.

Add the fried cauliflower and scallions, and toss the entire mixture until everything is well-coated in the sauce. Serve!



SERVES 4

## #8: HOT & SOUR SOUP

- **¼ cup cornstarch, plus 1 teaspoon**
- **¼ cup water**
- **1 to 2 dried red chili peppers**
- **3 oz. pork shoulder or loin**
- **½ teaspoon oil**
- **¼ cup soaked dried lily flower**
- **¼ cup soaked wood ears**
- **¼ cup soaked dried shiitake mushrooms**
- **1 small block of spiced tofu (1/4 cup)**
- **¼ cup packaged firm tofu**
- **¼ cup winter bamboo shoots (canned is ok, but fresh is better if available)**
- **2 eggs**
- **1 scallion**
- **8 cups chicken stock**
- **½ teaspoon fresh ground white pepper**
- **2 teaspoon dark soy or mushroom soy sauce**
- **1 tablespoon light or seasoned soy sauce**
- **Salt to taste**
- **1 teaspoon sesame oil**
- **3 tablespoons white vinegar**
- **1 pinch of sugar**

*Bill's parents owned a takeout restaurant called Sun Hing, where his father would churn out his famed fried chicken wings, shrimp with lobster sauce, and fried rice. When it comes to our Chinese American takeout-style recipes, we try to create the best possible version of each dish. Hot & sour soup can be found on any takeout menu or Chinese buffet line in the U.S. It ranges in quality and flavor from awesomely delicious to lukewarm, tasteless, and gloopy. This version is really, in our view, the epitome of a good hot & sour soup. It's a recipe we're very proud of. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Mix ¼ cup cornstarch with an equal amount of water and use a spoon to stir until completely dissolved. Cut the dried chili peppers in half and discard the seeds. Mince them up and set aside.

Slice the pork into small strips and place into a bowl with the last teaspoon of cornstarch and ½ teaspoon oil. Stir it all together.

Soak the dried lily flower, wood ears, and mushrooms for an hour or two until re-hydrated. Once they're ready, slice the mushrooms and give the wood ears a rough chop. Trim the tough ends off the lily flowers and cut them in half.

Cut the spiced tofu and the firm tofu into 2-inch long and ¼-inch thick pieces. Slice the winter bamboo shoots into the same shape. Beat the two eggs in a bowl. Wash and chop the scallion and set aside.

Bring the chicken stock to a boil in a wok or pot and add the pork. Stir to ensure the slices are not clumped together. Skim off any foam that floats to the top.

Add the chili pepper, white pepper and both soy sauces, and check the soup for salt. Add the lily flowers, wood ears, mushrooms and bamboo shoots and bring the soup to a simmer. Add the two kinds of tofu, sesame oil, vinegar and a pinch of sugar and stir. It should start to look and smell like the real thing about now!

Use a spoon to remix your cornstarch slurry in the bowl so it's all combined. Bring the mixture to a simmer and use your soup ladle and stir the soup at the center of the wok in steady a circular motion to make a whirlpool while slowly pouring the cornstarch slurry in a thin stream. This prevents the cornstarch from clumping. Stop when you are about ¾ of the way done with your slurry to check the consistency of the soup. It should be thick enough to coat your spoon or ladle. Add the rest if needed.

Keep the soup simmering and use the same technique with the beaten eggs and again, make sure the motion is fast enough or you will end up with egg clumps instead of the beautiful swirls or egg "flowers" (which is what the Chinese call it). Garnish with the chopped scallions and serve.



MAKES 8-10 DOZEN

## #9: THE ONLY DUMPLING RECIPE YOU'LL EVER NEED

- **3 lbs green leafy vegetable (like shepherd's purse, baby bok choy, napa cabbage, or Chinese chives)**
- **1 ½ pounds ground pork (or ground chicken or beef, as long as they aren't too lean)**
- **⅔ cup shaoxing wine**
- **½ cup oil**
- **3 tablespoons sesame oil**
- **1 tablespoon salt**
- **3 tablespoons soy sauce**
- **¼ teaspoon white pepper**
- **⅔ cup water, plus more for assembly**
- **3-4 packages circular dumpling wrappers**

*We've been making this dumpling recipe for a long time, working together to fold hundreds of them before freezing them in huge batches for future breakfasts, party appetizers, and late-night snacks. This was the first dumpling recipe we ever posted on the blog, and the reason we called it "the only dumpling recipe you'll ever need" is because it's really more of a template than a recipe. You have the freedom to change what vegetables you'd like to add, the type of meat you'd like to use, as well as the ratio of vegetable to meat. Use our recipe as a guide and experiment on your own. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Wash your vegetables thoroughly and blanch them in a pot of boiling water. Transfer them to an ice bath to cool. Ring out all the water from the vegetables and chop very finely.

In a large bowl, stir together the vegetable, meat, wine, oil, sesame oil, salt, soy sauce, white pepper, and ⅔ cup water. Mix for 6-8 minutes, until very well-combined and almost paste-like in texture.

To wrap the dumplings, dampen the edges of each circular dumpling wrapper with some water. Put a little less than a tablespoon of filling in the middle. Fold the circle in half and pinch the wrapper together at the top. Then make two folds on each side, until the dumpling looks like a fan. Make sure it's completely sealed. Repeat until all the filling is gone, placing the dumplings on a baking sheet lined with parchment so they aren't touching.

If you'd like to freeze them, wrap the baking sheets tightly in clean plastic grocery bags and put the pans in the freezer. Allow them to freeze overnight. You can then take the sheets out of the freezer, transfer the dumplings to freezer bags, and throw them back in the freezer for use later.

To cook the dumplings, boil them or pan-fry them. To boil, simply bring a large pot of water to a boil, drop the dumplings in, and cook until they float to the top and the skins are cooked through, but still slightly al dente. To pan-fry, heat 2 tablespoons oil in a non-stick pan over medium high heat. Place the dumplings in the pan and allow to fry for 2 minutes. Pour a thin layer of water into the pan, cover, and reduce heat to medium-low. Allow dumplings to steam until the water has evaporated. Remove the cover, increase heat to medium-high and fry for a few more minutes, until the bottoms of the dumplings are golden brown and crisp.

Serve with Chinese black vinegar, chili sauce, or our [favorite dumpling sauce!](#)

Note: Find the dumpling wrappers fresh at the Asian grocery store. Look for the white, round ones. If they start to dry out, wrap them in a damp kitchen towel and put them in a sealed plastic bag for a couple hours to soften back up. Freeze any unused dumpling wrappers in an airtight sealed plastic bag for later.



SERVES 4

## #10: EGG FRIED RICE

- 5 cups cooked rice
- 5 large eggs (divided)
- 2 tablespoons water
- ¼ teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric
- 3 tablespoons oil (divided)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- ½ red bell pepper, finely chopped
- ½ cup frozen peas, thawed
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- ¼ teaspoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 scallions, chopped

*Egg fried rice. Deceptively simple, but a huge favorite and crowd-pleaser. Our egg fried rice recipe uses egg that's slightly flavored with turmeric and paprika, which is a unique addition. It adds color to the dish, making it a vibrant yellow. If you're used to a Chinese takeout place that makes their fried rice yellow, you can be sure they were probably using food coloring. Using turmeric gets you that same color at home with a natural ingredient. Of course, like most fried rice recipes, this egg fried rice is best served with copious amounts of chili oil (see recipe on [page 8 of this eBook](#)). [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Use a fork to fluff up the rice and break it apart. If you're using freshly cooked rice, let it stand on the counter uncovered until it stops steaming before fluffing it. If you decide to refrigerate the rice overnight in advance of preparing this recipe, it will clump up; you can then use your hands to break up the cold rice clumps into individual grains.

Beat 3 eggs in one bowl. Beat the other 2 eggs in another bowl, along with 2 tablespoons water, the paprika, and the turmeric. Set these two bowls aside.

Heat a wok over medium high heat, and add 2 tablespoons oil. Add the 3 beaten eggs (without the spices), and scramble them. Remove them from the wok and set aside.

Heat wok over high heat, and add the last tablespoon oil. Add the diced onion and bell pepper. Stir-fry for 1-2 minutes. Next, add the rice and stir-fry for 2 minutes, using a scooping motion to heat the rice uniformly. Use your wok spatula to flatten out and break up any rice clumps.

Next, pour the remaining uncooked egg and spice mixture over the rice, and stir-fry for about 1 minute, until all of the rice grains are coated in egg.

Add the peas and stir fry continuously for another minute. Next spread the salt, sugar, and black pepper over the rice and mix. You should now see some steam coming off the rice, which means it is heated through.

If the rice looks a little dry, feel free to sprinkle in some water or chicken stock. Adding some liquid directly to any remaining clumps of rice will also help to break them up. Stir in the scrambled eggs and scallions. Serve!



SERVES 4

## #11: CLASSIC PORK FRIED RICE

- 1 tablespoon hot water
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon Shaoxing wine
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon dark soy sauce
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper
- 5 cups cooked white rice
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 pound Chinese BBQ pork (char siu) cut into ½ inch chunks
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs, scrambled
- ½ cup mung bean sprouts
- 2 scallions, chopped

*Pork fried rice is probably one of the most popular take-out dishes out there, as well as a classic Chinese dish (anything involving rice and pork is likely to be a winner with a Chinese audience). In Bill's parents' restaurant, we used to serve pork fried rice as a side dish accompanying tons of other main dishes, so we were churning out orders of it on a regular basis. It may not be the most glamorous dish, but when done right, it is truly great. You can make your own roast pork using our [char siu roast pork recipe](#) in this eBook, or if you have a good Chinese market or restaurant near you that sells BBQ pork, you can buy it. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Start by combining the hot water, honey, sesame oil, shaoxing wine, soy sauce, dark soy sauce, and white pepper in a small bowl. This is the sauce that you'll be adding to the rice, and it's much easier to have it combined and ready to go before you start cooking.

Take your cooked rice and fluff it with a fork or with your hands (you can rinse your hands in cold water if the rice starts sticking to them). There shouldn't be any big clumps!

With the wok over medium heat, add a tablespoon of oil and sauté the onions until translucent. Stir in the roast pork. Add the rice and mix well. If the rice is cold from the refrigerator, continue stir-frying until the rice is warmed up, which will take about 5 minutes. If the rice was made fresh, then you just need to mix until everything is incorporated.

Add the sauce mixture and salt, and mix with a scooping motion until the rice is evenly coated with sauce. Break up any remaining clumps of rice with the spatula as best as possible. The rice should be hot by this time.

Toss in your eggs, mung bean sprouts, and scallions. Mix thoroughly for another minute or two and serve!



SERVES 4

## #12: SICHUAN DAN DAN NOODLES

### *For the chili oil:*

- 2 tablespoons Sichuan peppercorns
- 1 inch-long piece of cinnamon
- 2 star anise
- 1 cup oil
- ¼ cup crushed red pepper flakes

### *For the meat & sui mi ya cai:*

- 3 teaspoons oil (divided)
- 8 oz. ground pork
- 2 teaspoons sweet bean sauce or hoisin sauce
- 2 teaspoons shaoxing wine
- 1 teaspoon dark soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon five spice powder
- ⅓ cup sui mi ya cai

### *For the sauce:*

- 2 tablespoons sesame paste (tahini)
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon five spice powder
- ½ teaspoon Sichuan peppercorn powder (we ground whole Sichuan peppercorns in a mortar and pestle)
- ½ cup of your prepared chili oil (scary, but yes!)
- 2 cloves garlic, very finely minced
- ¼ cup hot cooking water from the noodles

### *For the noodles & veggies:*

- 1 lb fresh or dried white noodles, medium thickness
- 1 small bunch leafy greens (spinach, bok choy, or choy sum)

### *To assemble:*

- chopped peanuts (optional)
- chopped scallion

**W**e won't sugarcoat it. Dan Dan noodles aren't all that simple to make. The dish requires many different ingredients to accomplish a layered, complex flavor. But you can think of this dish having four parts: the chili oil, the meat mixture and sui mi ya cai (pickled vegetables you can find at your local Chinese grocery store), the sauce, and the noodles/leafy greens. Divide and conquer. With this tested and approved recipe, you've won half of the battle already. No guts, no glory. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)

To make the chili oil: In a small pot, add the Sichuan peppercorns, cinnamon stick, star anise, and oil. Over medium low heat, slowly heat to 325 degrees, and then turn off the heat. Wait 6 - 7 minutes, then remove the peppercorns, cinnamon stick, and star anise with a slotted spoon. Add the crushed red pepper flakes and allow them to steep in the hot oil. It should start smelling fragrant, almost like popcorn. Allow the oil to cool. This makes more chili oil than you'll need, but you'll be glad to have it on hand for use in other dishes. Store in a glass jar and keep refrigerated.

To make the meat mixture: In a wok, heat a teaspoon of oil over medium heat, and brown the ground pork. Add the sweet bean sauce, shaoxing wine, dark soy sauce, and five spice powder. Cook until all the liquid is evaporated. Set aside. Heat the other 2 teaspoons of oil in the wok over medium heat, and sautee the sui mi ya cai (pickled vegetables) for a few minutes. Set aside.

To make the sauce: Mix together all the sauce ingredients. Taste and adjust seasoning if you like. You can loosen it with more hot water, add more Sichuan peppercorn powder, etc.

To prepare the noodles and veggies: Cook the noodles according to package directions and drain. Blanch the greens in the noodle water, and drain.

Divide the sauce among four bowls, followed by the noodles and the leafy greens. Add the cooked pork and sui mi ya cai over the top. Sprinkle with chopped peanuts (optional) and scallions.

Mix everything together and enjoy!



MAKES 10 BUNS

## #13: STEAMED BBQ PORK BUNS

### *For the steamed bun dough:*

- 1 teaspoon active dry yeast
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup warm water
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup cornstarch
- 5 tablespoons sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup canola or vegetable oil
- $2\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons baking powder

### *For the filling:*

- 1 tablespoon oil
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup finely chopped shallots or red onion
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon light soy sauce
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons oyster sauce
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons dark soy sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups diced Chinese roast pork (you can buy it ready-made, or see our recipe to make your own)

*These steamed BBQ pork buns, or Char Siu Bao, are enjoyed by kids and adults alike. We tested and perfected the perfect steamed bun recipe for these. They are snowy white and cracked open on top. Unlike other steamed buns, which usually start with cold water and are steamed over medium heat, these buns require you to pre-boil the water in the steamer, forcing the buns to rise quickly so the tops crack. You can either buy ready-made char siu (BBQ roast pork) at a local Chinese grocery or Cantonese restaurant, or you can make your own using our recipe on [page 42 of this eBook](#). [See this recipe on the blog](#).*

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook attachment (you can also use a regular mixing bowl and knead by hand), dissolve 1 teaspoon active dry yeast in  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup warm water. Sift together the flour and cornstarch, and add it to the yeast mixture along with the sugar and oil. Turn on the mixer to the lowest setting and let it go until a smooth dough ball is formed. Cover with a damp cloth and let it rest for 2 hours. (You'll add the baking powder later!)

While the dough is resting, make the meat filling. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a wok over medium high heat. Add the shallots/onions and stir-fry for 1 minute. Turn heat down to medium-low, and add the sugar, light soy sauce, oyster sauce, sesame oil, and dark soy sauce. Stir and cook until the mixture starts to bubble up. Add the chicken stock and flour, cooking for 3 minutes until thickened. Remove from the heat and stir in the roast pork. Set aside to cool. If you make the filling ahead of time, cover and refrigerate to prevent it from drying out.

After your dough has rested for 2 hours, add the baking powder to the dough and turn the mixer on to the lowest setting. At this point, if the dough looks dry or you're having trouble incorporating the baking powder, add 1-2 teaspoons water. Gently knead the dough until it becomes smooth again. Cover with a damp cloth and let it rest for another 15 minutes. In the meantime, get a large piece of parchment paper and cut it into ten 4x4 inch squares. Prepare your steamer by bringing the water to a boil.

Now we are ready to assemble the buns: roll the dough into a long tube and divide it into 10 equal pieces. Press each piece of dough into a disc about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter (it should be thicker in the center and thinner around the edges). Add some filling and pleat the buns until they're closed on top.

Place each bun on a parchment paper square, and steam. I steamed the buns in two separate batches using a bamboo steamer (be sure the boiling water does not touch the buns during steaming process). Once the water boils, place the buns in the steamer and steam each batch for 12 minutes over high heat.



SERVES 6-8

## #14: CANTONESE ROAST PORK BELLY

- 3 lb slab of pork belly, skin on
- 2 teaspoons Shaoxing wine
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon five spice powder
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper
- 1½ teaspoons rice wine vinegar
- ½ cup coarse sea salt

**C**antonese Roast Pork Belly, or *siu yuk* in Cantonese, can often be found in Chinatown restaurant windows, but is rarely seen in home kitchens. The perception is that this is a difficult thing to make at home, but you'd be surprised at how simple it is. The effort to make this yourself is totally worth it of course. When you see the skin crispy skin puffing up in your oven, you'll see what we mean! The secret to the signature crackling is poking lots of holes into the pork belly skin, just before you hit the fat layer underneath. This creates air pockets that allow the skin to puff up. It's like magic! [See this recipe on the blog.](#)

Rinse the pork belly and pat dry. Place it skin-side down on a tray, and rub the shaoxing wine into the meat (not the skin). Mix together the salt, sugar, five spice powder and white pepper. Thoroughly rub this spice mixture into the meat as well. Flip the meat over so it's skin-side up.

So, to do the next step, there's actually a special tool that restaurants use, but we just used a sharp metal skewer. Systematically poke holes all over the skin, which will help the skin crisp up, rather than stay smooth and leathery. The more holes there are, the better. Also make sure they go deep enough. Stop just above the fat layer underneath.

Let the pork belly dry out in the fridge uncovered, for 12-24 hours.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Place a large piece of aluminum foil (heavy duty foil works best) onto a baking tray, and fold up the sides around the pork snugly, so that you're creating a kind of box all around it, with a 1-inch high border going around the sides.

Brush the rice wine vinegar on top of the pork skin. Pack the sea salt in one even layer over the skin, so the pork is completely covered. Place in the oven and roast for 1 hour and 30 minutes. If your pork belly still has the rib attached, roast for 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Take the pork out of the oven, turn on the broiler to low, and position the oven rack in the lowest position. Remove the top layer of sea salt from the pork belly, unfold the foil, and place a roasting rack on the pan. Place the pork belly on the rack and put it back under the broiler to crisp up. This should take 10-15 minutes. The broiler should ideally be on "low" so that this process can happen gradually. If your broiler gets pretty hot, keep a close eye on it and be sure to keep the pork as far away from the heat source as possible.

When the skin has puffed up and gotten crispy, remove from the oven. Let it rest for about 15 minutes. Slice and serve!



MAKES 2 LOAVES  
OR 12-16 BUNS

## #15: ASIAN MILK BREAD

- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup (158 ml) heavy cream (at room temperature)
- 1 cup, plus 1 tablespoon (total 250 ml) milk (at room temperature)
- 1 large egg (at room temperature)
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup (75 grams) sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (about 70 grams) cake flour, tap measuring cup to avoid air pockets
- $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups (about 500 grams) bread flour, tap measuring cup to avoid air pockets
- 1 tablespoon (11 grams) active dry yeast
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons (7 grams) salt
- Egg wash: whisk together 1 egg with 1 teaspoon water
- Simple syrup (optional): 2 teaspoons of sugar dissolved in 2 teaspoons hot water

*There are many milk bread recipes on the Internet, and many of them are quite complicated. No matter how closely we followed many of these recipes, on other food blogs and Chinese recipe sites alike, we were never satisfied with the outcome. All along, it turned out our cousin Heidi had the perfect recipe. It was the closest in taste and texture to Chinese bakery milk bread and also incredibly easy to make. You just have to put everything in the mixer to make the dough, proof for 60 minutes, knead the dough again, shape it, proof, and bake. The final product is fluffy, soft, slightly sweet, and golden. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

In the bowl of a mixer, add ingredients in the following order: heavy cream, milk, egg, sugar, cake flour, bread flour, yeast, and salt. Use the dough hook attachment, and turn on the mixer to “stir.” Let it go for 15 minutes, occasionally stopping the mixer to push the dough together. If you’re in a humid climate and the dough is too sticky, feel free to add a little more flour  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup at a time until it comes together. If you don’t have a mixer and would like to knead by hand, extend the kneading time by 5-10 minutes.

After 15 minutes of kneading, the dough is ready for proofing. Cover the bowl with a damp towel and place in a warm spot for 1 hour. We proof the dough in our oven (We turned on our oven’s rapid proof setting for 5 minutes, turned the oven off, and then closed the oven door). The dough will grow to 1.5X its original size.

In the meantime, grease two baking vessels on all sides with butter, such as 2 standard loaf pans or even a loaf pan and a 9-inch round cake pan.

After the hour of proofing, put the dough back in the mixer and stir for another 5 minutes to get rid of air bubbles. Dump the dough on a lightly floured surface, and cut it in half. You can make a loaf with one half of the dough by cutting it into 3 pieces and placing them in the loaf pan. With the other half of the dough, cut it into eight equal pieces and make buns. You can really shape the dough however you like—2 loaves, 1 loaf and a 1 pan of buns, or even 12-16 individual buns. Once shaped, let the dough proof for another hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Brush the risen dough with egg wash. Bake the loaves for 23-25 minutes. Remove from the oven and brush the buns with sugar water to give them a great shine, sweetness, and color.



SERVES 3

## #16: THAI BASIL BEEF

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 12 oz. beef, sliced thinly against the grain and mixed with 1 teaspoon oil and 2 teaspoons corn-starch
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- ½ of a red bell pepper, sliced thinly
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon dark soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon oyster sauce
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 1 cup Thai basil leaves, packed
- Cilantro, to garnish

*Thai basil beef is another quick Thai-inspired dish that only takes minutes to make. Try it once, and you'll swear it's better than takeout. This dish is traditionally made with holy basil, which is rarely available in American or even most Asian grocery stores. If you can't find holy basil, you may be able to find regular Thai basil. That said, you can substitute regular Italian basil in a pinch! You won't get quite the same flavor, but you'll be in the same ballpark at least. If you have a green thumb, try growing holy basil in your garden--like most types of basil, it's very easy to grow during the summer months. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Heat your wok over high heat, and add the oil. Sear the beef until just browned. Remove from the wok and set aside.

Add the garlic and red pepper to the wok and stir-fry for about 20 seconds. Add the onions and stir-fry until browned and slightly caramelized.

Toss the beef back in, along with the soy sauce, dark soy sauce, oyster sauce, fish sauce, and sugar.

Stir-fry for another few seconds, and then fold in the Thai basil until it's just wilted.

Serve with jasmine rice, and garnish with cilantro.



MAKES 3 DOZEN

## #17: SIMPLE WONTON SOUP

- 10 oz. baby bok choy or similar green vegetable
- 1 cup ground pork
- 2½ tablespoons sesame oil
- Pinch white pepper
- 1 tablespoon seasoned soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon shaoxing wine
- 1 pack wonton skins
- 6 cups good chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- White pepper and salt to taste
- 1 scallion, chopped

*Traditionally, wontons are very delicate little things, sometimes filled with vegetables and usually pork...served in a flavorful chicken soup seasoned with some sesame oil and white pepper. There are different types and versions, but for us, this is wonton soup in its simplest, purest form. Head to your local Asian grocer for the wonton wrappers. You'll see a couple different kinds, including ones made with white flour, and others made with eggs. For this recipe, you're looking for square shaped wrappers that are white. This recipe makes about three dozen, or about four to six servings. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Start by thoroughly washing the vegetables. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and blanch the vegetables just until wilted. Drain and rinse in cold water. Grab a good clump of veg and carefully squeeze out as much water as you can. Very finely chop the vegetables (you can also speed up the process by throwing them in the food processor).

In a medium bowl, add the finely chopped vegetables, ground pork, sesame oil, white pepper, soy sauce, salt, and shaoxing wine. Mix very thoroughly until the mixture is totally emulsified—almost like a paste.

Now it's time to assemble! Fill a small bowl with water. Grab a wrapper and use your finger to moisten the edges of the wrapper. Add a little over a teaspoon of filling to the middle. Fold the wrapper in half and press the two sides together so you get a firm seal.

Hold the bottom two corners of the little rectangle you just made and bring the two corners together. You can use a bit of water to make sure they stick. And that's it! Keep assembling until all the filling is gone. Place the wontons on a baking sheet or plate lined with parchment paper to prevent sticking.

At this point, you can cover the wontons with plastic wrap, put the baking sheet/plate into the freezer, and transfer them to Ziploc bags once they're frozen. They'll keep for a couple months in the freezer, and be ready for wonton soup whenever you want it.

To make the soup, heat your chicken stock to a simmer and add sesame oil, white pepper, and salt.

Bring a separate pot of water to a boil. Carefully add the wontons one at a time to the pot. Stir to prevent the wontons from sticking to the bottom. If they do stick, don't worry, They should come free once they're cooked. They're done when they float. Take care not to overcook them.

Remove the wontons with a slotted spoon and put them in bowls. Pour the soup over the wontons and garnish with chopped scallions. Serve!



SERVES 4

## #18: DRUNKEN NOODLES (PAD KEE MAO)

### *For the chicken & marinade:*

- 2 tablespoons water
- 12 ounces sliced chicken thighs or chicken breast
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon oil
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch

### *For the rest of the dish:*

- 8 ounces wide dried rice noodles
- 1½ teaspoons brown sugar, dissolved in 1 tablespoon hot water
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce (Thai soy sauce preferred)
- 1 teaspoon dark soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 2 teaspoons oyster sauce
- pinch of ground white pepper
- 3 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil (divided)
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- ¼ teaspoon fresh grated ginger
- 2 shallots, sliced (about ⅓ cups)
- 1 scallion, julienned into 3-inch pieces
- 4 Thai red chili peppers, deseeded and julienned
- 1 cup loosely packed holy basil or Thai basil
- 5 to 6 pieces of baby corn, split in half (optional)
- 2 teaspoons Shaoxing wine

*If you love Thai food, then you're probably already familiar with drunken noodles, or pad kee mao. Rice noodles, flavorful chicken, holy basil (or Thai basil), and vegetables come together into a whole greater than the sum of its parts. You do need a very hot wok to make this dish and achieve that signature "wok hay" flavor. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Work the 2 tablespoons of water into the sliced chicken with your hands until the chicken absorbs the liquid. Add 1 teaspoon soy sauce, 1 teaspoon oil, and 2 teaspoons cornstarch, and mix until the chicken is evenly coated. Set aside for 20 minutes.

Follow the directions on the rice noodle package to prepare your noodles. What we usually do is prepare a stainless steel bowl with hot tap water to soak the noodles for about 15 minutes. Then we just drain them and set aside for cooking.

Stir together the dissolved brown sugar mixture, soy sauces, fish sauce, oyster sauce, and white pepper in a small bowl and set aside.

Heat your wok until it's close to smoking, and spread 2 tablespoons of oil around the perimeter of the wok. Add the chicken and let it sear for 1 minute on each side until it's about 90% cooked. Remove from the wok and set aside. If the heat was high enough and you seared the meat correctly, your wok should be still clean with nothing sticking to it. If not, you can wash the wok to prevent the rice noodles from sticking.

Continue with the wok on high heat and add 1 tablespoon of oil, along with the garlic and grated ginger.

After a few seconds, add the shallots. Stir fry for 20 seconds and add the scallions, chili peppers, basil, baby corn and shaoxing wine. Stir-fry for another 20 seconds and add in the rice noodles. Use a scooping motion to mix everything for another minute until the noodles warm up.

Next, add the prepared sauce mixture and stir-fry at the highest heat for about 1 minute until the noodles are uniform in color. Take care to use your metal spatula to scrape the bottom of the wok to prevent sticking.

Add the seared chicken and stir-fry for another 1 to 2 minutes.

Serve!



SERVES 8

## #19: CHINESE BBQ PORK (CHAR SIU)

- 3 pounds (1.4 kg) pork shoulder/  
pork butt (select a cut with some  
good fat on it)
- ¼ cup (50g) sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- ½ teaspoon five spice powder
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper
- ½ teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon Shaoxing wine or  
Chinese plum wine
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon hoisin sauce
- 2 teaspoons molasses
- 1/8 teaspoon red food coloring  
(optional)
- 3 cloves finely minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons maltose or honey
- 1 tablespoon hot water

*Knowing how to make good Chinese BBQ Pork (cha siu in Cantonese or cha shao in Mandarin) is a valuable skill to have. Not only does it mean you don't have to travel to your local Chinese grocery or Cantonese restaurant to get it, you can freeze the leftovers for use in a host of different recipes, from BBQ Pork Buns and Pork Fried Rice to some of our other favorites, like [Roast Pork Puffs](#). This pork is sweet and delicious, and our family's recipe comes from Bill's memories of his father (a chef) making it in restaurants. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Cut the pork into long strips or chunks about 3 inches thick. Don't trim any excess fat, as it will render off and add flavor.

Combine the sugar, salt, five spice powder, white pepper, sesame oil, wine, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, molasses, food coloring (if using), and garlic in a bowl to make the marinade (i.e. BBQ sauce).

Reserve about 2 tablespoons of marinade and set it aside. Rub the pork with the rest of the marinade in a large bowl or baking dish. Cover and refrigerate overnight, or at least 8 hours. Cover and store the reserved marinade in the fridge as well.

Preheat your oven to the highest setting (475-550 degrees F or 250-290 degrees C) with a rack positioned in the upper third of the oven. Line a sheet pan with foil and place a metal rack on top. Place the pork on the rack, leaving as much space as possible between pieces. Pour 1 ½ cups water into the pan below the rack. This prevents any drippings from burning or smoking.

Transfer the pork to your preheated oven and roast for 25 minutes. After 25 minutes, flip the pork. If the bottom of the pan is dry, add another cup of water. Turn the pan 180 degrees to ensure even roasting. Roast another 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, combine the reserved marinade with the maltose or honey (maltose is very viscous—you can heat it up in the microwave to make it easier to work with) and 1 tablespoon hot water. This will be the sauce you'll use for basting the pork.

After 40 minutes of total roasting time, baste the pork, flip it, and baste the other side as well. Roast for a final 10 minutes.

After 50 minutes of total roasting time, the pork should be cooked through and caramelized on top. If it's not caramelized to your liking, you can turn the broiler on for a couple minutes to crisp the outside and add some color/flavor.

Remove from the oven and baste with the last bit of reserved BBQ sauce. Let the meat rest for 10 minutes before slicing, and enjoy!



SERVES 8

## #20: SPICY BEEF NOODLE SOUP

- 16 cups cold water
- 6 slices ginger
- 3 scallions, washed and cut in half
- ¼ cup Shaoxing wine
- 3 lbs beef chuck, cut into 1½ inch chunks
- 3 tablespoon oil
- 1 to 2 tablespoons Sichuan peppercorns
- 2 heads of garlic, peeled
- 1 large onion, cut into chunks
- 5 star anise
- 4 bay leaves
- ¼ cup spicy bean paste
- 1 large tomato, cut into small chunks
- ½ cup light soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 large piece of dried tangerine peel
- fresh or dried wheat noodles of your choice
- Chopped scallion and cilantro, to garnish

*Spicy beef noodle soup is exactly what we crave on cold nights (or any night really, who are we kidding). Make sure you don't skip the step of pre-blanching the beef. This will give you a cleaner, clearer broth. As for the noodles, you can choose whatever noodles you like to use. Both fresh or dried noodles are fine--just remember to cook them in a separate pot, as they are very starchy. For a non-spicy version, try our [Braised Beef Noodle Soup](#) or our [Instant Pot Taiwanese Beef Noodle Soup](#). [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

You'll need two large pots to make this recipe. Fill one large stock pot with 16 cups of cold water. Add the ginger, scallions, Shaoxing wine and beef chunks. Cover and bring to a boil. Immediately turn down the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. After that, turn off the heat and set aside.

Heat the oil in another stock pot or large wok over medium low heat, and add the Sichuan peppercorns, garlic cloves, onion, star anise and bay leaves. Cook until the garlic cloves and onion chunks start to soften (about 5 - 10 minutes). Stir in the spicy bean paste. Then add the tomatoes and cook for two minutes. Finally, stir in the light soy sauce and sugar. Turn off the heat.

Now, let's scoop out the beef, ginger, and scallions from the 1st pot and transfer them to the 2nd pot. Then, pour in the stock through a fine mesh strainer. Place the pot over high heat, and add in the tangerine peel. Cover and bring the soup to a boil. Immediately turn the heat down to a simmer, and cook for 60-90 minutes.

After simmering, turn off the heat, but keep the lid on, and let the pot sit on the stove (with the heat off) for another full hour to let the flavors meld together. Your soup base is done. Remember to bring the soup base to a boil again before serving. As an optional step, pick out the beef and strain the soup if you'd like to remove the spices and aromatics from the broth.

Cook your noodles in a separate pot according to the package instructions, and divide among your serving bowls (you can get 8 generous servings out of your pot of soup and beef). Top the bowls with hot broth, beef, scallions, and cilantro. Serve piping hot!

Note: If you still have leftover stock and beef, you can freeze it and reheat for future meals.



SERVES 4

## #21: EGG DROP SOUP

- 4 cups organic chicken stock or [homemade chicken stock](#)
- ½ teaspoon sesame oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Pinch of sugar
- Pinch white pepper
- 5 drops yellow food coloring (optional, but if you want “the look...”)
- ¼ cup cornstarch mixed with ½ cup water
- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 scallion, chopped

*The name “Egg Drop” comes from how the soup is made—dropping raw egg into hot soup to cook it. It doesn’t take a genius to figure that out. But actually, the direct translation in Chinese is “egg flower soup,” because the egg creates large and small swirls in the soup in a flower-like pattern. There are many variations of egg drop soup, but this recipe is a classic restaurant-style soup that you can make at home. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Bring the chicken stock to a simmer in a medium soup pot. Stir in the sesame oil, salt, sugar, and white pepper. Add in 5 drops of yellow food coloring, if using. The yellow food coloring gives the soup that rich restaurant-style yellow color but it is, of course, optional. Taste the soup, and adjust the seasoning if needed.

Next add the cornstarch slurry; make sure the cornstarch and water is mixed well, as the cornstarch settles very quickly. Stir the soup continuously as you drizzle in the slurry, or you’ll get unpleasant clumps of cooked starch in your soup. Use more or less starch if you like a thicker or thinner soup. You can also add the starch in a couple small batches, let the soup simmer for a couple of minutes, then check to see if the consistency is to your liking.

Now we’re ready for the most exciting part: the egg. This recipe calls for the egg to be slightly beaten, which results in both white and yellow egg swirls. The speed at which you stir the soup when adding the egg also determines whether you get large “egg flowers” or small egg flowers (i.e. swirly bits of egg). This is more a matter of personal preference than correctness. If you vary the speed at which you stir the soup, you’ll get both. Some people even prefer chunks of egg in their soup, so do whatever suits your preferences!

Once the soup’s consistency is to your liking, use a ladle to stir the soup in a circular motion, and slowly drizzle in the egg until you have added it all. Ladle the soup in a bowl, top with chopped scallions, drizzle some sesame oil over the top, and serve!



MAKES 3-4 DOZEN

## #22: VEGETABLE DUMPLINGS

### ***For the dumpling dough:***

- 3½ cups all purpose flour
- 1 cup, plus 2 tablespoons tepid water

(You can also substitute store-bought dumpling wrappers.)

### ***For the filling:***

- 3 tablespoons oil, plus ¼ cup (divided)
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cups shiitake mushrooms, chopped
- 1½ cups cabbage, finely shredded
- 1½ cups carrot, finely shredded
- 1 cup garlic chives (Chinese chives), finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon white pepper
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- 3 tablespoons Shaoxing wine or dry sherry
- 2 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- salt, to taste

**W**hile vegetable dumplings may sound like they're only for vegetarians or the health-conscious, these actually rival any meat-filled dumpling out there. Onions, cabbage, and carrot offer sweetness to the filling, while shiitake mushrooms add an earthy meatiness and umami. Finally, the addition of Chinese garlic chives gives these dumplings that extra kick of flavor (find them in Asian grocery stores). This recipe includes instructions on how to make your own dumpling wrappers, but you can also just get store-bought circular dumpling wrappers as well. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)

Start by making the dough for the dumpling wrappers (if not using store-bought). Put 3 1/2 cups flour in a large mixing bowl. Gradually add the water to the flour and knead into a smooth dough. This process should take about 10 minutes. Cover with a damp cloth and let the dough rest for 1 hour.

In the meantime, make the filling. In a wok or large skillet over medium high heat, add 3 tablespoons oil and add the ginger. Cook for 30 seconds, until fragrant. Add the onions and stir-fry until translucent.

Add the chopped mushrooms and stir-fry for another 3-5 minutes, until the mushrooms are tender and any liquid released by the mushrooms has cooked off. Add the cabbage and carrots and stir-fry for another 2 minutes, until the veggies are tender and all the liquid released has been cooked off.

Transfer the vegetable mixture to a large mixing bowl and allow to cool.

To the bowl, add the chopped chives, white pepper, sesame oil, shaoxing wine, soy sauce, and sugar. Season with salt to taste (though the soy sauce will usually add enough salt to the filling), and stir in the last ¼ cup of oil.

To assemble the dumplings, cut the dough into small tablespoon-sized pieces. Roll each out into a circle, and pleat the dumplings. Continue assembling until you've run out of filling and/or dough.

To cook the dumplings, steam them or pan-fry them. To steam, put the dumplings in a steamer lined with a bamboo mat, cabbage leaf, or cheese cloth, and steam for 15-20 minutes. To pan-fry, heat 2 tablespoons oil in a non-stick pan over medium high heat. Place the dumplings in the pan and allow to fry for 2 minutes. Pour a thin layer of water into the pan, cover, and reduce heat to medium-low. Allow dumplings to steam until the water has evaporated. Remove the cover, increase heat to medium-high and allow to fry for a few more minutes, until the bottoms of the dumplings are golden brown and crisp. Serve with our favorite [dumpling sauce!](#)

To freeze: place dumplings on a parchment-lined baking sheet so they are not touching, and wrap tightly in clean plastic grocery bags. Freeze overnight, transfer the frozen dumplings to freezer bags, and return to the freezer for storage.



SERVES 4

## #23: CHINESE TURNIP CAKE (LO BAK GO)

- 1 Chinese turnip/daikon radish (about 20 oz.), grated
- 1 to 1½ cups water
- Vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon dried shrimp, washed, soaked and chopped
- 3-5 dried Chinese black mushrooms, washed, soaked, and chopped
- 1 Chinese sausage, diced
- 1 scallion, chopped
- 1¼ cups (130 grams) rice flour
- 1 tablespoon (8 grams) cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- white pepper, to taste
- Oyster sauce for dipping

*This savory turnip cake (sometimes called radish cake), or lo bak go, is a traditional dish often served at dim sum houses or at home during Chinese New Year. Having sampled versions of turnip cake (or lo bak go, as it's known in Cantonese) at many dim sum restaurants over the years, we've come to the conclusion that they can't be compared to our homemade recipe. The restaurants definitely skimp on the filling ingredients, including the star of the dish, the Chinese turnip. Most of what you get is rice flour and starch. Our version is packed with mushrooms, Chinese sausage, and scallions for maximum flavor. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Add the grated turnip and 1 cup water to a wok or large pan, and bring to a simmer. Simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally so the turnip does not brown. The turnip will produce liquid, some of which will evaporate. You will have liquid left in the wok with the radish that you will also use. Scoop the cooked turnip into a large mixing bowl to cool. Pour any remaining liquid in the wok into a measuring cup, and add water until you have a total of 1 cup of liquid. Add it to the mixing bowl with the cooked turnip.

Clean your wok or pan and place it over medium heat. Add a couple tablespoons oil. Add the shrimp, mushrooms, and sausage, and cook for about 5 minutes. Stir in the chopped scallion and remove from the heat to cool.

Add rice flour, cornstarch, salt, sugar, and white pepper to the mixing bowl with the radish and cooking liquid. Mix well until the dry ingredients are well-incorporated. Add in the cooked shrimp, mushrooms and sausage, and be sure to scrape the oil from the pan into the batter. Mix well and let sit for 15 minutes.

Give the batter a final stir, and pour it into a well-oiled loaf pan. Place the pan into a steamer with plenty of water and steam over medium-high heat for 50 minutes.

Remove the pan from the steamer and let your turnip cake set for about 30 minutes. Once cooled, loosen the sides with a spatula and turn it out onto a cutting board. It should come out quite easily.

Use a sharp knife dipped in water to slice ½-inch thick pieces. I know people who'd enjoy it just like that, but most people pan-fry the turnip cake first. Add a couple tablespoons oil to a non-stick or seasoned cast iron pan over medium heat. Fry the cakes on both sides until golden and crispy. Serve with oyster sauce!

Note: You can also make this turnip cake in advance, refrigerate it in the loaf pan, and slice/fry later. If you've refrigerated turnip cakes that you've already fried, the best way to reheat them is to re-fry them in a pan.



SERVES 4

## #24: CHINESE TAKEOUT FRIED CHICKEN WINGS

- 10 whole chicken wings, washed and pat dry
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon Shaoxing wine
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons flour
- oil, for frying

*Chinese take-out fried chicken wings are the same as regular old fried chicken, right? Wrong! This wing recipe is special. Bill's father used to make a tray full of them each day at the family restaurant, and while the recipe was never written down, he could make them in his sleep if he had to. They were pre-fried in the morning and re-fried to order throughout the day, and those mountains would turn into molehills real fast during the lunch, dinner and late night rush hours. Once a week, at the end of the night, we would toss a few into the fryer and serve them with dinner. No matter what we were having, they were always a favorite. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Combine all the ingredients (except the frying oil, of course) in a large mixing bowl. Mix everything until the wings are well-coated.

Let the wings marinate for 2 hours at room temperature or in the refrigerator overnight for best results. (If you refrigerate the wings, be sure to let them come to room temperature again before cooking).

After marinating, if it looks like there is liquid in the wings, be sure to mix them thoroughly again. The wings should be well coated with a thin batter-like coating. If it still looks too watery, add a bit more cornstarch and flour.

Fill a medium pot about 2/3 of the way up with oil, and heat it to 325 degrees F.

Fry the wings in small batches for 5 minutes and remove to a sheet pan lined with paper towels. After all of the wings are fried, return them in batches to the oil and fry again for 3 minutes.

Drain on paper towels or a cooling rack, and serve with hot sauce!



SERVES 4

## #25: VEGETABLE LO MEIN

- **1 pound (450g) fresh white noodles or lo mein egg noodles**
- **1 tablespoon dark soy sauce**
- **2 tablespoons light soy sauce**
- **1 teaspoon sesame oil**
- **1 teaspoon sugar + 1 teaspoon hot water to dissolve the sugar in**
- **pinch of five spice powder (optional)**
- **1 tablespoon oil**
- **1 clove garlic, minced**
- **1 cup sliced mushrooms (shiitakes, button mushrooms, or anything you like)**
- **1 scallion, split at the thick parts and cut into 2-inch lengths**
- **1 red, orange, or yellow bell pepper, julienned**
- **1 small carrot, julienned**
- **1 tablespoon Shaoxing wine**
- **a handful snow peas, trimmed**
- **a handful of leafy greens (bok choy, choy sum, etc.)**

*This vegetable lo mein is a really simple, versatile noodle dish that can be a staple vegetarian meal or a go-to meatless Monday dinner. Vegetable lo mein is healthy, tasty, and very easy to make. We used fresh eggless hand-pulled noodles, but you can feel free to use packaged fresh white noodles or lo mein egg noodles from the Asian grocery store. You can even sub in dried spaghetti if you have nothing else! This recipe is a blank canvas—you have your noodles and sauce as a base, and virtually any vegetables you like as your paint palette. [See this recipe on the blog.](#)*

Boil water in a large pot for the noodles. If using the lo mein egg noodles, you can skip this step, as those noodles do not require any pre-cooking. But if using fresh white noodles, you will have to boil them. Just cook until al dente, drain, and rinse in cold water. Set aside.

In a small bowl, combine the soy sauces, sesame oil, dissolved sugar, and five spice powder, if using.

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a wok over high heat and add the garlic, mushrooms, and the white parts of the scallions. Stir-fry for 30 seconds and add the peppers and carrots. Make sure your wok is searing hot, and then add the Shaoxing wine. Stir-fry for another minute.

Next, add the snow peas and leafy greens to the wok and cook until the greens are just wilted. Then add your noodles. Make sure that before you add them, they're somewhat loose and not all clumped together (you can rinse them in warm water to loosen them up before adding them to the wok).

Pour your sauce mixture over the noodles and stir-fry until the color of the noodles are uniform. A folding or scoop-and-lift motion works well for that. Once everything is well-combined, dish out the noodles and serve.

# resources

- [Chinese Ingredients Glossary](#)
- [All recipes \(visual index\)](#)
- [Chinese Bakery Favorites](#)
- [Chinese Takeout Classics](#)
- [Dim Sum Recipes](#)
- [Chinese New Year](#)
- [Quick & Easy](#)
- [Rice, Noodles & Pasta](#)
- [Vegetarian](#)
- [Desserts](#)

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