

I'M THE CULINARY GOD

Chapter 11 - 011: If you drink water, you must get scalded; if you eat noodles, you must choke!

With things having reached this point, Lin Xu had no choice but to take the bag and start selecting items.

He chose about twenty pounds of tomatoes, thirty pounds of eggplants, seven or eight pounds of carrots, and over ten pounds of baby bok choy. Additionally, there were scallion and ginger, as well as the vegetable ingredients needed for rendering chicken fat and chili oil.

While Lin Xu was choosing the eggplants, the stall owner secretly took out his phone and snapped a photo, then posted it under the Lin Ji's Food topic.

Uncle Shen from the Spring Breeze Market: "#Lin Ji's Food# Boss Lin is buying vegetables at my stall. Now everyone knows what topping we're having for lunch today, right?"

After posting, Uncle Shen put away his phone and helped Lin Xu with his selections.

Once all the ingredients were selected, Uncle Shen turned on his electronic scale, weighed each ingredient, calculated the total price, and then gave Lin Xu a discount.

In the wet market, such bulk purchases usually came with a discount. This wasn't just because the customer was buying a lot; more importantly, customers making such large purchases were typically from restaurants or eateries. A good relationship could lead to long-term cooperation. However, compared to other customers, Uncle Shen gave Lin Xu a slightly larger discount. After all, he considered Lin Xu one of his own.

"Boss Lin, if you're introducing any new dishes next time, tell me in advance. I can get some higher-quality ingredients then. For our own people, we have to use the good stuff!"

It was only when he was scanning the QR code to pay that Lin Xu learned the stall owner's surname was Shen.

He smiled and said, "Then I'll have to trouble Uncle Shen. For now, it's just tomatoes and eggplants. I'll let you know in advance if I add anything else."

Seeing that Lin Xu was planning to buy other items, Uncle Shen told him, "If you're buying other ingredients, just leave these vegetables here with me. When you're done, you can use my three-wheeler to haul everything. It'll save you the trouble of finding a vehicle."

Lin Xu didn't stand on ceremony with him. After placing the vegetables in a spot that wouldn't hinder Uncle Shen's business, he strode towards the meat stall.

He bought twenty pounds of pork belly, ten pounds of large soup bones, six pounds of chicken carcasses, two old hens laden with butter, two boxes of chicken skin, and about another twenty pounds of pork lard.

He was using pork lard more and more. Buying pre-rendered lard was no longer cost-effective. Besides, pre-rendered lard wasn't as fragrant as lard he rendered himself. As for the chicken skins, they were the raw material for rendering chicken fat.

「After Lin Xu left」

Uncle Shen, with nothing else to do, opened his phone. Only then did he notice there were already replies under his post.

Lin Ji Boy Yue Liyue: "Eggplant? What kind of topping can you make with that? Can any Northern friends enlighten me?"

Genius Girl Loves Food: "Squash Diced Sauce. It's a topping made with diced eggplant and minced meat. Darn it, why didn't I guess? T_T"

Uncle Shen subconsciously glanced at the time on his phone: 05:03:36. It was just past five in the morning.

Shouldn't everyone be snuggled under their blankets with the AC on at this hour?

Uncle Shen from the Spring Breeze Market: "What do you all do for a living? How are you up so early?"

Lin Ji Boy Yue Liyue: "I'm a game booster. Haven't slept yet."

Genius Girl Loves Food: "I just got up to memorize vocabulary. It's such a grind."

Lin Ji Boy Yue Liyue: "Aren't you 'Genius Girl'? Do you still need to memorize vocabulary? [sideways glance smile][sideways glance smile][sideways glance smile]"

Genius Girl Loves Food: "Yesterday, someone from the Tsinghua University admissions office told me that students admitted through exam exemption can't freely choose their majors; they can only pick from a designated list. So, I declined. I'm going to take the college entrance exam and apply for the major I actually like."

Lin Ji Boy Yue Liyue: "..."

Uncle Shen from the Spring Breeze Market: "..."

After Lin Xu returned from buying meat, Uncle Shen drove his electric three-wheeler over. After loading up all the ingredients, Lin Xu drove the electric three-wheeler to the shop. After unloading, he drove the three-wheeler back and returned it to Uncle Shen.

Once back at the shop, Lin Xu immersed himself in the hectic preparation work.

He started simmering the chicken bone broth. The pork bone broth went on to simmer. He set the vegetables to soak.

Next, he soaked the purchased pork lard and then cut it into mahjong tile-sized pieces. He started to render the lard.

In modern society, although people are increasingly concerned about healthy eating and have become more resistant to pork lard, it is still widely used in the catering industry. For example, when stir-frying vegetarian dishes, adding pork lard greatly improves both the flavor and texture. The concept of "vegetarian dishes cooked with meat fat" refers precisely to this method of using animal fat. Although the shop didn't currently offer stir-fried dishes, pork lard was essential for making both the chili oil and the new Squash Diced Sauce debuting today.

After the lard was rendered, Lin Xu scooped out the eggplants and carrots that had been soaking in the sink. After washing, he cut them into chunks larger than a thumb. Once they were all cut, he placed them in a basin. He sprinkled two large handfuls of salt over them and stirred them evenly to begin drawing out their moisture.

For the diced eggplant to be delicious, it was essential to use salt after dicing to draw out its moisture. This not only eliminated any odd taste from the eggplant but, more importantly, the salt caused the eggplant to dehydrate and soften, much like a sponge being squeezed dry. Later, when added to the pot, these diced eggplants would soak up the meat juices, becoming fragrant, soft, smooth, and incredibly delicious.

As for the carrots, they were mainly used for color. The purpose of drawing moisture from the carrots was to reduce their cooking time, to prevent the diced eggplant from overcooking while waiting for the carrot dices to cook through.

Next, Lin Xu cut meat, sliced tomatoes, whisked eggs, and prepared dough. He was busy until nearly eleven o'clock, when the morning's prep work finally concluded.

"Hullo, Boss Lin! Are we openin' for business now, yah?"

Just as Lin Xu took a cola from the beverage cooler, about to take a breather, the shop door was pushed open. A few young men, yawning widely, walked in. The leader was in his early twenties, speaking heavily accented Cantonese-style Mandarin. Each of them had deep, dark circles under their eyes—clearly hardcore all-night gamers.

"Everything's ready. Do you guys want to eat now? If you do, I'll start cooking right away," Lin Xu said, twisting open his cola and taking a sip.

He then took out the electronic blackboard and rewrote the menu prices:

[Tomato Egg Noodles: Large Bowl 28 / Small Bowl 25]

[Signature Tomato Cubes Noodles: Large Bowl 30 / Small Bowl 27]

"Wow, Uncle Shen from the wet market was right! It really is 'Tomato Cubes'!" one exclaimed.

"See? Lin Ji folks don't lie to Lin Ji folks," another responded.

"Boss, hurry and make us each a large bowl so we can try it!" a third requested.

"Yeah! After we eat, let's post a pic to taunt that Panda Bro!" another added.

After updating the prices, Lin Xu placed the blackboard by the door and then headed to the kitchen to roll out noodles.

The leader with the Guangdong accent grabbed four bottles of North Pole soda from the beverage cooler and then paid 140 yuan at the counter using the QR code.

After returning to his seat, he took out his phone, snapped a photo of Lin Xu, and posted it under the Lin Ji's Food topic.

Lin Ji Boy Yue Liyue: "I'm already at #Lin Ji's Food#! Ordered a large Signature Tomato Cubes Noodles. Anyone got anything to say? 😊"

Panda Bro: "May you choke on every sip of water!"

Saving Up for a Hair Transplant: "May you scald your tongue with every spoonful of soup!"

Eighteen-Year-Old White-Haired Lad: "May you gag on every strand of noodle!"

Genius Girl Loves Food: "May you get groped by perverts if you ever crossdress!"

Everyone: "..."