

Culinary 19

Chapter 19 - Tiger Skin Chicken Feet are Ready! Absolutely Delicious!

Stewed flavors can't be achieved without the master stock. This was especially true for Tiger Skin Chicken Feet. Under the effect of ice water, the fried chicken skin was filled with various collagenous pores and wrinkles, giving it a loose texture, yet it was utterly tasteless. The flavor of Tiger Skin Chicken Feet came entirely from the master stock.

Lin Xu brought over a large stock pot used for stewing flavors and poured in the filtered Pork Bone Broth. Then, according to the amount of master stock in the pot, he successively added salt, Light Soy Sauce, Dark Soy Sauce, and Crystal Sugar. Since it was the first time he was preparing the master stock, the amount of seasonings had to be doubled. Only then could he ensure the richness of the stock's flavor.

He turned on the stove and brought the master stock in the pot to a boil. Then he added half a pound of whole dried chilies, a handful of Sichuan peppercorns, another handful of Sichuan peppercorns, and also Star Anise, bay leaves, cinnamon, black cardamom, cardamom, and Scallion and Ginger. He continued to simmer for an hour. This allowed the spices and seasonings in the master stock to fully integrate. At the same time, it let the medicinal flavors of the spices completely evaporate.

By this time, the chicken feet had also fully swollen. They were twice the size they had been before. Lin Xu scooped out the chicken feet and placed them into the stock pot, then added a large spoonful of pork fat and a spoonful of chicken fat. The pork fat made the chicken feet even more moist, while the chicken fat gave the chicken feet a richer savory aroma.

Soon, the stock pot was brought to a boil again. He lowered the heat, keeping the simmer just below boiling. This effectively prevented the chicken skin from cracking and falling off during boiling, which would result in a poor appearance.

Half an hour later, he turned off the heat. He let the chicken feet continue to soak in the master stock. To make delicious Tiger Skin Chicken Feet, one must follow the principle of "three parts cooking, seven parts soaking." Soaking allowed the chicken skin to expand again. It also let the flavors of the master stock completely penetrate.

After soaking for about an hour, Lin Xu brought over a self-heating tray. He carefully arranged the chicken feet on it and added a bit more master stock. The Tiger Skin Chicken Feet snack was now completely ready.

"Wow, it smells so good!" Cartboy, standing by, looked at the thick chicken feet on the tray, his heart swelling with admiration for his boss. These chicken feet are beautifully made! Their color is rosy, they're huge, and their surface is covered with enticing tiger-skin patterns.

"If you want to try some, you can try one." Seeing Cartboy's eager look, Lin Xu handed him an empty plate and let him pick a couple to try.

Today, he had prepared even more noodles than yesterday. But with Cartboy's help, Lin Xu had finished all the preparations by ten forty in the morning. Cartboy had worked two years doing basic work in the back kitchen. His foundational skills were very solid. Chopping and cleaning were a breeze for him, while Lin Xu only needed to handle more technical tasks like stir-frying toppings, simmering cold dressings, and frying Chili Oil.

"Can I really eat this, boss?" Cartboy looked at Lin Xu excitedly. In the last restaurant where he worked, eating on the job was punishable by a fine. I can't believe the boss at Lin Ji is so generous, letting staff try the snacks first!

"How can you describe the chicken feet to the customers if you don't taste them yourself? You can't just keep saying they're delicious, can you?" After speaking, Lin Xu picked up two for himself and started tasting them.

The chicken feet were moist at first bite, with a rich savory taste, followed by a hint of spicy numbness. The flavor wasn't overpowering, but it was enough to tantalize. The plump chicken skin was filled with the juices of the master stock. One bite, and the juices were abundant. The fresh, spicy, and numbing flavors filled his mouth again. His taste buds instantly sprang to life; his appetite skyrocketed.

"Damn! These chicken feet are too delicious, boss, you're really awesome!" After finishing one, Cartboy smacked his lips, still longing for more. Incredible! I've never tasted such delicious chicken feet in my entire life! "Today we're definitely going to sell out!"

After Lin Xu had eaten two, he again took out the electronic blackboard that was placed at the entrance. Under the three types of noodles, he added the newly introduced marinated snacks:

[Signature Tiger Skin Chicken Feet: 6 yuan/each]

After writing it, he had just set it up at the entrance when Old Man Gao, wearing a floral T-shirt and white casual pants, arrived. Though Old Man Gao had white hair, he enjoyed wearing trendy floral shirts or T-shirts, and his neck was adorned with Buddhist beads, jade pendants, and the like, dressed like an old overseas Chinese who had returned from Southeast Asia.

"Mr. Lin, how about we look at the house after you get through with the busy lunch period?" Seeing Lin Xu at the entrance, Old Man Gao initiated the conversation.

Lin Xu nodded, "I was just about to discuss it with you. I've been busy making chicken feet all morning and haven't had the time to contact you."

"Chicken feet? Are the marinated snacks for today these Tiger Skin Chicken Feet written on the board?" Old Man Gao no longer mentioned the house, eagerly asking Lin Xu, "Are the chicken feet ready now? Are you open for business?"

"Yes, everything is ready."

Old Man Gao pointed to the shop's door, "Then let me eat first, we can talk about renting the house after my meal." After saying this, he strode into the shop. Seeing the chicken feet laid out within the kitchen partition, he said to Lin Xu, "Give me four chicken feet and a small bowl of Tomato Egg Noodles. My teeth aren't so good, I can't eat other marinated foods; I just like these tender Tiger Skin Chicken Feet."

Lin Xu acknowledged. He went to the kitchen to start rolling out the dough. Meanwhile, Cartboy quickly took a plate and deftly served four chicken feet to Old Man Gao.

"Take your time eating, sir. The noodles will be ready shortly."

Old Man Gao took the plate and sniffed it, then remarked in admiration, "Wow! Just by the smell of this master stock, you can tell it's made with Pork Bone Broth. Super fragrant."

Cartboy gave him a thumbs up, "You really got it, sir. It is indeed made from pork bones."

Old Man Gao smiled and began tasting the chicken feet. These taste great! So soft and tender. They fall right off the bone with just a gentle suck. With a gentle chew, the savory flavor of the master stock bursts forth in my mouth.

"Delicious! These chicken feet are simply divine!" Old Man Gao finished an entire chicken foot in one go, full of praise for Lin Xu's craftsmanship.

As he was eating, Panda and a few friends walked in. As soon as they entered, Old Man Gao gestured to Panda, "You must try the new chicken feet today, they are incredibly authentic!"

Panda laughed, "There's nothing Mr. Lin makes that isn't delicious." After saying this, he glanced at the chicken feet set inside the partition, then at the dough Lin Xu was rolling, "Give us twenty chicken feet, four bottles of North Pole, four large bowls of Tomato Cubes Noodles. We arrived a bit early today, not very hungry yet, so we'll just start with a bowl."

After finishing, he used his phone to pay by scanning the QR code at the cashier. Twenty chicken feet for 120, four bottles of North Pole for 20, four large bowls of Tomato Cubes Noodles for 120. A total of 260 yuan.

"Just for a bowl of noodles, coming to 65 per person, that's a bit extravagant," muttered one of Panda's friends who hadn't been there before.

"Don't worry, it's definitely worth it!" After saying that, Panda went to grab the North Pole sodas.

「On a social media platform.」

A user named Little Yueyue from the Shen Family posted a query under the topic of Lin Ji's Food: "A fresh-faced newbie reporting in! When I go to eat at Lin Ji's Food for the first time, how can I act like I'm a regular?"

Quickly, a warm-hearted netizen named "Genius Girl Loves Food" responded: "Regulars usually greet the owner with a kiss upon entering—men kiss the hand, women kiss the cheek, then just say 'I'm here!' and you're all set!"

「Under the shade of trees not far from Lin Ji's Food.」

A tall girl with a high ponytail and delicate features, reading the reply on her phone, lightly curled up the corners of her mouth. If only it could really be like that... that would be wonderful!