

Culinary 35

Chapter 35: Grandpa Gao, Your Vest Fell Off!

Too fragrant, too rich? I thought it tasted great.

Shen Jiayue didn't understand why Elder Gao would say such a thing.

In her opinion, Lin Xu's cooking was always the tastiest! No objections accepted!

"This type of stock-based savory soup should actually be considered a type of porridge. It pairs well with main dishes to create a strong sense of fullness, but it's not quite suitable for serving in the restaurant."

The customers in the restaurant, after gnawing on chicken feet and finishing their noodles, needed a clear soup to cut through the richness, not this kind of fragrant, rich, and satiating porridge.

Lin Xu had also realized this by now. This morning, he and Shen Jiayue had indeed treated this soup as porridge.

"Elder Gao, you know so much. Were you a chef before?"

Elder Gao smiled and said, "I've worked as a helper in a restaurant before... If you want to learn, shall we start now?"

Lin Xu nodded gratefully, "Then I'll have to trouble you, Elder Gao."

Previously, when he was renting a place, Elder Gao had actively helped him solve difficult problems. Now that the restaurant needed to serve soup, Elder Gao was going to teach him. What a kind old man indeed.

The remaining customers in the restaurant had nearly finished their meals and were about to leave. But when they heard Elder Gao was going to teach Lin Xu how to make soup, they all stayed, partly to taste it and partly out of curiosity about the new soup.

From new toppings to braised dishes, and then to cold side dishes, each new item introduced in the restaurant had the customers eagerly guessing. Now they could see the answer. How could anyone miss it?

"The soup I'm making is super simple," Elder Gao explained. "It only requires eggs, nori, table salt, and clear water. The cost is low, making it quite suitable for commercial production in a restaurant."

That really did sound simple. But would the flavor turn out to be good? It sounded rather bland.

The people around all showed skeptical expressions.

Elder Gao soaked the nori in cold water. This step was similar to Chen Meijuan's method, aimed at washing off any sand on the nori's surface to improve its texture.

While soaking the nori, he also whisked some eggs. Then he started boiling water.

Taking advantage of the time it took for the water to boil, he carefully lifted the nori out of the basin, rinsed it once more, then arranged several bowls, tearing the softened nori into pieces and placing some into each. After that, he added a pinch of table salt to each bowl.

By then, the water in the pot was boiling. Elder Gao turned off the heat.

After the water stopped boiling, he finally picked up the whisked eggs, swirling them as he poured them into the pot. Under the heat, the poured egg liquid immediately formed beautiful, fluffy ribbons in the water, like paint swirling into water or seaweed unfurling.

"Wow! So beautiful!"

Shen Jiayue, who had always believed that Lin Xu's food was the most delicious, found her eyes glued to the beautiful, fluffy egg ribbons the moment she saw them. The irregular, fluffy egg ribbons that formed in the calm water were truly like a work of art.

The watching patrons also quickly took out their phones to take pictures.

"Hey! So that's the trick to getting beautiful egg ribbons—turn off the heat! No wonder mine at home always turn out so broken up."

"Me too! I always mess it up, and my wife complains every single time."

"I always thought the egg ribbons in restaurants looked so pretty. Now I finally know the secret!"

"I'll give it a try when I go back. To think I came to eat and ended up learning a trick!"

"..."

Everyone was chatting noisily. Nobody had expected that such beautiful egg ribbons could be made so easily.

Elder Gao finished pouring the egg. The pot looked as if it held a huge golden blossom.

Elder Gao looked at Lin Xu and asked, "How many eggs did you use for that pot of soup just now?"

"Six."

He pointed at the egg ribbons in the pot, "I only used three to achieve the same effect. In the catering business, it's not just about using plenty of ingredients; sensible savings are also very important."

Lin Xu nodded. Today, he really learned something new. Who would have thought there was such a trick to making egg ribbons?

Elder Gao finished speaking, then started ladling the egg ribbons into bowls with a soup spoon.

"Nori, you see, shouldn't be cooked. Just briefly scald it. The water temperature should also ideally not exceed ninety degrees; otherwise, the umami flavor will quickly evaporate. The flavor will be gone before you even serve it to the customers."

After the Nori Egg Drop Soup was ladled into the bowls, the nori in each bowl also heated up, blooming open and releasing a tempting umami scent. This umami flavor wasn't intense, but it was quite lingering—delicate wisps of it constantly teased the taste buds of the surrounding diners.

"Wow, this smells so good."

"It really is. So fresh and savory."

"I'm this old, and this is the first time I've learned the right way to prepare nori!"

"Me too. I used to just boil it all together in the pot. It smelled very fresh while cooking, but tasteless when I ate it. I even thought I'd bought fake nori."

"Who knew just scalding it briefly was enough?"

"Learned another trick!"

The surrounding diners were enticed by the umami. Even though their stomachs were full, they felt hungry again.

When Elder Gao finished ladling all the egg ribbons, everyone couldn't wait to pick up a bowl.

In the white ceramic bowls, the golden egg ribbons and black nori intertwined beautifully. They looked exceptionally pretty, like two colors of seaweed drifting in the water, or like two colors of paint blending into each other.

They scooped up a little soup with a spoon, blew on it gently, and then tasted it.

The delicious flavor blossomed in their mouths, instantly washing away the greasiness from the noodles and chicken feet. An inexplicable sense of refreshment spread through them. Drinking the hot soup felt wonderful; even their pores seemed to relax in comfort.

"This soup is incredible!"

"Yes, it's so fresh and light, like taking a swim in the ocean."

"It feels too wonderful! Is this really made from just eggs and nori?"

"With only salt and no other seasonings, Elder Gao is truly amazing!"

"Indeed, his skill is masterful."

Everyone rated the soup very highly and, by extension, showered Elder Gao with praise. Who would have thought that Elder Gao, who usually liked wearing floral shirts and T-shirts while strolling around, would possess such high culinary skills? Using just nori and eggs, along with the most ordinary table salt, he managed to create such a delicious taste. It was almost like a miracle.

Elder Gao smiled humbly, "I just learned a thing or two working in kitchens; it's not worth praising. Mr. Lin, have you learned it? Do you need me to do it again?"

The steps were simple, so he definitely learned them. But to reach Elder Gao's level, it would surely require a lot of practice. The technique for making egg ribbons, the method for soaking nori, the amount of salt, and so forth—all required careful practice and deliberation. Sometimes, the tiniest difference could cause a huge change in flavor and texture.

Just as he was thinking, a system notification suddenly sounded in Lin Xu's mind:

"Host has listened to the State Banquet master's teaching, activating the Practice Makes Perfect task: Please use your spare time within one week to make one hundred bowls of Nori Egg Drop Soup following Elder Gao's steps. Upon completion, you will be rewarded with the Perfect Level post-meal soup—Nori Egg Drop Soup."