

## Culinary 431

Chapter 431: Xie Baomin: Putting aside the facts, aren't you two at fault? The romance of a chef!

Since everyone enjoyed the homemade snacks, I might as well make some Seven-colored Water Chestnut Cake too. My father-in-law, mother-in-law, and elder sister-in-law haven't had a chance to try it yet. Today, I'll let everyone have a taste of something new.

「Eight o'clock in the evening.」

Xie Baomin, the executive chef of Building Two, finished work unusually early. He drove to his apartment building and looked up at the lights on in his twenty-second-floor home. Knowing his wife had already finished work, he took a deep breath, opened the trunk, and retrieved a long flower box.

Well, after so many years of marriage, I haven't given my wife a decent surprise yet.

Xie Baomin didn't have a romantic bone in his body. He fundamentally believed that true happiness lay in a simple, ordinary life, so he'd never cared much for flashy things.

He'd rather spend the time grilling some kidney skewers and downing a couple of beers.

But today, seeing his junior brother and his wife's affectionate behavior while filming a video made Brother Xie quite envious. Plus, his wife had nagged about this too. So, on a whim, he had carved a bunch of roses.

However, now standing downstairs, Chef Xie from the Fishing Platform, usually so unrestrained there, suddenly felt timid.

Red beets are basically just radishes, after all. Isn't carving roses from radishes too stingy?

He remembered there was a flower shop by the entrance. Maybe I should buy a bouquet?

As he was pondering this, a neighbor carrying groceries walked over. Seeing Xie Baomin, the neighbor smiled and greeted him, "Chef Xie, you're off work quite early today! Shall we go up together?"

Xie Baomin had no choice but to cradle the long box in his arms and enter the building with his neighbor.

When they got on the elevator, the neighbor glanced at the box in his hand, "That's a long box, Chef Xie. What's inside?"

"Oh, a friend gave me some yams, and I didn't have anything to put them in, so I just found a random box and stuffed them inside."

Soon, the elevator reached the twenty-second floor. Xie Baomin said goodbye to his neighbor and stepped out when the doors opened.

As the elevator doors closed again, the neighbor muttered to himself, Using a rosewood box for yams? Chef Xie is really too extravagant, isn't he?

Arriving at his front door, Xie Baomin took a deep breath, entered a passcode, and unlocked the door.

Just as he stepped inside, he saw his wife, Su Peipei. She was sitting on the living room sofa, holding a pile of middle school reference books and preparing for lessons in advance. Summer break was ending soon, so she needed to prepare her lessons for the new semester to avoid last-minute panic.

"Why are you home so early today?" Su Peipei took off her glasses and pinched the bridge of her nose before taking a sip of rose tea from the coffee table.

Xie Baomin cleared his throat and muttered, "Didn't I promise to give you a surprise..."

Saying so, he opened the box in his hand. Inside the long box were rows of fiery red roses, complete with long stems.

Su Peipei glanced at them. Just as she was about to ask why he'd spent money on flowers, she noticed something unusual: the green stems didn't look like those of typical roses.

Upon closer inspection, she realized the stems were actually Celery stalks.

This...

She then examined the vividly luscious blossoms more closely and realized they weren't roses at all but had been meticulously carved with a knife. When she gently squeezed one, red juice even oozed out.

A warmth instantly spread through Su Peipei's heart. That rascal of hers always claimed he didn't understand romance.

Was this not understanding romance? He was making her heart melt like magma!ÿÿÿ

She tossed aside her lesson plans, casually placed the box of roses on the coffee table, then grabbed the somewhat dumbfounded Xie Baomin by the hand and pulled him towards the bedroom, "Come on, into the room with me!"

"I haven't even changed my clothes! Peipei, what's gotten into you today..."

Xie Baomin's mutterings were cut off by the sound of the door slamming shut. SLAM!

CRACK!

Downstairs, at the billiards table in the basement, Lin Xu held his cue and struck forcefully, sending the red ball straight into a pocket.

"Nice! Sunk it in one!" Shen Guofu, a cigar in his mouth, chuckled as he watched his son-in-law play.

Putting down his cue, Lin Xu said, "Dad, you keep playing. I'm going to check on the Snacks in the kitchen. Sister Yan is waiting to take some home."

"Go on. I could use more practice anyway. That powerful shot of yours just now was exhilarating! I love that feeling of sinking it in one go."

Upstairs in the kitchen, Shen Baobao, Han Shuzhen, and Chen Yan were all gathered around the cooling Horse Hoof Cake, taking pictures.

"It's so pretty!"

"Brother-in-law is truly amazing! He can make food look this beautiful."

Han Shuzhen posted a photo to her social feed and said with a smile, "This, I suppose, is a chef's romance."

Chapter 432: Chief Consultant of the Program Group: Geng Lishan! Geng's Fried Sauce Noodles, exquisite!

10 a.m.

The sky was drizzling softly.

Lin Xu drove to the entrance of a Hutong near the North Third Ring.

After parking the car, he held an umbrella in one hand and carried two types of snacks he had made last night. He approached a courtyard residence at the entrance of the Hutong and rang the doorbell.

Soon, the sound of brisk footsteps came from inside.

Then, the door opened.

Little Mushroom Head, Geng Lele, poked her head out, "Haha, welcome Xu Ge to our home! After Yue Jie told me last night, I was so excited I wrote myself a leave pass for school overnight."

Lin Xu: "..."

You're not even going to bother pretending, are you?

He closed the umbrella, flicked it a couple of times, and asked, "Won't your school penalize you for taking leave like this?"

"As long as I'm still number one in my grade, no one will penalize me. The teachers are actually worried that studying too much is bad for my health and always encourage me to play more. It's just a pity the computers in the school lab are too outdated; playing on them isn't very satisfying."

That's probably because the teachers don't know how mischievous you usually are, right?

Walking into the courtyard, Lin Xu hung the umbrella on a rack behind the door. Then, carrying the snacks, he followed Geng Lele along the circular corridor deeper into the residence.

"Where's Dundun?"

"At the company. It's new employee training today. The store manager missed him, so Dundun was sent to the company."

"TSK, TSK, TSK, I really didn't expect that with our Holy Master's help, you actually managed to poach the star manager from Fishing Platform. I was a bit skeptical when Yue Jie mentioned it last night."

"This... This is all thanks to Dundun."

Claiming credit for other things might be one matter, but luring Shu Yun away was definitely Dundun's achievement. The little fellow started coying up to her the moment they stepped into Fishing Platform.

That's why the recruitment process went so smoothly. If he had acted all high and mighty like he does with others, Shu Yun probably wouldn't have resigned from Fishing Platform. At least, not so readily.

Arriving before a study, Geng Lele banged on the door, "Old man, hurry up and open! Your sworn brother is here to see you! If you don't open up soon, I'm going to eat all the snacks he brought!"

Before she finished speaking, the door opened. Geng Lishan's hearty laughter came from inside, "Little Friend Lin, welcome, welcome! Your visit truly brightens up my humble home!"

He was dressed in a white martial arts training suit, looking hale and hearty.

Lin Xu offered the snacks in his hand, "I made some snacks last night. I hope Mr. Lishan won't find them too plain."

"Not at all, not at all! To be able to taste Little Friend Lin's culinary skills is my good fortune."

Walking into the study, which was filled with the fragrance of ink, Lin Xu was immediately captivated by the calligraphy and paintings hanging on the walls.

Isn't it said that Mr. Lishan's works are priceless, each character incredibly hard to obtain? There are so many here! If these were sold at market price, they'd probably be worth several hundred million, wouldn't they? TSK... This isn't a study. It's practically a bank vault!

"The room is a bit messy; I hope Little Friend Lin doesn't mind."

Once inside, Geng Lishan busied himself pouring tea, while Geng Lele opened the boxes Lin Xu had brought, "Yue Jie said the Seven-colored Water Chestnut Cake is gorgeous. I have to take pictures and show them off."

As she spoke, she saw the Horse Hoof Cake Lin Xu had made. There were two small boxes, all cut into exquisite diamond shapes.

Upon opening them, not only was Geng Lele stunned, but even Geng Lishan, who was pouring tea, nearly spilled it on his hand.

"Wow, this Horse Hoof Cake is beautiful! It's like a work of art."

Geng Lele immediately took out her phone and, CLICK! CLICK!, snapped several photos, posting them in the Lin Ji's Food online topic.

"Today, Boss Lin came to visit my old man and brought a few boxes of snacks. My girlish heart has been completely smitten! What do I do? I can't bear to eat them!"

Because she promoted the Meow Meow Sect daily, she had a considerable number of followers on social media.

The moment she posted, comments from netizens flooded in.

Xi'erqi Strong Brother: Bet you I can wolf it down in one bite!

Riding a Cat into Battle: AAAHHH! I have absolutely no resistance to this kind of snack! Miss, can you spare me a box? I'll pay a thousand yuan!

Lin Daiyu Uprooting Willows: I'll pay eleven hundred!

Bobo Not Happy: I'll pay three thousand! Does that include shipping?

Flowers Don't Re-bloom, But People Can Be Young Again: Where is this? Why are there so many calligraphy scrolls and paintings in the room?

I Cannot Coexist with Gambling and Drugs: I heard the great calligrapher Mr. Lishan and Boss Lin are like sworn brothers. Could it be that the poster, this High Priest of the Meow Meow Sect, is a member of Mr. Lishan's family?

My Idol is Dundun: No wonder the High Priest always knows about any little thing happening with Boss Lin. Turns out she's an insider!

...

After posting, Geng Lele picked up a piece of the snack and popped it into her mouth.

"Wow, this tastes amazing! No wonder Yue Jie kept saying how delicious it is. Thanks, Xu Ge."

"You're welcome!"

After saying this, Lin Xu looked at Geng Lishan and said, "I came today to ask Mr. Lishan to inscribe a title..."

He then explained, from beginning to end, about the travel channel's food program needing a calligraphed title.

Upon hearing this, Geng Lishan immediately stood up, ground some ink, and, with a flourish of his brush, wrote down the four characters: 「The Flavor of Life」 .

After finishing, he turned to Lin Xu and asked, "How is it, Little Friend Lin? If it's not good enough, I'll rewrite it."

Lin Xu: "..."

You should at least state some conditions; otherwise, how huge a favor will I owe you? I need to find a way to repay this calligrapher. Otherwise, I'd become a complete freeloader!

Geng Lele, having eaten the Seven-colored Water Chestnut Cake, then tried the Shakima Lin Xu had made. MMM, this is super delicious, much better than the Shakima sold on the streets!

Chapter 433: Chief Consultant of the Program Group: Geng Lishan! Geng's Fried Sauce Noodles, So Particular!

The girl spoke to Lin Xu while eating, "Xu, please spend more time chatting with my grandpa. He locks himself in his room all day and is nearly going crazy."

As soon as Lin Xu heard this, he immediately had an idea.

He looked at Geng Lishan and asked, "Mr. Lishan, the food program on the travel channel was set up quite hastily, and those young editors don't know much about food legends and stories. Their promotional efforts tend to flop. If you don't mind, I would like to invite you to be the chief consultant for the program."

The TV station would definitely approve of this wholeheartedly. Previously, they couldn't even find a reputable celebrity to endorse them. Now that they had a consultant, wouldn't they be overjoyed?

As for Geng Lishan, having something to capture his interest was much better than being cooped up in his study all the time. He was a renowned food critic in Beijing with unique insights into food, which would fit perfectly into the program.

"Chief consultant?"

Although the title didn't interest him, it was Lin Xu's food program after all. Was it too much to ask to try each dish while acting as the chief consultant? He might even meet a bunch of cooks during the process.

Thinking this, he smiled and said, "Since my young friend Lin has invited me, I will shamelessly accept. However, let's be clear, if the program team acts recklessly despite my advice, I will walk away immediately!"

"Don't worry," Lin Xu replied. "If you're unhappy, I'll walk out of the program with you."

Are you kidding me? The travel channel couldn't even find a decent celebrity. Now that they finally have Geng Lishan, they'll practically worship him like a god. Moreover, cuisine was Geng Lishan's forte. Who would foolishly challenge him?

Lin Xu took out his phone and informed Zeng Xiaoqi of the matter.

At the same time, in the travel channel's office, everyone was busy reviewing the food program's procedures when suddenly, they heard Zeng Xiaoqi's shriek.

"AAAAH! Mr. Lishan has agreed to be our chief consultant!!!"

It was such a surprise! More surprising than eating five kilograms of spicy crawfish in one go. That was Mr. Lishan, the food critic! Just last month, several food programs had tried to coax him out of retirement, but they were all turned away, and some planners were even kicked out. And today, Lin Xu managed to secure him with just two boxes of snacks!

Upon hearing this, the office colleagues were all excitedly banging on their tables.

Just the other day, Zhen Wensheng had shamelessly tried to get someone from the Culinary Association involved, but he faced rejection because they looked down on the small scale of the travel channel.

Initially, they feared the travel channel was doomed to remain obscure and unloved, just drifting along without achieving anything significant. But since they met Lin Xu, everything had changed.

When Zhen Wensheng heard Zeng Xiaoqi's scream, he thought a snake had snuck into the office. Hearing that Geng Lishan had agreed to be the chief consultant, the old media professional was also extremely excited, exclaiming, "Let's find a place to celebrate tonight, my treat!"

His colleagues immediately cheered.

They could enjoy beer and kebabs again!

Zeng Xiaoqi was just about to ask about the budget for the evening when Zhen Wensheng cut in, "You are not allowed to eat spicy food!"

Your throat is already hoarse, and you still want spicy food? Are you planning to change careers or something?

Zhen Wensheng thought.

Zeng Xiaoqi said cheerfully, "I'm not interested if it's not made by Boss Lin."

She packed up the program's documents and planning book, took her digital camera, and said to Zhen Wensheng, "The inscription for the program is already written. Boss Lin asked me to go and take some photos for the program's intro, and also to show Mr. Lishan our program planning book to see if there's anything that needs to be added."

The planning book had actually been revised many times, and its flow was basically clear. However, to show respect for Mr. Lishan, they definitely needed him to review it and offer his insights; this would demonstrate their genuine sincerity.

While Zeng Xiaoqi was packing, Zhen Wensheng went back to his office, opened his cabinet, and took out two bottles of high-quality liquor that he had treasured for many years.

He carefully bagged them and handed them to Zeng Xiaoqi, who was about to leave, saying, "When visiting Mr. Lishan's house, it's not appropriate to go empty-handed. These two bottles of liquor have been with me for twenty years. Hand them to Mr. Lishan on my behalf to express our respect from the travel channel."

"Okay, Mr. Zhen."

Zeng Xiaoqi hurriedly took a taxi to the Geng family's courtyard house. The rain had stopped.

Lin Xu was in the study, appreciating Geng Lishan's calligraphy works.

Meanwhile, Geng Lele was interacting with netizens on her phone.

When she heard the doorbell ring, the girl practically skipped to the door, exclaiming, "Hello Xiaoqi, Xu and my grandpa are waiting for you."

"Hello Lele."

Upon entering, Zeng Xiaoqi first presented Zhen Wensheng's treasured bottles of liquor with a heap of compliments. Then she took out the program's planning book and other documents for Geng Lishan to review.

She had thought it would just be a formality.

Unexpectedly, Geng Lishan truly put on his reading glasses and went through the planning book, asking some questions as he read.

After a thorough discussion, they found themselves on the same wavelength. One was a famous food critic; the other, a media professional genuinely wanting to produce a food program. It was natural for them to hit it off as they talked.

With Lin Xu occasionally chiming in about food-related topics, Geng Lishan fully endorsed the program.

As noon approached, Geng Lishan stood up and said, "We have honorable guests today, and it's only right that I cook and let you guys taste my cooking."

As a food critic, though not necessarily a top-notch chef, preparing a few signature dishes was no big deal for him.

Chapter 434: Chief Consultant of the Program Group: Geng Lishan! Geng's Fried Sauce Noodles, So Particular!

For instance, Geng Lishan was extremely adept at making Noodles With Black Bean Sauce.

Within Beijing's cultural circles, Geng's Fried Sauce Noodles were famously delicious.

In the past, people from the cultural circles took pride in having the chance to eat the Noodles With Black Bean Sauce personally made by Geng Lishan.

However, ever since he became inaccessible to the public, outsiders simply could not taste his craftsmanship anymore.

"Wow, to be able to taste Mr. Lishan's craft is a delightful surprise. Today I'll help you out and take the opportunity to learn how to make Noodles With Black Bean Sauce," Lin Xu said.

Lin Xu followed Geng Lishan to the kitchen.

He truly wanted to see how Noodles With Black Bean Sauce were made and also lend a hand as needed.

After all, the calligrapher was in his seventies, still capable of doing some light tasks, but making Dough was a bit beyond his strength.

"Lin my friend, I won't stand on ceremony with you. Today we divide the work: you take care of the Dough, and I take care of the sauce. Let's give Reporter Zeng an eye-opener," Geng Lishan said.

"Alright!" Lin Xu eagerly agreed.

Lin Xu washed his hands and started to make Dough in the kitchen.

Meanwhile, Geng Lishan took out a bag of dry soybean paste and a bag of sweet bean sauce, squeezed them all into a bowl. Then, he grabbed a bottle of aged Floral Carving Wine, poured it into the bowl in small amounts several times, and began to dilute the sauce.

Dry soybean paste, being dry, needs to be diluted before use.

As he was busy, he said, "The most common dish in Beijing is Noodles With Black Bean Sauce. Almost every family knows how to make it, and each family's methods and flavors vary. It's all about that home-style taste. There's really no argument about what's authentic or not."

Lin Xu nodded in agreement. "Home-style cooking really doesn't have a set rule. If it's delicious, it's authentic; if it's not, then it isn't."

This statement made Geng Lishan give a thumbs up. "Lin my friend, you speak the truth. Being authentic or not isn't important. What's important is that it has to be delicious."

After diluting the sauce, he began to chop the meat.

To make the Fried Sauce, pork belly is used, preferably with more fat, as this makes the sauce richer and more fragrant.

The meat didn't need to be cut too large; pieces the size of a fingertip were fine. These meat cubes were called 'sieve-sized pieces' because they were similar in size to mahjong dice.

When chopping the meat, the fat and lean parts should be separated.

By doing this, during the frying process, one can first render the fat until fragrant and the oil is released, and then add the lean meat, making the diced meat taste even more delightful.

If both the fat and lean meat were put into the pan together, by the time the fat was cooked, the lean meat would already be too dry. Conversely, if the lean meat was perfect, the fat wouldn't have released its oil yet, and neither would taste good.

After chopping the meat, Geng Lishan took some Large Shrimp from the fridge, peeled them, and then cut the Shrimp into pieces similar in size to the diced meat.

"I like to add some Shrimp to my Fried Sauce Noodles to enhance the umami flavor and make it more satisfying to eat. The reason people praise my cooking so much is thanks to these Shrimp," he shared.

Lin Xu took mental note, planning to try it out when he got back.

If Shrimp enhanced the flavor, then he would also add Shrimp to the Noodles With Black Bean Sauce at his restaurant.

Indeed, not just adding Shrimp, but also substituting the oil used in the Fried Sauce with shrimp oil. Since the goal was to boost the umami, he would go all the way. He didn't believe that with these changes the Noodles With Black Bean Sauce wouldn't be delicious.

After preparing the Shrimp, Geng Lishan then took several Shandong Green Onions, which the nanny had prepared, and finely chopped them, filling a large bowl.

"When frying the sauce, you need a lot of green onions, and you should add them in three stages. This way, the resulting sauce will have a strong onion fragrance, and its texture will also be tender," he explained.

Add them in three stages?

Lin Xu asked, "Could Scallion Oil be used instead?"

This was just the question Geng Lishan delighted in answering. "That would be perfect! It's best to use the Scallion Oil made for Pot Roast Sea Cucumber; it has a richer fragrance and tastes better. It's just too labor-intensive, so I didn't prepare it."

Lin Xu was speechless. Aren't gourmets supposed to be meticulous about their food? Saying it's 'too much trouble' just shatters that image!

After chopping the onions, Geng Lishan then chopped some Ginger and Garlic Mince, then set up the wok and began to fry the sauce.

By this time, Lin Xu had already finished making the Dough, setting it aside to rest.

Having nothing better to do, he stood by Geng Lishan's side to watch the culinary expert make the sauce.

He heated the wok, then swirled oil to coat it. After pouring out this hot oil, he added fresh cold oil.

Once the oil was hot, he added the diced fatty pork and began to stir-fry it over low heat.

Using low heat could extract the maximum amount of fat from the diced fatty pork, giving the sauce a pork lard aroma without it being greasy.

When the diced fatty pork turned golden brown on the surface, he added the diced lean pork and continued to stir-fry.

How could lean meat fried in rendered pork fat be anything but delicious?

For lean meat, you could switch to high heat, which would quickly evaporate the water content.

"You can't rush to add the sauce," Geng Lishan instructed. "You must fry the meat until the oil in the pot turns clear. This shows the moisture from the meat has cooked out. Only then will the sauce keep for many days without spoiling."

When the oil in the pot turned clear, Geng Lishan poured the prepared Ginger and Garlic Mince into the pot, along with a third of the chopped green onions.

He continued to stir-fry.

Once the fragrance was released, he poured in the sauce diluted with Rice Wine.

At this point, the sauce and the oil in the pot were clearly separated, so he needed to keep stirring with a spoon, ensuring the oil and sauce quickly merged together.

Only then would the full aroma of the sauce develop.

Making Noodles With Black Bean Sauce seemed simple, but it was actually quite a physical task.

Even with Geng Lishan's experience, after stirring for some time, sweat began to appear on his forehead.

Lin Xu took over the spoon and said, "Let me do this heavy lifting. You just oversee me."

Before long, the oil in the pot disappeared, and the originally somewhat thick sauce had thinned considerably.

This was because the oil had blended with the sauce.

"Just keep frying," Geng Lishan guided. "In a while, when the water content reduces, the sauce will thicken again. Even extra fat will be fried out. That's when you should add the Shrimp, and then the second batch of green onions."

Umami substances evaporate when heated, so they shouldn't be added too early, or they would fry away.

"You should wait until the water in the sauce has mostly evaporated before adding them. This way, the umami from the Shrimp becomes sealed within the sauce by the oil and won't evaporate."

Wow, talk about meticulousness!

Lin Xu continued to stir-fry, and after about fifteen minutes, the sauce in the pot indeed thickened and became glossy.

He added in the chopped Shrimp and another third of the green onions.

The fragrance of the onions grew richer.

But the sauce for the Noodles With Black Bean Sauce was not done yet. It still had to be fried continuously until the full aroma of the dry soybean paste emerged, making the noodles truly delectable.

He fried on low heat for another ten-plus minutes.

As the aroma of the sauce in the pot began to intensify, Geng Lishan said, "Turn off the heat. After turning it off, add the remaining green onions, stir well, and it's ready to be served."

Lin Xu nodded, turned off the burner, added the green onions, and stirred well. He then scooped the sauce into a small basin, filling it up.

The sauce for the Noodles With Black Bean Sauce was ready. The housekeeper had also prepared the toppings for the noodles.

There were soybean sprouts just over a centimeter long, julienned cucumbers, carrot strips, radish greens, chive segments, shredded purple cabbage, minced celery, diced green beans, and shredded Egg—a lavish spread of twelve different ingredients.

There were even a few more varieties than the customary 'seven platters and eight bowls' for Noodles With Black Bean Sauce.

"Wow, no wonder everyone praises your family's Noodles With Black Bean Sauce as delicious; just the toppings alone are so abundant, how could it not be tasty?" Lin Xu exclaimed.

Geng Lishan said with a smile, "These are just accompaniments, all meant to balance the saltiness of the sauce. If the sauce is delicious, everything is good. If the sauce isn't good, even the most complete array of toppings is useless!"

By this time, the Dough was ready. Lin Xu rolled it into noodles using a rolling pin, boiled them in a large pot, and then served them into bowls one by one.

He arranged the toppings on the noodles and ladled a generous spoonful of the fragrant sauce over them.

Time to eat!

Chapter 435: Geng Lishan's Food Philosophy! Recording Begins! The Show Trailer Explodes!

"Oh, these noodles really have some chew to them!"

Despite having eaten Noodles With Black Bean Sauce for the better part of his life, Geng Lishan still couldn't get enough of it. After mixing the noodles, toppings, and the richly fragrant black bean sauce, he couldn't wait to pick up a pair of chopsticks and take a bite.

Then, he was stunned by how delicious the noodles were. He had always thought that with Noodles With Black Bean Sauce, it was all about the sauce. The noodles weren't the main focus, because a good sauce could completely cover up any flaws in them. However, today, after tasting the noodles rolled out by Lin Xu, he realized that perfect Noodles With Black Bean Sauce should feature noodles and sauce that complement each other, rather than one dominating the other. The smoothness and chewiness of the noodles contrasted sharply with the rich, salty fragrance of the black bean sauce. Too perfect!

Geng Lishan felt as though he was rediscovering noodles. He had eaten hand-rolled noodles for decades and never thought they could taste this good.

"Wow, I told you, Brother Xu's hand-rolled noodles and old man's black bean sauce are a perfect match! It's true, the noodles need to be chewy to be delicious," Geng Lele said after trying a bite of the noodles, her words full of endless praise.

She was a long-time regular customer at Lin Ji's Food. Shortly after Qiang Ge and others entered the restaurant back then, this girl had wandered in with Zhao Xiaozhi and others, and they had practically made it their cafeteria. Lin Ji's Food had recently closed for renovation. Although she had eaten the crayfish Lin Xu cooked during that time, one meal was not enough to satisfy her. She had been longing for these noodles for a long time. Today, her wish was finally granted.

"Mr. Lishan, the sauce you made is truly excellent!" Lin Xu exclaimed. Eating the delicious noodles, he gained a new appreciation for Noodles With Black Bean Sauce. The deep red dried yellow bean sauce mixed with the noodles made them wonderfully fragrant and delicious. When tossed with the toppings,

the flavor of the toppings was elevated to a whole new level. This sauce made anything it was mixed with delicious; it was practically a flavor amplifier.

Geng Lishan laughed and began to talk about the development of Noodles With Black Bean Sauce. "In the past, those destitute bannermen were particular about their food. When they couldn't afford to treat people to a meal, they'd serve a bunch of vegetarian dishes with sauce. After finishing those, they'd cook a bowl of noodles, mix in the leftover vegetables and sauce, and that became the early form of Noodles With Black Bean Sauce."

Since Lin Xu knew about the history of Fried Sausage, he understood this quite well. If you're poor but still want to be particular about your food, you have to lower your standards. He believed that the ancient Seven Dishes and Eight Bowls was definitely a grand affair. Otherwise, those bannermen wouldn't have been so nostalgic about it even after falling on hard times. But when it comes to Noodles With Black Bean Sauce, Seven Dishes and Eight Bowls boiled down to just a bowl of noodles with seven different toppings; there was really nothing much to fuss about. As for the so-called rules of eating Noodles With Black Bean Sauce, they could be listened to for entertainment. If you actually believed them, then you'd be the foolish one.

"Nowadays, when people talk about Beijing cuisine online, there's always a group of particular people and authenticity purists spreading all sorts of 'knowledge.' They claim that certain dishes must be eaten this way and others that way, to the point that many non-locals are getting annoyed with Beijing." Zeng Xiaoqi, who had been the topic host of "Yanjing Cuisine Share" for two years, had seen far too many of these types, so she couldn't help but sigh when Geng Lishan mentioned the destitute bannermen.

Geng Lishan shoveled another bite of noodles into his mouth. "Any home-cooked dish that's said to have a must-follow way of being eaten is not to be trusted. As long as it tastes good, that's all that matters. Why all the fuss? I've even seen Noodles With Black Bean Sauce made with Pixian bean paste, and people eat it with great relish. Can you say they're eating it wrong?"

These words immediately set Zeng Xiaoqi's mind at ease. She had been afraid Geng Lishan was one of those who insisted on the authenticity of everything, which would have made it difficult for the program team when dealing with Beijing cuisine in the future. But now, it seemed she had worried needlessly.

Feeling relieved, the beautiful Zeng Xiaoqi picked up a big mouthful of noodles and said sentimentally, "Since I was accepted to the Communication University of China, I've been in Beijing for at least seven or eight years. I've eaten countless bowls of Noodles With Black Bean Sauce, but none of them are as delicious as those made by Mr. Lishan."

This wasn't flattery; it was genuinely from the heart.

"It's because young friend Lin's noodles are so good," Geng Lishan said. "Without his noodles, my sauce wouldn't taste nearly as delicious."

After a lively meal, the housekeeper brought tea.

After finishing their tea and chatting for a while, Lin Xu and Zeng Xiaoqi stood up to say goodbye.

"Lele, what kind of computer setup do you think wouldn't hinder your talent?" Lin Xu asked with a smile as they reached the courtyard gate.

This question struck a chord with Little Mushroom Head, who cheerfully replied, "Well, at least it should be the highest configuration on the market: an i9 processor, a 3090 graphics card, 128GB of RAM, and a 16TB solid-state drive... wait, Brother Xu, why are you asking this?"

"Just asking casually. Don't forget to go to class later. We're heading back now."

Once back in the car, Zeng Xiaoqi asked curiously, "Are you planning to buy a computer for Lele?"

"Mr. Lishan's calligraphy has given Lin Ji's Food a three-month title sponsorship," Lin Xu replied. "If I tried to give him money, he'd definitely get angry, so I decided to just get a high-spec computer for Lele instead." That genius could work wonders even with the computers in the school lab. Having a high-spec computer would be like giving wings to a tiger.

After saying this, he started the car and headed toward the television station.

As they reached the entrance of Yanjing City Television Station, Zeng Xiaoqi opened the door to get out. Lin Xu said, "Hold on for a second, Xiaoqi. There's a gift for you in the trunk."

He got out of the car, opened the trunk, and took out two gift boxes: one containing Shakima and the other Seven-colored Water Chestnut Cake. He had made a large batch of snacks the previous night, so he had loaded a few into the car. When the new store opened, he'd introduce these snacks, so handing out a few more beforehand could also help generate some buzz.

Chapter 436: Geng Lishan's Food Philosophy! Recording Begins! The Show Trailer Explodes!

Surprise was written all over Zeng Xiaoqi's face.

She had just tasted these two snacks at Geng Lishan's home. She hadn't eaten much then because they were discussing the food program, but she had been thinking about them ever since.

Today was truly full of surprises.

Getting Mr. Lishan's calligraphy was a surprise, Mr. Lishan joining the program team was a surprise, tasting the Noodles With Black Bean Sauce was a surprise, and now, Boss Lin had given her a fourth wonderful surprise.

"It looks like it might rain again. You should head inside quickly," he said. "I'm off to visit Chairman Liu of the National Tourism Association to get him to promote and support our program."

After speaking, Lin Xu drove away.

Zeng Xiaoqi stood by the roadside holding two boxes of Snacks, watching the white G-Wagon disappear into the distance. She couldn't help but mutter,

"Why doesn't God mass-produce a few more perfect men like this one?"

「Very quickly,」

The news that Geng Lishan had provided his calligraphy for and joined the "Taste of Humanity" program team spread like wildfire.

Those media planners who had been rejected previously could hardly believe it.

A program on an insignificant channel, with no heavyweight guests, no hefty investments, and not even any initial sponsors, had actually won Mr. Lishan's favor.

Does this program team have someone extraordinary? they wondered.

Only after careful inquiries did they discover that Lin Xu, a two-time cooking competition champion, had joined the team, and subsequently, his close friend Geng Lishan had also come on board.

This was a real shocker.

A distinguished calligrapher was actually treating a young man as an equal.

He even personally cooked Noodles With Black Bean Sauce to host him.

This is treating him completely as one of their own! people thought.

Meanwhile, the TV station began to leverage Geng Lishan's involvement, doing their best to amplify the program's influence and attract sponsors.

After all, TV programs need advertising sponsorship to be sustainable.

This is especially true for culinary programs; with sponsors, they could use better venues, prepare more delicious food, and secure better broadcasting slots.

「Two days later.」

In the TV station's recording studio, which had been converted into a small kitchen, Lin Xu stood by the stove in a chef's uniform bearing the Lin Ji's Food logo, conducting pre-recording checks.

Next to him, Zeng Xiaoqi, dressed in a pink women's suit, had her sleeves rolled up and her hair tied back in a neat and youthful ponytail. She was practicing the opening remarks written by the director. Not far away, Geng Lishan, wearing reading glasses, sat in a chair, carefully examining the three dishes scheduled for recording:

Oil Braise Large Shrimp, Green Onion Explosion Mutton, and Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes.

All three were dishes people often heard about but didn't eat very commonly in daily life.

Especially the Oil Braise Large Shrimp; although available in restaurants, it was typically prepared as sweet and sour large shrimp. Geng Lishan had initially worried Lin Xu would make it the same way, but after their discussion, he realized it was actually an old recipe from decades ago.

This immediately filled Geng Lishan with anticipation for the dish.

As for the Green Onion Explosion Mutton, the piece of half-fat, half-lean mutton from the hind leg and the two half-human-height Shandong Green Onions Lin Xu had brought made it clear that this too was a classic, old-fashioned recipe.

Regarding the Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes, he didn't even inquire.

Hmm, I shouldn't ask for the recipe for every dish. Leaving a little suspense for myself might just turn into a pleasant surprise during today's recording, Geng Lishan thought.

After rehearsing her opening remarks several times, Zeng Xiaoqi finally looked at Lin Xu. They could start as soon as he was ready. She felt quite composed at the moment, remembering every word of her lines. If they waited any longer, she might have to find her rhythm again. "Are you ready, Boss Lin?" she asked.

Lin Xu wiped his hands with a towel. "All set," he said.

"Shall we begin then?" Zeng Xiaoqi asked.

"Sure," Lin Xu replied.

Next to Geng Lishan, Zhen Wensheng, serving as the on-site head director, immediately took his walkie-talkie and ordered, "All departments, pay attention. We are entering recording mode now. Extraneous personnel, please leave the set. We need to keep the area quiet."

It wasn't long before the program officially began recording.

After an opening segment about food and cooking, Zeng Xiaoqi slowly walked over to the stove, and Lin Xu appeared on camera.

"Today we are fortunate to have with us the dietary consultant from the Fishing Platform State Guesthouse and the founder of Lin Ji's Food, Boss Lin Xu, to explain the intricacies of cooking these dishes. Hello, Boss Lin."

"Hello, Xiaoqi."

"What are we cooking today?"

"Oil Braise Large Shrimp."

After answering, Lin Xu brought over several live Big Shrimp from the side workbench and also introduced the necessary seasonings and ingredients.

Following the introduction, the two interacted briefly, and then Lin Xu began to explain the key points and methods for preparing the Large Shrimp.

Not far away, Geng Lishan nodded repeatedly, whispering to Zhen Wensheng beside him, "The pacing is very well controlled, and the choice of dish is excellent. You all need to ramp up the promotion; don't let Lin Xu's efforts go to waste."

"Rest assured, Mr. Lishan," Zhen Wensheng replied. "We will promote this program through television, the internet, and various offline channels. We absolutely will not let Boss Lin's hard work be in vain."

Zhen Wensheng had bet correctly on Lin Xu in the last cooking competition, so this time he didn't hesitate to stake his career on him again.

He not only secured a high-frequency advertising schedule from the station but even managed to get ads placed at popular bus stops and in subway stations to build as much hype as possible.

The staff at the Tourism Channel were also working overtime.

Having been underperforming for so many years, they had finally encountered an opportunity to turn things around, and they were determined to seize it firmly.

Zeng Xiaoqi had eaten the Oil Braise Large Shrimp on Longqi Mountain that day, so now, watching Lin Xu cook step by step, she couldn't help but recall those large shrimp with their crisp skin and savory flavor.

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I'll definitely need to grab a couple to try later and savor the texture and taste of the Large Shrimp.

However, compared to the Oil Braise Large Shrimp, she preferred the crayfish prepared by Lin Xu.

Unfortunately, due to the frequent appearances on the cooking show lately, she couldn't eat spicy food, which meant she couldn't experience the joy of devouring a whole pot of crayfish in one sitting anymore.

Before long, the Large Shrimp were done.

Lin Xu used chopsticks to neatly arrange the Oil Braise Large Shrimp, which had curled up, on the plate. Then he filtered the sauce, boiled it again, and poured it over the Large Shrimp.

At that moment, not only was Zeng Xiaoqi tempted, but even the cameraman next to her couldn't help but swallow his saliva.

I never thought that the Oil Braise Large Shrimp I'd been eating for twenty years was made incorrectly, and that Lin Xu's method was the correct one for Oil Braise Large Shrimp. It was truly surprising.

Once the dish was prepared, it was placed on the rotating display stand to capture a close-up. Zeng Xiaoqi immediately picked up one of the Large Shrimp with a small dish to taste.

"So delicious! The shell is crisp, no need to peel it, and the meat is so tender. Lin Xu, your skills are amazing!"

Originally, the scriptwriter had written lines to praise the Oil Braise Large Shrimp. But after tasting the shrimp, she forgot them and improvised.

Zhen Wensheng said with a smile, "That's better than what was written in the script. Speaking while eating makes it more lively."

After the video was completed, Geng Lishan immediately stood up, looked over at the stove, and then at the Oil Braise Large Shrimp on the table. He couldn't help but express his feelings, "It's been many years since I've eaten Oil Braise Large Shrimp prepared this way. Lin Xu's skills are truly impeccable. The way you cooked just now made me drool."

Lin Xu chuckled and handed him a pair of chopsticks, "Please try it and let me know what you think, Mr. Lishan."

"I'm hardly qualified to give an 'expert opinion'; I'm just lucky to get a taste."

Geng Lishan tasted it and couldn't stop praising the dish, "When you open your restaurant, you must feature this dish. It will set a standard for other restaurants. Otherwise, they'll never realize how wrong their Oil Braise Large Shrimp is."

Lin Xu jokingly said, "If those restaurants come looking for trouble, you'll have to back me up, Mr. Geng."

"Don't worry, Lin Xu. I'm old, but I'm not dead. If anyone gives you trouble, they can't blame me, Geng Lishan, for not holding my tongue!"

From the side, Zhen Wensheng, seeing the post-production and operations staff eyeing the shrimp, approached them and said, "Quickly trim the sauce-pouring clip to make an announcement video to post online. The first episode is crucial. We must rely on the Oil Braise Large Shrimp for a successful start!"

The two were about to hurry off when Zhen Wensheng called them back, "Hold on a second."

Then he took two disposable plates, placed one Large Shrimp into each, and passed them over, "Try it, this flavor is quite rare."

He then turned to several cameramen and said, "You should try it too. Lin Xu rarely cooks, so don't let it go to waste."

Curious, Lin Xu asked, "Why aren't you eating, Mr. Zhen? Are you allergic to shrimp?"

Zhen Wensheng smiled, "When I was running the Travel Channel, I promised my team we would share both hardships and glory and achieve great things together. However, these past few years, the Travel Channel has been nearly dormant. We've only shared hardships, with no glory to speak of. So now that there's a bit of success, I need to let them have a taste, otherwise, this group might just run off."

They would have run off already if they were going to, right? Perhaps it was Zhen Wensheng's charismatic leadership that kept them. Such a team deserves respect.

Lin Xu said, "I got a few too many Large Shrimp from the Fishing Platform today. I'll cook some more later so everyone can have a taste."

After resting for a while, the cameramen who had tried the Oil Braise Large Shrimp took out the memory cards from their cameras and handed them to the post-production team, then inserted new cards to continue recording.

Although this type of cooking show only features one dish per episode, they can't just film one episode at a time during production. They need to film as many as possible to have material in reserve, so they're less panicked when it comes time to broadcast.

"What dish should we film next?" Zeng Xiaoqi asked, taking a sip of the Honeysuckle Tea in her cup.

The tea was a gift from Chen Meijuan when Zeng Xiaoqi left Longqi Mountain. She had added two pieces of Crystal Sugar to it when brewing it today, making it sweet and soothing for her throat.

Lin Xu looked at the mutton, then at the chicken legs soaking in a basin, and said, "Let's do the Sauce Explosion Chicken Cubes. The chicken legs have been soaking for a while, and I'm worried that soaking them longer will affect the texture."

"Okay, I'll notify them."

Soon, all departments were ready. The filming for today's second dish—Sauce Explosion Chicken Cubes—began.

Meanwhile, the post-production editor tasked with the job copied the filmed video to the computer, cut it, combined it with the previously half-finished announcement video, added some special effects, and then handed it over to the operations team.

Sister Xiao Hui, who was in charge of account operations, logged into the official account of Flavor of Humanity to post it online, then used the Travel Channel's main account to share it.

The show's accounts didn't have many followers, so even after cross-posting, there were hardly any likes or interactions.

How can we increase the viewership?The Travel Channel had just managed to turn things around; they absolutely had to seize this opportunity.But with the account not having many followers, netizens couldn't even see the video.Should I perhaps go to the other channels' operations departments later and sweet-talk them into sharing it using their official accounts?

Xiao Hui thought about it and sent a WeChat message to the operations staff of other channels, begging them to help share it, "Help me out, Sister Zhou, I'll treat you to milk tea later."

However, her series of pleas was met with a merciless rejection: "I can't, Xiao Hui. The official accounts are controlled by the leaders now; they don't allow random sharing of other stuff. How about I share it on my personal account instead? I'd like my milk tea with 70% sugar, not too sweet."

Following that, she begged high and low to the other channel operations staff for help. But those people either didn't reply or directly refused.

Xiao Hui was nearly in tears, yet no one in the station was willing to help. Because no one wanted the Travel Channel to succeed. They preferred it to remain an underdog—its success would mean less advertising revenue for them.

Just then, a series of sharing and liking notifications suddenly popped up on the computer.

Upon checking the details, Xiao Hui was stunned.

"@Fishing Platform State Guesthouse has shared your post and commented: Tune in to the Travel Channel, Friday evening at six, don't miss it!"

"@National Tourism Association has shared your post and commented: Tune in to the Travel Channel, Friday evening at six, don't miss it!"

"@China Travel Group's official account has shared your post and commented: Tune in to the Travel Channel, Friday evening at six, don't miss it!"

"@China Youth Travel Service's official account has shared your post and commented: Tune in to the Travel Channel, Friday evening at six, don't miss it!"

"@China Grand Hotel Summer Palace Restaurant has shared your post and commented: Tune in to the Travel Channel, Friday evening at six, don't miss it!"

"@Yangcheng Guo's Restaurant has shared your post and commented: Tune in to the Yanjing City Travel Channel, Friday evening at six, don't miss it!"

...

A series of official account notifications moved Xiao Hui to tears. The frustrations she had just experienced were released at this moment.

While she was still reeling with excitement, Wu Kexin, Yue Liyue, Gao Xiaoshuai, Women and Games, along with other online celebrities and major influencers, also shared and commented, urging their fans not to forget to watch the show.

Lin Xu's fans were also spreading the word, reminding netizens to remember to tune into the show.

Within just ten minutes, the viewership for Flavor of Humanity's announcement video surpassed those of other recent Yanjing TV Station program announcements.

All TV professionals were aware. This cooking show was about to explode!

Chapter 438: The Onion Blast Mutton That Amazed Geng Lishan! Shen Baobao's Cooking Diary!

"Damn, these Large Shrimp are so tempting!"

"As a shrimp lover, I find these shrimp utterly irresistible."

"The king of versatility has branched out yet again, but I'm not surprised at all."

"I never expected that Boss Lin, while busy working for the Fishing Platform, promoting his hometown's scenic spots, being a video uploader, and a broadcaster, would even find time to break into the TV industry."

"And I heard he even spends his evenings playing pool with his wealthy father-in-law."

"If I had such a wealthy father-in-law, forget playing pool; I'd be happy even if he wanted to hit me every day!"

"..."

Under the Lin Ji's Food topic, the official announcement video had already been shared by enthusiastic fans, and now everyone was discussing it fervently.

To them, the dish of Oil-Braised Large Shrimp was not unfamiliar, as Lin Xu had made it once when he returned to his hometown, and both the proprietress and Zeng Xiaoqi had posted pictures online. But a picture is just a picture; it lacks the impact of seeing the sauce poured.

Moreover, when the post-production editor worked on it, they specifically used slow motion. The shiny sauce slowly drizzling over the bright red shrimp also captivated everyone's hearts.

"No wonder Boss Lin never updated the video of making Oil-Braised Large Shrimp on short video platforms. It was prepared for the TV show."

"So, are the other dishes he didn't make also reserved for the show?"

"What dishes?"

"The Seven-colored Water Chestnut Cake! For the past few days, the High Priest, Zeng Xiaoqi, and Wu Kexin have all been showing it off. Yue Liyue even did a live review. It feels like the whole world is eating Seven-colored Water Chestnut Cake, but I can't get any."

"Hopefully, Boss Lin doesn't forget us loyal fans who have been endlessly tipping Coins and sharing."

"Right, people outside Yanjing City can't see the Yanjing City travel channel and don't want to install the Yanjing TV Station app. We really don't know where else to watch the video."

"..."

While everyone was discussing, Shen Jiayue posted a message in the topic:

"All dishes made by Boss Lin will also be re-recorded and published on the short video platforms. During the recording process, he will include some cooking tips, so please don't unfollow, everyone!"

Initially, for the promotional buildup, Lin Xu would often appear in the TV station's programs.

But once Lin Ji's Food's business was on track, he would gradually reduce his appearances.

After all, the chefs at the shop and his senior brothers were also waiting for their chance to be featured.

As soon as Shen Baobao's post was out, everyone immediately declared they wouldn't unfollow.

Are you kidding? If we unfollow, how will we continue to see the chubby Dundun, the beautiful proprietress, the delicious dishes, and the gorgeous scenery?

Hmm, following one account and getting to see so much content—what a bargain!

「The recording scene of the program.」

The Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes were ready. After the close-up shots were taken, Zeng Xiaoqi tasted them and couldn't help but exclaim,

"Wow, these chicken cubes are so fragrant and tender, just as good as the ones your senior brother makes!"

When the beautiful Miss Zeng first went to Lin Ji for an interview, she happened to meet Xie Baomin, who was helping out in the shop. She had the good fortune to taste the Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes made by this Fishing Platform head chef and was deeply impressed by the dish.

She felt Lin Xu's skills were on par with Head Chef Xie's.

"I'm still not as good as my senior brother; his culinary skills are better than mine."

His Sauce Explosion Technique had always remained at the Superior Level, while Xie Baomin's culinary skills were clearly at the Perfect Level.

Therefore, in terms of both taste and presentation, his senior brother was a cut above.

After the recording, Geng Lishan tasted it as usual and remarked,

"Hmm, this is exactly like the Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes popular in Beijing decades ago. It's not like nowadays, where they throw all sorts of ingredients into this dish, making it an unrecognizable mess."

It was worth coming! Really worth it!

The previous Oil-Braised Large Shrimp used a traditional method from decades ago. I didn't expect these Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes to also have that old-fashioned flavor. It's almost like traveling back in time. Young Friend Lin is truly remarkable. To be acquainted with such an intergenerational friend is truly my, Geng Lishan's, good fortune!

After his reflections, he turned his gaze towards that piece of half-fat, half-lean lamb leg meat and the large scallions on top.

The first two dishes were so outstanding. Then this Scallion Explosion Lamb is even more worth looking forward to!

Compared to Oil-Braised Large Shrimp and Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes, Scallion Explosion Lamb is more widely known; even now, it's a very popular dish.

But with greater popularity, the dish has also become more particular.

For instance, the ingredients: one must choose lamb leg meat with some fat. The lamb from this part has slightly coarser fibers, which makes it chewier and more satisfying to eat, yet not so tough that it's hard to chew.

Combined with the bit of fat on the lamb's surface, it's both fragrant and has a good bite.

Using lamb tenderloin, on the other hand, would be a mistake.

Because tenderloin is too soft, it lacks texture. When eaten with scallions, it can give the impression of eating a mouthful of scallions without any meat.

The piece of leg meat on the table now has a bit of suet but isn't overly fatty; it's the ideal choice for making Scallion Explosion Lamb.

One look and you can tell Young Friend Lin is an expert. In that case, I won't say any more. I'll just wait to taste it.

Lin Xu had a sip of tea, took a short break, and then continued recording.

To prevent the audience from realizing it was all filmed on the same day, Zeng Xiaoqi even changed her outfit. She wore black wide-legged pants paired with high heels, making her look half a head taller than Shen Baobao.

Her top, a flowing bean-green shirt, not only perfectly showcased Zeng Xiaoqi's excellent figure but also created a lovely color contrast with the Scallion Explosion Lamb dish.

"Is this outfit okay, Boss Lin?"

"Yes, very beautiful!"

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After reattaching his microphone, the recording of the show began.

"As a Northern drifter, I've found that Yanjing folks really love mutton. Whether it's mutton hotpot, lamb spine, mutton soup, or grilled mutton, these dishes are all extremely popular in Beijing. Among the stir-fried dishes, there's one that makes many Beijing residents crave it if they go three days without eating it. That dish is... Scallion Explosion Lamb!"

The camera shifted with Zeng Xiaoqi's movement to the stove, where Lin Xu's figure appeared again.

"Today we're fortunate to have Boss Lin here to teach everyone how to cook this dish. Hello, Boss Lin."

"Hello, Sister Xiaoqi."

The process for the three dishes was almost the same; Lin Xu knew it by heart. After the opening, he began to introduce the ingredients.

"The ingredients and seasonings for Scallion Explosion Lamb are very simple, mainly consisting of leg of lamb, Shandong Green Onions, ginger, garlic, fragrant vinegar, Soy Sauce, salt, and Sesame Oil."

After the introduction, Zeng Xiaoqi asked, "Why do you emphasize Shandong Green Onions, Boss Lin? Are you from Shandong?"

"I'm not from Shandong, nor am I a son-in-law of anyone from there," Lin Xu replied. "The reason I emphasize Shandong Green Onions is that these onions are sweeter and better enhance the umami flavor when added to dishes."

Geng Lishan nodded slightly, fully agreeing with this statement.

Shandong Green Onions are an indispensable ingredient in Scallion Explosion Lamb. Not just for this dish, but also for Beijing Sauce Meat Strips, Roast Duck, and other dishes requiring scallion strips—all must be made with Shandong Green Onions, using only the white part. These green onions are sweet, fresh, and free of tough strings or residue. They can neutralize the saltiness of the sauce while also adding a crisp, fresh flavor to the dish.

After Lin Xu finished his introduction, he began to demonstrate his knife skills. He picked up the lamb but didn't cut it into slices immediately. Instead, he followed the muscle grain to remove the tough membrane.

"When preparing lamb, the membrane must be completely removed," he explained as he worked. "Otherwise, the dish will be tough to chew and hard on your teeth."

After removing the membrane from the lean meat, he turned the meat over and gently stripped a thin layer of membrane from the fatty part. This layer is known as the lamb's "cloud skin"; if not removed, the cooked lamb will be unpleasantly chewy.

Once all the membranes were gone, he sliced the leg of lamb along the grain into strips about six centimeters long. Then, cutting against the grain, he sliced these strips into thin pieces.

As the cameraman moved in for a close-up, Zeng Xiaoqi also leaned closer to watch. If this is simple, I'll try making it myself back at my rented apartment, she thought.

At that moment, Lin Xu said, "The meat slices don't need to be too thin; about 1.5 millimeters is best. This thickness allows them to cook quickly while retaining some chewiness."

Upon hearing that the meat slices didn't need to be too thin, Zeng Xiaoqi was delighted. Haha, that perfectly suits my knife skills!

But when she heard "1.5 millimeters," a series of question marks popped into her head. 1.5 millimeters isn't considered thin? Boss Lin, do you have some kind of misunderstanding about the word 'thin'?

Recalling her own knife skills, which produced Potato Strips thicker than KFC fries, the beautiful Miss Zeng wisely decided to give up on the idea.

Forget it, forget it,

she thought. There's no need to risk chopping off my hand for a single dish. If I want Scallion Explosion Lamb in the future, I'll just have to thicken my skin and go freeload a meal from Boss Lin.

Once the lamb was cut, it was placed on a plate and set aside. Next, Lin Xu began to slice the green onions.

"Only the white part of the green onion is used," he explained. "When cutting, make small roll-cuts so the onion pieces can separate easily. They'll cook through quickly in the hot wok."

Roll-cutting is typically used for round ingredients. The term "roll-cut" doesn't mean the knife itself is rolling; rather, the food rolls under the knife. With each cut, the ingredient is rotated slightly. This method produces pieces that are more evenly cut and cook faster, and they also have a larger surface area to better absorb sauce. When cutting round ingredients this way, one should cut along the central axis, known in professional terms as the "axial line." If the knife blade extends beyond the ingredient's axial line when cutting, the pieces will be larger; this is called a "large roll-cut." If the blade does not extend beyond the axial line, it's a "small roll-cut."

After cutting the green onions, Lin Xu gently rubbed them on the cutting board with his hands, allowing the layers to separate. He then scooped them into a large bowl.

With the lamb and green onions prepped, Lin Xu also minced some ginger and garlic.

"You'll want to prepare extra minced garlic," he advised, "because for this dish, garlic needs to be added to the wok in three separate additions during cooking."

"Three times?" Zeng Xiaoqi asked. "Why is that, Boss Lin?"

"It's to remove the gamey taste and smell of the lamb," Lin Xu replied. "Garlic has a strong effect in neutralizing those, so it's best to use it when cooking lamb."

Zhen Wensheng turned to Geng Lishan and inquired, "Mr. Lishan, Chef Lin isn't mistaken, is he?"

"No, he's not," Geng Lishan confirmed. "Not only should garlic be added three times, but vinegar should also be added twice during the cooking. This is all to eliminate the gamey flavor."

Geng Lishan found himself increasingly impressed with Lin Xu. Young people who understand these traditional cooking methods are becoming truly rare, he thought. Take this dish, for example. If you were to ask any young chef from a typical restaurant to make it, they'd undoubtedly toss in a mishmash of ingredients like oyster sauce, Cooking Wine, and various peppers. But in reality, you shouldn't add Cooking Wine or other strong spices to Scallion Explosion Lamb. This dish is all about savoring the natural aroma and flavor of the lamb itself. Once Cooking Wine and spices are introduced, the lamb's distinct taste gets completely overpowered, ruining the entire dish.

Once all the preparations were complete, Lin Xu placed a wok on the stove and began the cooking process. He first heated the wok thoroughly, then added a large spoonful of cold oil and cranked the heat to maximum.

While waiting for the oil to heat up, he turned to the camera and said, "Home stoves typically have less powerful flames. So, when making this dish, I recommend cooking no more than half a pound of meat at a time. This allows for a quick stir-fry, ensuring the meat cooks rapidly without releasing too much moisture. Otherwise, if the water from the meat simmers out, it will significantly detract from the dish's presentation."

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This remark made Zeng Xiaoqi's desire to retreat ring even louder in her heart.

Before starting, she specifically asked if this dish was difficult to make.

Lin Xu said it wasn't difficult.

With such high requirements and it's still not difficult?

Indeed, a chef's words are not to be trusted!

After heating the oil, Lin Xu put the minced ginger and one-third of the minced garlic into the pot to fry until fragrant. Then, he poured the sliced meat into the pot and immediately used a spoon to scatter it, allowing the meat to change color quickly to lock in the juices. Once all the meat slices were scattered, he scooped up a small amount of fragrant vinegar and poured it down the side of the pot. The evaporation of vinegar could carry away the meat's odors, achieving the effect of removing the raw and gamey smells.

As Lin Xu was stir-frying, he didn't forget to remind, "You must pour the vinegar from the edge of the pot so it can evaporate cleanly at once. If you pour it directly into the pot, you'll end up with sour lamb."

After pouring the vinegar, he then added a bit of soybean soy sauce. This not only added a touch of color to the dish but also enhanced the savory fragrance. Finally, a small spoonful of salt was added to give the meat a base flavor.

By this point, most of the seasoning was already in.

Lin Xu held the pan with one hand while quickly stirring with a spoon in the other. The purpose of this technique was twofold: first, to spread the seasoning quickly, and second, to speed up the evaporation of water in the pan, preventing the meat slices from releasing liquid.

Once all the meat slices had changed color, he added the remaining minced garlic and poured the chopped white part of the green onions into the pot, continuing to stir-fry.

The aroma of garlic wafted first from the pot, followed by the fragrance of the onions.

After stir-frying for seven or eight seconds, once the onion slices were evenly distributed, he poured a bit more fragrant vinegar down the side of the pot. This step was to eliminate any remaining odors and to give the lamb a light, tangy fragrance that made it more appetizing and complemented rice.

After adding the vinegar, he stir-fried again until the vinegar in the pot had evaporated. Then, for the last time, he added minced garlic, followed by a slight stir before pouring some Sesame Oil down the side of the pot.

Scallion Explosion Lamb is a dish from the Shandong cuisine, which is particularly known for using Sesame Oil in almost every dish to enhance its aroma and flavor.

After adding the Sesame Oil, he mixed it a couple of times, turned off the heat, and served the dish.

Plated, the meat slices glistened, emitting a rich onion fragrance. A bit of juice had seeped out onto the bottom of the plate, precisely matching the dish's characteristic of "oily gloss and juicy sauce."

"Wow, it smells so good."

Lin Xu placed the frying pan and spoon back on the stove and told Zeng Xiaoqi, "Have a taste, Xiaoqi, and see how it is."

Zeng Xiaoqi did not immediately reach for her chopsticks. Instead, she carried her bowl to the side, opened the rice cooker, and served herself some freshly steamed rice. "Just smelling it earlier almost made me cry with craving. Now that I'm going to taste it, I have to pair it with rice, or I'd waste such a perfect dish."

She picked up some of the juicy meat with her chopsticks from the bottom of the dish, stirred it with the rice in her bowl, and then took a bite. The moment she ate it, the expression on the host's face turned to one of amazement. "My goodness, this dish is so delicious, isn't it?"

The lamb was incredibly tender, fragrant, and chewy in the mouth, with a hint of appetizing sweet and sour taste. The green onions inside were soft yet crunchy, fresh, and sweet without any stringiness, forming a perfect combination with the lamb.

Zeng Xiaoqi felt that her list of divine dishes suitable for pairing with rice needed to make room for another entry—this Scallion Explosion Lamb definitely deserved a spot.

The flavor and texture warranted at least three bowls of rice as a starting point. Who would have thought that chunks of lamb and a green onion cooked together could taste so good? And the use of seasonings was amazingly simple: besides salt and soybean soy sauce, there was just a little bit of fragrant vinegar for cooking. It was almost unbelievable.

"Delicious, delicious, so tasty!"

After the filming ended, the crew members voluntarily started serving themselves rice. Following Zeng Xiaoqi's example, they grabbed a portion of Scallion Explosion Lamb, mixed it with their rice, and ate with relish.

Geng Lishan, observing everyone's enjoyment, said with a smile, "Lin Xu's cooking skills are truly admirable. I'll shamelessly take a bite as well."

He took a slice of lamb and chewed it slowly, then slapped his thigh. "Delicious, incredibly tasty! Lin Xu, I've realized you didn't put your all into the competition last time; you held back, didn't you?"

Thinking about how he had pondered for several nights to plan the competition, only to find out it didn't push Lin Xu to his full potential, was quite a blow to his pride. However, this also indirectly showed just how immense Lin Xu's cooking talent was. A true favorite of the gods, spoon-fed by fate itself!

It was already past five in the afternoon, and the day's filming had officially ended. While everyone gathered around the tasting table to sample the dishes, Lin Xu quietly left the set with Geng Lishan. The studio staff would have a quick meal before diving into the hectic editing process. The edited footage then needed review by the station's leaders, and with time being tight, Lin Xu and Geng Lishan didn't linger.

After driving Geng Lishan to his doorstep, Lin Xu declined the calligrapher's invitation and headed to West Fourth Ring to have dinner with Shen Baobao and his in-laws.

Geng Lishan, hands clasped behind his back, walked into his home to find that his granddaughter Lele had returned from school and was now fiddling with a brand-new laptop. "Didn't your dad say he would only buy you a computer once you got into university?"

"This isn't from my dad; it's a gift from Lin Xu."

Lin Xu?

Upon hearing this, Geng Lishan furrowed his brow. "Girl, why are you accepting things from others for no reason? How is your grandfather supposed to face him now?"