

## Culinary 531

Chapter 531: Fish Intestine Omelette! Son-in-law Is Skilled at Cooking Fish? Then Have a Full Fish Feast!

"Dad, please drink a little less. We still have plenty of dishes to go with drinks tonight."

Seeing that his father-in-law was about to use Wuliangye to "disinfect" the grilled fish, Lin Xu quickly stopped him.

This was no joke. Considering how much they had already drunk—first in the private room with Grandpa and Geng Lishan, and then more just now—Lin Xu estimated that both his father-in-law and his own father must have consumed over 400 grams of alcohol today.

If they continued drinking, he reckoned it wouldn't be long before a trip to the emergency room was necessary.

Shen Guofu picked up a fish, tore it open from the middle with his hands, handed half to Lin Hongqi, took a bite from the other half, and immediately gave his son-in-law a thumbs up.

"Wow, these fish bones are incredibly crispy, and the flavor is fantastic! Lin Xu, pack some of these up for me later. I always crave something to munch on after my evening exercises, and this grilled fish would be perfect, wouldn't it?"

If you eat this grilled fish, then the exercise would basically be for nothing.

Although crucian carp itself is low in calories, this grilled fish was prepared with both sugar and Honey. Plus, it was smoked with sugarcane bagasse right before serving. Its caloric content is much higher than plain crucian carp.

The most critical part is that once you start eating these small grilled crucian carp, it's nearly impossible to stop at just three or five.

After downing three or five of these little fish, a beer to wash them down would feel inevitable.

One thing leads to another, and wouldn't that just lead to gaining more weight instead of losing it?

Lin Hongqi also hadn't expected the small fish to be grilled so perfectly. It exuded a delightful fragrance, with an enticing caramelized aroma mixed in.

Upon tasting, the crispy skin was subtly sweet.

The Fish meat inside, slightly dried from the grilling, was wonderfully chewy and robust.

His relative was right; this fish was indeed great with drinks.

"Tonight, I'm making Stewed Fish Entrails, spicy Fish Scales, fish head stewed with tofu, and salt-and-pepper fish bones. We'll have plenty of dishes to go with drinks, none inferior to this grilled fish."

Lin Xu was worried his father-in-law and father might drink another 100 grams if they got carried away.

He picked up a small bamboo basket, filled it more than halfway with the grilled fish that still radiated a rich, savory aroma, and casually handed it to Shen Guofu.

"Since it's so tasty, let everyone else try some too. It's a little firm right now because it's just been grilled, but the texture will be even better once it softens up a bit."

Hmm, he himself might not be able to stop the two drinkers.

But no matter. He could just let his mother-in-law and his own mother handle them.

Professional matters should be left to the professionals, after all.

Shen Guofu, holding half a fish in one hand and slowly chewing, carried the bamboo basket out of the kitchen with his other hand. He and Lin Hongqi went upstairs to share the delicacy with the family.

After they left, Lin Xu sat before the roasting oven and picked up one of the small grilled fish to try.

Mmm, these dried fish are indeed excellent. Their rich aroma and robust texture really do make you crave a drink. No wonder Dad and Father-in-law wanted to have another couple of liang after tasting them.

Just then, Dai Jianli, with his cheeks flushed from drinking, walked in.

"Brother Lin, your grilled fish... Whoa, is this an upgrade?"

He had originally intended to ask for some of the dried fish from lunch to have as a snack with drinks tonight. But upon seeing the spatchcocked crucian carp Lin Xu had just grilled, he immediately changed his mind.

These little fish looked far more tempting than those fish fillets. To have them with a couple of liang in the evening...

The ever-jovial Dai Jianli immediately said, "Could I have some of these dried fish? I'll trade you the recipe for my dry dipping sauce. I won't take them for free."

The recipe for a dry dipping sauce?

Lin Xu's curiosity was immediately piqued.

He wasn't particularly interested in other things, but Lin Ji's Food was indeed lacking a signature Soul Dipping Sauce. If he could master Dai Jianli's recipe for dry dipping sauce, he could standardize the dipping sauces for dry dishes in his restaurant, and even the dipping sauce for the whole roasted lamb could be further upgraded.

Currently, the restaurant used a dipping sauce that came with the Superior-level whole roasted lamb Technique.

If he could switch to Dai Jianli's Perfect Level dipping sauce, the flavor would undoubtedly reach new heights.

Lin Xu smiled and said, "Then I'll eagerly await Chef Dai's guidance."

Dai Jianli waved his hand. "Guidance is too strong a word. Let's just call it a mutual exchange. However, I can't make the dry dipping sauce right now. Wait a few days, and when we make it at Building 18, I'll let you know."

Although this dry dipping sauce seemed simple, preparing it was a major undertaking for Dai Jianli each time.

The back kitchen at Lin Ji's Food didn't have all the necessary ingredients or the specialized cookware. So, it would be better to invite Lin Xu over when he made it next time, allowing him to observe the entire process.

Lin Xu hadn't realized making a dry dipping sauce was so complicated.

However, the opportunity to observe the entire process was excellent, so he agreed without hesitation.

"Chef Dai, how many pounds of dried fish do you need? I'll get someone to buy more crucian carp and grill some more for you right now."

If it were anything else, maybe not, but grilling crucian carp was a breeze.

This stuff was cheap to make, and it used the residual heat in the roasting oven, so a large batch could be grilled at once. That's why Lin Xu had offered dozens of pounds.

For a Perfect Level Cooking Technique, even a thousand pounds of dried fish would be a worthwhile exchange, let alone a few dozen.

Hearing this, Dai Jianli laughed. "No wonder you were drinking cup after cup during the toasts today, Brother Lin! Turns out you're a straightforward fellow, just like me. I'll just take a bit in a takeaway container. I'm usually too lazy to make these myself, but with your skill, I'm getting quite a craving."

As he spoke, he picked up a piece of the golden, crispy grilled Fish and tasted it. He immediately changed his mind.

"Actually, pack two boxes for me. This seasoning makes it taste much better than the previous ones."

Lin Xu was speechless.

The previous batch was for the cat, so I didn't season it. And you all devoured it like a pack of bandits, nearly leaving Dundun hungry!

He arranged the remaining crucian carp, which weren't fully grilled yet, on the grilling rack and placed them back into the duck roasting oven to continue cooking.

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After finishing up, Lin Xu packed the fish slices that Dai Jianli requested, and also included a box of Fish Jerky, delighting this "honest man" who exclaimed he'd have to treat Lin Xu to a feast of river fish.

Next, Lin Xu continued to grill fish and make Fish Jerky.

After seeing off his relatives and friends, Shen Guofu sat in the business van driven by Zou Cheng, heading home with Lin Hongqi and Tan Yajun to play billiards. Han Shuzhen also took Chen Meijuan for a high-end SPA experience in Beijing.

The celebration was over, and everyone went back to their usual business.

But online was a different story.

Under the topic of Lin Ji's Food, the netizens who attended the celebration began to make their move.

Big Pighead on Willow Branches: [Picture][Picture][Picture][Picture] The roasted suckling pig I had today at Lin Ji, dipped in white sugar, was simply the best!

The Naughty Thoughts of a Kitten: [Picture] Actually, pairing it with Caviar is also very tasty, thanks to Mr. Lin's hospitality.

200 Pounds of Cuteness: [Picture][Picture] I liked Mr. Lin's Sweet and Sour Pork even more, tastier than what I have at home.

Girl, You Dropped Your Boyfriend: [Picture][Picture] I'd like to nominate Mr. Lin's White Jade Lotus Root Strips for praise; getting to eat this dish really made the trip worthwhile.

Sorry, I'm a Cop: [Picture][Picture][Picture] Doesn't Lin Ji's roasted whole lamb deserve a name? It's so delicious, it still leaves me craving more.

Spring Breeze Cannot Blow You: You \*\*\*\*\*, if you're gonna chat, can you please stop posting pictures? What good does making me drool do for you?

...

In the evening, Lin Xu began preparing dinner.

After preparing several refreshing dishes, Lin Xu brought over the fish intestines that were removed while making Fish Jerky.

The innards had already had the gallbladders removed by the kitchen helpers, and the fish intestines were cleaned inside out. Now they were ready to be cooked.

He had originally planned to make Stewed Fish Entrails.

But as he took them out of the bowl and onto the cutting board, he realized he had slightly too much. If he just made Stewed Fish Entrails, it might go to waste if it wasn't all eaten.

He thought for a moment, then picked out a set of fish intestines from the mix and a few chunks of fish fat resembling tofu, preparing to make a pan-fried fish intestines and Egg dish to try.

He got this inspiration from the Silverfish and Egg dish.

Fish intestines are tender and smooth, so frying them with eggs should yield an unexpectedly good effect.

As for the fish fat, it was meant to enhance the flavor of the pan-fried fish intestines and eggs, making the dish even more delectable.

To prevent any mistakes while cooking, he specifically asked Zhu Yong, "What's the process for making pan-fried fish intestines and eggs?"

This was a delicacy Zhu Yong had known how to make since he was young. He replied without turning his head, "Fry the fish intestines first to get rid of any peculiar smell and fishiness, then either mix the intestines into the beaten eggs or pour the eggs directly into the pan, as long as you can form a pancake. There's nothing specific beyond that."

Hmph, just as he had speculated.

Silverfish are soft and tender and can be directly mixed with the eggs.

However, fish intestines have a stronger smell, so frying them briefly is effective in removing the smell and also results in a better texture that's more fragrant and smooth.

Once he confirmed the method, he cracked seven or eight eggs and added some scallions and salt into the egg mixture for seasoning.

Dishes like this pan-fried egg don't require much effort in seasoning. A simple addition of salt is sufficient.

As for the fish intestines, he'd sprinkle some pepper powder while frying them to get rid of the fishiness. That would be enough.

After everything was prepared, Lin Xu set up the wok and began cooking.

He didn't add any oil to the wok but poured the diced fish fat into it. Soon after heating, smoke started to rise from the wok.

At first, it was steam accompanied by a fishy smell. In a short while, the steam disappeared, and the bottom of the wok was lined with bubbling fat as the fish oil started to render.

When the fat chunks shrank, Lin Xu poured the sectioned fish intestines into the wok, frying them with the rendered fish oil.

Using fish oil to fry the intestines maximizes the umami flavor and also improves their texture.

Soon after hitting the wok, the intestines began to shrink and morph, turning from soft, noodle-like shapes into a more structured and distinctive form.

Lin Xu pinched some pepper powder and sprinkled it into the wok, using the spatula to spread the intestines and fat chunks flat. Once flattened, he poured half of the egg mixture from the bowl into it.

The egg mixture couldn't be poured in all at once, or else the appearance of the pan-fried egg wouldn't be appealing.

After the egg mixture was in the wok, he didn't stir immediately, allowing it to envelop the intestines and begin to set. Once the egg mixture had mostly solidified, he flipped the forming pancake and spread it out again.

Then he poured the remaining egg mixture into the wok.

This way, the partially cooked egg combined with the fresh egg mixture to form a slightly thick, round pancake. It not only looked appealing but also allowed the pancake to absorb as much of the fish oil as possible, giving it a richer texture.

And the fish intestines wrapped in the egg wouldn't overcook. Instead, they became even more tender because of the egg's insulation.

Once this new layer of egg mixture had set, Lin Xu shook the wok to loosen the pancake, then skillfully flipped it over with his spatula to continue frying the other side.

He also pressed down on the surface of the pancake with the spatula to force out any uncooked egg mixture and extra fat, preventing a greasy taste.

After both sides were fried well, Lin Xu carried the wok over to the plate.

Tilting the wok and gently shaking it, he allowed the pancake to slide smoothly onto the plate.

After finishing the omelet, he added cooking oil to the wok and poured in the Grass Carp bones—marinated with Scallion and Ginger, Cooking Wine, and other seasonings—for low-temperature immersion frying. This method involves frying in oil heated to less than half its usual frying temperature. This allows the heat of the oil to penetrate deep into the fish bones while keeping the flesh attached to them tender and juicy.

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To make Salt and Pepper Fish Bones delicious, the fish bones must be deep-fried for an extended period, making them crispy and flavorful.

However, there wasn't enough time today. Lin Xu was content with just frying the small fish bones until crispy. As for the main bones from a Grass Carp weighing over ten pounds, they were too hard. Frying them until completely crispy was too difficult; if there had been more time, slowly baking them until crisp would have been more realistic.

As the deep-frying continued, the oil temperature in the wok gradually rose.

When the oil reached a high temperature, Lin Xu removed the fish bones. After letting the oil temperature rise again, he returned the bones to the wok for a second frying.

This step was to render out excess fat and further crisp the fish meat clinging to the bones.

A few seconds later, he scooped them out with a large colander, sprinkled salt and pepper over them, and tossed them in the colander to ensure an even coating before plating.

After finishing all the dishes, Lin Xu removed his apron and headed upstairs to eat.

As soon as he entered the private room, Shen Baobao said,

"That fish intestines omelette was super tasty; can we have it again tomorrow?"

There was nothing wrong with that. Fish offal wasn't expensive, and if they wanted it, the seafood stall owner could deliver a bagful every day.

After sitting down, Lin Xu picked up a piece of the fish intestines omelette and tasted it. The texture was indeed excellent; the fish oil was savory and smooth, not greasy like pork lard, and it paired perfectly with the eggs.

Inside, the fish intestines were soft, fragrant, and pleasantly chewy—very delicious.

This tastes really good. Tomorrow, I'll have Little Che ask the seafood stall owner for more so the staff can also try this delicacy.

While he ate the omelette, Shen Guofu and Lin Hongqi started drinking again.

However, having drunk too much Liquor at noon, the two opted for beer tonight. They ate the crispy fried Salt and Pepper Fish Bones and reminisced about the tough times when starting their business.

In the middle of the conversation, Shen Guofu suddenly said,

"Since Old Brother Lin and his wife are both in Beijing, I'd like to host a family banquet tomorrow. Lin Xu, will you have time?"

Lin Xu replied,

"I have to be at the TV station for recording nearly the entire day tomorrow, so I can't make it back for lunch. If it's a dinner gathering, that works. I'll try to finish recording and get back as early as possible."

Since it's a family banquet, I should definitely lend a hand.

After all, I'm part of the Shen Family now too.

Shen Guofu said,

"It's in the evening. Tomorrow noon everyone might be busy with something, but everyone can come in the evening, have a couple of drinks and chat."

Seeing that no one objected, Old Shen continued,

"I see Lin Xu has been enthusiastic about fish these days; let's simply have a fish feast tomorrow. I'll be in charge of buying the fish, Lin Xu will cook, and everyone else will taste."

A full fish feast?

Chen Yan, who was engrossed in her fish intestines omelette, looked up with a sparkle in her eyes.

She was supposed to go to her grandmother's house tomorrow at noon to make aspic and steamed eggs, and she hadn't wanted to rush back and forth. But upon hearing about a full fish feast, Chen Yan instantly felt, How could I possibly miss out on something like this?

She even began to fantasize about whether they would eat Grouper, salmon, or perhaps tuna.

With Uncle in charge of buying, the fish would definitely be something special.

Hearing his father-in-law planning something big, Lin Xu said,

"I will try to be done before four in the afternoon tomorrow. When I finish, I'll head straight to the villa to start preparing, aiming not to delay everyone's dinner."

「Sunday morning.」

The TV station's travel channel, which was supposed to be off, had all hands on deck.

After waiting for so long, Lin Xu had finally freed up nearly a whole day for filming. This made everyone thrilled and filled with anticipation about the dishes he was going to prepare today.

Lin Xu drove his BMW X5 to the TV station and casually handed Zeng Xiaoqi a food bag.

Curious, Zeng Xiaoqi asked,

"What is this?"

"Yesterday I made some dried fish and Fish Jerky. Try them. If you like them, I'll let you know next time I make some so you can try them fresh."

"I knew there was something up when the boss's wife and Lele were whispering and making faces at each other after dinner yesterday! Turns out there was a surprise, and it's really not fair not to let me know..."

Zeng Xiaoqi muttered, but that didn't stop her from immediately taking the bag. She quickly looked around to make sure no colleagues were nearby before she relaxed.

Yes, these delicacies are best enjoyed alone at home, not shared in the office.

After all, this is a delicacy that money can't necessarily buy.

After handing the snacks to Zeng Xiaoqi, Lin Xu opened the trunk and took out two foam boxes.

These contained the ingredients for today's recording, all kept fresh with ice blocks in the boxes to maximize their freshness.

Once in the office, Geng Lishan was already waiting.

After a short preparation, they began filming.

Meanwhile, Shen Guofu, still thinking about the full fish feast, drove to a suburban seafood market in Beijing with Han Shuzhen to look for ingredients for the evening.

He had initially wanted to buy a Giant Grouper.

But after inquiring, he learned that it needed to be pre-ordered; it wasn't easy to buy on the spot since it had to be shipped from Hainan to Beijing, which took time.

Of course, if he was willing to pay extra, he could still get one.

However, Shen Guofu hadn't made up his mind and decided to look around some more.

If no other suitable ingredients turned up, he would opt for the Giant Grouper.

A capitalist's money didn't grow on trees. The motto was to save whenever possible. Besides, they had eaten Dragon meat not long ago, so there wasn't much enthusiasm for having it again so soon. It's better to see if there are other ingredients available first, he thought.

While they were strolling around, the couple came upon the fierce seafood section.

This area contained large fish, like cultivated sturgeon weighing several dozen pounds and massive huso fish.

While looking, Shen Guofu was suddenly attracted to a pool in the corner.

It actually contained Crocodiles!

They were also farmed, but quite large, and looked fierce and aggressive.

Seeing the Crocodiles, Old Shen's adventurous and novelty-seeking heart immediately stirred.

"Shuzhen," he said to his wife, "since our son-in-law is so good at cooking fish, why don't we buy a Crocodile? They're practically fish, right? It shouldn't be too difficult for him, should it?"

Chapter 534: Low EQ: Nearly Backstabbed by Father-in-Law; High EQ: Father-in-Law Helps Me Show Off!

"Wow, this Stuffed Winter Melon with meat is really delicious!"

In the TV studio, Zeng Xiaoqi, eating the Stuffed Winter Melon with meat prepared by Lin Xu, once again forgot her lines.

Not far away, Zhen Wensheng gave a wry smile. Indeed, food programs aren't suitable for foodies to host. If she didn't fix this habit of constantly forgetting her lines, the scriptwriter-director would

definitely have an issue. Someone stays up half the night writing those lines, and she forgets them completely after just two bites of delicious food! Is that fair to the scriptwriter who's practically tearing their hair out over it?

Zeng Xiaoqi had eaten Stuffed Winter Melon with meat made by Lin Xu before. However, last time it was made with low-fat Chicken Breast for its slimming effects, while this time it was replaced with tastier and more flavorful pork belly. The freshness of the Winter Melon and the rich aroma of the pork belly formed a striking contrast. Combined with the intensely savory and spicy sauce, the taste was truly unforgettable.

"It's so delicious! I suggest our viewers try it at home too. It's simple to make, tastes great, doesn't take much time at all—faster than ordering takeout..."

After the recording, Zeng Xiaoqi picked up a whole piece of Stuffed Winter Melon with her chopsticks and quickly approached the young scriptwriter-director, Xiaowei, speaking in an ingratiating tone, "Sorry, Xiaowei, I forgot my lines again. Ultimately, it's because Boss Lin's food is too delicious; my brain just crashed. If you're going to blame someone, blame Boss Lin."

Lin Xu: "..."

With this talent for buck-passing, if she were in Japan, she'd at least be hailed as a Buck-Passing Immortal, right?

Xiaowei, the scriptwriter-director, had initially been quite dissatisfied with Zeng Xiaoqi forgetting her lines. But after tasting the Stuffed Winter Melon made by Lin Xu, she immediately felt she really couldn't blame Senior Xiaoqi. The flavor was just that good. The Winter Melon was tender, infused with the rich aroma of pork. No wonder Boss Lin had repeatedly emphasized buying white-skinned Winter Melon while shopping; it truly had a much better texture than the green-skinned variety. So what if she forgot? As long as the program's quality was good, the lines weren't that important. Besides, the beautiful Ms. Zeng was her senior from the Communication University and also the person in charge of this program, managing bonuses and many other things. In such a situation, of course, she would choose to forgive her!

"Alright, Senior Zeng, what's the next dish?" Xiaowei waved her hand generously, no longer minding Zeng Xiaoqi's forgotten lines.

Zeng Xiaoqi gently pinched Xiaowei's chubby cheeks, "That's my good junior. Wait for me after work; I'll share some limited-edition snacks with you."

At the words "limited-edition," Xiaowei's eyes immediately lit up. The last time she had limited-edition snacks, it was the Shakima and Horse Hoof Cake personally made by Boss Lin. So, this time, it would also be something Boss Lin made himself, right? Jackpot!

Zeng Xiaoqi, in a delighted mood, went to the next room to change her outfit. Indeed, to prevent the audience from realizing everything was filmed on the same day, she had prepared at least six outfits for today, all to enhance the program's visual appeal.

"How does this outfit look?" Approaching Lin Xu, Zeng Xiaoqi deliberately did a twirl. She was wearing a dark green dress with a white shirt-style collar, adorned with a collegiate-style bow, making her look both youthful and fashionable.

Lin Xu pointed to the chive scapes he had just taken out of the foam box and said, "It matches well with the color of the chive scapes."

Chive scapes? Zeng Xiaoqi thought it was another dish she had tried, but the sight of the chive scapes made them seem unfamiliar. It seems Boss Lin also creates new dishes when I'm not over at Lin Ji scrounging for meals.

"This is a dish my senior apprentice taught me," Lin Xu explained. "I managed to free up the entire day to record the show. The plan is to film as many quick, simple, and fast dishes as possible to build up a backlog of several episodes. That way, I'll have more breathing room when we tackle more complex dishes later."

The chive scapes were fresh, but the accompanying mussels were different from last time. This time, Lin Xu used frozen mussels bought from the market. This was because the program targeted the general public. It couldn't solely feature high-end ingredients; instead, the dishes had to be based on the everyday lives of ordinary people. That was the only way to get the audience interested in learning. If you made dishes with Fish Fin and sea cucumber every day, even if people learned how, how often would they actually have the chance to cook them?

Once everything was prepared, the recording began. After the opening remarks, Lin Xu introduced the ingredients required for Stir-fried Chive Scapes with Mussels, then took the frozen mussels, soaked them, and showed everyone how to prepare them. After these steps, he heated water in the pot to blanch the mussels. All frozen meat ingredients need to be blanched before cooking for safety reasons and also to remove any off-flavors from freezing.

After blanching, the mussels were scooped out and stir-fried quickly in lard. Then, the chive scapes were added and stir-fried together. Soon, the Stir-fried Chive Scapes with Mussels was ready.

After that, they continued cooking and recording.

By 3:30 in the afternoon, ten dishes had been completed.

Lin Xu, looking at Zeng Xiaoqi who was now dressed in white wide-leg pants and a black high-necked T-shirt, said, "Let's wrap it up for today. I need to go to my father-in-law's place to cook. I'm planning a full fish feast, so I have to see what kind of fish he's bought."

"A full fish feast?" Zeng Xiaoqi swallowed subconsciously. It should be delicious, right? She vividly remembered the magnificent spread of dishes made from Giant Grouper served at his engagement party. The taste and texture had been so incredible, it made her feel like giving another congratulatory gift. If he was preparing a full fish feast today, it must taste even better, right? She really wanted to join in on the fun.

"Last time, for your engagement, you served Giant Grouper. What kind of fish are you planning for this feast?"

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"I'm not sure. My father-in-law was the one preparing it. It's probably a big carp or something similar that weighs a few dozen pounds."

Lin Xu didn't bother changing his clothes either. He simply took off his apron, gathered his personal items, said goodbye to everyone, and left the TV station.

He sped all the way to West Fourth Ring Road.

When he parked his car in front of the villa, he noticed his father-in-law's Bentley, his sister-in-law's Porsche 911, and Shen Baobao's BMW X1 were all in the parking spots by the entrance.

Along the roadside, other vehicles like Range Rovers, BMW 7 Series, and Maybachs were also parked.

Did the relatives come this early?

Lin Xu locked his car and walked into the villa.

As soon as he walked through the courtyard gate, Shen Baobao approached him, an exasperated look on her face. "Xu Bao," she said, "we might not be able to have the All Fish Banquet today."

"Why?"

"Because my dad bought a crocodile... He even swore to me and Chen Yan that anything with the word 'fish' in its name is a fish, and that it would still count as an All Fish Banquet."

Lin Xu: "..."

We agreed on an All Fish Banquet, and you bring back a crocodile? Are you planning to backstab me, dear Father-in-law? Good thing I've mastered the recipes for an All Crocodile Banquet; otherwise, today would have been a huge embarrassment.

He smiled at Shen Baobao and said, "Dad is right. Crocodiles are fish too, and if it's a fish, it can be cooked. Have you forgotten when I took you to Building Eighteen to freeload a meal? We ate a lot of dishes made with crocodile that day, didn't we?"

Shen Jiayue: "!!!!!!"

My Xu Bao really is the best!

In her excitement, she couldn't help but ask, "But that day, you just kept me company eating out front. You didn't even go into the kitchen to learn. Can you really make it?"

"Of course. Cooking crocodile isn't that difficult. Come on, take me to see the ingredients Dad prepared."

The two walked into the kitchen through the side door.

As soon as they entered, they saw a nearly two-meter-long crocodile laid out on the workbench.

The crocodile had already been butchered. Next to it, a large stainless steel basin held its innards.

From another part of the kitchen, they could still hear Chen Yan and her father, Chen Yuejin, trying to convince Shen Guofu that a crocodile isn't a fish.

"Aunt Liu got a fright when they first brought it in," Shen Baobao said. "It's such a huge crocodile, Xu Bao, can you really cook it?"

"I can, but I'll need your help."

Hearing she could participate in preparing the crocodile, Shen Baobao immediately wanted to go upstairs and change into her chef's uniform.

Indeed, ever since she and Chen Yan had learned to make aspic, the girl had come to see herself as a true chef. She didn't just have chef's uniforms at their shop; she kept them at both her family's home and Lin Xu's, complete with chef's hats, always looking ready to dash into the kitchen and save the day.

"Just tell me, Xu Bao, what do you need me to do?"

"Boil some water. We need to scald the crocodile's outer Scale Armor with boiling water to clean it off before we can butcher it... What about the crocodile blood? That's precious stuff! Dad didn't throw it away, did he?"

Every part of a crocodile is a treasure. Although the outermost Scale Armor can't be eaten, it can be used in medicine.

Other parts, like the crocodile head, crocodile claw, crocodile steak, Crocodile Belly, crocodile skin, crocodile tail, crocodile liver, and crocodile intestine, can all be used in cooking. Even the crocodile bones are excellent for making soup.

The crocodile blood can also be used to make steamed blood rice, which invigorates \*qi\* and replenishes blood.

"I don't know. I'll go ask Dad and change my clothes while I'm at it."

Without my chef's uniform, I feel like a Saint facing an enemy without their Holy Clothes—a bit short on confidence.

As Shen Baobao skipped happily through the living room to change into her "Bronze Holy Armor," she couldn't resist showing off a bit. "Xu Bao's here!" she announced. "He's going to make us an All Crocodile Banquet! Oh, Dad, Xu Bao wanted to ask, did you keep the crocodile blood when it was butchered?"

"Crocodile blood is edible?" Shen Guofu walked into the kitchen as he spoke, his eyes filled with the dismay of someone who'd missed out on a fortune. "I had no idea! The butchers asked if I wanted it, but I figured it wasn't good for anything, so I said no. Looks like I slipped up..."

I only asked for the innards and completely forgot about the crocodile blood...

"Xu, so the crocodile blood really is edible, then?"

"It is, but if you didn't get it, don't worry about it. This crocodile will be more than enough."

Lin Xu turned on the kitchen's large water boiler and also put a large pot of water on the stove to heat.

Blanching such a massive crocodile thoroughly wasn't going to be easy. Even though the villa's kitchen was large and spacious, processing a creature this size was still proving to be a bit of a tight squeeze.

"This was the largest farmed crocodile in the entire aquatic market, weighing 46.85 kilograms (just over 103 pounds)! It almost didn't fit in the Bentley's trunk..."

Tsk, tsk. When will Father-in-law ever get over this obsession with 'bigger is better'? Crocodiles aren't necessarily tastier the bigger they are. It's best to choose one weighing 20 to 30 kilograms (approximately 44 to 66 pounds). A crocodile that size is substantial yet still has tender meat; that's when they're at their most delicious. Any larger, and the meat starts to get tough, significantly affecting the texture and taste.

When the water boiled, Lin Xu found an enormous basin in the kitchen. He, his father-in-law Shen Guofu, and his uncle-in-law Chen Yuejin together lifted the crocodile into it.

Then, they unwrapped the tape from the crocodile's mouth and the wires binding its limbs.

These had been applied during slaughter to prevent accidents. But now, with the crocodile thoroughly dead and its innards removed, the bindings were no longer necessary.

Once the water was boiling, they poured it over the crocodile.

Soon, the tough Scale Armor began to loosen and fall away.

Lin Xu lifted the crocodile's tail out of the hot water, rested it on the edge of the basin, and began scrubbing off the Scale Armor with a steel brush. Shen Jiayue and Chen Yan, now changed into their chef's uniforms and hats, held the tail firmly to prevent it from slipping back into the basin.

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The scales shed piece by piece, revealing the white crocodile skin underneath.

Chen Yan curiously asked, "Brother-in-law, this part can be eaten now, right?"

"Yes, this crocodile skin is rich in collagen, with an even better texture than soft-shell turtle and Pork Skin. I'll make sure you two eat plenty once it's cooked."

This was precisely when he needed some help, so he might as well coax these two into doing more work.

As soon as they heard it was rich in collagen, the two pretty cooks immediately perked up.

While helping Lin Xu support the crocodile tail, they even took the initiative to scrape off the Scale Armor that was almost falling off from the hot water.

After cleaning the tail, Lin Xu also cleaned the Scale Armor on the upper half of the body.

Then, he lifted the Crocodile back onto the work table, belly up, using a steel brush to clean the Scale Armor on its belly as well.

Once everything was clean, he scalded it once more with hot water, trying to remove as much of the epidermal Scale Armor as possible. Soon, the Crocodile turned pure white.

It looked like a sculpture that hadn't been painted yet.

Lin Xu placed the cutting board under the Crocodile and started by chopping off the tail.

The crocodile tail was divided into two parts. The front, thicker half had substantial meat and, being tougher from regular activity, was suitable for braising.

The tail tip in the back half was full of gelatin, making it ideal for soup.

After removing the crocodile tail, the Crocodile's size was instantly halved.

Next, Lin Xu chopped off the crocodile head. The head didn't have much meat, and since crocodiles don't have tongues, he made sure to include as much neck meat as possible in the cut. It would later be steamed in the Chopped Pepper Fish Head style.

This kind of dish made from a crocodile head is generally for show; when served, they prop up the Crocodile's mouth and give it a formidable name like "King Crocodile Head" or something similar.

After dealing with the head and tail, he then chopped off the Crocodile's claws and removed its limbs.

The meat from the crocodile's limbs was not only thick but also rich in collagen. If cooked right, its texture could rival that of a bear paw.

With four sizable crocodile legs, Lin Xu planned to cook two and freeze two in the fridge for whenever he craved them later.

With its head, tail, and limbs removed, only the Crocodile's torso remained.

He then removed the Crocodile Belly, which had the tenderest meat, suitable for stir-frying, steaming, and even making sashimi.

However, since the family wasn't used to eating raw meat and Lin Xu didn't have a taste for it either, he decided to skip the sashimi, preferring his meat cooked.

After cutting off the belly meat, he removed the ribcage.

The Crocodile's ribs were tender and finely textured, well-suited for marinating and then deep-frying to make garlic crocodile steak or Peppered Crocodile Steak. They could also be marinated in black bean sauce and steamed to make black bean sauce crocodile steak.

"I just discovered that crocodile meat looks a lot like frog meat; both are pinkish-white, not blood-red like beef, pork, or lamb," Chen Yan remarked, touching the crocodile meat and feeling its extreme tenderness.

Such tender meat, once eaten, would likely result in tender skin too, right? By now, she was already looking forward to how her skin would improve and her complexion would glow after eating the Crocodile. Hmph, although I can't compete with my cousin in body shape, when it comes to skin and complexion, I can still give that darn Yueyue a run for her money!

"Yan Bao, if you're hungry, go eat something else to tide you over. Don't just stand there drooling over the crocodile meat," Shen Jiayue muttered disdainfully. Her cousin looked like a Komodo dragon that had spotted its prey. Good heavens, was she about to reveal her true form?

Chen Yan gently kicked her cousin with her high-heeled leg.

"You're the one drooling! I'm just thinking how tender this meat looks and wondering how best to cook it later," Chen Yan retorted.

After removing the ribs, only the spine and the crocodile skin on its back remained.

Lin Xu skillfully used a kitchen knife to remove the skin from the back. This skin could be used for soup, turned into a gelatin dish, or stir-fried with dried chili.

Basically, any way you could prepare Pork Skin, you could prepare crocodile skin.

To change the subject, Chen Yan curiously asked, "Brother-in-law, can you buy those pre-cut crocodile meats at the market?"

"You can, but you have to be careful not to buy lizard meat by mistake. I've heard that some markets sell giant lizard meat passed off as crocodile meat."

Shen Baobao burst into laughter upon hearing this. Just a moment ago, I was teasingly thinking of my cousin as a Komodo dragon drooling over its prey, and now Lin Xu brought up giant lizards! Could this be

what they call a 'meeting of minds'? She had planned to show off in front of Chen Yan but thought better of it. Yan Bao was so petty, and with all these kitchen knives around, what if she snapped? It could end badly. Sigh, girls like me who are considerate of others' feelings are becoming so rare. Lin Xu is really lucky to have me!

After separating all parts of the Crocodile, Lin Xu first bagged a front and a hind crocodile leg in plastic and put them in the freezer.

Then, he began to cut the crocodile meat into portions.

He chopped the ribs into small pieces, marinating half with black bean sauce, Scallion and Ginger, and the other half with Scallion and Ginger, dried chili, Light Soy Sauce, Cooking Wine, salt, and sugar.

Once all the ribs were thoroughly marinated, he steamed half and fried the other half.

This was the best way to savor the deliciousness of the crocodile ribs.

After dealing with the ribs, he moved on to the other parts.

He soaked what needed soaking, marinated what needed marinating, and cut what needed cutting.

Once everything was prepared, Lin Xu began cleaning the Crocodile's organs, asking Aunt Liu and others to start preparing the side dishes for the All Crocodile Banquet.

These included minced ginger and garlic, chopped green onions, cilantro, as well as green and red chilies, onions, and wood ear mushrooms—none of which were essential but certainly enhanced the dishes.

After organizing these tasks, Lin Xu soaked the Crocodile's lungs, crocodile liver, and heart in running water, then carefully removed the crocodile gall to add to the soup later.

As for the chunks of fat from the abdominal cavity, he kept them soaking in another basin.

Before starting to cook, he planned to render some crocodile fat first, using it to cook the ingredients. This would enhance the rich, aromatic flavor and the smooth, oily texture of the dishes.

After sorting the organs, Lin Xu began to clean the crocodile intestine.

This too was a delicious ingredient; crocodile intestine was tender and chewy, suitable for many recipes. Today, Lin Xu planned to use the Stir-fried Pork Intestines Technique to cook some crocodile intestine, letting everyone taste the deliciousness of this ingredient.

As for the rest, he decided to just dry-fry them.

While he was busy, Shen Guofu, hands behind his back and beaming, boasted to the relatives, "You all kept arguing with me, saying a Crocodile isn't a fish. So what if it's not? In the presence of my son-in-law, doesn't it still get handled clearly and orderly?"

Hmph, as long as it has the word 'fish' in its name, it's under my son-in-law's jurisdiction, and he'll find a way to handle it!

Chapter 537: Crocodile Meat is Really Delicious! Master Wei, Can You Take Me Home Tonight?

In the kitchen, upon hearing his father-in-law praise him so highly, Lin Xu helplessly sighed. With my father-in-law's attitude that his son-in-law is always the best, it's only a matter of time before this public persona I have goes down... Indeed, one fan is worth ten haters.

He planned to use his points to redeem all the Basic Cooking Techniques, lest his father-in-law, his most devoted fan, inadvertently highlight his flaws.

The crocodile vendor was quite considerate and had already turned the crocodile intestine inside out and given them a preliminary wash.

Now, Lin Xu just needed to wash them a few more times with flour, salt, and cooking oil, similar to how Pork Large Intestine is cleaned.

As for making the intestines crispy, he specifically needed to wash them with baking soda.

Once everything was in order, Lin Xu began to cook.

He took out the soaked crocodile fat from the water and sliced it into mahjong-sized pieces. He then placed them in the frying pan, brought the pan over to the stove, added a bowl of water, and started to simmer.

The general method for rendering animal fat was basically the same. It involved chopping it into large pieces, putting them in the pot, and adding water to simmer. This allowed the water to slowly evaporate while the fat slowly rendered out.

By the time the water had completely evaporated, the fat had also given off a fragrant aroma.

"What's this?"

Shen Baobao noticed that during her brief moment out to drink water, a pot of oil was already on the stove, filled with white chunks of crocodile fat.

"I'm rendering crocodile fat. Later on, you can try the crocodile cracklings. They should taste better than Pork Grease."

Crocodile fat isn't as greasy as pork fat and naturally has a rich, fresh flavor. This flavor might be a blend of pork fat and chicken fat.

Cooking with this type of fat—not to mention crocodile meat—even just a handful of the most ordinary vegetables could significantly enhance one's appetite.

The process of rendering crocodile fat is quite lengthy and relatively safe, so Lin Xu left Baobao in charge of it, "Call me when these bits of fat turn golden brown. If they haven't, just keep waiting. Don't worry; this oil will only get more fragrant the longer you render it. You can't ruin it by over-rendering."

Although rendering crocodile fat merely involved watching over it and nothing else, it gave Baobao a strong sense of participation.

She even specifically recorded a brief video of the busy kitchen to share with their group chat.

"Today, Xu and I are cooking an All Crocodile Banquet. I'll invite everyone to try it when there's a chance!"

Not long after she sent the message, Chen Yan, who had just finished washing the crocodile liver and lungs, chimed in, "So, was I bustling about for nothing? I contributed to this All Crocodile Banquet too! If you don't add my name, I won't let you two off the hook!"

Lin Xu, who was moving an entire crocodile spine to the workbench, couldn't help but laugh. It's not like we're writing some high-level academic paper; do you two really need to show off your credentials like this?

He propped up the crocodile spine on the cutting board and trimmed off the thicker parts. This separated the tenderloin and the back meat, making it easier for the large bones to cook through.

The trimmed tenderloins and back meat could also be stir-fried or deep-fried.

After removing the excess meat, Lin Xu grabbed the Bone Chopper, chopped the spine into large pieces, and then rinsed them with water, ready to start making Braised Pork Ribs.

These large bones could also be used for making broth.

But since he had already decided to use the tail tip for soup, making another soup dish would be repetitive. So, he decided to make Braised Pork Ribs instead, to let his father-in-law taste the flavors of home again.

He placed a large wok on the stove and poured a little cooking oil into the pan. Then, he scooped a few pieces of the rendering crocodile fat into it and added half a spoonful of pork lard.

Once the oil was heated, he added Scallion and Ginger, garlic, and dried chili, frying them until fragrant. Then, he added two large spoonfuls of Northeastern Big Sauce and sautéed it until fragrant. Finally, he added water, Dark Soy Sauce, and Crystal Sugar, and put in the bones.

When the liquid in the pot began to boil, he transferred it to a pressure cooker.

He added a few star anises, several bay leaves, and a piece of cinnamon. Then, he covered the pot and started stewing.

Since the Northeastern Big Sauce is quite salty, there was no need for further seasoning. The mixture would be pressure-cooked for about an hour, until the meat on the bones was fall-off-the-bone tender and ready to eat.

Next, using the steps for making crystal sugar hocks, Lin Xu fried the slightly smaller crocodile claws until partially cooked, then stewed them in another pressure cooker.

Like the large bones, these claws needed to be pressure-cooked for about an hour to achieve a state where the skin was crispy, the meat tender, and the sauce gelatinous.

As for the hind claws, Lin Xu planned to cut them into large chunks and braise them.

However, it was a bit early to start braising them now; he needed to hurry up and start on the tail tip soup first to satisfy the ladies' cravings for collagen.

He filled a clay pot used for soup with spring water and heated it. Then, he added the washed and chopped tail tip, along with Codonopsis, Astragalus, Cordyceps, Scallion and Ginger, salt, and Crystal Sugar. After covering the pot, he let it simmer on low heat.

While Lin Xu was busy in the kitchen, the living room filled with more and more relatives.

Having just enjoyed a feast at Lin Ji the day before, everyone's appetite was somewhat lacking. But the prospect of an All Crocodile Banquet today filled everyone with anticipation for dinner.

"It's said that every part of a crocodile is precious," Shen Guofu, with a cigar in his mouth, said confidently, reflecting his pride in his son-in-law's skills. "So today, let's see if crocodile is really as good as the legends say."

He was even curious whether the crocodile bought that day was big enough to satisfy everyone's meat cravings.

After all, a ninety-some-pound crocodile might seem large, but once its skin and entrails were removed, along with the bones, not much meat would be left.

"Guofu, don't just think about eating meat; have some veggies too," Mrs. Han, the newly minted cat lover, holding Dundun, seriously advised her son-in-law.

Chapter 538: Crocodile Meat is Really Delicious! Master Wei, Can You Take Me Home Tonight? \_2

After Lin Ji's Food reopened, as a son-in-law, I just couldn't stop thinking about eating meat every day. The belly I had managed to slim down these past few days seemed to be bulging out again. If things kept going like this, not only would I fail to lose weight, but I'd probably reach new heights in gaining it.

Shen Guofu said to his mother-in-law, "We do have vegetarian dishes. Just now, I saw Lin Xu ask Sister Liu for some dried bean curd sticks. He seems to want to make Fish Belly stew with dried bean curd sticks, which is a vegetarian dish, isn't it?"

Grandma Han: "..."

Why don't you also say that the chopped green onions in it are a vegetarian dish? she thought. When we were younger and the family wasn't well-off, it was understandable to crave meat, but why do you still love meat so much now? If you keep eating like this, it's only a matter of time before the 'three highs' come knocking.

Han Shuzhen gave Dundun some small dried fish, feeding the little guy while saying, "Starting tomorrow, you're not allowed to go to the shop for dinner. You'll come straight home and have a fat-reducing meal with me. I'll let you go there for the Mid-Autumn Festival."

Her words instantly froze the smile on Shen Guofu's face. Happy Old Shen turned into Melancholic Old Shen.

No meat again?

He dared not defy his wife's commands and could only try to negotiate for his rights. "Then you've got to let me eat low-fat dishes like Winter Melon Stuffed with Meat and Spicy Shredded Chicken often. Plus, the dried fish that Lin Xu makes, I also need to eat a little of that every day. And about drinking..."

Han Shuzhen glanced sideways. "You still want to drink?"

Shen Guofu immediately softened. "Red wine, red wine! Isn't a glass before bed said to be good for your health? How about you drink fruit vinegar, and I drink red wine, so we both stay healthy, okay?"

Seeing her husband act so timidly, Han Shuzhen couldn't help but laugh. "Always haggling like a kid. You can drink a little, but don't start making a bunch of snacks before bed to accompany your drink."

"No way! How could I stash away snacks like Yueyue does?"

Shen Baobao in the kitchen: What?! I was actually planning on secretly bringing some Crystal Pork Hock and Crystal Skin Jelly for Dad. Now that plan is gone; the hocks and jelly are no more. Oh, Boss Shen, just obediently accept this period of re-education through labor. I'll frequently send pictures of food in the family group chat to comfort you!

「The crocodile meat was now ready.」

Lin Xu stood in front of the workstation, diligently chopping the meat mixture made from crocodile tenderloin and Crocodile Belly. Tender and fresh, crocodile meat is ideal for ball-shaped dishes. What Lin Xu was making now were Boiled Crocodile Meatballs, a dish that included both the meatballs and the soup—an option for those who didn't enjoy the taste of the herbal tail-tip soup.

The preparation wasn't complicated. After chopping the meat mixture, he added ginger juice, scallion and ginger water, and some Sichuan peppercorn water. He seasoned it with salt, Light Soy Sauce, Cooking Wine, and Egg White, then added more scallion and ginger water and Sichuan peppercorn water. After stirring it well, he began to vigorously slam the meat mixture to develop its gelatin. This ensured that when the meatballs were boiled, the mixture would bind together.

"Wow, it looks just like the playdough we used to play with as kids! Can we have a go at slamming it too?"

Lin Xu glanced at the nail polish on Shen Baobao's fingernails and the artificial nails on his sister-in-law's fingers, and he declined their offer to help. No point in having artificial nails end up in the meat mixture, giving relatives an unwelcome surprise. Better if I handle the heavy lifting myself.

Seeing his two assistants idle at the moment, he instructed them, "Why don't you two start peeling garlic? Prepare a small bowlful. I see we're almost out of garlic sauce at home. We'll need to fry some more later and can also make a dish of Garlic Flavored Crocodile Belly."

After sending away Shen Baobao and his sister-in-law, who were hoping to gain some experience, Lin Xu continued to slam the meat mixture for a while longer. He stopped when it became sticky and adhered to his hands. Then he poured in a bit of water mixed with sweet potato starch and combined it thoroughly with the meat.

When making Boiled Crocodile Meatballs, adding some starch water to the meat mixture is necessary. This prevents the meatballs from falling apart and also enhances their chewy, springy texture. After mixing the meat mixture evenly, he set it aside to marinate.

Taking advantage of this time, he boiled a pot of water and scalded the inside and outside of the crocodile head. After scalding, he peeled off a layer of white membrane from the mouth. This membrane was inedible and needed to be removed to prevent the finished dish from tasting fishy. Once cleaned, he scored the inside and outside of the mouth with a small knife. Then, he poured cooked chopped chili peppers over it, allowing the skin and neck meat to marinate and absorb the flavors.

Aside from the skin, there isn't much edible substance in a crocodile head; its main appeal is its impressive appearance and auspicious symbolism, which is why people like it. However, for those who truly appreciate good food, making soup with it is a more practical choice.

After marinating the crocodile head, Lin Xu placed it on a plate and then into the steamer to cook. Meanwhile, he boiled another pot of water on the stove. Once the water boiled, he turned off the heat, allowing the temperature to drop to about 70-80 degrees Celsius. Then, he reignited the fire and adjusted it to the lowest setting. This was to maintain the water at a "Shrimp Eye Water" state.

This temperature is ideal for dishes like Boiled Shrimp, Boiled Scallop Slices, and Boiled Small Octopus, as it cooks the ingredients through while preserving their tender texture. For the Boiled Crocodile Meatballs Lin Xu was preparing, the requirements for water temperature were the same.

Bringing the marinated meat mixture to the stove, he slammed it a few more times to further develop its elasticity and firmness. Then, dipping his left hand in water, he grabbed a portion of the mixture and squeezed it to expel any trapped air. He then relaxed the web between his thumb and forefinger on his left hand, gently squeezing so that the meat mixture he had just worked was extruded through the opening.

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When he squeezed the meat mixture with his left hand until it formed a cylindrical shape protruding between his thumb and forefinger, he dipped a ceramic spoon in his right hand into water. Then, he gently scooped off the protruding part, and a small, round meatball took shape.

Carefully, he slid the meatball into the pot along the edge, then continued to squeeze out the filling and scoop out meatballs.

"Wow, Lin Xu, I want to learn this!" Shen Jiayue, who was peeling garlic, was instantly captivated by the scene.

A gentle squeeze with the left hand, a scoop with the spoon in the right, and a round meatball was made. It was just like a magic show.

Lin Xu said, "This isn't easy to learn; it's a bit too advanced for you."

"Oh, I see..."

Chen Yan, not willing to give up, asked, "How advanced is 'a little advanced' exactly?"

I'm quite the culinary whiz, you know; I can even make aspic, egg custard, and fruit curd. If it's just a little advanced, isn't it just the right challenge? After all, a culinary whiz must be brave enough to step out of her comfort zone!

Lin Xu was quite impressed by his sister-in-law's spirit of challenging herself.

But in cooking, those who liked to recklessly charge in were more likely to get burnt or cut their own hand while chopping meat...

Forget it, let's not add to the workload of the medical units.

Lin Xu said, "It's like asking a first-grader to solve a system of linear equations with three variables. You two better save the effort; this isn't for beginners."

With half of the meat filling left in the basin, Lin Xu stopped.

He turned up the heat on the stove and boiled the meatballs to prevent the filling inside from being undercooked.

Soon, the water in the pot was boiling.

After skimming the froth with a spoon and boiling for another two minutes, the meatballs were done.

While the meatballs were boiling, he took a small bowl and put dried shrimp skins and seaweed in it, then added some White Pepper powder and salt.

After preparing this, he carried the pot with the meatballs and poured its entire contents, meatballs and water, into the bowl.

Very soon, a fresh and fragrant aroma wafted from the bowl.

He covered the bowl with a lid and brought it straight to the dining table. This not only kept it warm but also allowed the seaweed's savory aroma to steep into the soup, enhancing its flavor.

After all this, Lin Xu brought over the remaining meat filling and half a bowl of Steamed Meat Powder.

He rolled the meat filling into meatballs. Once formed, he rolled them in the Steamed Meat Powder until their surfaces were evenly coated, then placed them on a plate.

Using up all the meat filling, he made a full plate of round meatballs. After steaming them thoroughly in the steamer, they would become Steamed Crocodile Meatballs.

Before long, dishes began to emerge one after another.

Braised Alligator Leg, Crystal Sugar Crocodile Claw, Steamed Crocodile with Garlic and Vermicelli, Fried Tofu with Crocodile Belly, Stir-fried Crocodile Intestines, Peppered Crocodile Steak, Fried Crocodile Intestines, Stir-fried Crocodile Liver, Spicy crocodile lungs, Boiled Crocodile Meat, Overlord Crocodile Head, Black Bean Sauce Crocodile Steak, Boiled Crocodile Tenderloin, Dry-Tossed Crocodile Skin, Black Pepper Crocodile Strips, Boiled Crocodile Meatballs, Steamed Crocodile Meatballs, Codonopsis and Astragalus Crocodile Tail Soup...

A grand total of over twenty dishes, all quite generous in portion, made all the relatives' mouths water immediately.

"Thank you, elders, for coming. This All Crocodile Banquet was a joint effort by Lin Xu, Yan Bao, and me. Please feel free to give any feedback; we will continue to improve next time," Shen Baobao said, delivering a pre-meal speech as if she were the head chef.

This prompted the relatives to quickly put down their utensils and applaud in acknowledgment.

Although everyone knew that the two girls were only playing a minor role in the kitchen, they were still contributing. Among the relatives present, they were the only two willing to step into the kitchen.

The other cousins were so pampered and spoiled they would probably want a nanny to tie their shoelaces for them.

By comparison, Shen Baobao and Chen Yan suddenly received a wave of compliments.

Chen Yan's mother, Shen Guofang, couldn't help but praise her daughter, "This noon, our Xiao Yan steamed egg custard for the old lady, made aspic, and after the meal, she prepared Watermelon Curd and Peach Cheese. The old lady was overjoyed."

This round of praise made Chen Yan, who always felt underappreciated, tightly grasp Shen Baobao's hand.

Ha, I never imagined I'd be praised one day, no longer just a backdrop for my cousin.

Just as she was feeling elated, Shen Guofang spoke up again, "Can you believe it? My Xiao Yan is so pretty and capable, and she's earned quite a bit these past few years, yet she still can't find a partner? Everyone, please keep an eye out. She's almost thirty; if she doesn't get married soon, she'll become an old maid."

Chen Yan was speechless. BOO HOO HOO HOO, I've been so well-behaved and sensible, why bring this up again? Can't I just quietly enjoy the delicious food?

To change the subject, Chen Yan stood up and began lifting the lids off the dishes one by one.

With every dish revealed, the astonishment on the relatives' faces grew.

It couldn't be helped; the dishes were just too beautiful, fragrant, and delicious, each with its own unique character. Both the presentation and the flavor were incredibly enticing.

Shen Guofu's smile stretched from ear to ear, clearly delighted. "Lin Xu is really full of surprises. Luckily I bought the crocodile this time; otherwise, who knows how long this kid would have kept his talents hidden."

Lin Xu forced a smile, then started pouring drinks for the elders.

Better eat quickly to prevent my father-in-law, that die-hard fan, from stirring up any more trouble.

Everyone picked up their chopsticks and started eating.

"Oh my, this alligator leg is full of collagen, even tastier than pig elbow skin!"

"This soup is so rich and delicious; you'd never guess it's made from crocodile tail."

"The flavor of this crocodile meat is really fresh, kind of like bullfrog but even more fragrant."

"Delicious, so delicious! Lin Xu's cooking skills are truly beyond words!"

"Next time, let's have crocodile again. This meat is so good, especially the crocodile skin—it's full of collagen. Eating more of it seems like it would be good for the skin."

"..."

Everyone chatted while eating.

Every person was enjoying their meal. Even Shen Guofu was so engrossed in tackling the dishes that he forgot to drink his wine.

In the midst of eating, Han Shuzhen asked, "Lin Xu, did you use up that entire big crocodile?"

"No, about half of the meat is left. I plan to bring it to the restaurant tomorrow for the staff to try."

"Alright, take it with you. Save your father-in-law from constantly thinking about it."

Shen Guofu was taken aback. I'm not the one constantly thinking about it! You are, aren't you?

Thinking of his wife's fondness for foods rich in collagen, Shen Guofu felt that he could find an opening to "break through" during this "reform period."

But exactly how to break through, that would be his son-in-law's problem to figure out later.

Yes, my super invincible son-in-law is the best; he can handle any ingredient with ease. Lin Xu, my boy, whether Dad gets to eat meat in the future, it all depends on you!

While the Shen Family's villa buzzed with toasts and banter, Lin Ji's Food was experiencing its evening rush.

With the boss away for the day, the management staff became extra proactive, fearing any mistakes or mishaps in the operations they were responsible for.

At the entrance to the kitchen, Wei Qian was busy checking the dishes when Song Tiantian appeared at the door.

"Master Wei, could you come out for a moment?"

Wei Qian stepped out of the kitchen and asked curiously, "What's up, Tiantian? Is there an issue at the front desk?"

"It's not the front desk; I have a problem."

"What problem?"

Song Tiantian said in a coy, quiet voice, "I heard that recently there have been hoodlums harassing girls at night. I'm on the late shift today, so Master Wei, could you ride a shared bike and see me home after work? I'm scared..."

Wei Qian was utterly baffled. You're scared? What are you afraid of? Afraid you won't be able to control your strength and accidentally kill a hoodlum with one punch?

## Chapter 540: The Emotional Master of Every Person! A Low-Fat Appetizer Rich in Collagen: Cold Mixed White Fungus!

"Okay, I'll take you home after work tonight."

Although he was somewhat puzzled by Song Tiantian's request, since she, a young woman, had asked and it was on his way, Wei Qian agreed. He and Song Tiantian lived not far from each other, at different stations along the same subway line. Sometimes, he would even bump into this hefty colleague on the subway.

Now that it was no longer hot at night, biking back was also an option, offering a nice chance to enjoy the night view of Beijing.

Seeing Wei Qian agree, Song Tiantian said, "I'll wait for you after work," and went downstairs, beaming with joy.

Watching her strong and robust figure leaving, Wei Qian thought of a recent Japanese manga he had read and couldn't help murmuring a manga-style line: My colleague is clearly strong but excessively timid...

With that build and strength, those small-time hooligans wouldn't dare to harass you if their IQ was even above sixty. I really don't get what you're afraid of. It seems even the most formidable girls need a man's backing after all. I, Wei Qian, may not have many talents, but I do have a manly spirit. Otherwise, why, out of so many male colleagues, would Song Tiantian choose me in particular? What a discerning person she is! If she had picked Zhu Yong, she might have attracted all the petty hoodlums in Beijing. That guy's so cowardly, letting a woman bully him every day and still finding pleasure in it—it's simply a disgrace to all men. If I ever end up like that, I'd rather dive into Shichahai Lake and drown myself than let a woman ride roughshod over me!

At this moment, Wei Qian was like an old general on stage, covered head to toe in the flags he had just planted.

Just as he was planting these metaphorical flags, a new dish was brought out from the kitchen. It was a stir-fried pork dish made by one of the chefs. Using tongs, he picked up a slice and placed it on a small

plate, then tasted it with chopsticks. The meat was tender and well-seasoned with a spicy kick; it was ready to be served to the customers.

This was the head chef's duty: all dishes destined for the tables had to be sampled by him to ensure the flavor was correct before they could be served. This practice maximized the quality of the dishes and prevented any mishaps.

「Downstairs.」

Song Tiantian said to Shu Yun with a bit of shyness, "He agreed! Manager Chen truly is a love guru. This method is so effective! I have to treat you and Manager Chen to a meal when I get my salary this month..."

Overcome with excitement, Song Zhuangshi found her words tumbling out somewhat incoherently.

Shu Yun handed her a glass of water. "Take a sip of water. Drink some water and then talk. Since things have gone so smoothly, just proceed with the plan. First, invite him to go biking a few times to build a closer relationship."

"Right, I got it, Manager Shu!"

Seeing how thrilled Song Tiantian was, Shu Yun couldn't help but smile wryly to herself. She and Manager Chen had been working hard these past few days to come up with ideas for Song Tiantian, repeatedly playing out each possibility. It felt like they were more invested than if they were in a relationship themselves... Is it true that every single person becomes an expert in love?

To test this theory, she took out her phone and sent a message to Dou Wenjing: "Manager Dou, how do you go on a date with a boy?"

Soon, with a rapid TAP-TAP-TAP, Dou Wenjing sent a flurry of messages:

"A date? Are you in a relationship, Shu Yun?"

"Dating is simple! Start with a movie and a meal—maybe hotpot, so it won't be awkward."

"Of course, Western cuisine works too, with waiters chattering nearby and the elegant environment. Even if it gets awkward, it won't feel too embarrassing."

"For movies, don't pick something too niche; you need to consider the boy's feelings. You could watch a superhero film and then ask about the superheroes' relationships to spark his desire to chat."

"But don't ask silly questions, like why Superman didn't help when Iron Man died, or why Captain America allowed the Joker to destroy the city—those kinds of dopey questions."

"..."

Shu Yun sent the same message to Zeng Xiaoqi. Zeng Xiaoqi, who was snacking, also replied with a TAP-TAP-TAP, sending a barrage of messages similar to Dou Wenjing's, filled with detailed strategies for charming a man.

Tsk tsk tsk, it seems being an expert on romance really is the norm for single folks, Shu Yun thought, feeling a sense of vindication. Much better. Finally, I don't have to obsess over such matters anymore.

Shu Yun added these two experts to a group called [Tiantian's Singles Rescue Squad], then tagged them both and wrote: "I'm not in a relationship. I just heard that single people are experts at romance, so I wanted to test it. I didn't expect your responses to be exactly like the rumors."

Seeing this message, Dou Wenjing, who was in her office, got up huffily and headed home. She had actually finished work and was ready to leave over ten minutes prior, but seeing Shu Yun's message, she couldn't help but dive in and offer advice. Who knew all that effort was just for a test!

As she stepped into the elevator, she sent a fuming message in the group: "I curse your bra size to be one size smaller!"

Zeng Xiaoqi also cast her own spell: "I curse your skin to be one shade darker!"

Only after sending their messages did they notice the group name, and they immediately switched back into love guru mode.

"What's going on? Is Tiantian about to escape singlehood?"

"Holy moly! How come you're only notifying us of such a big deal now?"

"Who's the lucky guy? How far has it progressed?"

"@Shu Yun, hurry and tell us, I'm dying to know!"

"..."

Chen Yan, who was in a villa restaurant competing with Shen Jiayue over Crystal Sugar Crocodile Claw, heard the incessant buzzing of group messages on her phone. She set down her chopsticks, intending to see which group was being so inconsiderate.