

Culinary 55

Chapter 55: Universal Boiled Technique! Can You Make Seasoning Oil?

"SIZZLE!"

After the oil in the wok was hot, Grandpa Gao added the prepared Scallion and Ginger, Sichuan peppercorns, and dried chili pieces, and began to stir-fry. Once the fragrance wafted out, he added the minced Doubanjiang.

Very soon, the unique, savory aroma of the Doubanjiang spread through the air.

"When stir-frying Doubanjiang, don't be in a hurry to add water," Grandpa Gao said. "You need to fry it slowly to thoroughly bring out the sauce's fragrance. That's what makes it more delicious."

Lin Xu hadn't originally planned on using a Cooking Learning Card. But now that his master had entered teaching mode, explaining every step in detail, it seemed a pity not to learn something.

So, he silently chanted in his mind: Use Cooking Learning Card!

After he finished, the system's notification sound echoed in his mind: "Learning target: Gao Peisheng. Current Skill: Teaching. Do you wish to learn?"

Lin Xu: ????

You really didn't let me down!

When the Doubanjiang in the wok was almost ready, Grandpa Gao added two or three bowls of Bone Soup that had been freshly made that morning and turned up the heat. The vibrant Red Oil floated on the surface of the white Bone Soup, a truly appetizing sight for anyone who loved spicy food.

Very soon, the Bone Soup in the wok came to a boil. Grandpa Gao didn't proceed to the next step but instead kept the soup at a rolling boil.

"Don't rush to cook the meat when the Bone Soup boils," he advised. "Let it simmer on high heat for a while. This allows the aromas from the seasonings to fully infuse into the soup."

After about three to five minutes, Grandpa Gao turned down the heat and used a fine-mesh sieve to scoop out the dregs from the wok.

This step delighted Lin Xu. Back when he ate dishes like Mao Xue Wang in the school cafeteria, what annoyed him most were the dregs and spices like Sichuan peppercorns. He always had to spend ages picking them out. Today, he finally wouldn't have to bother with them. He felt like he could eat an extra bowl of rice.

After the dregs were strained out, the soup in the wok was gently simmering, just below a boil. Grandpa Gao added a bit of sugar to balance the complex flavors in the soup. Then, he brought over the marinated meat slices and began adding them to the wok.

"When adding the meat, the soup in the wok shouldn't be at a rolling boil. Otherwise, the meat slices will easily lose their starch coating, and the texture will be much worse," he explained, evenly distributing the meat slices into the wok.

Lin Xu, deciding to try his luck, used the Cooking Learning Card again.

"Learning target: Gao Peisheng. Current Skill: General Boiled Technique. Do you wish to learn?"

General Technique? Does this mean that after mastering this technique, I can make all kinds of water-boiled dishes? Learn, learn, learn! I must learn!

After confirming, the system's notification rang in his mind again: "Host has consumed one Superior Cooking Learning Card and acquired the Superior General Cooking Technique—Boiled. This Skill enables the preparation of all types of boiled dishes. Congratulations, Host."

HAHA! I never expected such good luck. I originally just wanted to learn one dish, but I never imagined I'd master an entire category of dishes. This is truly an unexpected delight!

After all the meat slices were added, Grandpa Gao held the handle of the wok and gently swirled it.

"Once the meat slices are in the wok, don't stir them with a spatula. Just gently swirl the wok a few times to prevent sticking," he instructed.

When the meat in the wok had slightly changed color, he turned up the heat. The moment the soup came to a gentle boil, he lifted the wok and poured everything—broth and meat—into a large bowl already lined with blanched vegetables.

"If you were using plain water, you'd need to thicken the soup slightly with a bit of starch to improve the mouthfeel. But Bone Soup doesn't need it, as it's naturally slightly viscous," Grandpa Gao explained.

At this point, the meat slices were only about eighty percent cooked. But don't worry, they would be fully cooked in no time.

Grandpa Gao sprinkled the knife-cut chilies Lin Xu had prepared the previous day over the contents of the bowl, then added a handful of minced garlic. Then, he rinsed the wok and placed it back on the stove.

As he poured oil into the wok, he looked at Lin Xu and asked, "Do you have any Seasoning Oil? This dish is more aromatic with it."

Seasoning Oil? The kind that gives it that special kick, right?

Lin Xu gently shook his head. "No..."

Hearing this, Grandpa Gao added a large ladleful of rapeseed oil to the wok, followed by a smaller half-ladleful of lard.

"You can make some later. Seasoning Oil is widely used and simple to prepare. You know how, don't you?"

I... If I say I don't, will your estimation of me drop?

While Lin Xu silently used forty thousand points to redeem the Qualified Level General Seasoning Oil Cooking Technique from the Points Mall, he smiled and said to Grandpa Gao, "I do. I'm just a bit rusty."

"That's fine. I'll guide you when you make it this afternoon. As long as you grasp a few key points, making Seasoning Oil is very simple."

Once the oil in the wok was hot, Grandpa Gao carried the wok over to the large bowl. Using a ladle, he scooped up the hot oil and poured it over the knife-cut chilies and minced garlic in the bowl.

Instantly, a tantalizing aroma of numbing spice and garlic sizzled and rose from the bowl.

Lin Xu snapped a picture of this moment with his phone and shared it in the group chat. He suddenly noticed that Panda had left the group. Meanwhile, his own Shen Jiayue was discussing skincare tips with Wu Kexin, Chen Yan, and others.

This... Wasn't this group supposed to help Panda find a date? How did Wu Kexin get in here? Is she supposed to be giving him ideas on how to woo herself?

"WOW! It looks so tempting!"

"I want to have this for lunch today, can I, Xubao?"

"Now I finally get why everyone calls Brother-in-law 'Demon King.' This is truly infuriating."

"Is Lin Ji's Food adding a new dish, Boss Lin? It looks so spicy!"

"Boss Lin, could you spare a thought for us hardworking folks eating pre-packaged meals on the high-speed train? How am I supposed to stomach my food now!"

"..."

Since Wu Kexin was also in the group, Lin Xu didn't press the issue. Instead, he told everyone about the dish: "This is today's staff meal. We're not adding this dish to the menu for now, so you'll have to wait if you want to try it."

"Staff meal? The benefits are too good! Mom, I want to go to Lin Ji's Food and be a dishwasher!"

It was already ten-fifty. Lin Xu didn't chat much longer with them. He put down his phone and started packing today's lunch for Shen Jiayue: a large bowl of rice, a portion of Shui Zhu Rou Pian (Sichuan Boiled Meat Slices), a serving of Chicken Feet with Black Bean Sauce, and a bowl of Nori Egg Drop Soup. Once packed, he placed it at the cashier's counter for the delivery person to retrieve.

"Time for lunch!"

Lunch at Lin Ji's Food had begun.

Lin Xu picked up a slice of tenderloin and tasted it. Mmm, tender and smooth, with a distinct numbing spiciness. It was much more delicious than what the school cafeteria served. Plus, there were no dregs from the Sichuan peppercorns or Doubanjiang, making it exceptionally satisfying to eat.

"This Shui Zhu Rou Pian is really delicious, and the broth is amazing too," Little Che exclaimed, scooping two spoonfuls of the Red Oil-laden broth into his bowl. The reddish broth coated the rice grains. He took a bite. It was fragrant, spicy, and went perfectly with the rice.

"Boss, will our restaurant serve this dish?" Little Che asked curiously.

If they served this dish, he could eat it often. If not, who knew when he might have it again?

Lin Xu took a bite of rice and said, "We can't add dishes like this that require individual wok preparation to the menu. Let's wait until the kitchen isn't so short-staffed... If you guys want to eat it, just tell me in advance, and I'll make it for you."

Although it couldn't be added to the menu, it was no problem for the staff to enjoy it. They could even try different variations.

「On the high-speed train.」

Panda washed his face in the restroom. He was preparing to forget this feeling that hadn't even had a chance to sprout.

After returning to his seat, just as he was about to close his eyes for a nap, Wu Kexin, sitting beside him, handed him a tissue. "Why is your face so wet? Quick, wipe it off. You watch our things, okay? I'm going to wash some plums. I've never had these wild mountain plums before; I'm kind of addicted."

With that, she took a small bag of plums from the food Chen Meijuan had given them and headed towards the restroom.

Plums? Inner quality!

Panda wiped the water from his face, a thought suddenly flashing through his mind. Is she hinting with the plums that she cares more about inner quality than appearance... So, do I still have a chance?

The dejection on his face vanished instantly. The ripples in his heart began to spread once more...