

Culinary 621

Chapter 621: Blanch the beef and then mix it with a cold sauce, you have no idea how delicious it is! _4

The water that splashed back into the pot instantly brought up clumps of froth.

And as the rinsing continued, more and more froth appeared.

Chen Yan felt that she could manage the earlier steps somewhat.

But when she saw Lin Xu flick his wrist as he poured, only one thought remained in her mind: This is way over my head... way over my head...

Seeing the confusion on their faces, Lin Xu smiled and said, "You don't have to spread it out. Just pile it up a bit, scoop up some water and pour it over. After pouring, remember to do this flip so the beef in the colander turns over."

Watching Lin Xu skillfully juggle the colander in his left hand, Chen Yan had only one thought: This is way too advanced, brother-in-law!

By now, the beef in the colander had changed from red to pink. This indicated that the surface of the meat was cooked, with only some traces of blood remaining inside.

Lin Xu used a spoon to skim off the froth in the pot. Then, he added coriander roots and scallion roots to the pot, waited for the water to boil again, and pressed down on the two types of roots with the spoon to release as much flavor into the water as possible.

After two minutes, he submerged the colander into the boiling water. While dipping, he stirred with the spoon to ensure the beef in the colander was fully exposed to the boiling water.

After scalding for about ten seconds, the beef was completely blanched.

He scooped it back out and pressed the excess water from the beef with the spoon. Then, he poured it into the prepared sauce and mixed it evenly with a small spoon so the sauce coated the beef uniformly.

Next, he added the minced chili, young ginger, coriander, and scallion sections. He also sprinkled in a small spoonful of cooked sesame seeds, stirred everything together, and then transferred it onto a plate.

"How about that, did you learn it?"

Shen Baobao responded irrelevantly, "I learned how to mix the dipping sauce for Chaoshan Beef Hot Pot."

The prepared beef was very aromatic, enhancing even the scent of the coriander. It made one crave to taste it.

Chen Yan said, "I need to practice at home. If I'm lucky, my dad might get to try what I make this afternoon. If not... I'll let the maid make braised beef."

Carrying the dish back to the dining room, Chen Yuejin salivated at the sight of the green coriander in the plate.

In his view, whether it was beef or pork wasn't important. What was essential was the coriander; that was the top priority.

Meanwhile, the meat lovers stared at the beef. They realized that a new beef dish could be made in just a few minutes, which would make satisfying future cravings much easier. Just a quick dip and it's done, just like eating beef hot pot!

He picked up a slice of beef and tasted it, immediately showing a look of pleasant surprise. "Wow, it's so fresh and tender, very much like the beef in a Chaoshan Beef Hot Pot. Delicious! It's much better than eating actual hot pot."

Hearing this, the other relatives also picked up their chopsticks to try.

Everyone thought it tasted great, and most importantly, it was ready in just a few minutes.

Thinking about it, returning home after work and quickly blanching some beef could yield an extra dish for drinks in just a few minutes. It was truly tempting.

"Lin Xu, could you teach us?"

"Why not make a tutorial video? I think we could all learn it."

"Right, it's about time to shoot a video. Make one on how to make beef with coriander so we can learn too."

"Who can resist the lure of having a dish for drinks right after work..."

Lin Xu didn't refuse, smiling as he said, "I'll shoot one when I'm not busy, ensuring everyone can learn it easily."

After the meal, he and Shen Baobao drove their BMW X5 to Central Finance University to deliver mooncakes to a teacher who had been very caring toward them.

Once back at the shop, he took advantage of the afternoon break to shoot a video on making beef with coriander, then started to tend to other matters in the shop.

After the Mid-Autumn Festival holiday, the shop finally saw a break from the busyness.

Lin Xu cleaned the steam pot that Old Huang had sent earlier and immediately made a call. "I'm ready to make steam pot chicken, brother. Do you have any high-quality young hens? The requirement for chicken meat in this dish is quite high."

"Yes, yes, all prepared, just waiting for your call, brother. Shall we do it tomorrow?"

"Yes, tomorrow we'll make steam pot chicken!"

Chapter 622: Game: I Can Install an Accelerator! Pressure Cooker Chicken: What a Coincidence, So Can I!

Since they were making steam pot chicken, it was natural for all the family members to get a taste. Although the chicken itself wasn't the main focus, the inclusion of herbs such as Panax notoginseng and Astragalus was quite beneficial for women, especially during autumn, a key season for nourishment. Eating it several times could significantly boost one's immunity.

To ensure there was enough, Lin Xu specifically took out the largest steam pot Old Huang had sent. The diameter of this pot was nearly forty centimeters. It was very large and could hold plenty of ingredients, enough even if many people were eating together.

The steam pot isn't a standalone cooking tool; it needs to be placed on top of a soup pot. To prevent the steam pot from being damaged or tipping over due to excessive condensation during cooking, Lin Xu had Che Zai weld a custom metal stand matching its diameter. During cooking, the metal stand would bear all the pressure from the steam pot, ensuring no stress was placed on the pot below.

After setting up the steam pot, Lin Xu washed his hands and went to the TV station to film for the afternoon. This would allow him to focus solely on making the steam pot chicken at the shop the next day.

「The next morning.」

When Old Huang came to deliver the vegetables, he said to Lin Xu, "I have a friend who contracted an orchard in the suburbs. He raised a flock of hens there, never feeding them commercial feed. Instead, he let them eat bugs in the orchard and scattered wheat kernels. They aren't very fat, but their meat is firm, and their bellies have a lot of Butter... What time will you start cooking? I can drive over there early to slaughter the chickens and bring them over."

The fresher the hens used for steam pot chicken, the better. Since the chicken meat couldn't be washed or blanched, the longer it sat, the worse its taste and texture would become. Authentic steam pot chicken requires the chicken to be placed in the pot while it's still warm and twitching to ensure that none of the nutrients and flavors are lost.

However, current regulations prohibited all food service venues within Beijing from slaughtering and processing live poultry on-site. It could only be brought in from the suburbs after slaughter. To ensure freshness, the time between slaughter and cooking had to be minimized as much as possible.

After thinking, Lin Xu said, "Bring it around two in the afternoon. We can start cooking as soon as it arrives."

"Two o'clock? Will there be enough time? A typical steam pot chicken takes more than four hours, you know. If you start that late, won't you miss the dinner rush?" Old Huang was visibly worried, fearing that the cooking time allocated was too short.

Lin Xu replied with a smile, "Don't worry, I have a trick for making steam pot chicken that can cut the cooking time in half."

This comment made Old Huang pause. "A trick? Even I, a son-in-law from Southern Yunnan, don't know that. Where did you learn it? It's not some dubious shortcut like adding chicken broth or Chicken Essence, is it? That would be a waste of good ingredients, let me tell you..."

The ingredients for the steam pot chicken being made today alone cost at least four figures. Using the restaurant method of adding chicken broth or Chicken Essence would ruin everything.

"Relax, Old Huang, we're eating this ourselves. How could I do that? This is a technique my master taught me, and it's not usually shared with outsiders," Lin Xu explained.

Upon hearing it was a method passed down by Master Gao, Old Huang's doubts vanished completely. It couldn't be helped; the old master's reputation was simply too great. He was practically a legend at Fishing Platform.

After settling the serious matters, Old Huang winked and asked, "Brother, those Moringa Seeds are working out alright, aren't they?"

Working out? Lin Xu wasn't really sure, as he couldn't very well ask his senior brother or his father-in-law about it directly.

"I'm not sure. A friend of mine has been using them. They seem to be effective, as he hasn't looked as troubled these past few days."

Troubled? Not troubled? Old Huang's eyes lit up. The phrase 'not troubled' is so vivid—much better than just saying 'listless,' which everyone understands. Brother Lin truly lives up to his Finance University degree—such a cultured man!

He glanced around, and seeing no one was paying attention, he lowered his voice and said, "A friend of mine managed to order some Maca. It hasn't arrived yet, but once it does, I'll have my friend share some with yours. They say an expert from afar always has better tricks. We'll see if it's true."

Lin Xu was taken aback. Old Huang, you don't actually think I'm as run-down as you are, do you?

I wanted to tell him the truth, but then I felt it wouldn't be right to betray my senior brother. He's constantly surrounded by adversaries and has very few allies on his side. Better not to sell him out. Still, I'll have to find a way to clear up this misunderstanding later, or it'll only get worse.

After Old Huang left, Lin Xu grabbed a small handful of *Panax notoginseng*, rinsed it twice to remove the surface dust, and then placed it in clean water to soak. Although the steam pot chicken was only to be cooked in the afternoon, the preparation had to start now.

Hard medicinal herbs like *Panax notoginseng* needed to be soaked for several hours in advance. Only then would their medicinal properties be fully released during cooking. Besides *Panax notoginseng*, other ingredients like *Astragalus* and morel mushrooms also needed pre-soaking and plumping. This would ensure they could all be added to the pot at the same time once the chicken arrived.

However, ingredients like *Astragalus* and morel mushrooms weren't as hard as *Panax notoginseng*, so they didn't need to be soaked too far in advance. Soaking them around eleven in the morning would be sufficient and wouldn't delay their use in the afternoon.

After soaking the *Panax notoginseng*, breakfast at the shop was almost ready.

Today's breakfast was Hot Dry Noodles.

The amount of dough made last night was a bit excessive. Plus, the pastry chefs had been practicing enthusiastically, so about twenty pounds of dough was left over. To avoid waste, Ji Minghui used a

noodle machine to process it directly into round noodles. These were then boiled, mixed with rapeseed oil, cooled, and packed for refrigerated storage in the cold room.

Dough and noodles tended to ferment overnight. Even when kept in cold storage, they would develop a slight sour, fermented taste. So, they were immediately cooked and processed into semi-finished Hot Dry Noodles to prevent this.

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Just blanch it slightly this morning, and it's ready to eat.

To better align with the Wuhan people's cherished "guò zǎo" (morning breakfast ritual), Ji Minghui and several chefs from the pastry department came in an hour early on purpose today. They mixed the Sesame Sauce, fried pickled beans, deep-fried dough rings, and pan-fried doupi. They also boiled some Rice Wine egg-drop soup to accompany the food, wanting everyone to truly experience the joy of a Wuhan breakfast.

"Boss, it's ready. Do you want a large bowl or a small one?"

Lin Xu said, "You all eat first. I'm going to wake up the lady boss."

After saying that, he picked up a freshly fried dough ring. Eating it as he walked, he headed outside. At the kitchen door, he didn't forget to bring out the air-dried Chicken Breast, which was Dundun's breakfast.

Not long after, a drowsy Shen Baobao followed Lin Xu over, nibbling on half a fried dough ring. Obviously, the one Lin Xu had taken when he left had been snatched by this girl.

"I'll have the doupi first! I absolutely love the taste. Last time I traveled with my dad, we bought a whole one, and it really annoyed the people waiting in line..."

Upon seeing the food, Shen Jiayue truly "woke up."

Watching his Baobao, who needed delicious food every day to maintain her energy, Lin Xu affectionately went to the kitchen to serve her a few slices of cut doupi. This was for their own consumption, so the presentation of the doupi was very simple. However, it was packed with quality ingredients; the filling inside was generous, and the outer layer was fried till crispy, making it incredibly satisfying and delicious.

After receiving the plate, Shen Baobao picked up a piece and took a large bite.

"Wow, this is so tasty!"

She then took out her phone, snapped a photo, and posted it on Lin Ji's Food's page:

"Lin Ji's Food's staff meals are out of this world! Who would've thought you could experience the joy of guò zǎo with just a staff meal? I've tried it for you all—authentic three-delicacy doupi. I've been on a diet recently, so I'll just have five big pieces for now!"

It was only seven in the morning, precisely when many people were hurriedly heading off to work. Shen Baobao's photo instantly breached the defenses of many netizens who hadn't yet eaten breakfast. Especially that piece of doupi with a bite taken out, which completely revealed the generous filling inside.

"AAAAH, Lady Boss, that's cheating!"

"You used to only post food temptations during meal times, but now you're starting even earlier."

"These temptations cover morning, noon, night, and even late-night. What can we do but surrender?"

"Seeing the three-delicacy doupi makes me suddenly miss home. I didn't have time to go back for the Mid-Autumn Festival. I'll return for the National Day holiday and devour two bowls of Hot Dry Noodles right after getting off the high-speed train."

"Wow, a fellow local up there! I'm also ready to go home for the National Day holiday."

"Just curious, does the shop hire interns? These ever-changing staff meals are making me drool!"

"Every time I dine at your place, I'm reminded that dishes not on the menu can't be ordered. Yet, your staff eat so lavishly and fancily. You guys really don't treat customers like gods at all!"

"..."

Lin Xu walked over with two bowls of prepared Hot Dry Noodles, handing one to Shen Baobao and starting on the other himself.

The noodles coated in Sesame Sauce and Chili Oil tasted incredible. Such a satisfying mouthful! The diced preserved vegetables and pickled long beans mixed into the noodles also helped cut through the richness. After the noodles, a big bite of a fried dough ring.

Carbs on carbs—double the joy, double the surprise!

This is a real man's breakfast. Eat your fill, and you won't feel hungry all morning.

"Xu Bao, are we having steam pot chicken for lunch today?"

"No, this afternoon. That way, our parents can try it when they get off work. Besides, there isn't enough time to prepare it for lunch."

"Then I'll wait until this afternoon to eat."

「At eleven in the morning」

Lin Xu grabbed a handful of dried morel mushrooms and rinsed them to wash off the surface dust. These top-grade morels already had their tough stems removed, so there wasn't much to clean. If they hadn't been trimmed, they couldn't simply be rinsed. Instead, they would need to be blanched in slightly hot water to remove the stems and clean out any sand from inside.

After rinsing, he put the morels in warm water, around forty degrees Celsius, adding a handful of sugar to start the rehydration process. The umami compounds in morels are volatile and evaporate with heat, so the rehydration water shouldn't be too hot. Cold water isn't effective either, making around forty degrees Celsius ideal. The sugar was added to enhance the rich flavor of the morels.

Next, he soaked other ingredients and medicinal herbs such as Astragalus, dried dates, Black wolfberry, and Adenophora root, preparing for the steam pot chicken in the afternoon.

「At 1:30 in the afternoon」

Lao Huang's car arrived punctually in front of Lin Ji's Food. Carrying two plastic bags, he jogged into the store.

"Bro, six in total, all plump young hens. They were killed just over an hour ago; still warm."

To ensure his wife could enjoy authentic steam pot chicken, Lao Huang hadn't even stopped for lunch. After placing the chickens at the kitchen entrance, he asked Che Zai for a few small sesame seed buns, planning to stuff them with some beef to tide himself over.

"Thanks for your hard work, Lao Huang!"

Lin Xu took the chickens to the kitchen and began preparing the steam pot chicken. Although the chickens for steam pot chicken aren't supposed to be washed with water, they still needed some processing; at the very least, the skin had to be dealt with. He placed the chickens in a basin, grabbed a handful of salt, and rubbed it vigorously over their skin to remove dirt from the pores and any surface impurities.

For a chef, 'not rinsing with water' and 'not cleaning at all' are two different concepts.

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You can't wash it with water, but you can clean it with salt, starch, flour, buckwheat husks, and so on. As long as you want to wash it, there are many ways to clean the chicken skin thoroughly.

Very soon, the white salt was rubbed dirty.

The chicken itself had obviously become much whiter and more tender.

After cleaning all six chickens, Lin Xu also cleaned the Chicken Feet, chopping off their toenails in the process.

Then he cut off the chicken butts and discarded them. This part couldn't be stewed in the steamer, as it would taint the broth with a foul smell.

After cutting them off, he forcefully sliced the chicken legs, removing the lower half of the chicken's body along with the skin, just like the cutting method used for fast-food chicken drumsticks.

The chicken legs, along with the surrounding meat, are tender, making the steamed dish fragrant, smooth, and satisfyingly firm.

However, the meat from parts like the chicken breast is tough. Steaming it makes it both stringy and dry, so it shouldn't be added.

After removing both chicken legs, Lin Xu also cut off the chicken wings along with the surrounding meat. Only the chicken head, frame, and breast remained on the carcass.

The chicken neck had only skin, no meat, and was full of lymphatic tissue, making it unsuitable for the steamer.

However, the chicken body, head, and neck wouldn't go to waste. He planned to let Wei Qian or Zhuang Yizhou cook them with a few potatoes into a potato and chicken stew later that afternoon, which would still be delicious with rice or steamed buns.

After removing the chicken legs and wings from all six chickens, the main ingredients for the steamer chicken were ready.

Though called the main ingredients, they were actually the cheapest components of the entire steamer chicken dish.

He chopped the chicken into pieces slightly smaller than mahjong tiles, gathered the various other ingredients, and brought over the steamer, which had been washed the day before, to start filling it.

The steamer had a unique shape, featuring a central conical vent, somewhat resembling a copper hot pot used for shabu-shabu.

Lin Xu evenly spread the chopped chicken inside the steamer.

Then, against the inner wall of the pot, he tucked in slices of Xuanwei Ham, using the fattier lower section, which was saltier and would effectively season the broth.

The aroma of Ham is rich, but in this dish, it shouldn't overpower the fresh flavor of the chicken, so the amount of Ham had to be kept to a minimum.

Since only a little was necessary, the saltiest parts were naturally used.

To prevent the Ham flavor from being too strong, the slices were tucked into the outermost crevices.

After inserting the Ham, Lin Xu added soaked Notoginseng, morel mushrooms, Astragalus, Cordyceps, Black wolfberry, and glehnia root. The quantities of the strongly flavored medicinal herbs had to be carefully controlled.

As for Red Dates, they were sliced open and their pits removed, using only the skin and flesh.

After adding these, a small handful of Cordyceps Flower was added next.

Cordyceps Flower would give the broth a golden hue, enhancing its presentation.

With all these ingredients, the steamer was practically full.

After covering the steamer, Lin Xu brought over a large pressure cooker and filled it with water until it was about two-thirds full.

When making steamer chicken, the process had to be continuous, without pausing to add water.

Although the ingredients in the steamer are what's eaten, the pot underneath boiling the water also needed adjustment. Traditional households often used chicken broth for this.

This allowed the flavor of the chicken broth to gradually seep into the steamer via the steam, enriching the umami of the resulting soup.

Those who found chicken fat too greasy could use the water from soaking morel mushrooms for the steaming liquid, which would make the steamer chicken's broth even fresher tasting.

However, with today's ample quantity of rich ingredients, there was absolutely no need for such extravagance.

Lin Xu added some Angelica dahurica to the water in the pressure cooker, which is effective at removing gamey odors, along with a large spoonful of Scallion and Ginger water and a large spoonful of Rice Wine.

Scallions, ginger, and alcohol couldn't be added directly to the steamer but could be added to the water boiling beneath. This would still effectively remove gamey scents and other odors.

However, for the scallions and ginger, only their infused water should be used, not the raw vegetables themselves, as both produce an unpleasant smell if stewed for too long.

Comparatively, Scallion and Ginger water was more suitable, as it would evaporate completely.

After adding all the seasonings, Lin Xu sealed the pressure cooker, removed its pressure valve, and then turned the heat to high to bring the water to a boil.

The trick he had mentioned to Mr. Huang that morning was to use a pressure cooker.

Compared to ordinary pots, the steam from a pressure cooker is more concentrated and abundant. By simply removing the pressure valve, there's no need to worry about excessive pressure building up. It's truly an essential for home and travel... Ahem, I digressed.

Soon, the water in the pot was boiling.

Lin Xu retrieved the metal rack the car guy had welded the day before and placed it on top of the pressure cooker.

Five minutes later, once the impurities in the steam had dissipated, Lin Xu positioned the steamer directly over the pressure cooker's vent.

Soon, billowing steam entered the steamer, and condensation on the lid began to drip.

"Damn, no wonder you had the car guy weld a metal rack yesterday! It was all for the steamer chicken," Zhu Yong and Zhuang Yizhou exclaimed, approaching with their phones to snap a photo.

Neither of them had ever imagined using a steamer this way. The steam from a pressure cooker was far more concentrated than from a regular boiling pot. No wonder they only started preparing the steamer chicken now! It turned out the boss had mastered steamer acceleration technology!

Lin Xu said, "Today's steamer is quite large, so I specifically had a metal rack made for it. If it were a smaller steamer, just placing it on the lid of the pressure cooker would do."

"Damn, I have to note this down. Learned a new trick!"

"I'll note it down too. I'll buy a steamer and try this at home. If this works, eating steamer chicken will be so much more convenient in the future!"

While they were talking, Lin Xu turned down the stove's heat to prevent the strong steam from dislodging the lid.

After finishing these preparations, he stepped outside. Mr. Huang, who had just been munching on baked pastries, was now clutching a bowl of Tomato Egg Noodles, scraping the last bits from the bottom.

After finishing, he gave Lin Xu a thumbs-up. "Bro, the hand-pulled noodles in your restaurant are absolutely fantastic!"

"If you like them, eat more," Lin Xu replied.

After setting down his bowl, Mr. Huang said, "No more for now, though. I'm planning to have steamer chicken this afternoon; gotta save some room. By the way, Bro, I'm planning to organize a group meal for my company in your banquet hall. Who should I talk to about this?"

Who to talk to? Lin Xu wondered briefly.

Lin Xu pointed downstairs. "Just find Manager Shu. She can arrange everything perfectly."

"Alright, I'll go down and find her now." Mr. Huang got up and strode downstairs.

At that moment, Shu Yun was playing with Dundun by the stairwell. The little fellow absolutely loved the sensation of the steps, one after another. Midway up, he even turned and meowed at Shu Yun, as if urging her to keep up and not fall behind.

"Manager Shu, I'm looking to book a group meal for about eighty to ninety people. I want it to be lavish. How much will it cost?"

Upon hearing there was business, Shu Yun immediately hoisted Dundun onto her shoulder. Walking towards the service desk, she asked, "Can you confirm the exact day?"

"Yes, how about Wednesday evening? Is Wednesday evening available? If it's booked, Thursday works too. We're practically family here, so whatever is most convenient for the restaurant."

Shu Yun said with a smile, "If everyone were like you, Mr. Huang, our job would be so much easier."

Mr. Huang smiled and waved his hand. "Your restaurant sources such high-end ingredients; it's only right that we reciprocate when we can."

As they were discussing the arrangements, Dundun, who was sitting on the service desk, suddenly perked up. Just then, the shop door pushed open, and Ren Jie, dressed in sportswear, strode in.

"Excuse me... is Chef Chen from the kitchen here?"

Shu Yun looked up, and a string of exclamation marks seemed to pop into existence above her head. "!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Chef Chen actually snagged such a handsome guy without a word! If it weren't for the fact that I don't have a sports car, I'd absolutely try to steal him away.

She cleared her throat, just about to say that Chef Chen was upstairs busy preparing for the evening's dishes, when Mr. Huang, who was idling nearby, suddenly puffed out his chest and interjected,

"Young man, you might be in the wrong place. From the opening until now, I've been to the kitchen several times a day. Back there, we only have one head chef, Brother Wei. There's no Chief anything..."

As he was speaking, Mr. Huang caught Shu Yun frantically signaling him with her eyes. He quickly realized he had misspoken and coughed twice to cover his embarrassment.

"What's going on?" Ren Jie frowned, a hint of wariness flashing across his face.

Chapter 625: Chef Chen, I've figured you out! It's no wonder it's called steam pot chicken, the taste is truly exceptional!

"Hello, our Head Chef Chen is busy in the kitchen. Perhaps you could wait a while?"

Boss Huang, you're really stirring up trouble, Shu Yun thought, exasperated. If this ruins Head Chef Chen's plans, she'll definitely blame me later...

She was about to guide the handsome man to a seat when another man, around thirty-six or thirty-seven, entered.

He had a neat crew cut and was dressed in casual wear, a clutch bag tucked under his arm. He looked at Ren Jie and asked, "Have you found Head Chef Chen? She helped me out a lot, and I need to thank her in person."

Ren Jie shifted his puzzled gaze from Old Huang and Shu Yun, then replied, "It seems she's busy in the kitchen..."

"Then let's wait a bit longer."

The newcomer was Ren Jie's squad leader, Sui Fusheng.

Two days ago, the mooncakes Ren Jie brought back had solved a problem for Squad Leader Sui. His fiancée had heard Lin Ji's mooncakes were delicious but didn't realize how hard they were to get. Sui Fusheng had tried for three days without success, making her feel like he was just brushing her off. But once Sui Fusheng brought her the mooncakes and made a point of explaining how incredibly popular Lin Ji was, they were both overjoyed. His fiancée even apologized, which made Sui very happy.

Today, Ren Jie was off duty, so the two of them drove to Yingchun Street. They planned to pay for the mooncakes and personally thank Head Chef Chen for gifting them.

"Please, take a seat here for a moment... Xiao Dong, brew a pot of Biluochun Tea and bring some refreshments."

Although I can't yet figure out the relationship between this handsome man and Head Chef Chen, since he's here to see her, he naturally deserves the best treatment, Shu Yun thought.

Old Huang, sharp as ever, could tell something was afoot. Fearing he might say the wrong thing again, and with the steam pot chicken still hours from being ready, he excused himself to continue his deliveries, planning to return in the evening.

After Ren Jie and Sui Fusheng sat down, Shu Yun returned to the service desk and sent Chen Yan a WeChat message: "Boss Chen, a very handsome man is here looking for 'Head Chef Chen.' He might not be as handsome as *the* Boss, but he's definitely an eye-catcher."

The message had just been sent when Chen Yan, who was in a company meeting, announced, "Let's adjourn for today. I have something to attend to." She then hurriedly walked out of the conference room. As she walked, she didn't forget to send Shu Yun a voice message: "Hold down the fort for me; I'll be there soon. Also, tell Tiantian to open the banquet hall doors. I'll come through there to avoid any awkward encounters at the main entrance... And make sure you have a chef's uniform ready for me. I need it urgently."

After sending the voice message upon reaching her office, Chen Yan kicked off her Chanel high heels, slipped into a pair of canvas shoes she had worn a couple of days prior, grabbed her car keys, and dashed out.

Weiwei watched in surprise. "What's going on? Why is she rushing around like she's got a dog nipping at her heels?"

「In the restaurant.」

Shu Yun discreetly finished listening to Chen Yan's voice message, a slight frown creasing her brow.

Is Boss Chen playing some kind of role-playing game? Rich people certainly have elaborate whims,

she mused. But grumbling aside, she still asked Song Tiantian to take the keys to the third floor, unlock the doors to the banquet hall, and then wait by the main entrance of the hall with a chef's uniform and a head chef's hat for Boss Chen.

While Shu Yun was discreetly making these arrangements, Xiao Dong, the team leader on the first floor, brought over the tea and refreshments.

Before the grand opening, Shu Yun had trained them thoroughly. The restaurant's tea was categorized into several grades: the most common were Maojian Tea and Jasmine Tea; a step above was Longjing Tea; and the highest grade was Biluochun Tea. When the general manager (Shu Yun) requested Biluochun Tea, the unspoken instruction was to treat the guests with the utmost respect.

When preparing the tea, Xiao Dong specifically requested some freshly made pastries from the bakery department. Good tea deserves good pastries, after all, she thought.

As Xiao Dong brought over the tea and pastries, Ren Jie quickly stood up to receive them. Pouring tea for himself and Squad Leader Sui, he said, "Thank you, we can manage ourselves. Please don't worry about us."

Sui Fusheng also chimed in, "We rough types don't need to be waited on. Please, go on with your work."

After Xiao Dong left, Sui Fusheng, who had just called himself a 'rough type,' picked up his white porcelain teacup. He took a sip and then praised, "No wonder everyone likes dining at Lin Ji! Even the tea is exceptional—aromatic, smooth, with a sweet aftertaste. Fifty grams of these tea leaves must cost hundreds! Head Chef Chen certainly commands a lot of respect!"

Ren Jie took a sip and agreed it was excellent.

However, the words of that portly middle-aged man (Old Huang) from earlier left him puzzled. Lin Ji doesn't have a 'Head Chef Chen,' but the manager at the front desk said they do. I don't understand what's happening, he wondered.

Putting down his teacup, he picked up an egg yolk pastry and tasted it. It was sweet but not cloying, with a rich egg flavor that paired perfectly with the tea.

He nodded in agreement. "These high-class Chinese restaurants really are different. Even their refreshments are better than what you find in regular pastry shops outside. It's just a shame they're so expensive. With our salaries and allowances, we couldn't afford to eat like this very often if we really let ourselves go."

Sui Fusheng picked one up and tried it, agreeing it was delicious. "If you just stick to something simple like noodles, it might be affordable, but forget about lavish dishes with lots of meat and fish... I heard their roasted whole lamb costs several thousand and has to be pre-ordered... Why isn't Head Chef Chen done with her work yet?"

Shu Yun overheard their conversation. Just as she was about to invent an excuse for Boss Chen, the roar of a sports car's engine sounded from the street outside.

Ren Jie frowned. "I really dislike people who show off like that in sports cars. Back when I was choosing my police specialty at the academy, if I hadn't been accepted into criminal investigation, I would have gone for traffic patrol. Then I could have really cracked down on these reckless rich kids and their speeding."

Chapter 626: Chef Chen, I've Exposed You! The Steam Pot Chicken is Truly Unparalleled in Flavor!
[Please Subscribe]_2

Shu Yun: "..."

If she hadn't misheard, that must have been President Chen driving up.

The chosen Mr. Right really was... a perfect check on her!

Dundun, on the reception desk, turned over in his sleep, his chubby little body concealing his great contributions.

「On the other side.」

Chen Yan parked her car on the side of the road and hurried into a building with a tutoring sign. She climbed the stairs to the third floor, where Song Tiantian was already waiting.

Chen Yan took the chef's uniform, slipped it on, and then pulled the chef's hat onto her head. "How about it? Does it look okay?"

Song Tiantian looked her up and down. "It's okay, but that watch of yours..."

The Vacheron Constantin on Chen Yan's wrist was a limited edition, worth nearly seven figures. It wasn't something you'd expect a chef to wear; moreover, professional chefs aren't supposed to wear watches or other accessories.

Chen Yan took it off and, along with the diamond chip pendant from her neck, handed them to Song Tiantian. "Hold these for me, Tiantian. I'll go down and check things out."

To invent a persona as a head chef and then rush around in a panic like this—she really wondered how those illiterate stars managed to maintain their scholarly personas.

I'm really not cut out to be a star.

President Chen mused randomly. She was grateful she had only put on light makeup today and didn't need to do anything more. If she'd worn heavy makeup, she would have had to remove it before going downstairs.

She walked through the passageway to the third floor of Lin Ji's Food, then went down the stairs to the second-floor kitchen.

"Brother-in-law, do we have any dishes ready to be served? I need to deal with someone downstairs..."

Lin Xu looked at his sister-in-law, who seemed to have undergone a complete transformation. He pointed to the steam pot chicken that had been started that morning and said, "We're working on the steam pot chicken right now. There aren't any other dishes ready. What do you want to do?"

President Chen didn't beat around the bush. "Didn't I blurt out the other day that I'm the head chef here? Now someone's come looking, and I want to maintain that persona."

Maintain her persona? Lin Xu thought for a moment and then offered his suggestion. "Just say you've just finished a meeting with the executive chef and the head cook. Business has picked up for the Mid-Autumn Festival, and the kitchen staff started to slack off, so you scolded them. Isn't that a good story? Head chefs don't just cook all the time. It's more common for them to stand around with a bulging belly and their hands clasped behind their back."

Oh? Learned a new trick.

Chen Yan recalled how Xie Baomin, Guo Weidong, and Qiu Zhenhua behaved at the Fishing Platform, and her expression immediately grew haughty.

A head chef should carry an air of arrogance.

Lin Xu was curious about his sister-in-law's behavior. "Why don't you just tell the truth? Being a chef isn't something that particularly brings glory, nor is it something to be ashamed of. There's no need to pretend."

Chen Yan replied, "The other person is just a low-ranking police officer. If I were to show off my sports car and things like that, wouldn't it intimidate him? After all, men generally value their pride highly."

Having said that, she started walking down the stairs.

As soon as she reached the bottom of the stairs, Ren Jie, who had heard the footsteps, looked over. "Head Chef Chen, I hope I'm not disturbing your work?"

When Sui Fusheng heard that Head Chef Chen had arrived, he immediately put down his teacup. Turning to see Chen Yan, he paused for a moment, stunned.

In his impression, a head chef should be at least in their forties. But this head chef seemed to be in her twenties, right? So young and beautiful, could she really be a head chef?

"Hello, Officer Ren. I was just upstairs holding a meeting with the executive chef and the head cooks. With business booming during the Mid-Autumn Festival, everyone's gotten a bit lax, so I scolded them... Sorry to have kept you waiting."

After exchanging a few pleasantries, Ren Jie said, "This is my captain. The mooncakes you gave him last time cleared up a misunderstanding between him and his fiancée. He came especially to thank you today."

Sui Fusheng took an envelope from his handbag, containing three thousand yuan. "Head Chef Chen, your mooncakes were a great help. This is payment for them; please accept it."

So they really did come to offer money?

Chen Yan refused. "Didn't we clear things up last time? Those mooncakes were to compensate you for your loss. How could I accept your money?"

After some back and forth, they compromised. Chen Yan accepted fifteen hundred yuan, and the other fifteen hundred was credited to a membership card, which they could use at the restaurant in the future.

While the card was being topped up, Chen Yan shot Shu Yun a meaningful glance.

The implication was to add more credit, effectively returning the fifteen hundred yuan to them. It's not easy for them being police officers; she couldn't possibly accept their money.

Shu Yun caught on immediately and said with a smile to Ren Jie and Sui Fusheng, "We're running a promotion in our restaurant at the moment: top up one thousand five hundred and get an additional one thousand five hundred free. Since both of you are friends of Head Chef Chen, let's just put it onto two cards then. That way, it's more convenient for you to use."

Ren Jie and Sui Fusheng had never dined at the restaurant before. They thought it was a regular promotion and didn't question it.

After the top-up, Ren Jie gave Chen Yan a deep look and then took his leave.

「Stepping out of the restaurant.」

He sighed and said, "I can't believe that during the last assessment, Head Chef Chen saw through my disguise, yet I didn't see through hers."

Sui Fusheng was taken aback. "What do you mean?"

"When I first entered the restaurant, someone mentioned there was no head chef named Chen in the back kitchen. I thought it was nonsense at the time, but after observing Head Chef Chen just now, I realized. She's still wearing the same canvas shoes she had on when we met the other day. They're dirty and haven't been changed, which suggests her living conditions are quite ordinary, completely mismatched with a head chef's income."

"So you mean..."

"She's not actually a head chef. She's probably just a kitchen helper doing miscellaneous tasks. The reason we waited so long was likely because she hadn't finished her tasks, and that manager was just helping her cover it up."

After saying that, Ren Jie sighed. "Just because she felt she ruined my assessment, she insisted on not taking our money, even though her financial situation doesn't seem good. What a kind girl."

Chapter 627: Chef Chen, I've seen through you! As expected of Steam Pot Chicken, the flavor is truly exceptional! _3

"Oh, interested?"

Ren Jie gave a wry smile and shook his head. "My parents are old-fashioned scholars. If they knew I was seeing a little chef, I reckon they'd break my legs. They've made it clear: no one with less than a master's degree is to enter the Ren Family's door..."

The two reached a roadside Tiguan, unlocked it, and got in.

As Sui Fusheng started the car, he said, "Matters of the heart are unpredictable. I used to insist I'd stay single for life, and look at me now, always fussing over Baobao this and Baobao that... If you like her, go for it. As long as you two want to be together, all external factors are just passing clouds."

Ren Jie turned to look at the entrance of Lin Ji's Food.

He thought that the little chef trying so hard to act like a head chef was actually... quite cute.

Should he come back on his next day off?

He'd topped up his card with fifteen hundred yuan; it'd be a waste not to spend it...

As he was thinking, he saw a white Porsche parked haphazardly on the roadside, and his professional instincts kicked in. He frowned and asked, "Captain, do you know any traffic cops around here?"

"What's up?"

"That car is illegally parked. It should get a ticket..."

「Inside the restaurant.」

Chen Yan handed the fifteen hundred yuan to Shu Yun, who had been thoroughly engrossed in watching the 'show' unfold, saying, "Put this in the accounts, so your numbers match up tonight."

"Okay, I'll take care of it... Should I let you know the next time that handsome cop comes by?"

"Mhm, yes. I can't let my head chef persona collapse."

Seeing the gossip-hungry look on Shu Yun's face, Chen Yan added, "Shu Yun, I have a whole set of La Mer skincare products, a limited edition. I think it'll suit you well. I'll bring it over for you later."

"Great! Thank you, Boss Chen!"

Ha, to stop her from gossiping, Boss Chen really had to cough up a bit today.

Shu Yun had originally planned to share the gossip in the "Tiantian's Single No More Squad" group chat, but since Boss Chen had offered a set of skincare products, she decided to let it slide.

After all, you can't bite the hand that feeds you.

When she returned upstairs, Chen Yan took off the chef's jacket she wore over her T-shirt, put on her watch and pendant, slung her Hermès bag over her shoulder, and completed the transformation from Chef Chen to Boss Chen.

"Brother-in-law, I'm heading back now. Don't forget to call me when the steam pot chicken is ready. I need my skin to be in its best condition for my eighteenth birthday."

"No problem," Lin Xu called out from the kitchen, resuming his work.

The lid of the steam pot was now rattling continuously from the steam pressure.

A rich, savory aroma wafted from it, instantly making one's mouth water.

However, it was still too early for the steam pot chicken; it wouldn't be ready until at least 5:30 PM.

The pot was large, so the condensation formed more slowly. If it were a smaller steam pot, about an hour in a pressure cooker would suffice.

Of course, there was another method.

That was to place a chunk of ice on the lid of the steam pot.

The steam pot worked on the principle of steam pre-cooling and condensing into water. The greater the temperature difference between the inside and outside of the pot, the better the condensation, and the more condensed water would be produced.

But today, there was plenty of time, so Lin Xu didn't resort to that.

「Around five in the afternoon.」

Shen Baobao finished work, and the guests arriving for the steam pot chicken also began to show up.

There were his parents-in-law, his senior apprentice-brother and his wife, Old Huang and his wife, as well as Zeng Xiaoqi, Dou Wenjing, Chen Yan, and others.

Speaking of eating steam pot chicken, the group, having just celebrated the Mid-Autumn Festival, wasn't overly enthusiastic.

But if you mentioned it was full of Chinese herbs that enriched qi and blood, then sorry, even if Earth were about to end the next second, they'd still have to take a few bites to replenish their vitality.

Everyone sat in the private room upstairs, exchanging pleasantries for a while as the servers brought in several dishes.

There was a platter of assorted braised meats, cold mixed vegetables, and the cilantro-beef salad that Lin Xu had taught Chen Yan and Shen Baobao to make a couple of days ago.

In short, they were all appetizing cold dishes.

The men had already started drinking with the food on the table. The women, though they also found the dishes delicious, ate with great restraint.

They were saving room for the steam pot chicken.

「In the kitchen.」

Lin Xu put on heat-resistant gloves and carefully lifted the stewing steam pot from the stove.

After wiping away the grease splattered around the lid, he opened it, and an intensely rich and savory aroma billowed out.

The soup inside didn't fill the pot, but its golden color was incredibly enticing.

The young hen, raised on grain, already had abundant fat. Combined with ingredients like Cordyceps Flowers, its color was golden, and the rich, savory aroma was so enticing it made one want to plunge right in.

Lin Xu ladled out two bowls and said to Wei Qian, "These are for Tiantian and Shu Yun. Don't forget to take them to them later."

"I'll take them right now."

After Wei Qian left, Lin Xu covered the pot again and carried the oversized steam pot up the stairs.

When the door to the private room was pushed open, everyone inside perked up.

The main event had arrived!

Seeing the large soup pot Lin Xu was carrying, everyone let out a satisfied gasp.

This pot was so big; they could eat and drink to their hearts' content.

When the lid was lifted, revealing the golden broth inside, everyone was captivated.

Xie Baomin exclaimed in admiration, "Junior Brother, your skill in making steam pot chicken is truly excellent! One look at this broth, and I know this chicken is cooked to perfection."

Madam Huang said, "This kind of Golden Soup steam pot chicken is rare even in Southern Yunnan. Nowadays, chickens are mostly feed-raised, have short growing periods, and simply don't have enough fat in their meat."

While everyone was talking, Lin Xu took a ladle and served each person a small bowl of soup.

The moment they tasted the soup, everyone was stunned.

"This is unbelievably delicious!"

"How did you make this, Brother-in-law? Can I learn?"

"Lin Xu, your cooking is amazing! Can we have this often in the future?"

"Brother Lin, could you teach me later? My Old Huang has teased me countless times that I'm not a true native of Southern Yunnan because my steam pot chicken isn't tasty. Even when I punish him by making him sleep in the living room, he doesn't change."

Lin Xu: ???????

Is it possible that sleeping in the living room is a reward for him?

After serving everyone, Lin Xu ladled a bowl for himself. He tasted it; the flavor was indeed exceptionally savory. The saltiness from the ham was just right, even saving the step of adding salt.

Drinking it piping hot like this, it wasn't just women; men couldn't resist this sensation either.

Shen Baobao finished her soup in a few gulps and was about to pick up a piece of chicken to eat when Lin Xu stopped her, saying, "The meat is a bit bland, so it needs a dipping sauce. Drink the soup first. I'll prepare the dipping sauce for the chicken in a moment, and I guarantee you'll like it even more."

Upon hearing Lin Xu was going to make a dipping sauce, Madam Huang immediately asked, "Is it that spicy and sour kind from Southern Yunnan? If so, this steam pot chicken will be even more perfect!"

Lin Xu smiled. "It's exactly that kind of dipping sauce. For the best flavor, I even had someone specifically buy wood tomatoes..."

After saying this, he finished the soup in his bowl in one gulp, stood up, and said, "Everyone, please wait a moment. I'll have you tasting authentic Southern Yunnan dipping sauce shortly!"

Chapter 628: The Soul Dipping Sauce That Gets You Hooked at First Bite! Geng Lele's Promotion Feast!

Dips, also known as sauces, are the soul of dipping sauce dishes and are found all over the country. For instance, there's the ginger sauce used with Plain Chicken in Cantonese cuisine, the oil sauce and dry sauce in Sichuan cuisine, as well as the sesame paste dipping sauce for Northern mutton hot pot, and the indispensable Shacha Sauce for Chaoshan Beef Hot Pot; all of these are very famous. But if you ask where the most dipping sauces are found, the Yun Gui Region takes the lead. Here, the types of dipping sauces number in the thousands, and new ones are created daily. All kinds of sour, sweet, bitter, spicy, numbing, and fragrant dipping sauces not only enhance people's appetites but also enrich the flavors of the dishes.

When he exchanged points for the steam-pot chicken recipe, it came with a related dipping sauce. However, Lin Xu felt it was too restrictive. Considering the reasonable prices of Yunnan-style dipping sauces, he exchanged points for an Excellent Level collection of Yunnan-style sauces. The collection cost less than 300,000 points but included several thousand sauce recipes, as well as techniques and tips for mixing dipping sauces. Breaking it down, each type of sauce cost only a few dozen points—even cheaper than those "historically low" games on Steam that sell for 1% of their original price.

Back in the kitchen, Lin Xu prepared the ingredients for the dipping sauces. There are many ways to make Yunnan-style dipping sauces, but the fundamental principle is that they must be delicious. To ensure northerners could also adapt to the taste of Yunnan-style dipping sauces, Lin Xu specifically chose one with a sour and spicy flavor profile. This sauce, named "Nanmi," primarily used ingredients like tomatoes, tree tomatoes, purple eggplants, Thai chiles, and garlic. The so-called tree tomato is a plant unique to Southern Yunnan, also known as a tomato tree. It is rich in pectin, has a sweet and sour taste, and is a main ingredient in making jam. The reason for using tree tomatoes in this sauce, aside from adding sourness, was mainly to act as a thickener, making the dip's texture more captivating.

Once the ingredients were prepared, he placed a frying pan on the stove and began to Dry Burn it. After it was hot, he added the various ingredients one by one to blacken their skins. Finally, he grabbed a

large handful of dried chilies and added them to the pan, similarly charring them until their skins were slightly blackened. Then, while they were still hot, he pounded them into fine fragments in a mortar, creating the pounded charred chilies that are an indispensable part of nearly every meal in the Southwest Region. These chilies, charred to an almost-black state, might look unassuming, but they possessed a rich fragrance and were one of the essential ingredients for dipping sauces.

He scraped the pounded charred chilies out of the mortar. Next, he peeled the charred skins off the main ingredients, also placed them in the mortar, and used the pestle to crush them into a mush, which he then transferred to a small bowl. He added cilantro and chopped thorny celery, followed by salt, sugar, Flavoring, chopped garlic, and the freshly made pounded charred chilies. After mixing everything evenly, a rich Dai-style "Nanmi" sauce was ready. Lin Xu tasted it; the sour and spicy flavors were intense but acceptable. Originally, he hadn't planned to add sugar. He worried that the strong sour and spicy taste might be too much for the others, leading to an awkward scenario where everyone just watched Mrs. Huang eat by herself. So, he added some powdered sugar to balance the flavors. And indeed, it tasted great. The sour, spicy, and slightly sweet profile gave this dipping sauce a unique character.

Carrying the dipping sauce back to the private room, he took a stack of small saucers from the serving cabinet and gave everyone a spoonful of this Dai-style sauce.

"Come try this. The sour and spicy flavor is quite strong, so don't take a big bite all at once," he warned.

His last remark was directed at a certain gluttonous girl.

Shen Baobao stuck out her tongue. That Xu Bao is too much! Don't I, the executive chef of Lin Ji's Food, have any dignity?

But despite her grumbling, she was the first to take the saucer of dip and place it in front of herself. Having already downed two bowls of chicken soup, it was time to taste the chicken. Shen Baobao, who had no anxieties about her appearance, didn't think drinking a lot of chicken soup was all that beneficial; she just wanted to heartily devour the meat.

She picked up a large piece of Chicken Thigh from the steam pot, dipped it in the sauce, and eagerly popped it into her mouth. The chicken was a bit hot, but that wasn't important. What mattered was the intense sour and spicy taste of the dipping sauce, like biting into a green apple covered in chili. The sourness made her grimace, while the spiciness made her want to cry. However, when she bit into the chicken, its fresh, savory flavor and tender texture greatly neutralized the intense sour and spicy taste.

The previous assault of sour and spicy sensations seemed to lose its sharp intensity. Instead, it had an appetizing effect.

"Wow, I didn't expect people from Southern Yunnan to handle sour and spicy flavors as well as those in the Northwest!" Shen Baobao exclaimed.

Mrs. Huang, however, didn't dip the chicken directly. She first used her chopsticks to pick up a little of the thick dipping sauce and taste it. A surprised expression immediately appeared on her face. "This dipping sauce is really delicious! But compared to chicken, this kind of sauce would be even better with grilled eggplant, grilled Pork Skin, or beef skin. That would be even tastier."

Usually, steam-pot chicken just needs a ginger-garlic sauce, she thought. However, considering Brother Lin isn't from Southern Yunnan, making it this well is quite remarkable. Plus, after drinking that delicious chicken soup, having a sour and spicy dipping sauce with the meat is quite appetizing. When she arrived, she had been somewhat apprehensive, fearing that the steam-pot chicken made by Lin Xu, a Northerner, wouldn't be authentic, or that it might have a gamey taste like her own attempts. But after trying it, she realized his skill was comparable to those masters of steam-pot chicken in Southern Yunnan. Not only did it lack any gamey taste, but he had also used Ham to make the soup incredibly savory. Drinking it hot was so comforting, warming her entire body. No wonder he became a consultant at Fishing Platform at such a young age. His skill was truly excellent.

The men at the table each finished a bowl of chicken soup and then resumed drinking their alcoholic beverages. The women, however, generally had more than two bowls of chicken soup. When they occasionally scooped up pieces of Notoginseng, some even attempted to chew and swallow them. But they soon realized their teeth were likely no match for the hardness of the Notoginseng, so they eventually gave up.

Chapter 629: The Soul Dipping Sauce That Gets You Hooked with Just One Bite! Geng Lele's Celebration Banquet for Academic Advancement! _2

Lin Xu sat down, picked up a piece of chicken, dipped it gently in the dipping sauce, and then brought the meat to his mouth. The chicken was completely tender and had fallen off the bone, chewy and fragrant, and exceptionally moist in texture. When he put it in the pot earlier, he had included the yellow fat from the chicken's abdominal cavity into the steam pot, along with the fat from the Ham, ensuring the soup wasn't bland, but instead rich and aromatic. Delicious! Not only was the chicken delicious, but the spicy and sour dipping sauce also felt like it gave the dish its soul.

Before preparing the dipping sauce, Lin Xu was worried that the strong flavors of spicy and sour would overpower the fresh taste of the chicken. However, upon tasting it, he found that it didn't overpower it at all; in fact, it enhanced the chicken's flavor.

It was truly a dipping sauce that could get one hooked!

Zeng Xiaoqi had been hosting a travel show for the past two years and had traveled extensively.

Tasting the sour and spicy delicious dipping sauce, she asked curiously, "I remember when I had dipping sauce in Southern Yunnan, they added fish mint. Why didn't you add any here?"

Mrs. Huang said with a smile, "We don't add fish mint to our local dipping sauce... We locals dislike the name 'fish mint' because it carries a strong sense of aversion. We prefer 'Houttuynia cordata'; it's ear-foldingly delicious."

Everyone: "!!!!!!!"

They learned another tip for interacting with people from the Southwest.

While enjoying the steam pot chicken, everyone started discussing how to make this delicacy.

Aside from the ingredients, the method for making steam pot chicken was actually quite simple. The chicken didn't even need to be washed. Just rubbing the skin with salt to remove impurities was enough before chopping it up and placing it in the steam pot, along with other ingredients and Ham. Then, it was just a matter of placing the steam pot on the pressure cooker and waiting for it to cook. How simple is that.

But there was one thing: this dish required high-quality ingredients.

Common Three-yellow Chickens and White Feather Chickens just wouldn't do; this method wasn't suitable for them.

At the very least, it had to be grain-fed free-range chicken or small black claw chickens.

While enjoying the delicious steam pot chicken, Chen's innate passion for cooking surged once more: "Brother-in-law, what's the best chicken to use for steam pot chicken? Is today's considered top-notch?"

Lin Xu shook his head: "This chicken meat is not bad, but it's not the best. The top-grade would be hens from Southern Yunnan, free-range and not fed commercial feed, spayed before they start laying. They're allowed to mature for a full year, transforming from pullets into old hens, their bellies full of Butter, without ever having laid a single Egg. That's the best kind of chicken."

Imagine a hen that has accumulated a year's worth of nutrition being stewed in a steam pot—the taste is indescribable.

Mrs. Huang exclaimed in admiration, "Brother Lin really knows his stuff about Southern Yunnan. Sadly, those chickens are now hard to come by. If you're not careful, you might be duped because many people fatten up spent laying hens for a couple of months and then sell them. If you aren't an expert, you won't be able to get your hands on a real spayed hen."

Xie Baomin, who was drinking with Shen Guofu and Old Huang, said, "For women, black-boned chicken would be a better choice. Making steam pot chicken with black-boned chicken is even more beneficial for health."

Black-boned chicken?

Everyone's eyes lit up instantly.

Right, if you can't buy the best hens, you can get the nutritionally superior black-boned chicken.

It was quite easy to purchase free-range black-boned chickens from the farms in the capital's suburbs.

Buying them and processing them at the restaurant would surely result in another beauty-enhancing, nourishing black-boned chicken soup.

Mrs. Huang then said to Old Huang, "Old Huang, buy a few black-boned chickens and send them over later. And let's trouble Brother Lin to make another steam pot chicken for us. We have so many good medicinal herbs at home; send some of those too."

Giving money directly would be too impersonal, and only a fool would turn such personal connections into business transactions. Offering some of the valuable herbs from home not only strengthens the partnership but also smoothly integrates them into Lin Xu's network. This could greatly benefit future business expansions.

Old Huang understood this as well. So, when his wife gave the instruction, he immediately agreed. "Of course, no problem. I'll ask which farm has the best quality black-boned chickens. If it's for us, we definitely have to get the best."

「While everyone was enjoying their meal, at the service desk on the first floor.」

Shu Yun held a bowl, slowly savoring the chicken soup, which was dotted with beads of golden fat, with a spoon.

"It's truly scrumptious. No wonder it takes several hours to prepare. Labor-intensive dishes are indeed all extraordinary," she said, marveling at the delicious taste of the chicken soup.

Song Tiantian, who was beside her, tasted a spoonful and then asked, "Director Shu, does this really replenish energy and blood?"

"Of course, it contains plenty of Panax notoginseng and Astragalus—one for blood and the other for energy. It's really good for the body. Drink up quickly before it cools down and might become greasy."

Song Tiantian clenched her fist and flexed her bicep. The slightly loose white shirt suddenly strained against her muscles, looking as if the seams might burst: "I don't think I need to replenish my energy and blood. Wei Qian, on the other hand, often gets those debilitating sweats and needs to supplement more. Otherwise, I'll keep having to slow down for him when we're cycling at night."

Shu Yun was dumbfounded.

You're treating Wei Qian like your wife, aren't you?

And that massive bicep is really enviable! If only I had muscles like that, when the boss doesn't pay... Wait, why am I having thoughts about beating up the boss?

This thought is a bit dangerous. Definitely shouldn't go there.

She then looked at Song Tiantian's build and couldn't help but wonder, How much liquor did Tiantian's former boss have to drink before daring to harass such a formidable woman?

「Just as she was drinking, Geng Lele arrived at the restaurant.」

Seeing Shu Yun, the girl hurried over excitedly.

Chapter 630: The Soul Dipping Sauce That Gets You Hooked with Just One Bite! Geng Lele's Celebration Banquet for Academic Advancement! _3

"Yunyun, I have some unfortunate news for you..."

This tone of voice made Shu Yun puzzled. "What unfortunate news? Did you get caught forging a sick note?"

"No, it's that I can never pretend to be the class teacher to sign off on things again, nor am I eligible to participate in the college entrance exam... I... I... I... I... I was forcibly accepted by the Excellent Level class."

Accepted is one thing, but forcibly? It's not like they can go to your house and drag you there.

Shu Yun said with a smile, "That's good news, actually! When we took the college entrance exam, we would study all night long, and after the exams, we were all out of sorts. To be able to skip the college entrance exam and get into Tsinghua University, and moreover, to be in the Excellent Level class which is on par with Professor Yao's class, is a dream come true for many."

"But..."

Geng Lele, too, initially thought it was quite nice. But these past few days, whenever she showed the slightest hesitation, everyone—whether school teachers or family relatives—acted as if her acceptance was a stroke of immense luck, a blessing from her ancestors. You're ungrateful and even putting on airs, how thoughtless! That was the general sentiment.

Young Geng Lele was experiencing troubles beyond academics for the first time, so she was unhappy.

Shu Yun put down her bowl and said with a smile, "Let them say what they want; just don't listen to them. Didn't Professor Cui say last time that he would handle these matters? He doesn't want you too involved in things outside your studies to prevent them from affecting you."

From her years of knowing her relatives, some genuinely cared about the younger generation, but others were covertly jealous. Their own achievements were mediocre, and so were their kids'. If everyone were mediocre, then fine, but there just had to be someone exceptionally talented in the family. To find some psychological balance, they deliberately talked down to the younger ones, and the more outstanding the young person, the harsher they lectured them.

Dealing with these people is actually quite simple; just find someone imposing enough to make them back down.

Shu Yun looked at Geng Lele and asked, "When they say these things, is your grandfather not present?"

"Yeah, they always wait for my grandfather to be absent before they say such things."

"Next time someone says that, just call your grandfather over. Let the gentle and amiable Mr. Lishan sincerely thank them for their earnest advice and fervent hopes."

Geng Lele paused for a moment. Could the problem really be solved that simply?

She had been quite troubled by these matters during this year's Mid-Autumn Festival. What seemed so hard to resolve unexpectedly became simple just by bringing her grandfather into it—it was almost too easy!

"Thank you, Yunyun. Oh, by the way, I might be having a school acceptance celebration in a few days. You should join us."

"Sure, I'll bring you a big red envelope!"

After speaking, Shu Yun pointed upstairs, "They're all upstairs eating steam pot chicken. You should hurry up and try some too. Besides, before dinner, Aunt Han was mentioning she hadn't seen you these past few days."

Upon hearing there was food, Little Mushroom Head instantly perked up. "I'll go right now, and I'll invite Uncle Shen and Aunt Han to my school acceptance celebration..."

And she happily trotted upstairs.

Song Tiantian enviously watched Geng Lele's departing figure and said, "I so envy those for whom taking the college entrance exam is as easy as drinking water. After being accepted by Tsinghua University, Lele's parents must be really happy, right?"

Happy, definitely. But extremely happy... Considering that both of Geng Lele's parents work in a research institute and are highly intelligent, they probably take such things in stride. They would likely think it's only to be expected. Moreover, when it came to happiness, the truly elated one should be the runner-up from Haidian Middle School, who had always been overshadowed by Geng Lele. Now, hearing Geng Lele was leaving, that student was probably genuinely happy for their schoolmate.

「The following morning.」

While the back kitchen was bustling with preparations, Lin Xu received a call from Geng Lishan.

"Lin, my young friend, you heard about Lele getting into Tsinghua University, right? I'm planning to hold a school acceptance celebration at your place, for about eighty or ninety people. Can your place accommodate that many?"

"Yes, we can. We just set up a banquet hall before the Mid-Autumn Festival; it can definitely accommodate them."

Upon hearing about the banquet hall, Geng Lishan was relieved. He was very dedicated to his granddaughter's school acceptance celebration. He invited not only a host of relatives but also leaders and teachers from Haidian Middle School, as well as esteemed guests like Cui Qingyuan. Additionally, members of the TV show "Delicacies of the Worlds" were also invited, since they were colleagues, after a fashion.

After finalizing the date, number of guests, and dishes, the restaurant began its preparations. The roast suckling pig from the last time had left a profound impression on Geng Lishan, so this time there would be one per table, along with a whole roasted lamb. As for other dishes, that was up to Lin Xu to decide. He had only one request: nothing too fancy, just showcase the dishes' natural flavors as much as possible. It was a celebration for close friends and family, after all; no need for pretentious, unsatisfying dishes.

But to Lin Xu, it sounded like: "Not too fancy? Natural flavors? What kind of cooking fits these criteria?"

After hanging up the phone, he asked Wei Qian, "What kind of dishes are considered not fancy while maintaining their natural flavors?"

"Stewing," Wei Qian replied. "That's all about natural flavors, isn't it?"

That was one direction, but for a proper school acceptance celebration, we can't just serve a table full of various stews, can we? Even at a country feast, they don't just do that!

Zhu Yong said, "The steam pot chicken you made yesterday fits the bill. It looks good, tastes good, and is suitable for Lele's school acceptance celebration."

That was a good suggestion. I'll ask Old Huang to prepare a few more chickens that day, so each table can have a serving of steam pot chicken to try.

Zhuang Yizhou also offered his opinion, "How about steamed dishes? They are simple and fresh without being bland. That should meet Mr. Lishan's requirement for natural flavors perfectly."

The topic of "natural flavors" spurred a lively discussion.

While they were talking, the usually silent Qin Wei suddenly spoke, "Salt... salt-baked. That... meets the... requirements."

As he said this, everyone's eyes lit up.

Right, salt-baked! When speaking of natural flavors, what could be more fitting than salt-baked dishes?

It was truly unexpected; Mr. Lishan, despite his age, was actually speaking so cryptically! If Qin Wei hadn't figured out his hint, this celebration banquet might not have achieved perfection.

Just as he was thinking, the system notification rang in Lin Xu's mind:

"Host continually seeks improvement, triggering Side Quest [Technique Exploration]: Please create three salt-baked dishes of at least Excellent Level within four hours. Upon completion, you will obtain a Superior universal Cooking Technique—Salt Baking."

Four hours, three dishes. And all must be of Excellent Level. System, you don't have to think so highly of me, really. I'm just a newbie in the cooking world. Starting me off with three dishes... it's going to be very difficult for me to achieve that.

Lin Xu sighed and began to conceptualize the salt-baked dishes he was about to make...