

## **Culinary 631**

Chapter 631: Salt-Baked Snacks that Even a Kitchen Novice Can Learn! Shocking My Sister Yan for an Entire Year!

When it came to salt-baked dishes, the first thing Lin Xu thought of was Salt Baked Chicken.

This dish, created by the Ke Family during their migrations, became as famous as Plain Chicken, renowned for its robust flavor and unique aroma.

However, for Lin Xu, attempting to make Salt Baked Chicken without any prior experience in related dishes was a bit risky.

With only four hours available, online tutorials suggested that marinating the chicken alone would take two hours, baking it would require another hour, and the final hour would be consumed by washing the chicken, stir-frying the salt, and other preparations. The timing was incredibly tight.

Even if he did succeed, he would have completed only one dish.

That was quite a significant gap from the requirement of three dishes.

Therefore, to complete the task, he needed to select ingredients that were less difficult to handle, quicker to prepare, and took less time.

In the spirit of "three cobblers with their wits combined may outdo Zhuge Liang," Lin Xu looked at his main kitchen crew and asked, "Which salt-baked dishes have you all tried? The simpler ones that are quick to prepare?"

Actually, this task had a loophole. Lin Xu now had plenty of points and could have exchanged them for three Excellent Level salt-baked dishes from the points mall, costing at most five to six hundred thousand points in total. But completing the task would grant him a Superior General Technique for salt-baking. Exchanging a few hundred thousand points for a Superior General Technique was undoubtedly a good deal.

But Lin Xu didn't do that. If the system left such an obvious loophole, he thought, it's probably waiting for me to fall into it. Better to honestly follow the task requirements. Besides, the task description mentioned exploration, so why not enjoy the fun of culinary discovery?

Upon hearing this, the head chefs and executive chef immediately offered suggestions:

"Salt-baked Pork liver: bury the Pork liver in hot, stir-fried salt and let it bake for fifty minutes. It's so good, it'll make the neighbor's kids cry and roll on the floor with craving."

"Salt-baked peanuts, a perfect little snack to go with drinks."

"Salt-baked... salt-baked quail... eggs... Fragrant, really fragrant!"

"Salt-baked Large Shrimp: just bury live shrimp in salt, no other care needed. Not only the neighbor's kids, but even the adults next door wouldn't be able to resist this temptation."

"..."

With many minds at work, the range of ideas broadened.

Soon, everyone had thought up all sorts of salt-baked dishes.

Salt-baked fava beans, salt-baked soybeans, salt-baked walnuts, salt-baked cashews, salt-baked pumpkin seeds... Nuts and salt-baking are a perfect match. From this category alone, they listed numerous dishes.

Furthermore, there were salt-baked pork kidneys, salt-baked lamb kidneys, salt-baked chicken kidneys, salt-baked chicken gizzards, and other dishes that also met the requirement of being quick, simple, and easy to prepare.

Hearing everyone's suggestions, Lin Xu, who had been worrying, suddenly thought, This is actually a bonus question!

With so many salt-baked dishes, all simple to cook, he was confident he could complete three dishes within four hours.

With this in mind, Lin Xu immediately began to prepare.

First were the quail eggs suggested by Qin Wei.

He chose this delicacy because salt-baked quail eggs required absolutely no seasoning. Their appeal lay in the aroma of the baked eggs themselves, making them relatively easy to prepare.

The kitchen had large-grain sea salt, rich in umami and with a loose texture, similar to the coarse salt used for Salt Baked Chicken.

But unlike coarse salt, this refined large-grain sea salt was typically used for sprinkling on high-end seafood or steaks. It lacked the harmful substances present in coarse salt and could directly contact the food.

The only downside to this salt was its high price.

However, compared to the Superior salt-baking Technique, this cost was negligible.

Lin Xu brought over a small basin of quail eggs, poured them into clear water, and gently rubbed the shells clean, making them cleaner and safer to eat.

After washing the eggshells, he dried them with paper towels, placed them in a basket, and set them aside.

With salt-baked dishes, the surface of the ingredients must not be wet; otherwise, the water would dissolve the salt, making the dish unpleasantly salty and bitter.

Without moisture, the salt remains dry, imparting only the rich umami of the salt to the ingredients.

Once the quail eggs were ready, Lin Xu found a wok that wasn't used often and decided to designate it as his salt-baking pot.

Salt can be corrosive to iron and tends to damage woks, so chefs normally use stainless steel pots, clay pots, or woks that are about to be discarded for salt-baking dishes. Chefs wouldn't use their regular frying woks for salt-baking.

He cleaned the wok, placed it on the stove to heat up, and then poured in four packets of large-grain sea salt.

After pouring it in, he gently stir-fried it with a spoon, slowly heating the salt.

When stirring, it was crucial to scrape the bottom to ensure the salt heated evenly, preventing the food from burning.

To make the baked quail eggs more fragrant, after the salt's temperature had risen slightly, Lin Xu added a handful of Star Anise.

Star Anise could impart a faint, savory, almost meat-like aroma to the salt.

Although this wouldn't significantly affect the taste of the quail eggs once shelled, fragrant eggshells might improve the system's assessment. And since this is an exploration, he mused, I should try various methods.

Star Anise is quite resistant to heat when stir-frying, so it needed to be added early.

Once the aroma of the Star Anise was released, he added Sichuan peppercorns and dried chili segments, continuing to stir-fry.

By now, the salt in the wok had clearly become drier. It was much easier to stir than when it was first added, and the rustling of the salt grains was more distinct.

Soon, a numbing and spicy aroma also began to waft through the air.

Lin Xu then added a handful of Fennel to the wok, mixed it evenly, and was ready to begin baking.

He first scooped out at least half of the salt from the wok. Then, he turned the stove flame down to its lowest setting, resembling a candle flame, because too much heat could easily burn the quail eggs.

Chapter 632: Salt-Baked Snacks That Even Kitchen Novices Can Master! Shocking Sister Yan for a Whole Year! \_2

Using a spoon, Lin Xu dug a small hollow in the remaining salt in the pot to ensure the layer at the bottom was even.

He then placed the quail eggs one by one onto the salt. After arranging them, he poured the scooped-out salt back in, completely burying the quail eggs.

He put the lid on the pot, and the baking officially began.

Baking, in this context, referred to cooking ingredients by stewing them in a specific medium. This included not only salt-baking but also methods like water-baking and steam-baking.

After setting the quail eggs to bake, Lin Xu paused in thought. Then, he boiled a pot of water on an adjacent stove, added a large bowl of meat-braising broth, and brought it to a high boil.

He then poured a small basin of rinsed peanuts into the broth.

Since I've already made salt-baked quail eggs, I might as well make salt-baked peanuts too.

He chose to boil them in the broth first to enhance their savory flavor, which would make the baked peanuts even more delicious.

Of course, the system score will also be a bit higher.

Well, to get the peanuts to Excellent Level, boiling them in broth before baking should make them more aromatic than just baking directly. The score will naturally be higher.

"Why the sudden obsession with salt-baking? Salt-baked quail eggs and peanuts are both great with drinks. Are you secretly trying to satisfy your father-in-law's cravings?"

Wei Qian sidled up, a knowing look on his face as if he'd seen right through Lin Xu's little plan.

Lin Xu said, "It's not just for my father-in-law. I've been enjoying a small snack before bed these past few nights. Peanuts are nutritious and filling—isn't that better than other snacks?"

He then looked at Wei Qian and asked, "Want to try some? It'd be nice to have something to munch on while watching TV dramas at night, so you're not just sitting there."

"Absolutely not! If Tiantian finds out I'm snacking secretly at night, she might give me another shoulder throw. I don't dare provoke her..."

A shoulder throw?

The surrounding area suddenly fell silent. Not only was Lin Xu stunned, but Zhu Yong, Qin Wei, and Zhuang Yizhou also turned to look.

A bit of playful teasing between them was one thing, but privately practicing wrestling moves like a shoulder throw? That seemed far from typical for a couple.

It felt like they had missed out on a lot of drama!

Zhu Yong, munching on a piece of tomato he was cutting, asked, "Hey Wei, spill the beans about the shoulder throw. No offense, I just want to know what it feels like. I've taken plenty of punches, but I've never experienced a shoulder throw..."

Zhuang Yizhou, always one to stir the pot, chimed in, "Go on, tell us! If it's fun, I might try it with my girlfriend too."

Judging by Wei Qian's grimace, it probably wasn't fun. But whether it was fun or not was secondary; the main thing was they'd never witnessed anything like it!

Who would've thought the restaurant's head chef and front manager could be so explosive!

Wei Qian glared at them irritably. "Get lost, all of you! Stop stirring things up. Anymore out of you two, and you'll be doing all the stir-fries tonight."

With that, he retreated to the adjacent pastry section.

I can't afford to offend you all, but surely I can hide from you?

Ten minutes later, Lin Xu scooped the peanuts out of the broth and removed the aromatics, leaving only the peanuts.

By this time, the salt-baked quail eggs were almost ready.

When he lifted the lid, a rich aroma of spices mingled with the distinct, clean scent of sea salt wafted out. Closing his eyes, it was as if he were cooking savory seafood.

The sea salt in the pot had now clumped into large pieces.

Lin Xu turned off the stove's flame and carefully broke apart the salt chunks with a spatula. Then, using a large colander, he sifted the quail eggs and spices from the salt.

This salt would be used to fry the peanuts later, and any remaining spices could easily burn, so it was essential to filter them out now.

After sifting out all the quail eggs and spices, he brought over a plate, lined it with two lettuce leaves, and arranged the baked quail eggs on top.

Once they were arranged, Lin Xu examined them with the Eye of Discrimination.

[Level: Excellent Level]

Success!

He picked up a quail egg, cracked it open, and peeled off the shell, revealing the richly fragrant egg inside.

He wasn't sure if the baking heat had been too high or the time too long, but the lower half of the quail egg was slightly browned. However, the mouthfeel was excellent and the aroma very rich.

These are much tastier than plain boiled quail eggs!

With the quail eggs as a successful precedent, Lin Xu felt confident about the next two dishes.

He reignited the flame and returned the pot of sea salt to the stove. As it heated, he continuously used a spoon to break up the clumps of salt.

Once the salt was loose again, he first used a colander to filter out any remaining spices. Then, he poured the drained peanuts into the pot and began to stir-fry them.

When the peanuts first went into the pot, their moisture caused them to become coated in salt.

No problem, I just need to keep stir-frying over high heat.

Salt-baked peanuts were different from salt-baked quail eggs. Quail eggs needed to be buried in salt to stew, while peanuts required constant stir-frying.

This not only kept the salt loose but also ensured the peanuts heated evenly.

Soon, the salt coating on the peanuts began to diminish. Eventually, the surface of the peanuts dried, and the salt became loose once more.

When a CRACKLING sound started, it signaled that the peanuts were perfectly cooked.

He turned off the heat, buried the peanuts in the hot salt, and let them sit for a short while to allow the flavors to meld.

This was a technique he'd picked up from making the salt-baked quail eggs earlier. Burying the ingredients in hot salt allowed its unique absorbency to draw out moisture from within. Even though he had wiped the surface moisture off the quail eggs, the salt had still absorbed a lot of moisture, even forming large chunks. That's why he wanted to try the same method with the peanuts.

Chapter 633: Salt-Baked Snacks That Even Kitchen Novices Can Master! Shocking Sister Yan for a Whole Year! \_3

If it worked, it would be like mastering a small trick. If it didn't, there was no real loss—at most, just a few scorched peanuts. For Lin Ji's Food at the moment, this kind of loss was negligible.

He didn't dare to let them bake for too long and didn't even cover the pot. About two to three minutes later, he raked out the peanuts buried in the salt. Then he used a strainer to sift them, pouring all the peanuts onto a tray to spread out and prevent the residual heat from scorching them.

While the peanuts were cooling, Lin Xu took a cucumber, cut it vertically, laid one half flat on the cutting board, and sliced it diagonally into cucumber slices. After cutting, he arranged the cucumber slices in a circle on a plate, with the arcs facing outward, trying to form a flower-like pattern as much as possible. When the peanuts were cool enough, he carefully placed them in the center with a spoon.

If the quality isn't enough, plating will help. All high-end dishes focus on presentation, which showed that appearance was also part of the culinary score. Lin Xu wasn't very confident about this plate of

peanuts, so he simply styled it, not expecting too high of a mark; just hoping to reach the Excellent Level would suffice. Since starting his career, this was the first time he felt the "hurray for 60 points" sentiment.

After arranging it, he looked at it with the Eye of Discrimination, and it turned out to be Superior!

This...

Lin Xu picked up a peanut and tasted it. It was fragrant and crisp, savory and delicious. Upon closer tasting, he could discern a faint braised flavor within the peanut. This gave him a new appreciation for the method of salt baking. This technique was simply an amplifier for the aroma of the ingredients. The two dishes he had just prepared, whether the quail eggs or the peanuts, were both more fragrant than usual and had acquired an additional unique savory taste from the sea salt.

He had never expected that fiddling around with nothing better to do would actually result in a Superior dish. This was truly an unexpected gain!

Only one more dish to go.

In the blink of an eye, he had prepared two salt-baked dishes. Capitalizing on his proficiency with nuts, Lin Xu used the same method he did for the salt-baked peanuts to create salt-baked cashews.

"Host has completed the side-quest 'Technique Exploration' by preparing three salt-baked dishes of at least Excellent Level within four hours, and acquired the universal Superior Cooking Technique—Salt Baking. Congratulations, Host."

Finally done.

Lin Xu placed the three finished salt-baked dishes on the work table and then said to everyone, "Come taste and see how they turned out."

Zhu Yong asked curiously, "Weren't you saving these for Uncle Shen? If we eat them, how will you have enough to save?"

"He doesn't get off work until much later. The quail eggs will be cold by the time he's back. I'll make some more just before closing. Besides, this salt can be reused, and we have plenty of quail eggs available."

Hearing this, everyone stopped being polite, crowding around to start tasting. The quail eggs were fragrant and savory, the peanuts were crunchy with a gentle taste of braised meat, and the cashews were also deliciously crispy, full of rich flavor but not salty.

Delicious.

All these snacks were quite tasty. The boss's cooking skills were truly excellent; everything he made was delicious. Everyone couldn't stop praising Lin Xu's skills; it was a shame they couldn't drink during work hours, or they would have definitely had a couple of drinks with these delicious snacks.

「Around five in the afternoon.」

Shen Guofu drove with Han Shuzhen to the store. They initially planned to ask Lin Xu about the method for stewing Astragalus, but upon seeing the freshly made salt-baked peanuts, cashews, and quail eggs, they couldn't help but lick their lips.

"Shuzhen, since we're here and Lin Xu is offering, why don't we try them before we go home?"

Han Shuzhen rolled her eyes at him helplessly. "Then we'll start from tomorrow, okay? We're setting off for Yinzhou at the end of the month, and with all the hiking and sleeping in tents, you have to be in good shape. Don't blame me for not waiting for you then."

"No way, I won't lag behind. Just you watch!"

While they were speaking, Shen Baobao and Chen Yan also finished work and came to eat. Seeing the salt-baked dishes, Chen Yan immediately became interested. "Brother-in-law, the flavor of these salt-baked dishes is really good. Is it easy to learn? I'd like to give it a try if it is."

When it came to other dishes, Lin Xu really wouldn't dare guarantee his sister-in-law could learn them. But these kinds of salt-baked dishes, which were so easy anyone could make them, weren't genuinely difficult. As long as one managed the time well and didn't use high heat when baking, it was hard to mess up.

He said with a smile, "It's quite simple. You can definitely learn it if you want to."

As Shen Baobao was peeling quail eggs, she asked curiously, "Yan Bao, are you planning to personally prepare our birthday feast? What's with the sudden diligence? If you were this hardworking in school, we might have had a Qingbei scholar in the family. Unlike me. I was destined to go to Central Finance to find my Xu Bao; I couldn't change my university application."

Chen Yan said, "..."

Sis, do you have some kind of condition where you feel awful if you don't spread 'dog food'? Has flaunting your relationship become a habit for you?

She retorted, "I just want to learn, alright? You have your brother-in-law to cook for you, but I'm all alone. If I don't learn to cook, I'll starve. Besides, there's a lot of joy in cooking. Isn't that more satisfying than playing those virtual games?"

Shen Baobao's eyes gleamed. "Then I'll learn, too!"

I'm the official Executive Chef of Lin Ji's Food; I can't let a copycat surpass me!

With that thought, the sisters headed to the changing room to put on chef uniforms, planning to earnestly master the salt-baking technique in the small kitchen beside the duck roasting oven.

「Six in the afternoon.」

Ren Jie walked out from the Yinchun Street police station next to Haidian Middle School. The team had recently tasked him with organizing some criminal case files. Some cases had yet to be closed, so he had to go to the respective police stations to compile these files.

## Chapter 634: Salt-Baked Snacks That Even Kitchen Novices Can Master! Shocking Sister Yan for a Whole Year! \_4

He hadn't kept track of the time in the archives room, and before he knew it, it had gotten late and he still wasn't done.

When he left the archives room, he saw quite a few people queuing up for food in the cafeteria. Feeling embarrassed to join them, he made the excuse that he had plans with a friend and decided to grab a bite outside instead.

Everyone else was in uniform, and he was the only one in plain clothes. That was too conspicuous and also embarrassing; it was better to just grab something outside.

Standing at the entrance of Yingchun Street, he immediately dismissed Cao Ji's lamb soup and quickly made his way to Lin Ji's Food.

Well, since I've recharged my card, I might as well go in and have a bowl of noodles. The internet hypes it up so much, I should taste it for myself.

Yingchun Street was bustling with people, many of whom were eating fried buns while walking. Smelling the aroma, Ren Jie couldn't help but feel hungry too.

At the entrance of Yingchun Street, he noticed numerous luxury cars parked outside. There was a Bentley, an X5, and just as he was looking, a white Porsche 911 caught his eye.

What's going on? Why have I encountered this car again?

He didn't mind the other cars, but the sight of the Porsche always annoyed him.

If I ever get the chance to be a traffic cop, I'll definitely give this car a ticket right here on Yingchun Street.

Thinking this, he entered the grand entrance of Lin Ji's Food, casually glanced towards the staircase, and couldn't help but think of that assistant cook who had impersonated the head chef.

I wonder if she's busy today...

He found an empty seat by the window in the hall. As soon as he sat down, a server brought him a pot of hot tea and casually gave him a menu.

Ren Jie briefly flipped through it. Seeing the prices of the dishes at the back, he couldn't help but smirk. The noodles were fine, but the cost of the other dishes was really beyond what someone of his financial class could afford.

"I'll have a large bowl of Tomato Egg Noodles, half a portion of Ginger Lotus Root, and half a portion of pressed pig's head meat," he said.

After speaking, he closed the menu and handed it back to the server.

At the service counter, Shu Yun was tapping away on her phone, sending a message to Chen Yan:

"Officer Ren is here, probably to eat. He ordered half a portion of lotus root and half a portion of pressed pig's head, and a bowl of Tomato Egg Noodles."

Upon receiving the message, Chen Yan, who had just finished plating a dish of salt-baked quail eggs, immediately headed downstairs with the dish. She was just about to ask someone to taste test it, and now the perfect guinea pig had walked right in.

Her watch and pendant were in her bag. Her brother-in-law had said that one shouldn't wear any jewelry on their wrists while cooking. She had taken off the pendant specifically to keep it from getting greasy; otherwise, she'd have to spend money to get it cleaned, which was such a hassle.

Once downstairs, the two appetizers Ren Jie had ordered were also brought over.

"Hello, Officer Ren. I just made some salt-baked quail eggs. Help me taste them," Chen Yan said.

"I didn't..."

Ren Jie looked up at Chen Yan, then glanced at Shu Yun, who was watching with a spectator's interest from the service counter, and suddenly realized what was going on.

He asked with a smile, "Isn't this the busiest time? You're not busy?"

"Not busy, everything is arranged," she replied.

Chen Yan sat down. Just as she was about to peel a quail egg to taste it, her phone suddenly rang. She put down the egg and pulled the phone out of her pocket.

It was a call from an unfamiliar out-of-town number.

Upon answering, a voice with a heavy southern accent came through: "Hello, this is Haidian Sub-Bureau of Yanjing City Public Security..."

Chen Yan: ????????

From the Public Security Bureau?

She said to Ren Jie, "The person on the phone says they're from Haidian Sub-Bureau."

Upon hearing this, Ren Jie immediately said, "That must be a scam... Hand me the phone, turn on the speakerphone."

Chen Yan activated the speakerphone and passed the phone to Ren Jie. Then she picked up the quail egg she had set down. She still hadn't tried it and really wanted to check the flavor.

Meanwhile, the person on the phone kept rambling on.

Ren Jie cut him off: "Brother, did you get to eat mooncakes for the Mid-Autumn Festival a few days ago up in Myanmar North? How's today's task going? Are you going to get beaten if you can't complete it tonight?"

Chen Yan was curious. What was he playing at, trying to sound so chummy? Could that actually make the person turn themselves in?

Just as she stuffed the peeled quail egg into her mouth, a sobbing sound came from the phone.

Chen Yan: "!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

What in the world was happening? Chen Yan wondered. It was just a bit of casual chat; how did it make the other person cry? Did this young cop actually know magic? If a simple phone call could reduce someone to tears like that, what would happen when Ren Jie found out she'd been lying about being the executive chef? Wouldn't she end up crying her eyes out?

Chapter 635: Little Helper, How Long Can You Keep Acting? The Representative Dish of Salt Baked Category!

The crying on the other end of the phone didn't last long before the call was disconnected.

Ren Jie put down his cell phone and sighed softly.

"With such widespread national publicity, people still get duped by the crude lie of gold being everywhere in Myanmar North and then get drawn into telecommunication fraud."

As a policeman, he had seen too many ordinary people victimized by telecommunication fraud.

The money swindled included elderly people's life savings, children's school fees, and the money families had scrimped and saved for years to buy a house...

Chen Yan chewed on the quail egg in her mouth.

It tasted good, delicious with a hint of smokiness.

But she felt uneasy, fearing that this young policeman would say something to make her cry too.

Ren Jie, unaware of her apprehension, was still thinking about telecommunication fraud.

"No one around you has suffered from telecommunication fraud, right?"

"Fraud? No, the people around me aren't exposed to that."

Ren Jie took a bite of pressed pig's head meat and remarked, as if to himself, "Those fake online orders, cashback schemes, inflated reviews, and even scanning QR codes on delivery slips for cashback—don't believe any of it. It's all fraud."

Chen Yan was taken aback.

Are there still such things on delivery slips these days? She genuinely didn't know. At the company, Weiwei always helped her open packages, and at home, the nanny would have dealt with any deliveries before she finished work.

"I'll mention it to my employees later, to prevent them from being deceived."

In light of such rampant fraud, it was time to bring up telecommunication fraud at the company. This would prevent anyone from getting duped and subsequently jeopardizing the company's assets by taking desperate measures. Besides, it might also be a good idea to have the company's streamers mention anti-fraud awareness during their broadcasts. Once public awareness is sufficiently raised, telecommunication fraud will have nowhere to hide. As a good citizen, both beautiful and intelligent, she felt it was her duty to cooperate with the police.

Ren Jie, while peeling a quail egg, said, "Don't just warn others; you should be careful yourself."

You're just a little assistant cook; working in Beijing must be tough. If you got scammed, you'd probably have no one to turn to, right? I should give her my number before I leave. That way, if anything happens, she won't be completely lost and clueless.

He muttered as he popped the quail egg into his mouth, then his eyes lit up. "Oh, these quail eggs are delicious! Quite fragrant. You're very skilled."

"Of course, I am the head chef, after all... Both dishes you ordered are perfect with drinks. How about some beer or something? My treat."

Having just witnessed someone cry after only a few words, Chen Yan's voice was a little hesitant. She even forgot to add the "executive" part to her title and quickly changed the subject to the dishes.

Ren Jie finished one quail egg, found it tasty, and then reached for another, peeling as he spoke. "No, no, I need to finish my noodles and get back to the police station for overtime. I just dropped by today to try your restaurant's noodles. The online reviews raved about them so much, they made my mouth water."

The police station? So he really is a junior police officer.

Soon, the floor supervisor, Little Dong, brought over the Tomato Egg Noodles. "Your meal is ready. If you'd like to order more, just let our Chef Chen know."

Ren Jie held his bowl and smiled faintly. Little assistant cook, just how many people did you get to help you spin this lie? He'd originally planned to call her out on not being an executive chef, but since she'd roped so many people into her charade, he figured he'd let her keep it up. Let's see how long you can maintain this pretense.

He stirred the noodles in the bowl to mix them evenly, then lifted a mouthful with his chopsticks.

The smooth, springy noodles and the rich, savory tomato and egg topping made the young policeman pause. Accustomed to the police canteen, this was a delightful surprise.

"Wow, really delicious. No wonder netizens rave about it."

A couple of bites of noodles, then a slice of Lotus Root to refresh the palate... this is great! Totally worth coming here. Good thing I ordered a large bowl; a small one definitely wouldn't have been enough.

Seeing him enjoy his meal, Chen Yan waved to Little Dong in the distance. "Bring him some Nori Egg Drop Soup so he doesn't choke."

Little Dong came over and quietly asked, "Chef Chen... Head Chef, what would you like to drink?"

"Sour Plum Soup for me, no ice, just room temperature."

Ren Jie, busy slurping his noodles, smirked inwardly. Calling her 'Chef' so awkwardly... they didn't rehearse this well enough, did they? This little assistant cook sure is vain.

Soon, the drinks and the Nori Egg Drop Soup were served.

Ren Jie tasted the soup and remarked, "Wow, this is really flavorful and light! Delicious. I'll have to order this again next time. It pairs well with the noodles."

Chen Yan said, "Next time, you might want to try the Jade Soup marked with a five-point star on the menu. That soup is even more delicious, slimming, and I absolutely love it."

Jade Soup?

Ren Jie took a moment to recall, thinking of the soup he had seen on the menu.

The photo looked appealing, but the triple-digit price had deterred him from trying it.

A soup that costs over a hundred yuan? Can't afford it, definitely can't afford it.

"It's made with Chicken Soup. First, the broth is simmered. Then, chicken breast is processed into a meat paste and added to the broth. The meat paste gradually clarifies the rich broth, turning it into a Clear Soup..." Chen Yan sipped her Sour Plum Soup through a straw, explaining how Jade Soup was made.

Ren Jie was taken aback.

Originally, he thought the price was steep, but hearing about the process, the triple-digit figure now seemed... well, not entirely unreasonable.

But... 'meat paste'? In professional culinary terms, shouldn't that be 'chicken purée'? Oh, little assistant cook, you're full of flaws, you know that?

Chapter 636: Little Assistant Chef, I Wonder How Long You Can Keep This Act Up! A Signature Dish of Salt-Baked Category! \_2

After finishing the noodles and the soup, Ren Jie looked at the remaining lotus root and pork head meat on the table and said, "It'd be a shame to waste these dishes. I should pack them up in case I get hungry later tonight."

The pork head meat was delicious, and the sour-sweet taste of the lotus root was also quite appetizing. If it weren't for the fact that he was already full, he really would have liked to finish it all in one go.

Upon hearing Ren Jie praise the food, Chen Yan immediately gestured to Xiao Dong, "Get an empty meal container to pack these up. Also, pack a few servings of marinated meat and one serving of Lotus Root. Check upstairs if there are any freshly baked Sesame Pancakes. If so, pack twenty."

After saying that, she explained to Ren Jie, "If you take them back and your colleagues want to try, you can't let them eat leftovers, can you? Those pancakes are small; twenty of them aren't much."

Ren Jie had originally intended to decline. But upon hearing this, he realized he hadn't considered it thoroughly. If it were his own police squad, it wouldn't matter since everyone was familiar; no one would mind eating leftovers. But at the Yingchun Street Police Station, where they weren't as familiar, it really wouldn't be proper to offer leftovers.

He hadn't expected the assistant chef to handle the situation with such experience. How many years has she been working in the catering industry?

He laughed and said, "Then I have to thank you, Chef Chen."

"What's there to thank? It's just a little food. My sis— Er, when I wasn't a head chef, my purse was snatched once. A few police officers chased the thief for several streets to get it back for me. Consider this a way of showing my gratitude to you all."

Heavens, I almost said 'brother-in-law.' Luckily, I'm quick-witted and promptly switched to Tiantian's version of the Northeast dialect; otherwise, I might have easily given myself away.

Before long, Xiao Dong came over with the packed meals and Sesame Pancakes. Without waiting for Chen Yan to instruct further, she took out a few small meal containers, poured the lotus root, pork head meat, and salt-baked quail eggs into them, and placed them all into the takeout bag.

Ren Jie took out the restaurant's membership card from his wallet and passed it to Xiao Dong to settle the bill. Chen Yan had intended to waive the fee, but Ren Jie refused, "If you waive it, how can I come back again? I've already topped up the card; I should use it... Oh, by the way, take down my phone number. Remember to call me if there's anything you can't resolve."

Soon, Xiao Dong returned with the membership card and the receipt. She had only charged for the noodles and the two side dishes; all the items Chen Yan ordered were not billed.

After Ren Jie left, Chen Yan gave Xiao Dong a thumbs up. "Well done, Xiao Dong. Come here and add me on WeChat. Let me send you a red packet to treat you to milk tea."

"There's no need, Chef Chen. I was just doing my job."

"What do you mean 'no need'? Hurry up! If you don't accept it, I'll curse you to drop two cup sizes! My curses are famously effective; do you want to try?"

Xiao Dong was speechless. Goodness, if I dropped two cup sizes, wouldn't I be flatter than my back? Chef Chen's curse is truly vicious.

She hurriedly scanned the QR code, added Chef Chen on WeChat, and accepted the 199-yuan red packet.

After sending the red packet, Chen Yan looked at Shu Yun, who was smiling behind the service counter, and asked, "Have you had your fill of melon seeds?"

"Not yet. I'll need at least two more plates of salt-baked quail eggs to be satisfied."

"Are you going to eat the salt used for baking the quail eggs too?"

Chen Yan went to the service counter and said to Shu Yun, "This young policeman is from the nearby station. We need to establish a good relationship so that if there's ever an issue with the restaurant, we'll have someone familiar to turn to. Deduct the cost of the packed dishes from my account; don't let it mess up the books."

As she said that, Chen Yan lunged towards Dundun, intending to give the little cutie another squeeze. However, Dundun was already on guard, twisting his chubby body into his small room. After entering, he even blocked the entrance with a cushion. Thus eliminating any possibility of being bullied by his aunt.

Shu Yun waved her hand helplessly. "Go on, go on... Why are you bullying my godson again? Go play with your little policeman if you have nothing better to do."

Unable to bully Dundun, Chen Yan could only return upstairs grudgingly, ready to continue learning how to cook.

As soon as she entered the kitchen, Shen Baobao adopted a soothsayer-like posture and divined, "Last night, as I observed the celestial phenomena, I divined that a certain older, single woman's face was blooming, a springtime crush stirring in her heart... Ouch! Stop pinching, stop pinching! Yan Bao, are you addicted to role-playing now?"

"Not at all. I \*am\* the executive head chef, you know... What are you guys doing?"

"Salt-baking chicken gizzards... They'll be ready soon."

Once they mastered the salt-baking technique, not only did Chen Yan feel her culinary skills had greatly improved, but even Shen Baobao acted as if she were a super chef whose talent had merely been overshadowed by her good looks.

They would stir-fry coarse sea salt until it began to CRACKLE AND POP, then add the ingredients and bury them completely. With the stove on its lowest heat, they'd wait for the time Lin Xu specified, then uncover it and take out the food. That was all there was to it. It was so simple it hardly seemed like cooking. The only crucial detail was to be clear on the timing, to prevent the ingredients from burning in the salt.

As the sisters were chatting, Lin Xu lifted the lid from the pot braising the chicken gizzards. The distinctive savory scent of sea salt wafted from the pot.

Shen Baobao didn't bother teasing Chen Yan anymore and obediently approached with a small basin, acting on the principle that the more perceptive an apprentice, the more a master will teach.

I'm so perceptive; does that mean I can learn many more dishes?

The sea salt in the pot had once again formed chunks. Lin Xu carefully lifted them with a spatula, then gently tapped the chunks to break them, extracting the enclosed chicken gizzards one by one.

Chicken gizzards are one of the parts of a chicken with the best texture. The famous Shandong dish, Oil-fried Double Crispy, uses chicken gizzards and the top section of a Pork Stomach, creating an irresistibly crisp and tender mouthfeel. The crispness of chicken gizzards is showcased in many dishes. However, salt-baking them yields a soft, tender texture, offering a different kind of culinary pleasure.

Chapter 637: Little Sous Chef, How Long Can You Keep This Act Up? A Representative Dish of Salt-Baked Style! [Subscribe Request]\_3

Today's chicken gizzards were quite a luxury, using only those two choicest, muscular portions. These are the essence of the chicken gizzard, the part used for Oil-fried Double Crispy.

Lin Xu scooped a few into a basin. Chen Yan and Shen Baobao immediately reached out to eat them, but Lin Xu stopped them.

"You can't eat them now; wait a little longer."

Right now, the surface of the chicken gizzards was covered with fine salt grains. Eating them directly would be unbearably salty; the salt grains had to be wiped off first to enjoy their fresh and delicious taste.

After portioning them all out, he grabbed a box of kitchen paper, wiped each chicken gizzard, then fetched a clean plate, laid down a lettuce leaf, and began to arrange them on it.

Shen Baobao asked curiously, "Not going to slice them?"

Just now, when Lin Xu had stopped her from eating, she thought he was going to slice them. It turned out he was just wiping and plating them.

Lin Xu picked one up and tore it with his hand, revealing the fine, dense texture within. He popped it into his mouth. Savoring the gizzard's resilient yet crisp and tender texture, he said, "The tastiest way to eat Salt Baked Chicken Gizzards is to tear them by hand. Tear the gizzard meat into thin strips before putting them in your mouth. The more you chew, the more fragrant it becomes."

"Really?"

Shen Baobao, mimicking Lin Xu, picked up a piece of gizzard. Finding it very hot, she quickly blew on it, then tore off a piece and tasted it. It was indeed delicious.

"Wow, this texture is incredible! It had so much salt yet isn't salty at all—super delicious! Yan Bao, you must try it quickly."

After salt-baking, both the texture and flavor of the chicken gizzards were elevated to a new level. The texture was dense and resilient, yet didn't lack a satisfying crispness. Moreover, it had a good chewiness without being tough on the teeth—truly exceptional.

After eating one, even though Lin Xu didn't usually crave alcohol, he felt the urge to have a small drink. This stuff was just too perfect for pairing with alcohol.

Carrying the dish outside, Lin Xu immediately caught the attention of Shen Guofu, who was just about to finish the liquor in his cup before dinner. "What's this thing?"

"Chicken gizzards, Salt Baked Chicken Gizzards. Dad, try them. They should be to your taste."

Lin Xu had barely finished speaking when Shen Baobao began to enlighten her parents on the knack of eating them by hand. Anyone listening would have thought she was quite knowledgeable, but in reality, she had only learned it herself two minutes prior.

Shen Guofu tried a bite following his daughter's instructions and immediately unscrewed the bottle cap to refill his cup of liquor. "This liquor pairs too well with the dish... Oh, no, this dish calls for too much liquor! It would be a disservice to such delicious food not to have a couple more drinks. Lin Xu, are you done? Once you're finished, let's you and I sit down and have a drink."

Han Shuzhen shot her husband a helpless glance. "I'll let you drink to your heart's content today, but if you dare turn onto Yingchun Street after work tomorrow, you'll be in for it tonight!"

She picked up a chicken gizzard that was still slightly hot. Mimicking her daughter, she tore off a piece and tasted it. Both the texture and flavor were top-notch. No wonder Old Shen's craving for alcohol was triggered by just one bite. These chicken gizzards truly were an excellent accompaniment to alcohol.

I need to find some time to talk to my son-in-law. I can't keep letting him indulge Old Shen. Otherwise, every new dish will be an excuse for drinking. When will it end?

Lin Xu had just sat down and was about to start eating when Chen Yan, who was in high spirits, asked, "Brother-in-law, besides these, what else can be salt-baked? Don't mention Salt Baked Chicken; it's too much trouble. Tell me something simpler."

"Simpler?" Lin Xu thought for a moment and replied, "Salt Baked Large Shrimp, that's relatively simple. Trim off the antennae, Shrimp Spear, claws, and head. Then remove the sand sac from the head and devein them. Bury them in hot salt and let them bake for ten minutes. After that, simply dig them out and they're ready."

Chen Yan was flabbergasted. "Brother-in-law, do you have some misunderstanding of the word 'simple'? Preparing the shrimp like that, you call that simple?"

She asked curiously, "Is there anything simpler than that?"

"Sure. You can just bury the shrimp directly without cleaning them. But then, it will take a bit of effort to eat because you'll need to remove the vein before eating. Also, when you bake them, pay attention to the heat, as the shrimp legs can easily get burnt."

So, you just bury them directly? Chen Yan immediately decided to give it a try.

Lin Xu went on to say, "All shelled seafood, including crabs, sea snails, scallops, razor clams, and so on, can be buried in salt to be salt-baked. They all turn out exceptionally flavorful."

The more he spoke, the more excited Chen Yan became. She was very eager to try the taste and texture of salt-baked seafood.

Salt-baking is originally a cooking method from coastal regions, similar in principle to baking mutton in sand in the Northwest deserts.

Curiously, Han Shuzhen asked, "Xu, what salt-baked dish are you planning to make for Lele's academic achievement celebration?"

For such a significant event as Lele's academic achievement celebration, a representative salt-baked dish was, of course, essential.

Lin Xu said, "I'm preparing to make Salt Baked Chicken. I'll have Old Huang send over some freshly slaughtered free-range chickens. I'll make a large batch so everyone can try something fresh."

At the mention of Salt Baked Chicken, Shen Guofu felt he could down another glass of liquor. It was yet another dish perfect for pairing with liquor.

He picked up his glass and took a sip. "Then we're all looking forward to eating it."

For the ladies, the beauty-enhancing steam pot chicken was more anticipated. However, the men, who enjoyed drinking, preferred dishes like Salt Baked Chicken with its excellent texture and savory flavor.

「Two days later, at noon.」

Just after lunch, Old Huang delivered about ten free-range chickens. "Brother Lin, why the sudden need for so many chickens?"

"We're hosting an academic achievement celebration tonight, and these are for the banquet."

Hearing this, Old Huang immediately adopted an expression that said, "I may not be well-educated, but don't try to fool me. Don't academic achievement celebrations usually happen once the college entrance exam scores are released? Holding an academic achievement celebration at this time of year? Are they preparing for a repeat year, or is this a warm-up for next year's college entrance exams?"

Lin Xu said with a smile, "That little girl with the mushroom haircut who often eats at the restaurant was admitted to the gifted class at Tsinghua University. Admission to these special talent programs isn't like regular enrollment; students report as soon as they're recruited."

Nowadays, universities are desperate to snatch up talent. Lele, at least, was already a high school senior. It's said that the gifted class and Yao Class even recruit high school freshmen and sophomores through special admission, with the youngest being middle school students. Geniuses, after all, can't be viewed through the lens of ordinary rules and regulations.

Old Huang then said, "One of my two sons joined the army after high school, and the other went to a vocational college; neither got into a four-year university. I must come tonight to offer congratulations and soak up some of that good fortune, hoping my grandchildren's generation will produce a university graduate."

Lin Xu was speechless. You're praying at the wrong shrine. With Lele's penchant for skipping class, if she were to 'absorb' any of this auspicious qi, she might not even make it into a vocational college. Still, an academic achievement celebration is a joyous event, and one can't turn away well-wishers.

He said with a smile, "Do come tonight. It'll be a good chance for you to try some dishes you've never had before."

Hearing this, Old Huang became even more determined to offer a congratulatory gift.

Entering the kitchen, Lin Xu washed the chickens inside and out again, then took some sand ginger powder, salt, and peanut oil and began preparing the famous Ke Family dish—Salt Baked Chicken!

Chapter 638: Authentic Salt Baked Chicken, Not as Complicated as You Think! A Little Surprise at the Promotion Party!

In the Lingnan Region, Salt Baked Chicken is a very common dish and is not complicated to make.

A whole chicken, once purchased, is cleaned, dried, and then rubbed with Salt Baked Chicken Powder for marination. Afterward, it's poached in braising liquid or steamed using indirect heat.

Chicken cooked by poaching is called 'water-baked,' while chicken cooked by steaming is known as 'air-baked.'

Both methods produce delicious Salt Baked Chicken and eliminate the step and hassle of frying the salt.

However, for the most authentic and delicious results, one must follow the traditional method: hot-frying the salt and then burying the chicken in it. This is what truly defines Salt Baked Chicken.

For the people of Lingnan, sand ginger is an indispensable ingredient when eating chicken, whether it's Plain Chicken or Salt Baked Chicken.

Sand ginger, also known as lesser galangal, is a spice and medicinal herb prized for its distinctive aroma.

When added to dishes, it not only imparts a rich fragrance but also aids digestion and relieves pain.

After being washed, the chicken is hung up to drain excess water.

During this draining time, Lin Xu began preparing the marinade for the Salt Baked Chicken using sand ginger powder.

In the traditional preparation of Salt Baked Chicken, whole pieces of sand ginger are crushed and minced, then mixed with salt and rubbed all over the chicken.

However, when minced sand ginger is applied directly to the chicken, it tends to char during the baking process. This results in the Salt Baked Chicken's surface being covered with black specks, which detracts from its appearance.

To make the dish more visually appealing, chefs choose to dry the sand ginger and then grind it into powder for use.

This way, the chicken can absorb the sand ginger's aroma while also preventing these charred specks from appearing.

Depending on the amount of chicken, Lin Xu added a large spoonful of sand ginger powder and another large spoonful of salt to a small basin.

Normally, adding peanut oil and mixing thoroughly would be enough to create an exceptionally delicious Salt Baked Chicken.

But today, as this was for an advancement banquet where presentation was also crucial, Lin Xu added a tiny bit of gardenia powder.

Gardenia has hardly any flavor; it's added purely to give the chicken skin a more vibrant, yellow sheen.

The reason chicken dishes like Plain Chicken and Salt Baked Chicken in restaurants have such a vibrant yellow skin is due to the effect of gardenia.

After adding the gardenia powder, if one were to also mix in Chicken Powder (made from ground Chicken Essence) or flavor powder (made from ground Flavoring), the result would be the commercial Salt Baked Chicken Powder commonly found on the market.

He stirred these powders until evenly combined, then poured in a large spoonful of peanut oil and mixed it into a thick paste. The marinade for the Salt Baked Chicken was now officially prepared.

Among the Eight Major Cuisines of China, it's not just Shandong cuisine chefs who favor peanut oil; Cantonese chefs are also particularly fond of this ingredient.

Regardless of the dish, whenever a fat needs to be applied to ingredients for marination, peanut oil is typically the top choice for Cantonese chefs.

Lin Xu took down the chickens that had been hung to drain, then used kitchen paper to thoroughly dry the surface and cavity of each one, removing any residual moisture.

This step is crucial for the chicken to absorb the flavors, so it must be done as thoroughly as possible and with great care.

Two types of chickens are typically used for Salt Baked Chicken: young hens and old hens.

Young hens have tender, juicy meat, while old hens offer crispy skin and chewier, more flavorful meat.

Both types have their own merits, with no definitive superiority. The choice depends on the desired texture.

Today, Lin Xu was using young hens that had been raised for a full 200 days. Their meat was firm yet succulent, making them an excellent choice for Salt Baked Chicken.

After drying the surface of a chicken, he first spooned a few small scoops of the prepared marinade paste into its cavity.

Reaching into the cavity, he repeatedly massaged and pressed—three times in total—to ensure the peanut oil-rich marinade evenly coated every nook and cranny inside.

Once the inside of the cavity was thoroughly coated, he moved on to rubbing the marinade onto the outer skin of the chicken.

While rubbing, he continued to press and massage, ensuring the marinade fully penetrated the chicken's pores.

He set the evenly coated chicken aside to marinate and then began on the next one.

Once all the chickens were coated, he hung them by hooks inserted at the base of their wings in the ventilated room.

This step is known as 'hanging the chicken.'

Hanging allows excess moisture within the chicken to drip out. This moisture is, in fact, the source of any gamey or fishy odors in the meat.

The reason Cooking Wine or high-proof Liquor isn't used to eliminate these odors when preparing Salt Baked Chicken is precisely because this hanging step is so effective.

If this step were skipped, one would have to diligently apply Cooking Wine.

Otherwise, the resulting Salt Baked Chicken would definitely have an undesirable odor.

Moreover, hanging the chicken before baking makes its meat drier and more intensely flavored, improving its taste.

Additionally, as the moisture seeps out, it carries away excess marinade, preventing the chicken from becoming too salty or its flavor too overpowering.

The hanging process should not be too short; it requires about two hours.

If the hanging time is too short, the moisture won't seep out thoroughly, and the meat will lack that desired dry, aromatic quality. Conversely, if hung for too long, the chicken will lose its tenderness and fresh texture.

One hour later, Lin Xu placed a large iron wok on the stove. He then sifted the coarse sea salt that had been used before, pouring it into the wok.

Although used sea salt can be reused multiple times, it's best to sift out any blackened bits and pieces, retaining only the large grains. This helps prevent a burnt taste during the baking process.

After adding this sifted sea salt, he then mixed in about ten new packets of sea salt.

When making Salt Baked Chicken, the more salt used, the better the resulting flavor. Since this salt can be reused, there's no need to worry about waste.

Once the sea salt was in the wok, he began to stir-fry it.

For other salt-baked dishes, spices like Star Anise and Sichuan peppercorns can be added to the salt for flavoring.

However, these are not needed for Salt Baked Chicken. This dish aims for the pure, savory-umami flavor of sea salt. If this flavor were to be replaced by the fragrance of spices, it would be missing the point entirely.

Stir-frying the salt is both time-consuming and physically demanding.

All the moisture in the salt needs to be stir-fried out, until the coarse sea salt grains begin to pop in the wok.

Chapter 639: Authentic Salt Baked Chicken, Not as Complicated as You Think! A Little Surprise at the Promotion Party! \_2

At this point, the sea salt's temperature had already exceeded two hundred degrees Celsius. The chicken was also almost done hanging, but it couldn't be taken down yet because the paper for wrapping it needed to be prepared first.

The paper used for Salt Baked Chicken is called gauze paper or Jade Paper, a type of semi-transparent thin paper made from bamboo.

Because it doesn't pill or shed fibers even after repeated rubbing, and possesses good breathability, it's used in culinary preparations.

Using this type of paper for Salt Baked Chicken allows the savory flavor of the sea salt to permeate the chicken meat, while the excess moisture in the chicken can be absorbed by the sea salt.

If Baking Paper or silicone oil paper were used instead, this effect wouldn't be achieved.

As for completely impermeable tin foil, the resulting chicken would be identical to one roasted in an oven, completely losing the essence of salt-baking.

Going to all the trouble of buying salt and stir-frying it, only to end up with an oven-roasted style chicken.

One might as well just roast it directly in the oven.

He took three sheets of Jade Paper and laid them on the workbench. Then, he brushed a thin layer of lard onto them to prevent the collagen in the chicken skin from sticking to the paper.

Many people are very careful when making Salt Baked Chicken, yet the skin still tears when unwrapped—this is caused by the collagen sticking to the paper.

Lightly brushing some fat onto the paper can prevent this.

Lard is chosen because it's fragrant and also makes the chicken skin more delicious.

Once the lard was brushed on, he took one of the hung chickens, placed it on the chopping board, and stuffed several crushed pieces of dried onion and ginger inside.

The rich sweetness of the dried onion enhances the chicken's flavor.

Ginger, meanwhile, effectively removes any gamey taste from the chicken.

To prevent the tendons in the chicken legs from contracting during cooking, which would cause the chicken's body to twist and deform, it's necessary to break the joints at the base of the chicken legs.

"Breaking" them actually means pressing down on the chicken legs and forcefully pulling them apart to the sides until a faint CRACK is heard. That's all there is to it.

Next, he folded the Chicken Feet into the chicken's abdominal cavity and tucked its head under a wing root, forming a neat bundle. Then, he placed it on the lard-smeared Jade Paper and began wrapping.

When wrapping, he placed the chicken, back down, at one corner of the Jade Paper. He rolled the chicken towards the center of the paper, ensuring it was wrapped, which positioned the chicken breast-down. The paper from the initial roll was folded up over the chicken's back.

Then, he folded the sides of the paper towards the middle, layering them over the chicken's back.

Since the chicken's back has less meat, the paper needed to be layered more thickly there to prevent the skin from burning.

After folding up both sides of the paper, he rolled the chicken forward.

Finally, he tucked the remaining corner of the paper into a seam, forming a small, square packet. The chicken was now wrapped.

After all the chickens were wrapped, he began placing them in the pot.

He scooped out most of the hot stir-fried sea salt, leaving a flattened layer at the bottom. Then, he placed the wrapped chickens inside one by one, leaving ample space between them.

He covered them with the remaining scooped-out sea salt and officially began the baking process.

The steps for making Salt Baked Chicken aren't complicated: rub the cleaned chicken with marinade, hang it for a while, wrap it in lard-smeared paper, and then bury it in hot stir-fried sea salt. That's all there is to it.

The stir-frying of the sea salt requires no additional flavorings, and the marinade itself contains no particularly prominent ingredients.

After baking for half an hour, he carefully scooped the chickens out with a wok spatula.

By this time, the salt surrounding the chickens had clumped together due to moisture evaporation. It needed to be broken up, and the salt stir-fried again until dry and aromatic. After that, he scooped most of it out, flipped the chickens, and returned them to the pot.

If it were just one chicken, such effort wouldn't be necessary.

But since he was making a large batch today, he had to consider the salt's absorption limit, necessitating the step of flipping the chickens and re-stir-frying the salt.

This would ensure the chickens were cooked thoroughly and also enhance their dry, savory taste.

After flipping and baking over low heat for another thirty minutes, the chickens were completely done.

With some time to spare before the school advancement banquet, Lin Xu decided to verify the Superior-grade preparation method and satisfy his own craving. He specially fished out one chicken from the pot.

The Jade Paper wrapping the chicken was completely soaked with oil.

Carefully tearing it open, a rich, savory aroma drifted out.

This aroma was incredibly delectable, possessing the unique fragrance of chicken along with a faint seafood-like note. Clearly, the savory essence of the sea salt had penetrated the meat.

After removing the outer paper, Lin Xu tore the chicken apart by hand, arranged it on a plate, and then said to Wei Qian and the others, who had been glancing over eagerly,

"Come on, try it and see how it tastes."

With that, he picked up a piece of Chicken Thigh with his chopsticks and tasted it.

Hmm, the chicken skin exuded an intense fragrance and had a slightly crispy texture. The meat was tender yet firm, and one could distinctly taste the savory flavor of sea salt within the flesh.

Delicious!

This was indeed the way Salt Baked Chicken should be eaten.

Lin Xu felt that the pre-cooking step of hanging the chickens was absolutely necessary. This step allowed excess moisture to seep out of the meat, resulting in a dry, savory, and delightful flavor.

If this chicken turned out so well, the others should too.

Next time he cooked other types of chicken, if there was a marinating step, he would try hanging them.

Perhaps that would elevate the texture and taste even further.

"Wow, this flavor is incredibly savory!"

"No wonder, with so much salt used, the umami flavor is intense!"

"It's the first time I've tasted a seafood-like flavor in chicken!"

"Good heavens, this chicken is amazing! The texture is fantastic—so satisfyingly chewy."

"The marination is perfect; even the chicken breast is flavorful. That's truly rare."

Wei Qian and a few others crowded around. Aside from Qin Wei, everyone else ate and exclaimed, feeling as if they were rediscovering chicken as an ingredient.

They hadn't tasted the Steam Pot Chicken before, and its soupy style wasn't really to their liking.

Chapter 640: Authentic Salt Baked Chicken, Not as Complicated as You Think! A Little Surprise at the Promotion Party! \_3

But today, the Salt Baked Chicken really satisfied everyone.

The savory taste and the chewiness made everyone keep eating without stopping.

"Lin Xu, what do you think about introducing Salt Baked Chicken in our restaurant?"

Wei Qian's words echoed the very issue Lin Xu had just considered.

The chicken was delicious; to indulge themselves only seemed somewhat wasteful.

For a chef, the most fulfilling thing isn't to fatten up family and friends, but rather to monetize their skills.

Earning money from customers and gaining their following, that's the real deal.

Only fattening up family and friends is more suited for breeding, not running a restaurant.

However, it was hard to say how interested people in the Yanjing Region would be in Salt Baked Chicken. Upon checking apps like Meituan for chicken rankings, the most popular were always Big Plate Chicken, Fried Chicken from Shandong, Spicy Chicken, various fried chickens, and... Roasted Chicken. Indeed, the Northern Region deeply loved Roasted Chicken, and almost every city or county had an old brand serving Roasted Chicken, typically savory and crisp.

If they rashly introduced Salt Baked Chicken, would customers buy it?

The others were also somewhat anxious.

Professionally speaking, the Salt Baked Chicken was extremely delicious; even if it were served in Meizhou's Ke Family locality, it would be of the same caliber.

But being delicious doesn't mean it will be popular. Roasted Goose and duck got the cold shoulder in the North, which showed that food preferences strongly depended on local conditions. Rashly adding a dish could lead not only to embarrassing unsold situations but could even impact the entire shop's reputation.

After some thought, Lin Xu said, "The cost of this Salt Baked Chicken isn't high, and the salt can be reused. How about we try offering it as a taste test to see how the regular customers react? If it works, we could do a limited sale."

This point made one really admire his senior brother. The surprise menu he'd created at the Fishing Platform was indeed interesting. If it didn't sell, he withdrew it; if it sold well, he continued the surprise—he had complete control.

Zhu Yong, while nibbling on a chicken wing, said, "Anyway, no matter what we introduce, it's about time our restaurant had a whole chicken dish. Summer is over, and more and more people are looking to gain a little autumn weight. It's time for our customers to experience that joy of eating a big mouthful of chicken."

It was indeed time to introduce a whole chicken dish. But they couldn't pin their hopes entirely on Salt Baked Chicken. Since Roasted Chicken is so popular in Beijing, they might as well introduce that instead.

Thinking of this, Lin Xu's inherent 'uncomfortable if not spending money' gene started stirring again.

Excited, he exchanged 3 million points in the Points Store for the Perfect Level recipe for Five-Spice Roast Chicken.

"Host spends 3,000,000 points, obtains Perfect Level Marinated Cuisine Technique—Five-Spice Roast Chicken, and triggers a Trial Task: Please sell two thousand Roast Chickens within a week of making them. Upon completion, the host will permanently obtain the Perfect Level Five-Spice Roast Chicken Cooking Technique. If not completed, the Skill will downgrade to Superior."

TSK, TSK, TSK, to sell two thousand Roast Chickens within one week. It would have been much better to have exchanged this before the Mid-Autumn Festival. Many areas in the North have a tradition of eating Roast Chicken during the Mid-Autumn Festival. Before the festival, these Roast Chicken shops would sell several thousand chickens daily. Exchanging for this Technique then would have easily completed the two thousand chickens without even looking. But now, the Mid-Autumn Festival had just passed. The sales of Roast Chicken weren't going to be high.

He read the content of the Trial Task again carefully. He noticed the phrase, 'within a week of making the Roast Chicken...'

That is to say, if he didn't make Roast Chicken in the near future, the task wouldn't start counting time. In which case, he could completely wait a while longer. Wait until the Mid-Autumn Festival hype completely died down, and everyone had finished the leftovers from the festival meals at home before introducing the Roast Chicken.

「At five-thirty in the afternoon, guests for the advancement celebration gradually arrived.」

As Geng Lele's future mentor, Cui Qingyuan, who had specifically changed into a new suit, arrived early. After presenting his own red envelope at the banquet hall's gift table, the food-loving professor also stopped by the kitchen door to taste a couple of bites of the Salt Baked Chicken. He bestowed high praise on Lin Xu's cooking skills.

Before long, other guests had started to arrive one after the other.

Essentially, everyone presented red envelopes—a simple and direct method. There were also others who brought different gifts. For example, Zeng Xiaoqi gave a Ming Dynasty inkstone, along with several certificates of authenticity from antique experts. Chen Yan brought a pure gold pen, taking her 'rich lady' persona to the extreme. And Shen Guofu gifted a sailboat crafted entirely from gold.

The old saying goes that nephews resemble their uncles. Judging from the types of gifts given by Shen Guofu and Chen Yan, their attitudes toward gift-giving were indeed quite similar.

Lin Xu and Shen Baobao presented an Imperial Gold Medal—which, to be precise, should be called a 'Meow' Imperial Gold Medal. The medal looked quite similar to the ones sold in the Imperial Palace, but instead of the large "I" character on the front, it bore 'Meow.' On the back, in a line of clerical script, it read:

“From this day forth, Geng Lele is officially appointed as the High Priest of the Meow Meow Sect.”

Below the text was a large cat paw print, a genuine reproduction of Dundun's right paw—the Holy Master's personal stamp.

Geng Lele responded politely to the other gifts with a smile and a few words of thanks. But upon seeing the gold medal, Little Mushroom Head was immediately overjoyed.

"HAHAHA! I've finally gained the recognition of the Holy Master! The cat paw print on the back is even real! I must keep this safe and pass it down as a family heirloom!"

During the gift-giving, Lin Xu also met Geng Lele's parents. They were a couple who seemed to often swim in a sea of knowledge, wearing thick-lensed glasses, always smiling at people, and concluding their greetings with just a few pleasantries. It seemed that these social niceties weren't as interesting to them as their research.

Once everyone had arrived, Geng Lishan stood on the stage, expressing his gratitude to all the guests, the leaders of Haidian Middle School, and Professor Cui, among others. After his speech, Geng Lele's parents also expressed their gratitude.

The teacher Geng Lele had previously impersonated for fake leave requests, representing Haidian Middle School, offered his blessings to Geng Lele. He also subtly hinted that Tsinghua University didn't require leave slips, implying Geng Lele no longer needed to forge teachers' signatures.

After these segments, the dishes started to be served.

The appetizers were all cold dishes. After a few more dishes were served, the Salt Baked Chicken was brought to the table.

"Wow, this chicken is really delicious!"

"Exactly! Both the texture and the flavor are superb."

"Brother Lin, is this the new dish you mentioned? When is it going on the menu at your restaurant?"

"Little Xu, the Salt Baked Chicken isn't too high in calories, right? Can your mother-in-law and I eat it regularly?"

"Brother-in-law, I want to learn this! Teach me when you have time!"

"Me too, me too! The executive chef here needs to master a signature dish that's worthy of showing off!"

"Brother Xu, you really outdid yourself with this chicken! I absolutely love it!"

"..."

Everyone showed great interest in the Salt Baked Chicken, further solidifying Lin Xu's idea to trial it in his restaurant. If the customers' reactions were good, then they would officially introduce it.

As he was thinking about this, Zeng Xiaoqi said to Lin Xu, "Boss Lin, the station plans to change 'Tastes of the World' from twice weekly to daily broadcasts, still at six in the evening. We're going to run out of stored videos all at once. Do you have enough time to record the show?"

Daily broadcasts? He had been quite busy lately and was uncertain if he could spare that much recording time. But just because he didn't have time didn't mean others didn't.

An image of his senior brother flashed in Lin Xu's mind.

Yes, it was time to let the viewers meet the 'villain' from the Fishing Platform!