

Culinary 68

Chapter 68: Black Sugar Shaqima! The Trick to Quick Porridge Cooking!

In the kitchen.

Lin Xu held a sieve and finely sifted the flour. The purpose of this was to make the flour's texture finer and sift out small particles, preventing an unpleasant texture. When making snacks with flour, this step was indispensable. It was also a piece of knowledge that came with the Dough Mixing Skill.

After sifting the flour, Lin Xu placed it into a dough mixing bowl. Then he took a few eggs and cracked them into a separate bowl. He scooped in a small spoonful of yeast and a small spoonful of baking powder, used chopsticks to beat the egg mixture, and then poured it into the mixing bowl to combine with the flour, forming a dough.

Without the Dough Mixing Skill, this step would have been quite difficult because Lin Xu wouldn't have known how many eggs to add, or whether the dough should be firmer or softer. But with the skill, he was like a master chef who had worked in a dessert kitchen for many years. Every movement was extremely standard.

After making the flour into a slightly firmer dough, he placed it in the mixing bowl, covered it with plastic wrap, and let it rise for twenty minutes.

While waiting for it to rise, Lin Xu carefully checked recipes and ingredients for well-known Shakima on his phone. Black Sugar Shaqima, Nut Shakima, Low-Sugar Shakima, Dried Fruit Mix Shakima—the sheer variety made him hungry.

Looking at the image of Black Sugar Shaqima, Lin Xu found it quite unique. Having seen Shakimas made with white sugar so often, occasionally seeing this darker-colored kind makes one a bit eager to try it. Especially that deep brown syrup on top. It looks so ample and plentiful; even without tasting, it seems like it would be very sweet.

Since there's an unopened package of black sugar in the storage room, why not make Black Sugar Shaqima today? After all, there are no customers in the store at the moment. Even if it fails, nobody will know.

The so-called black sugar was actually blocks of unrefined, uncrystallized sugar made from sugarcane syrup. It's a common ingredient in many desserts. Although the name Black Sugar Shaqima included black sugar, using black sugar alone wasn't enough. Some white sugar and maltose also had to be added during the cooking process. Black sugar alone didn't have the required sweetness or viscosity, so white sugar and maltose were needed as supplements.

「Twenty minutes later.」

Lin Xu sprinkled some cornstarch on his usual worktable for rolling dough. He then took the risen dough out of the mixing bowl and sprinkled more dry starch on its surface to prevent sticking. Then, he used a rolling pin to roll the dough into a thin sheet about two millimeters thick. For Lin Xu, who made hand-rolled noodles every day, this step was a breeze; he could do it with his eyes closed.

After rolling out the dough, he used a kitchen knife to cut it into strips about ten centimeters wide. He then stacked these strips and used the knife to cut them into noodles about three to four millimeters wide. After cutting, he sprinkled dry starch on the noodles and shook them loose to prevent sticking.

"It's becoming more and more like hand-rolled noodles," Lin Xu muttered, then placed a clean frying pan on the stove.

The shop actually had a dedicated deep fryer, which still contained half a pot of oil. However, that oil was used for frying Chicken Feet and wasn't suitable for sweet foods. He poured some peanut oil into the pan.

When the oil reached about 60% heat, Lin Xu evenly scattered the loosened egg noodles into it. These noodles instantly puffed up, expanding to two to three times their original size under the heat. When their surfaces turned light yellow, Lin Xu used a skimming ladle to scoop them out and placed them in a large strainer to drain the oil.

The noodles for Shakima shouldn't be over-fried. Otherwise, the surface would form a hard crust in the hot oil, negatively affecting the Shakima's texture. Therefore, they needed to be scooped out just after they finished puffing up, while still soft. This way, they would be incredibly soft and melt in the mouth.

After all the noodles were fried, Lin Xu moved the frying pan aside, placed a clean stir-fry pan on the stove, and started to make the syrup. He added water to the pan, along with white sugar, black sugar, and maltose. Then, he stirred continuously with a spoon. This not only sped up the melting of the sugars but also prevented the syrup from sticking to the bottom of the pan.

Soon, the water in the pan boiled. The white sugar and maltose completely dissolved, but the black sugar, being in thick blocks, melted more slowly, taking a while longer to dissolve completely. The pot was now full of dark brown syrup, emitting a rich sugarcane aroma.

When the syrup in the pot began to bubble, Lin Xu turned the heat to its lowest setting and then poured all the fried egg noodles into the pot. He started stirring with a spatula. The addition of maltose made the syrup very sticky and thick, rendering it difficult to stir. However, due to its high viscosity, once the syrup adhered to the egg noodles, it quickly coated them tightly, binding them all together in the process.

Once all the noodles were coated with brown syrup, Lin Xu turned off the heat. He carefully transferred the noodles from the pot to a greased mold. Then, he covered them with a layer of parchment paper and flattened the surface with a small rolling pin.

After doing all this, the Shakima was done. All that remained was to let it cool, remove it from the mold, and cut it into small squares. It would then become Shakima, a traditional snack beloved by all ages.

After finishing up, Lin Xu checked the time. It was already almost nine o'clock. He couldn't wait for the Shakima to cool. Just as he was about to tidy up the kitchen and head home to shower and sleep, a system prompt suddenly echoed in his mind:

"Host has crafted Shakima, an Excellent Level dessert, completing the side quest 'Dessert Making.' You have earned one Perfect Level dessert draw. Would you like to draw now?"

"Aha!" That was it?

Lin Xu had thought the reward would only be given after cutting it into small pieces and having someone taste it. He hadn't expected it to come so quickly.

"Draw!"

Although he'd always had terrible luck, he still had to make the draw. After a brief prayer, he pressed the draw button.

"Congratulations to the host on obtaining the Perfect Level traditional snack—Dragon Beard Candy."

Dragon Beard Candy? Isn't that the one where maltose is pulled into thread-like strands? Many streamers and YouTubers have attempted it. Like Pagoda Meat and Three Non-Stick, this snack is a staple challenge among food bloggers.

It's a pity I don't livestream or have time to make vlogs. Otherwise, I could definitely attract a wave of followers with Dragon Beard Candy... Lin Xu sighed slightly, then cleaned up the kitchen and went home to shower and sleep.

「The next day.」

Lin Xu increased his purchase of ingredients. He also bought a considerable amount of pork belly for making Crispy Meat. After trying to sell it yesterday afternoon, customers had really liked this dish. So today, he increased his purchasing, aiming to smoothly push the store's revenue past the fifty-thousand mark.

After returning to the store, he plunged into his hectic work. He soaked meat and chicken feet, rendered chicken fat, and prepared stock. He was thoroughly engrossed in his work and enjoying it.

At six in the morning, Master Gao came to the store with his hands behind his back.

"Oh, these two pots look good. Are you planning to make braised dishes with them?"

Lin Xu replied, "Yes, one for Tiger Skin Chicken Feet, and one for Sour Plum Soup... Master, Senior Brother brought his cleaver over last night. He also asked me to tell you to make extra breakfast, saying it's been a long time since he's eaten yours."

"Can't he cook for himself? How old is he that he still needs me to cook?"

Despite his grumbling, Master Gao's face was filled with warmth. Clearly, this State Banquet master was delighted to be so cherished by his disciple.

He took out some preserved eggs and some tenderloin from the storage room. As he busied himself, he said, "Your Senior Brother loves the Preserved Egg and Lean Meat Congee I make. Since he's coming, I might as well simmer a pot."

Simmering congee? It's already six o'clock; wouldn't that take until seven or eight to be ready?

Master Gao shook his head, "How could it take that long? Before six-thirty, you'll definitely be able to eat it..."