

Culinary 69

Chapter 69: The Secret of Porridge Cooking! Black Sugar Shaqima Upgraded!

That fast? Can porridge cooked so quickly taste good?

Nowadays, almost all businesses related to porridge promote the concept of simmering on low heat for a long time, giving people the impression that the longer you cook it, the tastier it gets.

But why does Master do the opposite?

Grandpa Gao, smiling, asked Lin Xu, "Kid, do you really think those porridge shops out there that promote slow cooking on low heat would foolishly simmer porridge for several hours, and then sell it for just a few bucks a bowl?"

Isn't that the case?

"Actually, making porridge is a process of starch gelatinization. As long as you can speed up starch gelatinization, there's no need to cook it for too long. Moreover, if you cook it for too long, the starch might even separate from its gelatinized state. Some people find that the longer they cook their porridge, the thinner it gets, and that's why."

Wow! I need to remember this. These are all key points!

Grandpa Gao took some rice, washed it several times, drained it, and then put it in the freezer at minus eighteen degrees Celsius to start freezing. Seeing Lin Xu's keen interest, he said, "There are several ways to accelerate starch gelatinization. If you want to learn, I can teach you."

What? Really?

Several methods?

Although the store doesn't serve porridge, Lin Xu still wanted to see how it was done. Of course, it would be even better if he could learn. After marrying Classmate Shen in the future, when she came home from work, he could serve her a bowl of porridge and say, "Baobao, this is porridge I simmered for three hours, try it..." However, in reality, it would be porridge he hurriedly cooked in half an hour after playing games for two and a half hours. Haha, just the thought of it... Wait a minute! If I have such a perfect wife, why would I still be playing games? Even if I did, there'd be no need to be sneaky about it, right?

Lin Xu shelved those odd thoughts. Looking at Grandpa Gao, he said, "Could you tell me about them, Master? I might try it in the morning sometime."

After putting the rice in the freezer, Grandpa Gao picked up a kitchen knife and started chopping minced meat, all while explaining to Lin Xu the little tricks for starch gelatinization.

"The first method is to use leftover rice to make porridge. The starch in leftover rice is already gelatinized. Just put it in a boiling pot for a little while to make rice porridge; it's very quick. Plus, the rice grains stay whole, giving it a smooth texture."

"However, leftover rice can easily breed bacteria, so I don't recommend you do this."

"The second method is to cook it like you cook dumplings. Boil the rice on high heat for about ten minutes, and then, like when cooking dumplings, add some cold water to the pot. When it boils again, add more cold water. Repeat this three or four times. With the alternating hot and cold, the rice grains will quickly gelatinize, and the porridge will be ready."

"As for the third method..." Grandpa Gao paused, a hint of suspense in his voice as he continued, "You've eaten frozen tofu before, right?"

"I have. After tofu is frozen, it develops many porous holes. When stewed in meat broth, it tastes especially delicious... Master, when you froze the rice just now, was it the same principle?"

Master and apprentice busied themselves with their tasks, but their conversation remained on the topic of making porridge.

"Correct. Rice, just like tofu, will form fine pores when frozen. During cooking, heat travels through these pores into the interior of the rice, accelerating its gelatinization."

As he spoke, Grandpa Gao had already marinated the minced meat. Next, he peeled a preserved egg, cut it into small pieces, and set it aside.

When making preserved egg and lean pork porridge, you don't need to cook the preserved egg's runny yolk. In fact, you should specifically look for preserved eggs with runny yolks. This way, when cut into small pieces and added to the pot, the flavor of the preserved egg will better permeate the porridge, making it more delicious.

After finishing these preparations, he mixed minced Scallion, Carrot Dices, and Egg into flour, stirred it with water into a batter, then placed a flat pan on the stove to start making egg pancakes.

Obviously, this was also something his Senior Brother loved to eat. Though he feigned indifference, the moment he heard his Senior Brother was coming, his Master became quite animated.

Once the pancakes were done, the rice in the freezer was also almost frozen.

Grandpa Gao heated some water in a pot. Once it was hot, he took out the frozen rice, added it to the pot, and brought it to a rolling boil.

After freezing, the rice grains became more brittle. If simmered over low heat, they would easily break apart, turning good porridge into a paste. Using high heat, on the other hand, helped keep the grains intact. This method also ensured the porridge had a smooth and satisfying texture.

After boiling the rice for five or six minutes, the water in the pot gradually began to thicken, a sign that the starch was gelatinizing.

Grandpa Gao poured the preserved egg pieces into the pot, allowing their flavor to permeate the porridge. He cooked it for another four to five minutes. The porridge was almost ready.

However, for the best texture, it still needed to rest for a while.

Grandpa Gao added the marinated minced meat to the pot, along with a little salt and a handful of essential minced Scallions, then turned off the heat. He stirred the pot a few times with a spoon and then covered it with the lid.

"Whether it's seafood porridge or pork offal porridge, once the meat is added to the pot, you mustn't cook it any longer. Otherwise, the meat will easily become tough and lose its fresh, tender taste."

All it needed was to rest for a little longer. Then the porridge would be perfectly ready to eat.

The entire process looked simple and convenient, as if anyone could make it.

I've learned another trick! I can try making porridge myself next time... Lin Xu mused. Remembering the Black Sugar Shaqima he'd made last night was still in the cupboard, he washed his hands and took it out.

"Master, this is the Shaqima I made last night. Please take a look and tell me what you think," he said.

As he was speaking, Xie Baomin pushed open the door and walked in.

He sniffed, his face lighting up with pleasant surprise. "Preserved egg and lean pork porridge? Egg pancakes? These are all my favorites! I knew Master had a sharp tongue but a soft heart. Good thing I didn't sleep in, or I definitely would've missed out."

He certainly likes these, but how is his nose so sharp? He smelled them so accurately the moment he walked in. It's quite astonishing.

Lin Xu took out the Black Sugar Shaqima he had made the night before from the cupboard. By then, it had completely cooled and set. He peeled off the top layer of cling film and flipped the entire block of Shaqima out.

"Yo, Junior Brother, you're quick to act! You made this right after I gave you a few tips last night. If I'd known, I would've stayed and taught you more," Xie Baomin remarked.

Lin Xu took a kitchen knife and cut the whole block of Shaqima into small pieces. Then he handed a piece to both Grandpa Gao and Xie Baomin. "Master, Senior Brother, please try this and tell me what you think," he said.

Although the system judged it as Excellent Level, Lin Xu didn't get arrogant. This was his first attempt, and the proportions of the ingredients weren't perfect; there was certainly a lot of room for improvement.

As expected, before Xie Baomin even tasted the piece he took, he said, "There's too much Maltose; it's sticky to the touch. You also added too much syrup. The standard is to just barely coat the surface of the fried strands. Any more, and it'll be too cloying."

Grandpa Gao tasted a bite and nodded in agreement. "Indeed, there's too much sugar. The amount of White Sugar should be reduced by half. Shaqima is made with Egg and Dough, so it must have a distinct egg aroma. But the sweetness in yours completely overwhelms the egg flavor; it's almost cloying."

Listening to the feedback from his Senior Brother and Master, Lin Xu realized he definitely needed more practice with his Sugar Boiling Technique.

As he was pondering this, a notification from the system sounded in his mind:

"Host has listened to the guidance of two State Banquet masters. The Excellent Level Black Sugar Shaqima has automatically upgraded to Perfect Level Black Sugar Shaqima. Congratulations to the Host."

"Host has listened to the guidance of two State Banquet masters. The Qualified Level Sugar Boiling Technique has automatically upgraded to Excellent Level Sugar Boiling Technique. Congratulations to the Host."