

## Culinary 691

Chapter 691: Half the roast chicken sold before it even cooled! Fan favorite dish: Roasted lamb chops!  
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He put on disposable gloves, tore off a wobbly piece of meat from the chicken leg, and popped the steaming bite into his mouth. The texture and flavor were simply irresistible.

While he was eating, Aunt Qian and Auntie Wang from the neighboring alley came in to shop.

"Hey, Old Yu, what are you munching on that smells so good?"

"It's the roast chicken from Boss Lin next door, just out of the pot. Old Sun and I each bought some—you ladies should try it. The meat is tender and flavorful, and not too salty. It's delicious."

Old Yu, known as the intelligence station chief of Yingchun Street, naturally enjoyed showing off and flaunting exclusive news. Now that he was the first to buy the roast chicken, he had even more reason to preen. That was precisely why he was eating it at the cashier's counter. Our relationship with Boss Lin is rock-solid; otherwise, why would I be the first one to get the roast chicken?

Aunt Qian and Auntie Wang didn't hesitate, each trying a small piece, and they were immediately captivated by the tender texture of the roast chicken. For older people, whose teeth often aren't what they used to be, it was rare to find roast chicken this easy to eat. They definitely had to buy a couple to satisfy their cravings.

The two of them didn't buy anything else from the supermarket and headed straight for the main entrance of Lin Ji's Food.

Old Yu called out from behind them, "No need to go inside. Buy it from the window of the braised goods section on the east side. That's where I got it, and Boss Lin packed it himself."

Upon hearing this, Aunt Qian and Auntie Wang didn't enter the shop but went directly to the braised goods section window on the east side of the main entrance.

Seeing Lin Xu inside, they quickly said, "Boss Lin, give each of us two roast chickens. He just bought his a bit earlier than us, and look at Old Yu showing off—his tail's practically in the air!"

Although the old neighbors appeared harmonious on the surface, their underlying competitiveness never really stopped.

As Lin Xu was packing the roast chickens, they eagerly suggested, "Isn't Boss Lin also in our community group? Next time you have a new product, just give a shout-out in the group. Don't always make us wait until we happen to find you."

Being a step behind Old Yu was quite irksome for the two older women.

As Lin Xu packed, he said, "We're not supposed to advertise in the group, remember? Last time I saw someone post a Pinduoduo discount link, they got kicked out."

Aunt Qian replied, "You just go ahead and post. My son is the community director. If he dares to kick you out, I'll kick him out of our home tonight!"

Lin Xu was speechless. That's a rather... physical interpretation of 'kicking out.'

Auntie Wang elbowed Aunt Qian. "If Boss Lin feels awkward about posting, you can do it for him."

"Right, right, right! I'll post it. Let's see which little brat dares to kick me out!"

Aunt Qian took out her phone, snapped a photo of the roast chickens displayed in the braised goods section, and immediately posted it to the community group: "Boss Lin has new roast chicken here! It tastes amazing! Anyone who wants some better hurry over before it's all gone!"

Hmph! What's Old Yu accomplishing by promoting it at the supermarket entrance? I'm posting it straight to the community group. I definitely have to outdo him.

Lin Xu, standing by the window, couldn't understand why his neighbors had suddenly become so competitive.

He took out his phone and sent a 200-yuan red packet in the community group. "Sorry everyone, I hope I'm not bothering you. The new roast chickens at the shop are indeed excellent. Anyone who likes them is welcome to come and try them first. Try before you buy."

Since Aunt Qian had helped advertise in the group, he sent a red packet to avoid any talk of playing favorites.

As soon as the large red packet was sent, the group chat immediately buzzed with activity. They were all neighbors from the area, and after claiming the red packet, many said they'd come to the shop to check out the roast chicken.

After sending the red packet, Lin Xu finished packing the roast chickens and handed them to Aunt Qian and Auntie Wang.

After the two older women paid and left, Lin Xu told the server standing nearby, "See? Just pack it like that. If someone wants a taste, just bring out a torn piece of the roast chicken for them to try. The customers coming in now are mostly old neighbors, so be extra polite with them."

"Understood, Boss!"

After giving these instructions, Lin Xu reminded Xu Xinhua and the others to be careful when taking out the roast chickens from the pot, then left the braised goods section to return to the main kitchen upstairs. He couldn't stay downstairs fussing over roast chickens all day; upstairs was the main battlefield.

Around four o'clock, the dinner service at the restaurant began.

Before dinner, Lin Xu specifically called Shen Baobao. "We're starting dinner here. Have you finished shooting?"

At that moment, Shen Baobao was in the kitchen steaming a piece of fish. "Not yet, not yet. I'm preparing dinner for Dundun. By the way, Xu Bao, how long does cod take to steam? I've been steaming it for about fifteen minutes."

Lin Xu gave a wry smile on the other end of the phone. "Cod only takes a few minutes to steam. You better take it out now. Overcooking it will dry it out, and the flavor will be much worse."

"Oh... I'll take it out right away."

"Remember to come back for dinner after you're done shooting. I'm preparing some grilled lamb chops as a treat for the film crew, so try not to be too late."

After hanging up the phone, Shen Baobao lifted the lid of the steamer, used a plate gripper to take out the plate with the steamed cod, and promptly transferred the fish to Dundun's dinner bowl. To cool it down quicker, she mashed the fish with a spoon, then spread it thinly on a clean plate, placing it on the dining table to cool.

Dundun, who had been playing in the living room, turned its head, smelled the delicious scent of the fish, and couldn't help but lick its lips with its crimson little tongue. Clearly, the little one was entranced by the smell of the fish.

It leaped down from Cat Castle, tail held high, and walked toward the kitchen as Zeng Xiaoqi, holding a camera mounted on a handheld gimbal, followed to film.

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MEOOW~

Arriving at the kitchen doorway, Dundun sat down obediently on the ground and didn't go in.

Ever since the first day Lin Xu had told it little kitties weren't allowed in the kitchen, it had remembered it well.

At this moment, although there was delicious and tempting fish inside, the little guy sat dutifully at the door, without stepping a foot over the line.

"Wow, Dundun is so well-behaved. Other cats would have run into the kitchen and made a mess by now, but it actually knows to wait outside."

"It's probably because the Boss taught it well."

"I also think it's because the Boss taught it well; counting on the Boss's wife is a bit of a stretch."

In a corner not far away, Geng Lele, Dou Wenjing, and Shu Yun watched this scene, all finding it amazing. Who would have thought that a little kitty could be as obedient and sensible as a dog?

Luckily, Zeng Xiaoqi got it on video.

Once this footage is edited, with a caption about how obedient and smart the kitty is, isn't that just asking to go viral?

Before long, Shen Baobao came out of the kitchen with a plate in one hand and Dundun's little dining table for eating in the other,

"Is my good baby hungry? Mommy is going to give you fish now, steamed cod just out of the pot. See if you like it; if not, we'll switch to tuna. If that doesn't work, Mommy will go buy you..."

She set the little dining table on the floor, then placed the plate on it. Dundun immediately came over, stuck out its tongue, and began to lap it up. SLURP, SLURP.

Zeng Xiaoqi came over, first capturing the affectionate scene between mother and child, and then crouched down to film Dundun eating the meat.

After filming enough, the beautiful host casually sat down on the floor,

"This video will definitely go viral once it's released. There was no one to disturb me just now. I shot it in one take, from Dundun playing on the Cat Castle to trotting over here to wait for food, and then to you bringing out the plate—all in one go. It's fantastic."

Shen Baobao said,

"Xiaoqi, you shouldn't sit on the floor; you might get a big butt."

"I'm exhausted. I need to rest a bit before standing up. Besides, if sitting could make my butt bigger, I'd sit on the floor every day. I so wish for a peach-shaped butt."

"A peach-shaped butt needs exercise; sitting like that will only make your butt flat and wide..."

Zeng Xiaoqi clambered up from the floor.

"I didn't realize the floor was so cold; it's freezing. I'd better sit on the sofa."

Behind her, Dou Wenjing and Shu Yun couldn't help but laugh.

You have small boobs, so whatever you say goes.

Dundun licked the plate clean, very satisfied with its stepmom's cooking skills.

As it was squatting nearby, licking its paws and washing its face, Shen Baobao suddenly came closer,

"Son, did Mommy make the fish yummy?"

Dundun was so startled that its fur fluffed up all over, and any fondness it'd started to feel instantly vanished.

With an expression of dismay, Shu Yun said,

"You can't scare cats when they're washing their faces; don't stress it out... Don't be afraid, Dundun, it's just your mom, not a stranger, don't be scared... Director Zeng, are we still filming?"

Zeng Xiaoqi was ready to check the playback on her camera to see if any shots needed to be redone when Director Shen came in with a piece of news,

"Lin Xu bought lamb chops to treat the crew. It seems we're doing grilled lamb chops."

Grilled! Lamb! Chops?

What are we waiting for? Let's get back and eat!

Zeng Xiaoqi turned off her camera, and while putting the lens cap back on, she said,

"Then let's go back and eat. Tonight, I'll sort through the video material. If necessary, we can continue shooting tomorrow. Anyway, we have a seven-day holiday. I refuse to believe we can't shoot it well."

Everyone began to pack up things like tripods and, after finishing, took the elevator to the underground parking garage and drove toward the North Fourth Ring.

At this moment, Lin Xu was sitting in the store eating.

Tonight's dinner was chicken soup noodles accompanied by roast chicken and flatbread. The chicken soup was made from the chicken carcass and bones left over from making Spicy Chicken at noon; just simmering them made a broth.

After adding the noodle slices and drinking the hot soup, it warmed and comforted the whole body.

The roast chicken had already been torn apart. Paired with freshly baked flatbread and refreshing pickles, it was very delicious.

"This roast chicken is really good, tasty."

"Even the chicken breast is flavorful; the Boss's culinary skills are truly remarkable."

"I've found that chicken thigh meat stuffed into flatbread is really satisfying to eat."

"Is that so? I'll also try a piece."

"I used to eat roast chicken cold and thought it was pretty tough, but I didn't expect it to have a different flavor when eaten hot."

As everyone was discussing, Xu Xinhua came up to get some flatbread.

People from the marinade section usually ate in their workspace because some meats needed to be watched over while marinating.

Seeing Lin Xu, he walked over with a pleased smile and said,

"Boss, half of the roast chickens are already sold. I really didn't expect the neighbors around here to be so supportive. Many roast chickens got sold even before they had cooled down."

Lin Xu was also a bit surprised.

Originally, I had thought about offering a roast chicken to each private room during the evening rush to boost sales, but half were already sold.

That means I'll have to prepare another batch early in the morning, and I'll need to cook according to the maximum capacity of the layered pot.

Today it was only the neighbors who bought them. Once the flavor of the roast chicken spreads, wouldn't it sell like crazy?

Thinking of this, he said to Xu Xinhua,

"Today, let the marinade section close up early. Just leave one person in charge of selling the marinades. Come in at four in the morning to properly prepare the chickens and fry them. Aim to have them ready for marinating by six when I arrive."

"Okay, Boss, I'll arrange for that in a bit."

Lin Xu then instructed the errand boy,

"Have Old Huang deliver three hundred freshly slaughtered tender roosters before four o'clock in the morning. With the new batch of roast chickens, we need an adequate supply to open up sales more smoothly."

"Alright, Boss."

After giving these instructions, Lin Xu finished his chicken soup noodles, ate a flatbread with the roast chicken, and then went to the cold storage.

He brought out the marinated lamb ribs, rinsed off the bits of vegetables from the surface, and got ready to grill them.

Other YouTubers would pamper their fans by posting an extra video or adding a status update.

But Lin Xu was different; he directly made grilled lamb ribs for his fans to eat.

True fan pampering benefits.

He lit the charcoal and piled up some more, trying to get the charcoal to ignite quickly.

Compared to grilling meat, grilling ribs is relatively simple, but there are a few points to be careful about. One small mistake, and these ribs could end up burnt...

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Compared to roasting a whole lamb, roasting lamb chops has a much lower threshold.

Roasting a whole lamb requires a long marinating time, several continuous hours of roasting, and strict requirements for the oven, charcoal fire, and so on.

But roasting lamb chops is much simpler; so simple that it can even be made without the roasting step.

Roasted lamb chops are a common dish in medium-sized restaurants in Northern areas.

The orthodox method is naturally charcoal grilling. However, charcoal grilling takes too long and is inefficient. Customers usually have to pre-order it. If they want to add it on the spot, the restaurant can hardly make it immediately.

So, many alternative cooking methods have evolved.

The most common method is to boil the lamb chops in advance.

When a customer orders, they are placed in an oven or on a grill over high heat until golden brown, sprinkled with cumin, sesame, and chili powder, and served on a plate lined with lettuce leaves.

If a grill isn't available, they can also be deep-fried directly in a wok of boiling oil.

Fried until golden and crispy then sprinkled with barbecue seasoning, they're almost indistinguishable from the real thing.

Moreover, by boiling the lamb chops first, they can be seamlessly incorporated when customers order other dishes like hand-grabbed lamb chops, lamb chops in clear broth, or lamb chops with dipping sauce.

One ingredient, multiple dishes.

However, today was about treating his fans, loved ones, and friends, so there was no need for such shortcuts.

Lin Xu secured the lamb chops on the roasting rack. Once the oven heated up, he placed the rack inside, activated the automatic rotation feature, and began roasting.

Just as he started, Zhu Yong approached.

"Boss, is it difficult to make this on your own?"

Lu Lu would also be at tonight's dinner where everyone was chipping in. Zhu Yong figured that after Lu Lu tried the roasted lamb chops, she would definitely ask him to make them too. So, to be on the safe side, he decided to learn how to roast them now to avoid a meltdown later.

Lin Xu said, "If you want to roast them directly, there are indeed a few things to keep in mind. For instance, you need to score the lamb chops and thoroughly rinse off the marinade after they're done marinating, or they'll burn. Additionally, the heat should be high initially, then lowered, and finally cranked up high again for a bit..."

"What does 'high then low' mean?"

"The high heat at the start sears the outside, locking in the moisture. That way, as it roasts, only fat drips out, not the juices. If you use low heat the whole time, the moisture will drip out, and the lamb chops will end up quite dry."

Just as Lin Xu was about to adjust the roasting rack's rotation speed, Chezi, who had come over to see what was happening, asked, "What about continuous high heat? What would the lamb turn out like then?"

Zhu Yong helplessly patted his shoulder. "Bro, why don't you wait until the boss is done cooking someday, then try roasting something on high heat the entire time? You'll see what happens."

Chezi instantly understood Zhu Yong's meaning. "It would burn, right?"

"To be precise... raw on the inside and burnt on the outside. It'd be a sorer sight than a has-been pop idol."

What kind of bizarre comparison is that?

He reminded, "When making roasted lamb chops at home, it's best to boil them first. Whether fried or roasted after that, the flavor will be good, and the difficulty will also be much reduced."

While some might consider this method to lack soul, as long as it's delicious, that's what really counts. After all, for food, taste is paramount. As for 'soul'... if it even has one, it's better off being sent packing!

As he was roasting, the entire film crew arrived at the shop.

Dundun, utterly exhausted, crawled straight into its little house and fell fast asleep. Not even Shu Yun's cuddles seemed appealing anymore.

The others headed upstairs, directly to the kitchen door.

The video was no longer important. Everyone was fixated on the roasted lamb chops they were going to eat tonight.

"Are the lamb chops ready yet, Lin Xu?"

As Lin Xu adjusted the roasting rack's rotation speed, Shen Baobao came over. Lin Xu glanced around and saw that all the crew members had arrived, every one of them staring expectantly at the oven.

This... This wasn't what I had expected. I'd assumed the entire crew would be so engrossed in filming Dundun's antics that they'd work straight through until dark, forgetting to eat or sleep. By the time they came for dinner, the lamb chops would have been perfectly ready. But they knocked off work before five o'clock. Aren't they afraid of having their bonuses docked for leaving so early?

"It'll be another hour or more; you won't be able to eat until at least six. If you're hungry, how about starting with a roast chicken?"

"Alright then..."

Lin Xu asked Chezi to go downstairs and bring up a slightly fatter roast chicken.

By this time, the roast chicken had cooled and was just warm to the touch, no longer piping hot.

At this temperature, it was too cool to be eaten hot in the usual way, but it was perfect for tearing apart and enjoying as a Cold Eating dish.

When eaten hot, the roast chicken is so tender it falls apart with a shake and doesn't need to be pulled apart. But for Cold Eating, you have to tear it by hand; otherwise, the legs and wings are tricky to remove.

The chicken should be torn into fairly large pieces, ensuring each piece has some skin attached.

When served as a Cold Eating dish, the chicken skin is the star—fragrant, satisfyingly chewy, and with a delightful, unctuous richness.

Roast chicken differs from braised chicken. Braised chicken can simply be chopped into pieces, but roast chicken loses some of its texture if chopped. The best way to eat it is hand-torn.

It's said that in the past, at banquets, one hand-torn roast chicken could fill three plates, and each plate would still look impressively full.

But today, since it was just for their own group, there was no need for such presentation tricks.

Carrying two plates of roast chicken outside, Lin Xu told the crew members, "You've all worked hard. Try some of this roast chicken; it was just made today. The lamb chops still need a while longer. If there's anything else you'd like to eat, just tell Chezi, and the kitchen will sort it out."

At this point, everyone was completely fixated on the roasted lamb chops; they didn't have much desire for other dishes.

After Lin Xu left, Geng Lele picked up a piece of roast chicken to taste, and her eyes lit up. "This roast chicken has got something!"

On hearing this, Zeng Xiaoqi also picked up her chopsticks to try some. Then she took out her cell phone, snapped a couple of pictures of the roast chicken on the table, and posted them in the "Good Sisters, Cups Don't Shrink" group.

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"I never expected Boss Lin's roast chicken to taste this good, absolutely delicious. Now all I'm missing is a bottle of Wusu beer. Anyone want to join me for a drink?"

HMPH. Curse that woman who led the group on a trip. Go ahead and run wild on the Hulun Great Grassland; we'll enjoy the delicious food at home. I bet the chefs over there can't whip up a roast chicken on the fly.

No sooner had she posted this than Chen Yan uploaded a picture of Mr. Gao busying himself at the grill:

"Running into Mr. Gao means good food is a given. Tonight's bonfire party just doesn't feel perfect without my good sisters."

TSK, TSK, TSK, not a word about food, yet that grill and the whole lamb trussed up on it tell us everything about tonight's roasted lamb feast.

Roast lamb made by Mr. Gao?

TSK, TSK, that's something to look forward to.

Zeng Xiaoqi immediately lost her momentum, and even Dou Wenjing, who had been ready to make some "fair comments," was left speechless.

However, at that very moment, Director Shen uploaded a photo of a duck oven in the group:

"So, you think we lit up this oven just to warm our hands by the fire?"

TSK, TSK, TSK, a gathering with the sisters is much more interesting.

Dressed in a blue Mongolian robe, Chen Yan on the Hulun Great Grassland couldn't help but scrunch up her nose as she looked at the message on her phone.

She had been planning to boast about the roasted lamb once it was ready, but little did she know that her brother-in-law had also made some barbecue. My bad! Since that's the case, it's time to show off something you don't have.

Chen Yan promptly sent a photo of herself sitting on a haystack in a Mongolian robe, with a seemingly endless, yellowing grassland in the distance. Without the summer scenery of "wind blowing low grass and revealing sheep and cows," the dry yellow tones filled the photo with a majestic sense of vastness.

It's a sensation you can't get in Beijing.

After posting the picture, she sent another message in the group:

"Showing off with a photo, quick, compliment me. Whoever doesn't will shrink a cup size."

To prevent her cousin from butting in again, Boss Chen directly brought out the big guns.

Sure enough, once she made her move, the group was flooded with praise.

Zeng-34B·Xiaoqi: Wow, the scenery here is so beautiful, Boss Chen's outfit matches it perfectly, taking beauty to a new level.

Dou-32D·Wenjing: Boss Chen has a great figure; even in a Mongolian robe, you look curvy and stunning.

Shu-36C·Yun: The person is beautiful, and the scenery is beautiful. Everything is gorgeous.

Chen Yan grinned. A little threat, and suddenly they're willing to speak the truth. How cheeky!

Just as she was about to respond, another message popped up in the group:

Shen-34E·Jiayue: PSSH. How gaudy. What a great landscape photo. Too bad, really.

The few people in front of the booth silently gave a thumbs up, giving the boss's wife their tacit approval.

Big busts do come with a confidence boost. If I had a figure like the boss's wife, I'd say the same thing.

Meanwhile, Chen Yan simply skipped over the topic:

"I think everyone should change their group nicknames back. Otherwise, it's too easy to feel body-conscious. Chatting shouldn't lead to mental exhaustion; that's not good, don't you think?"

Those who had just manually liked Shen Baobao's comment quickly concurred in the group.

Then, very conscientiously, they changed their group nicknames back.

After the fun and games, everyone started discussing the content to be filmed for the next day.

Zeng Xiaoqi, nibbling on chicken feet, said,

"Tonight when I get back, I'll do a rough cut of the footage. If the video of Dundun eating meat works out, we can post it as a warm-up, to stop the fans from constantly pestering us."

"Right, it's time to post something; dragging it on like this isn't right."

"Today's footage is perfect—the caring mother thinking of her child and the sweet, obedient little one. If we post that, it'll make those netizens tormented by cats green with envy."

"I think they'll be jealous of such a big villa and cry."

"No matter what, as long as they cry, it's good."

"..."

At half-past six in the afternoon.

The friends gathered for dinner arrived one after another.

Lu Lu sat at Shen Jiayue's table, ate some roast chicken, and drank a small bowl of Jade Soup. She was already half full by the time the other guests were still arriving.

When Liang Hanwen arrived at the restaurant in the blind taxi driver's new energy vehicle, most of the people were already there.

The so-called blind taxi driver wasn't actually blind; he just liked wearing sunglasses. His friends called him Blindman, hence the online nickname.

His real name was Qi Dengke. He was tall and thin, and due to his years of running a rideshare service, his arms and face were tanned.

Accompanying them was Invisible Chicken Wings, a professional voiceover artist. This slightly plump girl had a sweet voice and an outgoing personality; she started joking with Liang Hanwen and Qi Dengke as soon as she got into the car.

Once at the restaurant, they were led up to the third floor by the staff.

Despite being repeatedly informed that there was an elevator, they remarkably chose to take the stairs in unison.

Qi Dengke acted like a tour guide, introducing everything about the restaurant. He had a vivid impression because he'd toured the place on opening day with an invitation, even checking every private room.

Entering the large private room upstairs, cold dishes were already served.

Apart from what they ordered, the restaurant added a few more marinated dishes and side dishes, rounding up to ten types of cold platters.

Drinks and beverages were centered on the table, with those driving sticking to non-alcoholic drinks and others drinking in moderation.

As soon as they sat down, Lu Lu spoke up,

"I just inquired in the kitchen. To welcome us, Boss Lin has prepared roasted lamb ribs. And, worried there wouldn't be enough for everyone, he's made three whole racks."

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The moment this news was shared, everyone was astounded.

"Wow, Boss Lin really is generous!"

"A person like that deserves my lifelong fandom!"

"Others just pamper their fans with words, but who could have imagined our Boss Lin taking real action!"

"Looks like Brother Unhappy was right, Boss Lin is genuinely a solid person."

"If such a person doesn't get famous, it'd be a travesty!"

Once everyone had taken their seats, various dishes gradually started arriving.

Downstairs, in front of the roast duck oven, Lin Xu took the lamb ribs off the rack. He brushed them with a layer of oil and roasted them over high heat for ten minutes. Then, he removed them, sprinkled on a mix of sesame, cumin, and dried chili, and continued roasting over high heat for another ten minutes.

The golden and enticing roasted lamb ribs were then ready.

He placed the lamb ribs on a large plate lined with lettuce leaves and cut them rib by rib with a small knife. This made them easier to eat and also allowed the lamb's aroma to further emanate.

The lamb ribs came with a Perfect Level dipping sauce, which elevated both the flavor and texture.

Three plates were brought upstairs, one of which went to the film crew who had been waiting for over an hour.

After finishing the lamb ribs, Lin Xu took a moment to check on Dundun. The cat was lying in his little house, fast asleep on his back, his guard completely down. The little fellow was so exhausted; he'd clearly been put through a lot.

I really hope we make some progress today, so I don't have to bother the little guy tomorrow.

When he returned upstairs, Shen Baobao, who was sitting in their booth, commented, "These lamb ribs are delicious! We should start serving them in our restaurant. Especially when it gets cold, they'd be great for warming people up."

Lin Xu didn't object, "Sure, but let's wait until we try the Lotus Root and Pork Ribs stew in a couple of days. You can all taste it first, and then we'll vote on it."

After speaking, he grabbed a bottle of beer, planning to go upstairs to have a drink and chat with the fans who had been helping boost the restaurant's popularity.

Shu Yun quickly wiped the chili fragments from the corner of his mouth, "Do you need me to help pour the drinks?"

"No need. I won't drink much tonight, and I won't let them drink too much either."

After finishing the lamb ribs, each member of the film crew had a small portion of fried noodles, and the dinner that had started at 4:55 PM finally ended.

"Boss Lady, don't forget to take some videos of Dundun tonight with that compact camera," Zeng Xiaoqi said. "If it goes viral, we can edit together some bloopers and release it."

Zeng Xiaoqi slung her camera bag over her shoulder and put on her baseball cap, ready to go back and organize the video footage. If there were no issues, she planned to edit it into a video tonight and release it for the netizens to thoroughly enjoy.

Shen Baobao patted the camera in her bag and responded, "Don't worry, Sister Xiaoqi, I will."

Back in the single dormitory provided by the TV station, Zeng Xiaoqi took off her cap, changed into her pajamas, turned on her computer, and started organizing the videos.

The feeding video was perfectly shot, and the rhythm was excellent. Moreover, the camerawork was top-notch. However, for a more artistic presentation, it still needed further processing. For instance, stretching the footage of Dundun running to create a slow-motion effect, or adding some text and emoticons to the scene where Dundun waited by the kitchen door for food. The principle was simple: to make a good video, a lot of post-production work was necessary.

Director Zeng made herself a cup of coffee, then stretched and sat down in front of the computer to formally start editing.

「Meanwhile」

When Dou Wenjing left, she had the marinated foods department pack a roast chicken for her and paid for it.

She drove to the entrance of Haidian Middle School. After parking her car, Dou Wenjing walked towards the entrance of Ziqiang Shengjian, where there was still a queue.

"Sister, the master has approved my dough-making skills!" Yang Lin said excitedly, removing his mask as he saw his cousin approaching.

Dou Wenjing pointed at his mouth, "Put it on. You must wear your mask and hat at all times in the work area; it's company policy. If you get fined, don't come asking me to intercede for you."

Yang Lin hurriedly put his mask back on and said, "Sis, didn't you go out to have fun? I heard that President Chen and the others went all the way to the Hulunbuir Grassland and had a blast."

President Chen would probably be happier if she hadn't posted photos in the group today... Dou Wenjing then said, "There's nowhere to go, and I don't feel like going... Oh, didn't you say a couple of days ago that you wanted to eat the roast chicken from your hometown but couldn't find any? I brought one made by the boss. It tastes even better than the ones back home. Take it home and eat it tonight."

Surprise flashed in Yang Lin's eyes, "Thank you, Sis!"

"You're making over ten thousand a month now, right? So, don't keep complaining in the staff group and on your social media about not having anything to eat or drink; it doesn't look good to the other employees. From now on, if you want to eat something, just go to the store. Don't be shy about it."

"Okay, Sis, I'll remember that... Is there anything else, Sis?"

Dou Wenjing thought for a moment, then said, though she seemed to be holding something back, "In your free time, focus more on management. See if there are any areas in the store that can be improved. If there's anything you don't understand, feel free to ask me or Master Wang."

She didn't elaborate, just told her cousin to get back to his rented apartment early after work and then drove away.

The siblings didn't live together. Yang Lin felt grateful that his cousin had provided him with a job and didn't want to bother her too much. He had rented a room near where his colleagues, like Che Zai, Niu Chuan, and Xu Xinhua, lived. Sometimes they commuted to and from work together, and because of that, he had been added to Lin Ji's staff group.

「It was after nine at night.」

Having drunk more than three bottles of beer, Lin Xu returned home, carrying Dundun, with Shen Baobao by his side, when Zeng Xiaoqi called, "I've finished editing the video. I'll send it over for you guys to check out. If there aren't any problems, I can upload it tonight."

"Okay, thanks a lot, Sister Xiaoqi."

Soon, a video notification popped up on Shen Baobao's phone.

The video was short, only just over five minutes long. It included everything from Dundun playing in the Cat Castle to him taking big bites of codfish, with some cute effects added in between. However, they

were used sparingly, making it a refreshing change from those heavily staged popular pet videos. Moreover, Shen Baobao also appeared in the video, presented as a mother figure.

After watching, she exclaimed excitedly, "I can't wait to post it!"

Lin Xu watched it and thought the video was much better than he had imagined. "Then have Sister Xiaoqi send over the file in 4K at 60fps, and I'll add the intro and outro before officially uploading it."

"Sure, sure, I'll tell Sister Xiaoqi right now."

Lin Xu thought for a moment, then added, "Ask Sister Xiaoqi what she wants to eat. We should treat her tomorrow. She's put in so much effort for this, so the least we can do is make sure she's well-fed, even if there's no payment."

Shen Baobao immediately messaged Sister Xiaoqi, asking her to generate the file, and relayed Lin Xu's entire message.

Zeng Xiaoqi adjusted the format and chose to generate the video. As for what to eat, she thought for a moment, then said seriously, "I really want to try chestnut braised rice, the kind with cured sausage in it. I've never had this braised rice before, but it looks so delicious in videos. Can Boss Lin make it?"

"Chestnut braised rice?" Upon hearing this, Lin Xu laughed, "Sure! No problem, she can have chestnut braised rice tomorrow."

As he spoke, he saw Shen Baobao fiddling with a compact camera and asked curiously, "What are you doing with that?"

"I'm recording some of Dundun's gameplay footage to use as b-roll later."

Since it was just b-roll, Lin Xu didn't pay it much mind.

It wasn't long before Zeng Xiaoqi sent the video over.

He opened his computer and began adding the intro and outro.

As he was busy, Shen Baobao leaned over and said, "Honey, add a line at the end."

"What line?"

"If this video gets over a hundred thousand likes, we'll release some super exciting behind-the-scenes footage!"

Chapter 696: Wow, turns out the behind-the-scenes is the real deal! Chestnut Braised Rice ordered by Zeng Xiaoqi!

「Ten o'clock at night.」

A video titled "Dundun, You're So Good! Mommy Makes You Delicious Food Every Day!" officially appeared in Lin Xu's submission feed.

The video's cover featured Dundun eating meat. The chubby cat face occupied half the cover, looking utterly adorable and well-behaved.

Less than a minute after the post appeared, someone shared it under the Lin Ji's Food topic, "Holy crap, Boss Lin really uploaded a Dundun video! And judging by the title, it sounds like the Lady Boss."

"Wow, isn't this a double celebration?"

"Indeed, it's been a while since the Lady Boss appeared in a video. Boss Lin has been cooking all day and has forgotten about us, his huge group of Lady Boss fans."

"Pfft! Are you even fans? I'm too embarrassed to call you out!"

Netizens clicked on the video. Regardless of the content, as long as Dundun was featured, it was worth a like, a follow, and a share.

Viewers clicked open the video. After the title sequence, Dundun was nowhere to be seen. Instead, the screen showed the vast expanse of the Galaxy, which, to the accompaniment of soothing music, gradually shrank until it was reflected in a bronze-colored eyeball.

The camera then panned back, the background music grew more cheerful, and Dundun's big, fluffy face filled the screen.

"Wow, shrinking the Galaxy into Dundun's eye—that intro is epic!"

"Did they change the editor? This feels quite different from the previous style."

"It really doesn't look like Boss Lin's style. He prefers realism and, to pursue authenticity, would usually discard all filters and special effects. This video, however, started with effects, and now Dundun even has a soft-focus filter."

"Whatever, as long as my Dundun is here, it's the best!"

"The moment Dundun appeared, even the BGM changed style!"

"Dundun~ My Dundun~~~~"

On the bullet screen, various 'male mommies' and 'female mommies' went wild the moment they saw Dundun. After so many days, they finally got to see this adorable little furball.

When the camera pulled back, everyone finally saw Dundun playing on a Cat Castle that took up half the room.

The castle was exquisitely crafted, adorned with various cat toys, and even featured an attached spiral cat slide.

But what attracted everyone's attention the most was the spaciousness and decor of the entire living room.

"Damn, are there still houses this spacious in Beijing?"

"I can't even dream of a house like this."

"So spacious and luxurious, it must be the Lady Boss's villa, right?"

"Previous videos had shown a kitchen larger than most people's living rooms. Now that they finally got a look at the living room, they didn't expect it to be even bigger and more luxurious."

"That grand piano in the far corner—it looks like a limited-edition Steinway."

"Seriously? Such an expensive piano is just shoved in a corner?"

"Is it possible that the piano was originally where the Cat Castle is now, and they moved it just to make room for the castle?"

"I used to envy Boss Lin and the Lady Boss, but now I only envy Dundun."

"So jealous!"

The soft-focus filter made Dundun look even cuter, its already chubby body appearing even rounder.

While playing, the little guy suddenly jumped down from the Cat Castle and dashed toward the kitchen.

This once again highlighted the spaciousness of the living room.

In an average home, the kitchen is just a few steps from the living room, but the distance in the Lady Boss's house was clearly much greater.

Just when everyone thought Dundun would dash straight into the kitchen, the little fellow actually sat down at the kitchen entrance, its tail tip wagging gently, the very picture of patient waiting.

The camera cut to a frontal view. The look of anticipation in the little fellow's eyes, combined with its obedient seated posture, instantly melted the netizens' hearts.

"Oh my god, is there really such an obedient cat in the world?"

"It actually knows to wait patiently at the kitchen door and not go further in—isn't that incredibly well-behaved?"

"At least it's more considerate than my nephew. He's almost ten and still doesn't wash his hands before meals; he just grabs food when he sees it."

"I'm twenty-five, and I still haven't kicked the habit of sneaking food from the kitchen."

"Baby Dundun is so well-behaved! I really want to give it a kiss."

"I want a cat just like that! I love British Shorthairs so much."

Dundun didn't have to wait long before Shen Baobao came out of the kitchen wearing Pikachu slippers, holding a plate.

Her gentle voice and kind words immediately sent a flurry of "Mommy" comments scrolling across the bullet screen.

Shen Baobao, lounging on her bed and rewatching the video, said with a look of resignation, "They're so annoying, calling me 'Mommy.' I'm still a baby myself; I don't want to be anyone's mommy..."

Lin Xu was fiddling with a compact camera, planning to go out and shoot some more footage of Dundun. His Baobao had done well enough. This was something he could handle on his own. He said with a smile, "So many netizens are like tadpoles searching for their mom, shouting 'Mommy' at any woman they see. They'll get used to it."

In the video, Shen Baobao didn't place the plate directly on the floor. Instead, she set up a small dining table for Dundun and put the plate on it after arranging it neatly.

Cute text appeared on the side: "A raised cat bowl can effectively prevent neck problems in cats~"

Dundun lowered its head and began to lick up the food with its little crimson tongue.

The cod was steamed until tender and flaky, and the little fellow ate with great gusto.

The sight also made the viewers salivate.

"I used to drool watching Boss Lin's cooking videos. I didn't expect to still be drooling now that Dundun is the star."

"It definitely runs in the family."

Chapter 697: Wow, turns out the behind-the-scenes is the real deal! Chestnut Braised Rice ordered by Zeng Xiaoqi! \_2

["That family of three—everyone's drooling over them!"]

"Back off, Cao Zei, back off! Back off!"

Once Dundun finished eating, the video also came to an end.

Seeing the prompt to release behind-the-scenes footage if the likes hit one hundred thousand, netizens rushed to like the video. Not only did they like it themselves, but they also called their friends to help out and like it together.

How could a few short minutes be enough? Dundun was so cute; you could watch him all day without getting bored.

Likes? As long as they could see Dundun, that wasn't a problem at all. A hundred thousand likes? Please. The almighty netizens could even manage a million.

In the living room, Lin Xu, in his pajamas, was holding the camera, filming Dundun as he carried a small blanket, looking for which cardboard box to pick for the night.

He didn't choose the big cardboard box he usually slept in but instead selected Shen Baobao's shoebox. The tiny shoebox was a complete mismatch for his plump body, but the little guy didn't care. He dragged the blanket into it and spread it out, making the already small shoebox even tighter.

After laying out the blanket, Dundun jumped into the shoebox, attempting to stuff his chubby body inside.

However, just as he was wriggling in, RIIIP! The shoebox burst open.

Looking at the shoebox torn to pieces, Lin Xu was about to comfort the little guy, afraid he might be scared. But to his surprise, Dundun, blanket in mouth, immediately targeted another of Shen Baobao's shoeboxes.

Is this... a new way of taking revenge on Mommy?

Lin Xu turned off the camera, petted the little guy's head, and said, "Your mom doesn't need these shoeboxes anymore; they're for you to play with. But if you break them all, you'll have nothing left to play with."

Upon hearing this, Dundun immediately took his blanket into the nearby big cardboard box.

All that effort for nothing!

Fine! I'm going to sleep then!!!!

Returning to the bedroom, Lin Xu took out the camera's memory card. He planned to copy all the behind-the-scenes footage to the computer to avoid accidentally deleting everything the next day. He also wanted to check what content the film crew had recorded that day. They couldn't just get enough likes but then fail to produce decent behind-the-scenes footage for the netizens; the fans would definitely cause an uproar.

He inserted the memory card into the card reader, then plugged it into the computer's USB port.

While it was reading, Shen Baobao, who was on the bed, exclaimed in surprise, "Wow, the likes have already exceeded thirty thousand! Xu Bao, don't you think setting a goal of one hundred thousand likes is too low?"

One hundred thousand likes wasn't considered low. The main reason was that everyone's expectations were so high, and liking was free—just a matter of a click. That's why the number of likes had skyrocketed so fast.

Lin Xu clicked to open the folder on the memory card. It contained very few video files, aside from the one he had just recorded outside of the chubby cat bursting the cardboard box. The only other one was a large video file.

He clicked on that file and discovered it was a video of the film crew having a meeting in the conference room.

This... They even record their meetings? Do they really need to be so formal? And this kind of behind-the-scenes footage is neither exciting nor does it highlight Dundun's cuteness. If released rashly, wouldn't there be a mass exodus of fans?

To prevent this, Lin Xu decided to watch the entire meeting recording. He also wanted to see if this group of brainstormers had actually come up with any effective solutions.

The video started off normally. At one end of the conference room, they were discussing filming content, while Dundun was running around playing.

Just as Lin Xu was about to fast-forward, the cute little kitty in the video lifted a paw, waved at the camera, and then started to imitate a human walking. Its adorable antics, combined with the sighs and groans of the beautiful women discussing in the distance, formed a stark contrast, making humans seem rather foolish.

This, this, this... Lin Xu was dumbfounded. Was this the big move Shen Baobao had prepared? This is way more interesting than the feeding video! Why put this in the bloopers? If they released this, even unedited, it would blow people's minds, right?

"Xu Bao, what are you watching? Our meeting recording isn't that... Huh? This... is that Dundun?"

Shen Baobao climbed out of bed. She was just about to apply some nail polish to her tender feet when she heard the voices from that afternoon's meeting coming from the computer. She came over to take a look.

And then... the rookie director, who had been on the job for less than a full day, was stunned.

She had been so focused on the discussion that she hadn't noticed Dundun enthusiastically mugging for the camera nearby. He performed a whole repertoire: funny faces, winks, sticking his tongue out, playing dead, pretending to limp—all perfectly matching the topics of their discussion.

The highlight was the debate between Geng Lele and Shen Baobao about whether to type on a keyboard or play the piano. At that point, Dundun switched between acting like a severely overworked programmer and an elegant Piano Prince.

"Wow, we didn't even notice! My Dundun is so smart!" Shen Baobao was ecstatic. I completely missed my little darling working so hard on his performance! He must have been so sad, right? No, I have to go kiss my little Dundun baby.

Shen Baobao got out of bed, shuffled in her slippers out of the room, and without a word, scooped up a certain kitty from its cardboard box, where it was sulking.

Just as she was about to plant a couple of kisses on his forehead, Dundun, terrified, struggled to escape.

Help! The Yueyue Demon King is going to eat this kitten! I only tore up a shoebox! Do I have to pay with my life? Stepmothers truly are vicious!

Dundun struggled out of Shen Jiayue's embrace and, terrified, fled to the deepest part of a long, tunnel-shaped cat bed, looking utterly frightened.

Chapter 698: Wow, turns out the behind-the-scenes is the real deal! Chestnut Braised Rice ordered by Zeng Xiaoqi! \_3

Shen Jiayue: ?????

Has the gap between me and my child become this deep?

Feeling downcast, she returned to the bedroom, where Lin Xu had just finished reading the meeting minutes.

"Compared to this video, the latest full episode can't even count as a trailer... If only I had taken a peek earlier."

He saved the video on his computer the first chance he got. Still feeling uncertain after saving it, he also backed it up on the cloud.

This kind of video would be a king-level hit whenever it was released because a cat managing to perform without any physical objects was simply amazing. So amazing that it hardly seemed like a cat.

Thinking back on it now, Lin Xu felt that Dundun's price should have been more than just 880,000 points. He didn't know what had transpired between it and the system, causing him to land such a great deal.

If only he understood cat language, he and his son could have had a heart-to-heart conversation.

"Will releasing this video impact Dundun and us in any way?"

Shen Baobao, having read too many novels, was afraid that scientists or the like would discover something unusual about Dundun and decide to dissect the little cat for research.

"It shouldn't. If anyone asks, we'll just say it was specially trained, with the addition of green screen effects and special effects to achieve that result. Besides, just a few days ago, there was news about a kitten that turned on a faucet while its owner was asleep and flooded the house. With that in mind, everyone should be able to accept Dundun's performance."

This video, once released, would probably have netizens criticizing the acting skills of those young pop idols.

Even a cat acts better than you guys. Aren't you ashamed?

After saving the video, Lin Xu edited it a bit, adding old-movie effects and changing the color tone to a slightly yellowish hue.

Although Dundun was unlikely to be taken away for dissection, it was still better to play it safe by processing the video a bit.

And for a stunt like this, it had to be a bit flashy.

「The next morning」

The likes had already surpassed 130,000. Discussions about Dundun filled the space beneath the Lin Ji's Food topic.

After freshening up and changing his clothes, Lin Xu kissed the still soundly sleeping Shen Baobao on the cheek, then left the bedroom, carrying Dundun downstairs to the restaurant.

After placing Dundun on the service counter, he went to the braised goods section. Last night, Dou Wenjing had arranged for someone to convert the external window of the braised goods section into a small sliding window, the kind used for selling braised items. A workbench had also been set up inside, with a few lamps hanging above it. The window was used to sell various braised items and fried peanuts as bar snacks. Customers who found it inconvenient to enter the restaurant could pay and buy directly there.

Lin Xu looked around and felt it was well arranged.

It was exactly the effect he wanted.

At that moment, Xu Xinhua and his team had already prepared the chickens. Not only had they cleaned them thoroughly and shaped them into ingot forms, but they had also soaked them in Maltose Water and fried them in hot oil until their skin was reddish-brown.

"Boss, they're ready. Shall we start braising them now?"

"Yes, start now."

They placed a bamboo mat at the bottom of the large pot to prevent charring and then arranged each Pot Roast chicken in it. After all were arranged, they poured in the braising liquid and then added back the large bowl of fat that had been skimmed off before the Pot Roast chickens were removed from the pot the previous day. He turned on the switch for the jacketed kettle to begin braising.

Yesterday's batch of Pot Roast chicken had sold out completely before 8:00 p.m., and Qi Dengke and his team hadn't even been able to take one home. So today, they were increasing the batch size.

Nearly four hundred Pot Roast chickens would definitely sell well.

Besides the Pot Roast chickens, they also had dozens of pounds of chicken livers. Xu Xinhua had suggested this yesterday. He thought it was a waste to use the braising liquid only once a day, so his idea was to put the chicken livers in to braise for a while after the Pot Roast chickens were done, making five-spice chicken livers.

With the flavor of this braising liquid, the chicken livers definitely wouldn't taste bad.

Lin Xu was very supportive of this trial. So he directly asked Che Zai to buy dozens of pounds.

If they tasted good, they would start selling them. If not, they would let Ma Zhiqiang incorporate them into other dishes.

Either way, nothing would go to waste.

After setting the Pot Roast chickens to braise, Lin Xu went upstairs to look around. Around the time breakfast was ready, he went back to the residential complex behind the restaurant to wake up a certain Shen Baobao, who was still soundly asleep, for breakfast.

「It was a little past nine in the morning.」

Lin Xu and Shen Baobao were sitting in a booth on the second floor, watching a video call from Shen Baobao's mother. On the other end of the video, a sweaty Shen Guofu was attaching a massive Brass lock to an iron chain.

It's hard to believe my father-in-law actually carried a Brass lock weighing over ten jin to the top of the mountain.

When he hung it on the chain, the chain, which had been swaying gently, was instantly pulled taut.

From this, one could easily infer that the lock was heavy enough to eventually break the chain.

"Tourists nearby are taking photos of me and your dad. If I had known, I wouldn't have come up here just to be laughed at," Han Shuzhen's voice came from the phone. She had initially thought there would be no tourists at the summit, but when Shen Guofu pulled a huge Brass lock from his backpack, quite a crowd gathered around.

Shen Baobao said cheerfully, "Would you have been at ease if you hadn't come? What if Dad wrote someone else's name on the lock..."

"He wouldn't dare!"

While the mother and daughter chatted, Lin Xu went to the kitchen, took a larger basin, and soaked a large amount of rice in it. The braised rice Zeng Xiaoqi wanted was also what Shen Baobao craved. Earlier that morning at Lin Ji's Food, when Lin Xu had asked the staff, everyone expressed a desire to try it, so he decided to make a larger batch.

After soaking the rice, he boiled some water and cooked the freshly bought chestnuts briefly to make them easier to peel, then placed them in a basket for later use. Then he took some Cantonese-style sausages and sliced them thinly on the diagonal. He also diced some Carrots, shelled some green peas, and soaked some Sea Scallops. Lastly, he took a piece of pork belly, washed it, and sliced it.

Braised rice is a fairly versatile home-style dish with various regional cooking methods.

「Half an hour later」

When the rice grains had swollen slightly, it was ready to be cooked. He heated the wok, swirled it with oil then drained it, reheated it, and added the pork belly to stir-fry. Braised rice shouldn't have too much fat, or it becomes too greasy. The best method is to cook with the fat rendered from the pork belly. This way, it has a nice aroma, and the meat doesn't feel greasy—the best of both worlds.

When the pork belly slices turned translucent and a significant amount of fat had rendered out into the wok, he added the Carrot Dices and green peas. Since these were raw, they needed to be stir-fried to remove their raw taste. Then, he added the chestnuts, sausage slices, and Sea Scallops. After stir-frying, he seasoned them with Light Soy Sauce, salt, and a bit of oyster sauce. Lastly, he added the soaked rice.

Adding the rice at this stage helps to fry off its surface moisture, releasing its aroma and allowing the grains to absorb the fat in the wok, making the braised rice even tastier. When stir-frying the rice, he continued to toss it for a while longer to further enhance its aroma. Once the rice and other ingredients in the wok were stir-fried until no surface moisture remained, he added water just enough to cover the rice, put on the lid, and began to simmer it over low heat.

Making braised rice directly in a wok demands precise heat control because it's easy to char the bottom or leave the rice undercooked. However, once the heat and the amount of water are mastered, this stove-cooked rice is more flavorful than rice cooked in an electric rice cooker.

Of course, the best-tasting rice is still the kind made in earthen pots over a wood fire in the countryside. Unfortunately, burning wood isn't allowed in Beijing, so to taste it, I'd have to go back to a scenic spot in my hometown, Yinzhou.

The earthen stoves there can be used freely.

"Boss, why didn't you use a clay pot?" Che Zai leaned in, looking curious.

"I made over ten jin of rice today; only the large wok could hold it all... Oh, right, I'll buy some small pots for making Claypot Rice later. With the cold air arriving, it's about time we introduced Claypot Rice at the restaurant."

Since he was making braised rice, Claypot Rice—its ultimate form—also had to be put on the agenda.

This would also stop Yue Liyue from nagging about it constantly.

When the time comes, various Claypot Rice dishes—like those with cured meats, beef, seafood, or fish—could all be served at the restaurant.

"If we start serving Claypot Rice, will our stoves be enough?"

"We'll start with a limited supply. If demand increases, we'll figure something out later."

After saying that, Lin Xu turned down the flame under the wok and left the kitchen, intending to watch his father-in-law's lock-hanging spectacle again.

While the staff at the restaurant eagerly anticipated the braised rice, on the Hulunbuir Grassland, Chen Yan was seeing off Grandpa Gao and the others, who were hungover.

"Xiao Yan, this is a power of attorney. Can you help me transfer ownership of a property when you get back?"

Chapter 699: The Braised Rice Can Be This Delicious! Cinderella's Crystal Shoes?

After a lively evening with a large crowd where he showed off his cooking skills, Grandpa Gao inadvertently drank too much. Consequently, the RV caravan, which was supposed to depart in the morning, was delayed until this moment.

Chen Yan had been wandering around the yurts since early morning. She had drunk three bowls of milk tea and eaten some shaomai and milk crisps. She didn't dare to go take pictures of the sunrise or ride a horse. She waited all this time for Grandpa Gao to wake up.

The moment she received the power of attorney, Chen Yan was rather surprised. She had already prepared to cover for Grandpa Gao and had even learned from her cousin that the person who didn't speak Mandarin was named Lucy. While waiting for Grandpa Gao, she had even imagined a series of thrilling scenarios involving clandestine meetings, like those of an underground party.

But it turned out to be just... a property transfer?

Nevertheless, since it was Grandpa Gao's request, she had to agree.

Curious, she asked, "Who are you planning to transfer the property to?"

"It's for Xiao Xu," Grandpa Gao replied. "Before coming here, I handed all the property documents to a lawyer. I'll send you his WeChat contact card later. When you get back, contact him to figure out how to transfer the house to my apprentice."

For her cousin's husband?

That house must be worth several million now, and he's just giving it away like that.

He really dotes on his apprentice.

Chen Yan asked, "Without the house, where will you stay when you return to Beijing?"

"I'll stay at my place. I have several properties in Beijing. This particular one has always been rented out. Since Xiao Xu doesn't have a house yet, I might as well give it to him."

Tsk, tsk, tsk. Several properties.

I've been so focused on Grandpa Gao being a kept man lately. But in reality, even if he weren't, he's still a wealthy man with several properties in Beijing.

Soon, Luo Shan urged them to get on the road.

After saying goodbye to everyone, the giant RV, flanked by two smaller RVs, slowly drove out of the camp gate, heading south. Next, they would travel northwest through Inner Mongolia. Who knows when they would meet again.

「Back at the store.」

The simmered rice on the stove wasn't ready yet, but the aroma of rice and chestnuts was already wafting out with the steam. The rich fragrance was so tempting, it made one want to lift the lid and scoop out a bowl to indulge.

"When will it be ready, boss?"

"It needs a few more minutes. The rice has just cooked through but isn't fragrant enough yet. Plus, there's no rice crust at the bottom of the pot. It needs to simmer a bit longer."

It's not just Claypot Rice that has a delicious crust; simmered rice does too. And the crust from simmered rice is no less delicious than that from Claypot Rice.

Lin Xu patiently waited.

When the aroma in the pot grew more intense, he lifted the lid, scooped some Steamed Fish Sauce, and drizzled it into the pot along the edges. Then he covered it again and let it continue to simmer. Adding Steamed Fish Sauce gave the simmered rice a tempting soy fragrance. It also effectively reduced the greasiness of the simmered rice.

He simmered it on low heat for another five minutes, then turned off the heat. He kept the pot covered for a few more minutes, allowing the fragrance to fully permeate the rice. Only then was the simmered rice truly ready.

"Tell everyone outside it's time to eat."

Lin Xu stirred the rice in the pot to loosen it, then scooped it into a serving basin. The rice, having absorbed the rich meat broth, was intensely fragrant. It carried the mingled aromas and savory notes of pork belly, chestnuts, cured sausage, and Sea Scallop. The smell alone was enough to make one's mouth water.

After he scooped out the rice, a layer of slightly golden-brown rice crust remained at the bottom of the wok. He carefully scraped it off with a spatula, cut it into small pieces, and arranged them on top of the rice. This way, when serving, everyone would get a piece of the crispy, delicious rice crust.

Che Zai carried out a whole basin of simmered rice and began serving everyone.

Zeng Xiaoqi, who had been waiting for much of the morning, felt a keen sense of anticipation. To avoid being teased by everyone again, she had specifically washed her hair that morning, making sure it was fragrant, and had blow-dried it before coming to the store.

Last night's video was a huge success. It made Zeng Xiaoqi walk with her chest puffed out like a proud peacock. She asked everyone she met, "Did you see the video Boss Lin uploaded last night? I made it! How were the special effects?"

"What, you haven't seen it yet? Go watch it now! Dundun is so cute, and the boss's wife is so gentle. Hurry up and boost the view count, or you'll risk your bonus being docked!"

Under her enthusiastic promotion, the store staff added more views and bullet comments to the video. Of course, this small number of additional views was merely a drop in the ocean for a video that already had over 500,000 views.

On Lin Ji's Food's page, there were all sorts of screenshots turned into memes. For instance, someone took a screenshot of the spacious and luxurious living room of the villa and created a series of "New Dream Material Tonight" memes. Others used screenshots of Dundun playing on the Cat Castle with captions like, "Even the cat has a castle, while you're still renting," triggering an early wave of "online depression" posts. There were also GIFs of Dundun trotting, turned into reaction images captioned "Your little cutie has arrived" or similar.

These various memes further boosted the popularity of Lin Ji's Food. Although it didn't surpass the second-place spot, it significantly narrowed the gap.

"Director Zeng is really fired up today! Making a contribution certainly makes a difference, huh?"

Dou Wenjing teased her good friend, and Shu Yun chimed in, "Exactly! A meritorious official indeed! That's why the boss specially made the chestnut simmered rice that Director Zeng wanted. Here you go, Director Zeng, your simmered rice, served in an extra-large bowl just for you!"

"Go on, you two, keep up with your snide remarks. I'm in a good mood today, so I won't bother cursing you."

Zeng Xiaoqi lowered her head, took a deep sniff of the simmered rice in her bowl, her face alight with an expression of pure bliss.

Chapter 700: The Braised Rice Can Be This Delicious! Cinderella's Crystal Shoes? \_2

"Mmm, delicious!"

She picked up a chestnut and put it in her mouth.

The soft and tender chestnut absorbed the pork fat and the flavors of the other ingredients, tasting wonderfully tender, and its slight sweetness made the chestnut's aroma even richer.

Delicious!

Dou Wenjing and Shu Yun picked up their bowls, and after tasting the stewed rice, they were deeply captivated by the flavor as well.

"This stewed rice is just too aromatic, isn't it?"

"So many fragrances, and each ingredient has such a distinct flavor. The boss's skill is really getting better and better."

"Thanks to Director Zeng's suggestion, or else we wouldn't be able to enjoy such delicious stewed rice today."

"Let's all say it together, thank you, Director Zeng."

Zeng Xiaoqi: "..."

Such delicious stewed rice and it still can't keep your mouths shut, huh?

She ignored the pair, who were chiming in with each other, and turned to ask Shen Jiayue, "Boss lady, are we still shooting this afternoon? The netizens have said that if the behind-the-scenes footage is less than ten minutes, they'll unfollow and won't come to the shop."

Although it was a joke, it also clearly showed how much everyone was looking forward to the upcoming behind-the-scenes footage.

Shen Baobao scooped up a mouthful of the stewed rice, which, despite its oily sheen, wasn't greasy at all, and said, "There's plenty of behind-the-scenes footage, enough for the next two episodes. Let Dundun rest for a day first; the little guy was exhausted yesterday and still isn't his energetic self today."

It was only after Lin Xu reviewed the meeting notes last night that he realized this little guy had spent a long time taking selfies in front of the camera.

In the end, he had utterly exhausted himself and collapsed on the meeting table.

No wonder he was so desperate for fish that evening. He wolfed it down even though it was over-steamed. Clearly, his body had expended too much energy.

Enough for two episodes? That much?

Zeng Xiaoqi had thought Lin Xu had accumulated it over time, so she didn't ask any further.

She scraped the bottom of her bowl with her chopsticks and picked up a large piece of slightly browned, crispy rice. After taking a bite, she excitedly said, "Wow, there's even crispy rice at the bottom of the bowl! Boss Lin, this stewed rice is truly exceptional! I've never tasted such fragrant crispy rice, not even in Claypot Rice. This texture is amazing."

When the others heard this, they too used their chopsticks to search the bottoms of their bowls and indeed found crispy rice as well.

Shen Baobao took a bite and, her face lit with pleasant surprise, exclaimed to Lin Xu beside her, "Wow, it's so fragrant! CRUNCH! CRUNCH! Truly delicious."

Lin Xu picked the crispy rice from his bowl and placed it into her bowl. "If you like this, it's simple. I'll make a batch of crispy rice just for you later, so you can eat your fill."

After speaking, he took his bowl and went downstairs. He wanted to check on the roast chicken soaking in the master stock and see if it was ready. He planned to take it out so it wouldn't be late for the noon sale.

Arriving at the braised foods section, Lin Xu saw several old neighbors standing beside the outside window. Auntie Qian, who had helped with advertising yesterday, was at the front. Right behind Auntie

Qian stood Old Man Sun, who famously never returned empty-handed from fishing trips, along with a few other familiar faces from the neighborhood.

"Boss, these people are all waiting to buy roast chicken. They love our shop's hot roast chicken and were afraid of missing out. That's why they came early today and have been waiting at the window."

They like hot roast chicken? Well, that's easy. We'll start selling it as soon as it's out of the pot.

Lin Xu took a couple of bites of his rice and said to the old neighbors outside the window, "Why don't you all come inside and wait? It's much more comfortable in here."

Auntie Qian laughed and said, "I sit at home all day. It's quite nice to stand for a bit; feels good actually. When will the roast chicken be ready? It won't delay lunch, will it? My daughter heard your roast chicken is delicious and specifically asked me to buy two hot ones: one to eat at noon and another to take away."

"It definitely won't be delayed. Let me see if it's ready. If it is, we'll get it out immediately."

Lin Xu put down his bowl and was about to check on the roast chicken soaking in the master stock when Old Man Sun leaned in at the window and asked, "Young Boss Lin, what kind of rice are you eating? It looks so rich and appetizing."

"Chestnut Stewed Rice. Would you like to try some, Grandpa Sun?"

"Oh, I couldn't possibly impose."

From his tone, it was clear he was tempted. Lin Xu told a kitchen assistant, "Go see how much stewed rice is left upstairs. Pack some in takeaway containers for these uncles and aunts to try."

After saying that, he skimmed the layer of oil off the surface of the master stock and checked the color of the chicken inside. "It'll be another ten minutes or so. Please wait a moment, everyone. We have a lot of chicken today, so the soaking might be a bit slower than usual. But it will be ready soon, don't worry."

Although it would have been fine to take them out and sell them now, Lin Xu decided to wait another ten minutes, just to be safe.

Good food is worth the wait, and a good roast chicken benefits from a longer soak.

Soaking it a bit longer makes the chicken more succulent and its flavor richer.

Soon, the kitchen assistant returned with a bag, taking out several takeaway containers and disposable chopsticks. The cashier at the window handed them out one by one.

Soon, the delighted exclamations of the neighbors could be heard from outside.

They were all praising how delicious the stewed rice was.

Fragrant but not greasy, rich and delicious; the umami of the seafood and the aroma of the pork blended perfectly. The Carrot Dices and green peas not only added to the texture but also ensured it was nutritious and packed with vitamins.

What defines great food? This was it.

"Boss Lin, do you sell this stewed rice in the shop?"

"We don't have any plans to add it to the menu for now. But if you happen to be around when we make it, you're welcome to eat with our staff. I expect we'll be making it a few more times in the near future."

This stewed rice isn't suitable for the regular menu. It's too filling, and we can't price it very high. Adding it to the menu would affect the sales of other dishes. As a shop owner, you have to know how to make these trade-offs. You can't just impulsively add every delicious dish to the menu. If you do that, the business will eventually fail.