

## Culinary 71

Chapter 71: A Dish with a Threshold! First Failure of the Study Card!

Xie Baomin rinsed the Lotus Root, then prepared a basin filled with clear water and White Vinegar.

"To make this dish, you have to keep the Lotus Root soaked in White Vinegar as much as possible," he said. "Otherwise, if it discolors, the presentation will be greatly diminished."

Lin Xu watched while busying himself with his own tasks. He made Ginger Lotus Root every day, so he was already accustomed to this procedure.

After peeling it, he immersed the Lotus Root completely in the White Vinegar water. He also made sure to rinse the holes within it to prevent discoloration from oxidation when cutting it later.

After soaking for three to four minutes, Xie Baomin took the Lotus Root out. He then evenly cut it into several sections, each about ten centimeters long.

After cutting, he soaked the Lotus Root sections once more in the White Vinegar water. Then, he took out one section, placed it on the cutting board, and started slicing.

"Lotus Root has many holes, making it easy to miss with the knife. So during my apprenticeship, my master kept making me slice Lotus Root. When you can't feel the holes anymore, when you no longer miss with the knife, that means you've grasped the basics of Knife Skills. After that, cutting anything else is as easy as cutting tofu," he explained.

Really? That seems like an easy way to cut yourself.

Thinking about how he'd almost cut his hand when Shen Jiayue kissed his face just now, Lin Xu felt a lingering fear.

No wonder outsiders aren't recommended in the kitchen. It is indeed quite dangerous.

When no one's around, I'll have to give Shen Jiayue a good talking to. She scared me so much I broke out in a cold sweat. Wouldn't it be fair to punish her with two more kisses?

Xie Baomin finished slicing the Lotus Root and then put all the slices into the basin to continue soaking.

Some slices were whole, others were broken. He picked out the incomplete ones and continued cutting the remaining Lotus Root sections.

Once all the Lotus Root was sliced, he took the soaked slices out and began to cut them into strips.

The cut Lotus Root strips were uniform in length, all 1.5 millimeters square. They didn't resemble Lotus Root but rather looked like Potato Strips or radish strips.

After all the Lotus Root strips were cut, Xie Baomin prepared a fresh basin of White Vinegar water and continued soaking them.

Soaking not only prevents the Lotus Root strips from oxidizing and changing color but also removes the starch from their surface, making the texture even crispier.

About ten minutes later, Xie Baomin prepared a basin of White Vinegar water with ice cubes and placed it beside the stove, ready to start cooking.

He put a pot of water on to boil. Once it was boiling, he added some White Vinegar.

Then, he placed the Lotus Root strips in a large colander, held it over the pot of boiling water, and used a ladle to scoop the bubbling hot water over the strips.

While pouring, he had to rotate his wrist, making the water from the ladle splash out in a circular motion. This ensured it evenly covered the strips in the colander.

WOW! No wonder my senior brother said this dish requires precise heat control.

Just this step of pouring boiling water would be enough to deter many non-professionals.

It's not just about the danger of pouring boiling water.

The key is not knowing how long to pour. Too little, and the Lotus Root won't be cooked; too much, and the strips will become mushy. Only the perfect duration will yield crisp and delicious Lotus Root strips.

And on top of that, one must rotate the wrist to spread the boiling water evenly.

It's far too easy to splash it onto yourself or someone else.

After ladling several scoops of water, Xie Baomin transferred the Lotus Root strips from the colander into the basin of iced White Vinegar water to continue soaking.

"Well, Junior Brother, have you learned it?" he asked.

Lin Xu gave a wry smile. Learn it just by watching once? He's overestimating my talent.

When Xie Baomin was pouring the water, Lin Xu had tried using the Cooking Learning Card. However, the Skill displayed was "Pouring Water," leaving Lin Xu speechless. What's the use of learning such a Skill? To participate in the Dai ethnic group's Water-Splashing Festival?

"Is it time for the cold mixing now?" Lin Xu asked.

"Yes, it's time for the cold mixing. Let me prepare the dressing first," Xie Baomin replied.

Xie Baomin took a small bowl and added White Vinegar, white sugar, salt, and a bit of ginger juice.

"It's a pity your shop doesn't have white Soy Sauce. Adding a bit would be nice, but it's not a big deal without it," he said.

He stirred the dressing in the bowl to dissolve the salt and sugar.

Then, he took the thoroughly chilled Lotus Root strips from the basin and drained them. He placed them into a mixing bowl, poured in the dressing, and tossed everything until well combined before starting to plate.

There were quite a few Lotus Root strips today, so Xie Baomin plated two servings.

The White Jade-like Lotus Root strips, served on a pristine white plate, were visually stunning.

"Is that all, Senior Brother?"

"Not yet, there's one more step... Where's the Seasoning Oil? We need to heat some Seasoning Oil."

Seasoning Oil is needed? Doesn't that turn it into some kind of flash-fried Lotus Root strips?

Curious, Lin Xu fetched the Seasoning Oil and continued to watch his senior brother's demonstration.

Xie Baomin placed a wok on the stove, poured in a ladleful of Seasoning Oil, and heated it.

Then, he took a clean, fine-mesh sieve and placed a small handful of Sichuan peppercorns inside. Holding the sieve with his left hand above the Lotus Root strips, he used his right hand to slowly drizzle the hot oil from the wok onto the Sichuan peppercorns.

The hot oil sizzled and spattered upon contact with the Sichuan peppercorns. It then sprinkled through the mesh of the sieve, landing like tiny stars onto the Lotus Root strips below.

This imparted the fragrance of the Seasoning Oil to the Lotus Root strips, yet not a single speck of oil was visible.

Lin Xu was thoroughly impressed by the advanced technique.

WOW! This is a real eye-opener today!

I initially thought it was just a simple flash-fry, but this is far more difficult!

No wonder he's a State Banquet master! To think he could elevate a simple cold dish to be so refined and sophisticated!

Use the Cooking Learning Card!

I have to learn such an advanced dish! Even if it's just to show off, it's worth learning!

"Learning target: Xie Baomin. Current Skill: White Jade Lotus Root Strips. Proceed with learning?"

Learn!

A flash of golden light flickered through his mind.

Then, the system's prompt sounded:

"Learning failed. The required Knife Skills must be Superior or above. Host, please continue to work hard and improve your fundamentals soon."

Lin Xu: ????

Why did it fail?

"This is a dish our master created back in the day," Xie Baomin explained. "It's now a signature dish at the Fishing Platform. Many foreign guests who've tried it make a point to order it when they return."

After finishing with the Seasoning Oil, Xie Baomin wiped the tiny oil droplets from the edge of the plate with a piece of kitchen paper. With that, the dish was officially complete.

A dish created by Master himself? No wonder there's a prerequisite for this dish.

I must find a way to improve my Knife Skills so I can learn this dish.

While Xie Baomin was talking, his phone rang. He answered it and stepped out. Not long after, he returned carrying a styrofoam box, which he then opened.

Inside was a lively Gu fish, weighing about three pounds. Alongside it were a block of tofu, a still-steaming hot piece of beef tenderloin, a pack of asparagus, and other ingredients.

"These are ingredients I had delivered from a supplier who provides for the Fishing Platform," Xie Baomin said. "When you're not busy, I'll introduce you. Then you can contact him whenever you need high-end ingredients."

Lin Xu had thought the White Jade Lotus Root Strips would be enough. I didn't expect Senior Brother to actually prepare a full table of dishes!

"How are you planning to prepare this fish, Senior Brother? Sweet and Sour Gu fish?"

Xie Baomin smiled and said, "Foreign guests don't like food with bones, so we usually fillet the fish to make sweet and sour fish cubes. Of course, the fish bones aren't wasted either; we'll stew them into a Milk Soup to make Milk Soup with Tofu. As for the beef, we'll just make a simple Stir-Fried Beef with Hot Green Peppers..."

After saying this, he carried the fish to the sink to gut and clean it.

Meanwhile, Lin Xu took the opportunity to snap a photo of the White Jade Lotus Root Strips on the table and sent it to Shen Jiayue:

"Senior Brother made these White Jade Lotus Root Strips especially for you. It's a dish served to honored guests at the Fishing Platform. Want to come and try some?"

「In an office building in Wangjing.」

Shen Jiayue couldn't help but gulp as she looked at the picture Lin Xu had sent.

"No, I can't. If I go, they'll all definitely make fun of me."

"That's a real pity. Besides these White Jade Lotus Root Strips, there are also sweet and sour fish cubes made from Gu fish, Stir-Fried Beef with Hot Green Peppers using fresh beef, and Milk Soup with Tofu made from stewed Gu fish bones..."

"Stop, stop! Don't say anymore! I'm on my way!"