

Culinary 72

Chapter 72: I Want to Help Xu Bao Earn Money! General Technique Again!

"Hurry up, hurry up, the restaurant has delicious food!"

Hearing the dishes Lin Xu mentioned, Shen Jiayue didn't want to wait another minute.

Having just arranged work for her overtime staff, Chen Yan asked with a smile, "Just a moment ago, you said you weren't going to Yingchun Street for dinner and wanted to treat me to roast duck. It's only been a few minutes, and you've already changed your mind?"

Sliding her small bag onto her shoulder, Shen Jiayue said, "How can roast duck compare to dishes made by the head chef at the Fishing Platform? My Xubao's Senior Brother is really going all out at the shop today; he's going to make dishes usually served to foreign guests. If you're not going, give me the car keys. I'll drive."

Dishes from the Fishing Platform?

Chen Yan's interest was piqued.

Although the Fishing Platform State Guesthouse had long been open to the public, and she had eaten there several times, she had also heard that many of its dishes were not available for general sale.

Moreover, Lin Xu's Senior Brother was the executive chef.

Sometimes, you couldn't hire such a master chef even if you had the money.

"I'm going too, I'm going too! Wait, let me give Weiwei a couple of instructions, and then we'll head out."

With that, Chen Yan clacked away in her high heels to the adjacent office.

「A few minutes later.」

She returned to the office, quickly grabbing her bag. "Let's go, let's go! We can't be late, or there'll be nothing left to eat. Their lunch service starts before eleven, much earlier than usual..."

"Ha! Aren't you worried about our public displays of affection anymore?"

Shen Jiayue wasn't worried at all. She knew that even if they were late, Xubao would save her a portion.

Yes, Xubao is the absolute best to me!

Chen Yan shot her cousin a sidelong glance. "I've been overwhelmed by your public displays of affection several times already, so what's a couple more times? But seriously, the Shakima your husband makes is really good. Could you ask him to make some more sometime? My grandma loves those kinds of snacks, and I plan to bring some for her later."

Shen Jiayue stretched out a small hand. "Money, money! As long as you pay, Shakima is a piece of cake!"

Chen Yan laughed, speechless. "Why are you such a money-grubber? Is a thousand enough? I'll send it to you via WeChat..."

"No, just scan the payment code at the shop. Xubao doesn't even have an apartment in Beijing yet, so I need to help him earn the money for a house as soon as possible."

Chen Yan: "..."

I understand all that, and I get that you're eager to help him, but could you perhaps not say these things right in front of me? Haven't you noticed that standing right next to you is a stunningly beautiful, gentle, and adorable... single woman?

「In the restaurant.」

Xie Baomin was at the sink, dressing a Gu fish.

"When preparing a fish, first stun it by striking its head. Then, make an incision at the base of the tail to bleed it. This way, the fish meat will look more appealing and taste fresher."

Another trick learned.

Although he had just used up a Cooking Learning Card, Lin Xu felt no regret. Instead, his desire to improve his culinary skills intensified.

Witnessing such exquisite, high-end culinary artistry had broadened his horizons. He found himself unconsciously yearning to ascend to greater heights, to behold even more magnificent vistas in the world of cooking.

After bleeding the fish, he scaled it, removed the gills and internal organs, and meticulously cleaned the black membrane from the Fish Belly.

After another rinse, he began to portion the fish.

Xie Baomin started cutting from the Fish Tail, slicing forward along the backbone until he reached the area just behind the gills. He then made a vertical cut behind the gills, detaching one half of the fish meat.

Next, he sliced the meat from the other side.

He removed the Fish Skin, trimmed away the rib bones, and diced the fish meat into thumb-sized pieces.

Once diced, he first rinsed the pieces in clean water to remove any remaining blood. Then, he marinated the fish meat with table salt, Light Soy Sauce, Cooking Wine, and ingredients like scallion segments and ginger slices.

Meanwhile, the Fish Skin, head, and bones were fried in hot oil.

After frying, these were placed in a pressure cooker. He added boiling water, a small spoonful of table salt, and Scallion and Ginger, then sealed the lid and cooked under pressure for ten minutes.

"To get a rich Milk Soup from fish, you just need to pan-fry both sides of the fish before adding boiling water. If you want a Clear Soup, don't fry it; simmer it in cold water instead," Xie Baomin explained meticulously.

After all, this was his master's newly inducted junior apprentice-brother. Moreover, he was scheduled to represent Building Two in the Fishing Platform's Young Chefs Competition at the end of the month. Therefore, Xie Baomin needed to pass on as much cooking knowledge as possible.

If any of this knowledge proved useful during the competition, it could lead to victory.

Lin Xu asked curiously, "Weren't we making Tofu in Milk Soup? Why haven't you added the tofu yet?"

Xie Baomin smiled and said, "First, we prepare the Milk Soup. Then, we stew the tofu in the Milk Soup. This way, the soup will be more flavorful, and the tofu will become exceptionally fresh and tender."

"So, later on, are you going to discard all the fish heads, Fish Skin, and Fish Tails from the pressure cooker?"

"Yes, we only need the soup."

Lin Xu glanced at the pressure cooker with a hint of regret.

There's still quite a bit of meat on the fish heads and bones; it's a shame to just throw it away.

He thought for a moment and said, "Later, could you scoop out those bones and meat for me? I plan to take them to the residential complex behind the shop to feed the stray cats."

"Sure, I'll pack them in a disposable bowl for you later."

With that, Xie Baomin began to process the beef.

When this piece of beef was taken from the insulated container, it was still warm, indicating it was freshly slaughtered. By now, however, it had been soaking in clean water for a while.

Soaking helps to draw out the blood, making the beef taste fresher, more tender, and more delicious.

He lifted the beef out of the water.

First, he removed the surface fascia. Then, cutting along the grain, he meticulously removed the internal connective tissues.

"When stir-frying beef, whether it's for Sizzling Pepper Beef Fillet or a simple beef stir-fry, you must completely remove the fascia. Otherwise, the texture of the beef will be greatly compromised."

After explaining, Xie Baomin sliced all the beef into pieces three to four millimeters thick.

The meat for beef fillet shouldn't be too thin, or it will lack texture and chewiness.

After slicing, he rinsed it again with clean water.

Then, he proceeded with the marination.

He added table salt, Light Soy Sauce, Cooking Wine, egg white, and pepper powder to the meat in sequence. After mixing thoroughly, he added a handful of dry starch and continued to mix until uniform. Then, he poured in a little rendered oil, mixed briefly, and set it aside to marinate.

The oil serves to prevent the starch from coming off and helps the meat slices separate easily when stir-frying, preventing them from clumping.

By this time, the fish was also nearly done marinating.

He began to prepare the Sweet and Sour Fish Cubes.

This was to be the main course for the day.

Xie Baomin picked out the Scallion and Ginger from the fish. He then added an egg white, a handful of dry starch, a handful of flour, and a small spoonful of baking powder to the bowl. Finally, he added half a spoonful of rendered oil and mixed everything thoroughly.

Once all the fish pieces were evenly coated in batter, he began to fry them.

He dropped the fish cubes into the hot oil one by one, frying them until golden brown before removing them to drain excess oil.

Next, using another wok, he started making the sweet and sour sauce.

He added a spoonful of Seasoning Oil to the wok. Once hot, he stir-fried the tomato ketchup until fragrant. Then, he added concentrated orange juice, white sugar, White Vinegar, table salt, Dark Soy Sauce, and other seasonings, along with a spoonful of Pork Bone Broth, and let it simmer.

Once the sauce had thickened to a syrupy consistency, he scooped half a ladleful of hot oil from the adjacent frying wok and poured it into the sauce.

The vibrant red sweet and sour sauce was complete.

He returned the fried fish to the hot oil for a second frying of thirty seconds, then transferred it to the sweet and sour sauce. He tossed it briefly to ensure the fish cubes were generously coated.

Nearby, Lin Xu silently chanted in his mind:

Use the Cooking Learning Card!

This is my last Cooking Learning Card; I hope it doesn't fail again.

Just as this thought crossed his mind, a notification sound echoed in his head:

"Learning target: Xie Baomin. Current Skill: General Sugar and Vinegar Technique. Learn?"

What? A General Sugar and Vinegar Technique?

A surge of joy filled Lin Xu, and he immediately made his choice.

Learn!

"Host has consumed one Cooking Learning Card and acquired the Superior-grade General Cooking Technique—Sugar and Vinegar. This Skill allows the Host to prepare all types of Sugar and Vinegar dishes. Congratulations, Host."

Today is my birthday. I'm not asking for donations or monthly tickets; I just hope all my friends can wish me a happy birthday! After this birthday, I'll officially be an adult, and I'm feeling a little melancholic. Did you feel this way on your eighteenth birthdays too?