

Culinary 73

Chapter 73: Every Dish is Incredibly Delicious! The Essence of Cooking!

All sweet and sour dishes?

After processing the experience, Lin Xu realized that he could make all dishes that were deep-fried and then coated with sweet and sour sauce, such as sweet and sour pork loin, sweet and sour carp, sweet and sour fish cubes, sweet and sour shrimp, crispy-skinned sweet and sour tofu, and crispy-skinned sweet and sour eggplant, among others.

As for the nation's widely beloved sweet and sour pork ribs, although the name included "sweet and sour," they were not made using the same method, so he couldn't produce them.

However, the Squirrel Gu Fish, which didn't have "sweet and sour" in its name, was included in the technique.

After processing the experience, Lin Xu exhaled softly. He had intended to learn how to make sweet and sour fish cubes, but unexpectedly, he had acquired the entire culinary category.

Was this compensation for his recent failure with the White Jade Lotus Root Strips?

Next to him, Xie Baomin, after coating all the fish cubes with sweet and sour sauce, carefully spooned the finished dish onto a plate. He didn't forget to garnish the top with two vibrant green mint leaves.

This head chef wiped the sweat from his forehead and muttered to himself, "Next up is the Milk Soup Tofu."

He moved the pressure cooker aside to let it depressurize. Then he washed the pot that had been used for the sweet and sour sauce, filled it halfway with water, and set it on the stove to boil.

While the water was heating, he took the prepared tofu from the styrofoam box and efficiently chopped it into strips with a kitchen knife.

When the water boiled, he added three small scoops of salt to the pot. Grabbing a spoon, he stirred a few times to speed up the salt's dissolution. Then he added the chopped tofu strips into the boiling water.

"When cooking with tofu, whether it's for a cold dish or a stir-fry, you should always blanch it in boiling salted water first," Xie Baomin explained. "This removes the beany taste, making the tofu softer, smoother, and more palatable."

Oh? There's a trick to it, huh?

Lin Xu immediately made a mental note. Even though he no longer had the Cooking Learning Card, it was still important to remember such knowledge. If he ever had the chance to prepare tofu dishes in the future, he could use this.

The tofu didn't need to blanch for long. Once the water in the pot returned to a rolling boil for about half a minute, the tofu could be drained.

By now, the pressure cooker had also completely depressurized.

He lifted the lid. Instantly, a unique, fresh fragrance of fish wafted out.

As the steam cleared, the thick, milky-white soup was revealed, looking incredibly appetizing.

Xie Baomin used a strainer to remove all the scallion, ginger, fish heads, and bones from the pot, placing them into a disposable takeout box that Lin Xu had set aside for feeding cats.

Then, holding the pot with one hand and a fine-mesh sieve with the other above a wok, he poured the rich and delicious fish soup through the sieve, filtering it into the wok.

Next, he added half a spoonful of pork lard, two slices of ginger, and several pieces of scallion to the soup. He brought it to a boil over high heat, allowing the fresh flavor of the fish soup and the aroma of the pork lard to combine perfectly.

At this point, he added the blanched tofu and let it simmer on low heat.

Watching the white tofu simmering and bubbling in the milk soup, Lin Xu couldn't help but swallow.

Such a perfect soup. Never mind stewing tofu; even if you stewed a shoe insole in it, the taste probably wouldn't be too bad, right?

Just as he was musing, Shen Jiayue, who had stolen a kiss from him that morning and then dashed off, pushed the door open and walked in.

Heh, the female fugitive has finally returned.

"Wow, what a delicious smell!"

Drawn by the aroma of the Milk Soup Tofu, Shen Jiayue walked towards the kitchen. Meanwhile, Chen Yan scanned the payment QR code at the entrance, actually paying 1,000 yuan.

Yeah, my brother-in-law's skills are worth this price!

"Ms. Chen, what's this for?" Song Tiantian was puzzled. Since Chen Yan was the owner's relative, why did she still need to pay? At the restaurants where Song Tiantian had worked before, the owners' relatives never paid. They would always order a large table of dishes and act arrogantly towards the waitstaff.

"I'm planning to ask your boss to make some Shakima; this is for the cost. I'll talk to him about it later. Just make a note of this payment when you do the accounts tonight; he'll understand," Chen Yan explained.

"Alright, Ms. Chen."

After speaking, Chen Yan headed towards the kitchen with her purse. Seeing Shen Jiayue taking photos of the two prepared dishes with her phone, she leaned in and asked quietly, "What are these two dishes?"

One dish consisted of fine white shreds, while the other was so thoroughly coated in sweet and sour sauce that its original form was indistinguishable.

"This one is the White Jade Lotus Root Strips that my Xubao mentioned. It's a dish the Master created years ago. These white shreds are all sliced from lotus root," Shen Jiayue explained.

Chen Yan was utterly astounded.

This is actually lotus root? I thought it was some other ingredient, like wild rice stem. Why haven't I seen this dish on the menu at Fishing Platform despite dining there several times?

"And this one is sweet and sour fish cubes. My Xubao said it's made from filleted fish, without a single bone. You can eat it piece by piece without worry!"

No bones? This is incredibly considerate for people who struggle with eating fish!

Chen Yan, who had choked on fish bones several times before, immediately wanted to try a piece.

Before long, all the dishes were ready. It was almost eleven o'clock.

Time to eat!

"Wow, what a feast today! Thanks, Senior Brother!" Shen Jiayue said politely. She waited for the elder to sit down before taking a seat next to Lin Xu, looking very well-behaved. However, her eyes were already scanning the dishes on the table, deciding which one to try first.

"Go ahead and eat, everyone. We still have work to do later, so no need to stand on ceremony," the elder said.

He picked up some White Jade Lotus Root Strips to taste, then nodded. "This dish is well made. It seems that becoming the head chef hasn't made you neglect your fundamentals, Baomin."

Hearing the elder's praise, Shen Jiayue quickly took a bite. An expression of delighted surprise instantly appeared on her face. "This is so delicious!"

The crisp and refreshing texture, combined with the perfectly balanced sweet and sour flavor, gave one the exhilarating sensation of jumping into a swimming pool on a hot summer's day. After eating, the subtle spiciness of ginger and the numbing tingle of Sichuan peppercorns further stimulated the taste buds, making one unconsciously raise their chopsticks to continue enjoying the jade-like delicacy.

What does it mean for a dish to leave an endless aftertaste? What does it mean to be irresistible? This dish provided the perfect answers.

After several bites, Shen Jiayue picked up a piece of sweet and sour fish cubes to try. The outermost layer of sweet and sour sauce was appetizingly tangy, the batter in the middle was fragrant and crispy, and the fish inside was tender and juicy. A single cube of fish offered three different textures, and there was no need to worry about bones. It was absolutely mesmerizing.

As she was eating, Lin Xu served her a small bowl of Milk Soup Tofu.

Scooping a spoonful of the milk soup into her mouth, she found the fresh taste mingled with a rich aroma. It was comforting and warming, making her whole body feel wonderfully relaxed. The tofu was tender and smooth, without the slightest hint of a beany taste; instead, it carried a delicate sweetness.

AAAAHHH! Every dish is a classic and incredibly delicious!

The elder, holding a bowl of rice, leisurely ate a couple of mouthfuls of stir-fried beef with chili peppers, then asked, "Lin Xu, you've watched your senior brother cook all morning. What are your thoughts?"

To ensure Lin Xu could properly observe Xie Baomin's cooking, the elder had been busy all morning, sometimes helping Xu Xinhua with the Braised Chicken Feet, sometimes simmering Sour Plum Soup in a double-layered pot. He hadn't rested for a moment.

Now, it was time for Lin Xu to present his observations.

Thoughts? Lin Xu reflected on his senior brother's cooking process. It seemed different from those online cooking influencers. Those online chefs frequently used various sauces, as if using more made them look more professional, but his senior brother hadn't touched any from start to finish.

Thinking this, he tentatively said, "I feel that my senior brother is quite... restrained when it comes to using seasonings."

Just as he finished speaking, the system's notification sound echoed in his mind:

"Host has grasped the essence of cooking. Awarded a 50% off coupon for the Points Store. Congratulations to the host."

Lin Xu: ?????? I was just guessing! Did I really grasp the essence just like that?