

Culinary 78

Chapter 78: The Essentials of Making Alcoholic Peanuts! Received Group Dining Business!

Ha!

Is there really such good news?

Hand-pulled noodles had become a constraint on Lin Xu's cooking. A couple of days ago, he had wanted to stop serving hand-pulled noodles and sell only rice. However, some regular customers, being fans of noodle dishes, really liked them, so he hadn't gone ahead with it. Now, an employee had actually volunteered to take over this task.

This is really exciting!

Seeing Lin Xu remain silent, Che Zai thought he was angry and quickly tried to smooth things over, saying, "Niu Chuan has always lacked talent in cooking. He can't handle the stove and can't be a kitchen assistant his whole life. So, he thought about branching out and learning to make hand-pulled noodles; at least he'd have one skill."

Lin Xu snapped out of his thoughts.

Smiling, he said, "Making hand-pulled noodles is tiring. But if he's not afraid of hard work, then let him learn. The restaurant could really use a master to be responsible for the hand-pulled noodles."

Upon hearing this, Che Zai immediately strode towards the door.

Before long, a sturdy man followed Che Zai inside. He wasn't much taller than Che Zai, but he was several times more burly.

Upon seeing him, Lin Xu couldn't help but exclaim internally, This is exactly the talent my East Factory... oh no, this is exactly the talent my Lin Ji needs!

"Hello, Boss. I'm Niu Chuan. Don't worry, even if I learn how to make hand-pulled noodles, I won't teach it to outsiders."

Lin Xu was speechless. This isn't some unique secret technique. In the Northern provinces known for their noodle dishes, almost all housewives know how to make hand-pulled noodles. Even if you wanted to spread it, where could you even spread it to?

He laughed and said, "It's just a common noodle dish; there are no trade secrets here. You can learn it after the main work in the shop is done. As long as you're dedicated and willing to put in the effort, you'll learn it quickly."

The biggest requirement for making hand-pulled noodles is good physical strength. And Niu Chuan's brawny, ox-like stature was simply perfect for this position.

"There's sour and spicy soup and beef pan-fried buns made by my master in the pot. Hurry and eat them while they're hot. The restaurant is introducing a new dish today, and there's a lot of work to do."

After speaking, Lin Xu continued to watch over the wok of frying peanuts. The oil temperature had risen slightly, requiring him to constantly stir the peanuts with a large spoon. Otherwise, with the higher oil temperature at the bottom of the wok, the peanuts there were in danger of burning.

Meanwhile, Che Zai once again took on his role as Employee Number One, showing Niu Chuan around and solemnly explaining Elder Gao's status. Unfortunately, Elder Gao had gone for a walk in the nearby park after breakfast and wasn't there. Otherwise, he definitely would have garnered a wave of admiring glances.

"Damn, our restaurant's breakfast is too delicious, isn't it?" Niu Chuan savored the sour and spicy soup and the pan-fried buns, thinking that even the food from breakfast stalls couldn't compare.

Xu Xinhua, who had only started working a few days ago, said, "This is just breakfast. Lunch and dinner are even better—dishes that regular customers can't get! If you had come yesterday, you could have even tasted dishes made by the head chef from Fishing Platform. They were absolutely fantastic!"

The previous evening, when Che Zai and Xu Xinhua found Niu Chuan, he had initially thought it was a scam because the salary was so high. Still, he decided to come and see. But now, he regretted it deeply.

Why don't I enjoy surfing the web? If I browsed forums regularly like Che Zai, maybe I would have found out about the boss's recruitment earlier and started working here sooner! Such high pay, and the chance to learn a valuable skill! This is absolutely perfect for me!

After the meal, Niu Chuan changed into the new chef's uniform that Che Zai had fetched from the storage room, washed his hands thoroughly, and then got to the prep work in the back kitchen.

By then, the temperature of the oil in the wok had fully risen. The peanuts, originally at the bottom, had gradually floated to the surface, indicating that their moisture had been fried out, making them lighter. Peanuts require precise heat control when frying. If underfried, they aren't crispy; if overfried, they taste burnt. Only when fried just right do peanuts become fragrant, crispy, and increasingly delicious with each chew.

Once all the peanuts had floated to the surface, Lin Xu used a slotted spoon to scoop the peanuts out of the wok. After the oil in the wok heated up a bit more, he poured the peanuts back in for a second frying. This second frying, or 're-frying,' makes the peanuts even crispier and also prevents them from easily reabsorbing moisture. However, the timing must be controlled well; about twenty seconds is usually enough, otherwise, the peanuts might burn.

The peanuts just scooped out of the wok were still very hot. Therefore, they couldn't be piled up, or the peanuts in the middle would continue to cook and burn from the residual heat. The best approach was to spread them out quickly on trays to allow their temperature to drop rapidly.

Lin Xu spread the peanuts onto several trays and then poured the peanut oil out of the wok. He put the wok back on the stove. Then, he added two large handfuls of vertically cut dried chili, a handful of Sichuan peppercorns, and a few pieces of cracked star anise, stir-frying them over low heat in the residual oil left in the wok. Chilies and Sichuan peppercorns don't absorb much oil; in fact, fried peanuts even release some oil, so there's no need to add extra oil when making Alcoholic Peanuts. The key was the heat control. They had to be stir-fried over low heat to draw out the spicy fragrance of the chilies and the numbing taste of the Sichuan peppercorns. This way, the resulting Alcoholic Peanuts would be crispy, fragrant, spicy, and numbing, with an endlessly enjoyable aftertaste.

Soon, the fragrance of the dried chili and Sichuan peppercorns was released by the stir-frying. Lin Xu poured the fried peanuts into the wok and quickly tossed them using a small flipping motion with the

spatula. This prevented the peanuts or dried chilies from scorching and allowed the spicy and numbing flavors to better infuse the peanuts. After stir-frying for a while, when a thin layer of red oil coated the surface of the peanuts, Lin Xu sprinkled in salt and sugar. He mixed everything again evenly and then spread the peanuts out on the trays once more to cool.

"Wow, these Alcoholic Peanuts smell amazing! Are they ready, Boss?" Che Zai, who was cutting eggplants, exclaimed in admiration. That slightly numbing spiciness, combined with the aroma of fried peanuts, instantly triggered one's craving for alcohol.

"Not yet. There's one last step."

Lin Xu grabbed a small kitchen spray bottle, poured some Erguotou into it, and evenly sprayed the liquor over the freshly cooked peanuts on the trays. The liquor helps the peanuts maintain their crispy texture for a long time; they wouldn't become moist even after a week.

Lin Xu had just finished making the Alcoholic Peanuts when Ou Hua arrived to deliver drinks. Seeing the peanuts spread out to cool in the kitchen, he told a few of his delivery staff, "Bring in another twenty cases of beer, two cases of Hongxing, and two cases of Niu'er! With such great bar snacks, alcohol sales today will definitely explode!"

Lin Xu greeted Ou Hua, "Boss Ou, why don't you stay for a drink at noon?"

Ou Hua waved his hand. "Can't. I'm too busy. I couldn't even make it to my relative's child's full-month celebration. By the way, Boss Lin, tomorrow night I plan to have a staff meal at the warehouse for my team—delivery and warehouse staff, about fifty or sixty people. I'll source the food from you. What kind of menu combination do you think would be suitable?"

A group meal for fifty or sixty people?

Lin Xu was about to say he had never handled such a large order before when the system's notification suddenly sounded.

"The host has encountered a group meal order for the first time, triggering the side mission [Group Meal Planning]. Please provide Ou Hua with a group meal menu of no fewer than eight dishes before nightfall. Completion reward: One draw for Basic Cooking Techniques."

This can trigger a mission too?

Lin Xu wasn't particularly interested in Basic Cooking Techniques. The previous Pig Slaughtering Technique reward had truly left him with some psychological scars. However, this was business knocking on his door; there was no reason to refuse.

He thought for a moment and said, "Let me think it over. How about this: I'll give you an update at noon. We can connect via WeChat then."