

Show 14: **CHINESE COOKING**

Sour and Hot Soup

3 dried Chinese mushrooms, 1 to 1 ½ inches in diameter
2 squares, 3 inches each, fresh Chinese bean curd, about ½ thick
½ cup canned bamboo shoots
¼ boneless pork
1 quart chicken stock, fresh or canned
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon soy sauce
¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
2 tablespoons white vinegar
2 tablespoons cornstarch mixed with 3 tablespoons cold water
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 teaspoons sesame seed oil
1 scallion, including the green top, finely chopped

Prepare Ahead

In a small bowl, cover the mushrooms with ½ cup of warm water and let them soak for thirty minutes. Discard the water. With a cleaver or knife, cut away and discard the tough stems of the mushrooms and shred the caps by placing one at a time on a chopping board. Cut them horizontally into paper thin slices, and then into thin strips. Drain the pieces of bamboo shoot and bean curd and rinse them in cold water. Shred them as fine as the mushrooms. With a cleaver or sharp knife, trim the pork of all fat. Then shred it, too, by slicing the meat as thin as possible and cutting the slices into narrow strips about 1 ½ to 2 inches long. Have the ingredients, stock, salt, soy sauce, pepper, vinegar, cornstarch mixture, egg, sesame-seed oil and scallions within easy reach.

To Cook

Combine in a heavy 3-quart saucepan the stock, salt, soy sauce, mushrooms, bamboo shoots and pork. Bring to a boil over high heat, then immediately reduce the heat to low, cover the pan and simmer for 3 minutes. Drop in the bean curd, pepper and vinegar. Bring to a boil again. Give the cornstarch mixture a stir to recombine it and pour into soup. Stir for a few seconds until the soup thickens, then slowly pour in the beaten egg, stirring gently all the while. Remove the soup from the heat and ladle it into a tureen or serving bowl. Stir in the sesame-seed oil and sprinkle the top with the scallions. Serve at once.

Fried Rice

Serves 3 to 4

½ cup shelled, fresh peas, or substitute thoroughly defrosted frozen peas
3 tablespoons peanut oil
2 eggs, lightly beaten
3 cups Chinese boiled rice, prepared
1 teaspoon salt
3 ounces cook meat, sliced ¼ inch thick and cut into ¼ inch dice (about ½ cup)
1 scallion, including the green top, finely chopped

Prepare Ahead

Cook frozen peas according to package directions. Then drain and run cold water over them to stop their cooking and set their color. Frozen peas need only be thoroughly defrosted. Have the peas, oil, eggs, rice, salt, meat and scallions handy.

To Cook

Set a 12-inch wok or skillet over the high heat for 30 seconds. Pour in 1 tablespoon of oil, swirl it about in the pan and immediately reduce the heat to moderate. Pour in the beaten eggs. They will form a film on the bottom of the pan almost at once. Immediately lift this film gently with a fork and push it to the back of the pan so that the still liquid eggs can spread across the bottom of the pan to cook. As soon as the eggs are set, but before they become dry or begin to brown, transfer them to a small bowl and break them up with a fork. Pour the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil into the pan, swirl it around and heat it for 30 seconds. Add the rice and stir fry for 2 to 3 minutes until all the grains are coated with oil. Add the salt, then the peas and meat and stir fry for 20 seconds. Return the eggs to the pan, add the scallions and cook only long enough to heat the eggs through. Serve at once.

Sweet and Sour Pork

1 pound lean boneless pork, preferably butt
1 egg lightly beaten
1 teaspoon salt
¼ cup cornstarch
¼ flour
¼ cup chicken stock, fresh or canned
3 cups peanut oil

SAUCE

1 tablespoon peanut oil
1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic
1 large green pepper, seeded and cut into ½ inch squares
1 medium carrot, scraped and sliced into 2-inch strips – ¼ inch wide and ¼ inch thick
½ cup chicken stock, fresh or canned
4 tablespoons sugar
4 tablespoons red-wine vinegar
1 teaspoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon cornstarch dissolved in 2 tablespoons cold water

Prepare Ahead:

Trim the pork of any excess fat and, with a cleaver or sharp knife, cut the meat into 1-inch cubes. In a large bowl, mix together the egg, ¼ cup cornstarch, ¼ cup flour, ¼ cup chicken stock and salt. Set aside. For the sauce, have the oil, garlic, green pepper, carrot, chicken stock, sugar, vinegar, soy sauce and cornstarch mixture within easy reach.

To Cook:

Just before cooking, add the pork cubes to the egg and flour mixture and stir until each piece of meat is well coated. Preheat the oven to 250. Pour the 3 cups of oil into a wok and set it over high heat. When the oil almost begins to smoke or reaches 375 on a deep-frying thermometer, drop in half of the coated pork cubes one by one. Fry for 5 to 6 minutes, regulating the heat so that the pork turns a crisp, golden brown in that period without burning. Remove the pork with a strainer or slotted spoon to a small baking dish and keep it warm in the oven. Fry the other half and add the first batch. To make the sauce, pour off any oil remaining in the wok or use a 10-inch skillet. Set the pan over high heat for about 30 seconds. Pour in the tablespoon of oil, swirl it about in the pan and heat for another 30 seconds, turning the heat down to moderate if the oil begins to smoke. Add the garlic, then the green pepper and carrot, and stir fry for 2 to 3 minutes until the pepper and carrot darken in somewhat in color. Be careful not to let them burn. Pour in the chicken stock, sugar, vinegar and soy sauce and bring to a boil. Boil rapidly for about 1 minute, or until the sugar has thoroughly dissolved. Immediately give the corn starch mixture a quick stir to recombine it and add it to the pan. Cook a moment longer, stirring constantly. When the sauce is thick and clear, pour the entire contents of the pan fried pork and serve at once.

Egg Rolls with Shrimp and Pork

Makes 16 egg rolls

THE FILLING

½ pound fresh bean sprouts or substitute a 1-pound can of bean sprouts
½ pound raw shrimp in their shells
3 tablespoons oil
½ pound lean boneless pork, finely ground
4 cups finely chopped celery
2 to 3 medium fresh mushrooms, cut in ¼-inch slices (about ½ cup)
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon Chinese rice wine, or pale dry sherry
2 teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch dissolved in 2 tablespoons cold chicken stock, fresh or canned, or cold water

THE WRAPPERS

2 cups flour
½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup cold water
1 egg, lightly beaten

Note: 1 pound ready-made egg-roll wrappers may be substituted for these homemade wrappers.

Prepare Ahead

Rinse the fresh bean sprouts in a pot of cold water and discard any husks that float to the surface. Drain and pat them dry with paper towels. To crisp canned bean sprouts, rinse them under running water and refrigerate them in a bowl of cold water for at least 2 hours. Drain and pat them dry before using.

Shell the shrimp. With a small, sharp knife, devein them by making a shallow incision down their backs and lifting out the black or white intestinal vein with the point of the knife. Using a cleaver or a large knife, cut the shrimp into fine dice.

To Make the Filling

Set a 12-inch wok or 10-inch skillet over high heat for 30 seconds. Pour in 1 tablespoon of oil, swirl it about in the pan and heat for another 30 seconds, turning the heat down to moderate if the oil begins to smoke. Add the pork and stir fry for 2 minutes, or until it loses its reddish color. Then add the wine, soy sauce, sugar, shrimp, mushrooms and stir fry for another minute, or until the shrimp turn pink. Transfer the entire contents of the pan to a bowl and set aside.

Pour the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil into the same wok or skillet, swirl it about in the pan and heat for 30 seconds, turning the heat down to moderate if the oil begins to smoke. Add the celery and stir fry for 5 minutes, then add the salt and bean sprouts and mix thoroughly together. Return the pork shrimp mixture to the pan and stir until all ingredients are well combined. Cook over moderate heat, stirring constantly, until the liquid starts to boil.

There should be about 2 or 3 tablespoons of liquid remaining in the pan. If there is more, spoon it out and discard it. Give the cornstarch mixture a quick stir to recombine it and add it, stirring until the cooking liquids have thickened slightly and coated the mixture with a light glaze. Transfer the entire contents of the pan to a bowl and cool to room temperature before using.

To Make the Filling

Sift the flour and the salt in a large mixing bowl. With a large spoon or your hands, gradually combine the flour and salt with the water, mixing until a stiff dough is formed. Knead the dough in a bowl for 5 minutes, or until it is smooth, then cover the bowl with a dampened cloth and let it rest for 30 minutes. Turn the dough out on a lightly floured surface and firmly roll it out until it is no more than 1/16 inch thick. With a cookie cutter, pastry well or sharp knife, cut the dough into 7-inch squares. When you have finished, there should be 16 squares.

To Assemble

For each egg roll, shape out about ¼ cup filling with your hands into a cylinder about 4 inches long and an inch in diameter, and place it diagonally across the center of the wrapper. Lift the lower triangular over the filling and tuck the point under it, leaving the upper point of the wrapper exposed. Bring each of the two small end flaps, one at a time, up to the top of the enclosed filling and press the points firmly down. Brush the upper and exposed triangle of dough with lightly beaten egg and then roll the wrapper into a neat package. The beaten egg will seal the edges and keep the wrapper in tacked.

Place the filled egg rolls on a plate and cover them with a dry kitchen towel. If they must wait longer than about 30 minutes before being fried, cover them with plastic wrap and place them in a refrigerator.

To Cook

Set a 12-inch wok or heavy deep fryer over high heat, add 3 cups of oil and heat it until a haze forms above it or reaches a temperature of 375 on a deep-frying thermometer. Place 5 or 6 egg rolls in the hot oil and deep fry them for 3 to 4 minutes, or until they have become golden brown and are crisp. Transfer the egg rolls to a double thickness of paper towels and let the oil drain off while you deep-fry another batch of 5 or 6.

Serve the rolls as soon as possible, arranged attractively on a large heated platter. If necessary, the egg rolls can be kept warm for an hour in a preheated 250 oven, or they can be reheated for about 10 minutes in a 450 oven.