



Chapter Eleven

SZECHUAN CHICKEN BREAST AND UDON NOODLES



Gordon Ramsay Teaches Cooking II: Restaurant Recipes at Home

SZECHUAN CHICKEN BREAST AND UDON NOODLES

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How I do it here in my house is that I make this broth, leave all those ingredients in there, chill it, refrigerate it, and then bring it up to a boil slowly three or four days later—and those aromatics are breathtaking.

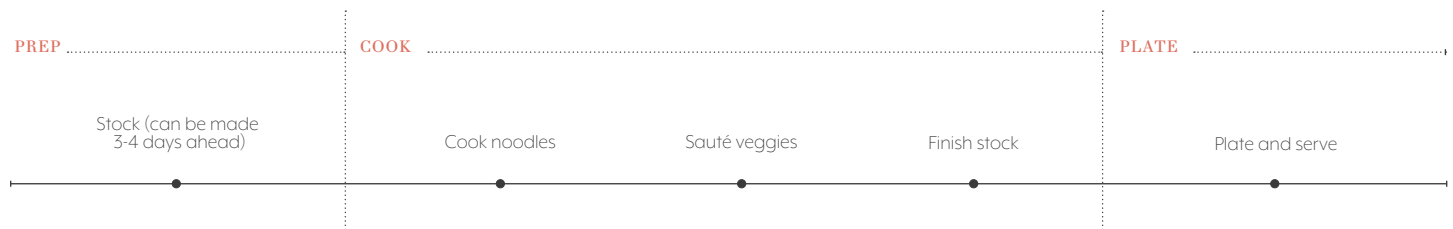
Chapter Review

This play on chicken noodle soup was inspired by one of Gordon's restaurants in Singapore. Gordon uses udon noodles but encourages you to change up the type of noodle to make the dish yours. Both the Szechuan-crusted chicken breast and the roasting juices used to enrich the broth are reserved from the whole roasted chicken in Chapter Nine: Szechuan Pepper Roasted Whole Chicken. Start with a base of chicken stock, roasting juices, and aromatics, and taste the broth as it reduces to see how the flavors build.

Gordon adds rice wine vinegar for tannins and soy sauce (instead of salt) for seasoning and color. Keep the stock at a rolling boil as it reduces—the water should be rolling in the middle of the pot and at the sides. This broth can be made up to four days ahead of time, stored in the refrigerator, and slowly brought back to a boil when you're ready to plate.

Gordon preps veggies in the order that they'll go into the pan. Mushrooms will take the longest, bok choy a bit less, and snap peas—the veggie that should retain the most crunch—goes in last. Add a drop of sesame oil to the pan but never sauté anything in sesame oil. It has such a concentrated flavor that it should be used in small amounts. The sautéed veggies only need light seasoning because the soy sauce in the stock will season throughout the composed dish. Take them off the heat when they are 80% done and they'll finish cooking in the hot broth.

RECIPE TIMELINE



SZECHUAN CHICKEN BREAST AND UDON NOODLES

*Prep*

- The ramen broth can be prepared and chilled up to five days in advance.
- The udon noodles can be blanched up to two days ahead and lightly warmed in hot water for one minute before plating.
- The scallions can be cut a few days ahead and stored in ice water in the refrigerator.
- This dish is best if the chicken breasts are used the same day as the initial roast but if that isn't possible, use this method to warm the reserved chicken breasts:
 - Place the breasts skin side up on a sheet pan with enough chicken stock or water to rise up about one quarter of the way up the breasts. Cover the pan with aluminium foil and bake at 350°F for 20 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F. The aluminium foil can be removed during the last 5 to 8 minutes of reheating to give the skin a crisp texture.

Ingredient Notes

- Gordon prefers a lighter broth but mentions that you can reduce the broth further to make it even richer.
- In prepping herbs, “picked” means that you’ve pulled each leaf from its stem. It’s a common practice for herbs used for garnish because it means that each leaf or flower has been looked over and approved for presentation.
- Aromatics help build the foundation of a dish with the most common being garlic, onions, celery, and carrots. When they come in contact with whatever fat you are using to cook (vegetable oil, coconut oil, butter, etc), they begin to release fragrant aromas and flavor.

Dietary Restrictions

- To make this dish gluten-free, substitute tamari for soy sauce and use a brand of gluten-free noodles.

Beverage Pairing

- Gordon recommends that you pair this dish with a refreshing, fuller-flavored IPA style beer with hints of sharp citrus.

Szechuan Crusted Chicken Breast, Udon Noodles With Bok Choy, Sugar Snap Peas, Shitake Mushrooms, and Ramen Broth

Serves 2

Lemon Salt

3 Meyer lemons
3 tablespoons Maldon salt

Zest Meyer lemons into a mortar and pestle and add Maldon salt. Crush the zest and salt together until fragrant and broken down. Store in an airtight container, in a plastic or ceramic container wrapped tightly with plastic wrap, or a zip-lock bag in a cool, dry place for up to two weeks.

Udon Noodles

9 ounces dried udon noodles
2 teaspoons sesame oil
1 tablespoon olive oil + 2 teaspoons
2 teaspoons unsalted butter, cubed
1 cup shiitake mushrooms, julienned
½ cup bok choy, chiffonade
¼ cup sugar snap peas, sliced on the bias
4 scallions, rough chop

In a large sauté pan, heat two teaspoons of olive oil on medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Sauté the mushrooms for 3 minutes with sesame oil. Add the bok choy and butter and continue to sauté for another minute. Add the snap peas and and scallions and toss. Season with salt and pepper and continue to sauté for 2 more minutes to wilt the scallions. Pull off heat and reserve.

Bring to a boil 2 quarts of cold, salted water. Add the noodles, stir, and let boil for 8 minutes or until the noodles are al dente (“to the teeth” in Italian) or the noodles will overcook while being held for plating. Strain the noodles in a colander and allow to drain and cool for a few minutes. Toss the noodles in a large mixing bowl with 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Add the cooked vegetables and reserve for plating.

Udon Noodles

3 cups chicken stock
1 cup roasted chicken juices
¼ lemongrass stalk, rough chop
½ knob fresh ginger, rough chop
4 garlic cloves, crushed
¼ bunch cilantro, plus 3 cilantro sprigs
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
2 teaspoons sesame oil

In a medium saucepan, simmer the chicken stock with the roasted chicken juices, lemongrass, ginger, cilantro, and garlic over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add soy sauce and rice wine vinegar. Reduce the broth for 20 minutes or until the reduced by half without letting the liquid go above a rolling boil. Strain the broth through a sieve and into a saucepot. Pick cilantro leaves off 3 sprigs of cilantro and add to the strained broth. Add 2 teaspoons of sesame oil to finish.

Szechuan Crusted Chicken Breast, Udon Noodles With Bok Choy, Sugar Snap Peas, Shitake Mushrooms, and Ramen Broth

Serves 2

Plate + Garnish

2 roasted Szechuan crusted chicken breasts
(Chapter Nine: Szechuan Pepper Roasted
Whole Chicken), warmed

1 tablespoon lemon salt

2 tablespoons scallions, thinly sliced on the bias

Use a meat fork to thread half of the udon noodles. Lift half of the noodles up, straighten them out while they hang from the fork, and lean the fork against the edge of the bowl as you twist the fork away from you to roll the noodles into a nest. Bring the fork to a 10 to 12 inch plating bowl and pull off the noodle nest into the center of the bowl. Repeat with the second noodle nest. Spoon half the vegetables over each bowl of noodles.

Slice each chicken breast into 4 pieces and lay over the noodles. Pour the ramen broth into a small pitcher to help distribute the broth easily or use a ladle. Pour or ladle enough of the broth on one side of the bowl and let rise up ½ inch from the top of the udon noodles. Finish with a sprinkle of scallions and lemon salt over the chicken.