

Pork Stir-Fry with Noodles (Lo Mein)

From America's Test Kitchen episode: *Let's Do Chinese*.

Serves 4

Use a cast-iron skillet for this recipe if you have one—it will help create the best sear on the pork. When shopping for Chinese rice wine, look for one that is amber in color; if not available, sherry wine may be used as a substitute. If no hoisin sauce is available, substitute 1 tablespoon of sugar. If boneless pork ribs are unavailable, substitute 1 1/2 pounds of bone-in country-style ribs, followed by the next best option, pork tenderloin. Liquid smoke provides a flavor reminiscent of the Chinese barbecued pork traditional to this dish. It is important that the noodles are cooked at the last minute to avoid clumping. See below for information on buying noodles.

INGREDIENTS

- 3** tablespoons soy sauce
- 2** tablespoons oyster sauce
- 2** tablespoons hoisin sauce (see note)
- 1** tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 1/4** teaspoon five-spice powder
- 1** pound boneless country-style pork ribs, trimmed of surface fat and excess gristle and sliced crosswise into 1/8-inch pieces (see note)
- 1/4** teaspoon liquid smoke (optional)
- 1/2** cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 1** teaspoon cornstarch
- 2** medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)
- 2** teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 4 1/2** teaspoons vegetable oil

- 4** tablespoons Chinese rice cooking wine (Shao-Xing) or dry sherry (see note)
- 1/2** pound shiitake mushrooms, stems trimmed, caps cut in halves or thirds
(about 3 cups)
- 2** bunches scallions, whites thinly sliced and greens cut into 1-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 1** small head Napa or Chinese cabbage, halved, cored, and sliced crosswise into 1/2-inch strips (about 4 cups)
- 12** ounces Chinese egg noodles (fresh) or 8 ounces dried linguine (see note)
- 1** tablespoon Asian chile garlic sauce

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in Dutch oven over high heat.
2. Whisk soy sauce, oyster sauce, hoisin sauce, sesame oil, and five-spice powder together in medium bowl. Place 3 tablespoons soy sauce mixture in large zipper-lock bag; add pork and liquid smoke, if using. Press out as much air as possible and seal bag, making sure that all pieces are coated with marinade. Refrigerate at least 15 minutes or up to 1 hour. Whisk broth and cornstarch into remaining soy sauce mixture in medium bowl. In separate small bowl, mix garlic and ginger with 1/2 teaspoon vegetable oil; set aside.
3. Heat 1 teaspoon vegetable oil in 12-inch cast-iron or nonstick skillet over high heat until just smoking. Add half of pork in single layer, breaking up clumps with wooden spoon. Cook, without stirring, 1 minute. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons wine to skillet; cook, stirring constantly, until liquid is reduced and pork is well coated, 30 to 60 seconds. Transfer pork to medium bowl and repeat with remaining pork, 1 teaspoon oil, and remaining 2 tablespoons wine. Wipe skillet clean with paper towels.
4. Return skillet to high heat, add 1 teaspoon vegetable oil, and heat until just smoking. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until light golden brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Add scallions and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until scallions are wilted, 2 to 3 minutes longer; transfer vegetables to bowl with pork.

5. Add remaining teaspoon vegetable oil and cabbage to now-empty skillet; cook, stirring occasionally, until spotty brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Clear center of skillet; add garlic-ginger mixture and cook, mashing mixture with spoon, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir garlic mixture into cabbage; return pork-vegetable mixture and chicken broth-soy mixture to skillet; simmer until thickened and ingredients are well incorporated, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove skillet from heat.

6. While cabbage is cooking, stir noodles into boiling water. Cook, stirring occasionally, until noodles are tender, 3 to 4 minutes for fresh Chinese noodles or 10 minutes for dried linguine. Drain noodles and transfer back to Dutch oven; add cooked stir-fry mixture and garlic-chili sauce, tossing noodles constantly, until sauce coats noodles. Serve immediately.

TECHNIQUE

NOODLES FOR LO MEIN

Developing the recipe for our Pork Stir-Fry with Noodles, we discovered that not any old noodle will do.

BEST BET

The slightly dry and curly fresh egg noodles labeled “lo mein” from an Asian market boasted firm texture and the best flavor.



BEST ALTERNATIVE

Dried linguine, though not authentic, offered a firm chewiness similar to lo mein.



NO THANKS

Vacuum-packed fresh noodles from the grocery store labeled “Chinese-style” were gummy and pasty.



America's Test Kitchen is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside of Boston. It is the home of *Cook's Country* and *Cook's Illustrated* magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to *America's Test Kitchen* (www.americastestkitchen.com) on public television.