

Easy 3 Cup Chicken [三杯鸡]



Ingredients

- 2 lbs of chicken wings
- 4 slices of ginger
- 3/4 cup of rice wine
- 1.5 tbsp of vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp of sesame oil
- 5 tbsp of soy sauce
- 3 tbsp of sugar
- 15 cloves of garlic
- a bunch of basil
- 4 pieces of scallion
- 6 pieces of hot dried chillies
- some bamboo shoots or dried mushrooms optional



4.45 from 9 votes

Instructions

1. - First, let's talk about the chicken. I got here some chicken wings. Traditional, this is done with a whole chicken and chop it into 1.5 inches size. Because we like to cook chicken with the bones for more flavor. I am a bit lazy today. I don't want to deal with a whole chicken so I just use chicken wings. They are the perfect size and has perfect ratio between the meat and the bone. Simply dry the chicken wings with a paper towel and set it aside.
2. - Heat up your frying pan. Add 1.5 tbsp of oil. Toss it around so the oil coats the bottom. Throw in 4 slices of ginger, 6-8 pieces of dried red chillies, 4 pieces of white part of spring onion, 15 cloves of garlic that I sliced each of them in half. You can use more but don't decrease the garlic amount because it is the key ingredient in this recipe. After the cooking, all the garlic will be melted into that glossy sauce. This is the secret of this recipe. The seasonings might look simple, but it is extremely savory.
3. - Stir all the aromatics on medium low heat for about 3 minutes. You want the garlic to be nice and sizzling. Cook the garlic until it is soft and slightly golden.
4. - Push all the aromatics to the side so you have room for the chicken. Adjust each piece to let the wings touch the bottom.
5. - While the chicken is sizzling, you want to move all the aromatics to the top so they don't get burned. Fry the chicken on one side for 5-6 minutes. Give it a check, if it is beautifully golden, you can flip them over and fry the other side.

6. - We want to brown as much surfaces as possible. Once you are satisfied with the browning, turn the heat to low. Empty a center space. That is for the sugar - 3 tbsp. Slowly stir it. In about 2 minutes, it should be nicely caramelized. Toss all the ingredients in the pan so the sugar coats the chicken.
7. - Transfer everything to a clay pot. If you don't have claypot, a heavy duty dutch oven, or slow cooker will work as well. If you use a regular pot, it is better be non-stick because the sauce is going to be thick and it will likely stick to the bottom.
8. - The reason why this dish is called 3 cup chicken is that, there are only 3 kinds of liquid seasonings, which are 3/4 cup of rice wine, shao xing wine works perfect; 5 tbsp of light soy sauce and sesame oil. The original recipe call for 1/4 cup of sesame oil. I think that is way too much so I twisted it with 1.5 tbsp of regular cooking oil which I add it to the frying pan in the beginning, and 1 tbsp of sesame oil for flavor.
9. - I like to add an optional ingredient - dried bamboo shoot. Cut into bite size. This is totally optional, I just like to have something else to eat beside the chicken. If you are 100% meat eater, you can skip this or use dried shitake mushroom. Soak it with warm water for an hour in advance until they are soft. Add that to the clay pot as well.
10. - Mix everything in the clay pot. Turn the heat to the low. Let it cook for about 40 minutes. During this time, you want to come back every 10 minutes to give it a stir. As you can see, the sauce is at a low level, the top part of the chicken is not getting any love. Flipping them will ensure the flavor to infuse evenly.
11. - 40 minutes later, the sauce is very glossy and thick now. If you still got lots of sauce in there, you can turn the heat to high and reduce it.
12. - Now it is the time to add a bunch of basil. In Jian Xi province, this dish doesn't have basil but in Taiwanese version, basil is the must have ingredients. Turn off the heat and you can serve.