

Lamb Stew Recipe [酱炖羊肉]



★★★★☆

4 from 4 votes

Ingredients

- 2 pounds of leg of lamb
- 2 tbsp of all-purpose flour
- some cooking oil to brown the lamb
- 5 cloves of garlic crushed
- 5 slices of ginger
- 2 pieces of scallion knots
- 1/2 of a medium size onion sliced
- 1 star anise
- 2 pieces of bay leaves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1/2 tbsp of Sichuan peppercorn.
- 3 tbsp of sugar
- 1.5 tbsp of tomato paste
- 3 tbsp of soybean paste
- 1.5 tbsp of soy sauce
- 1.5 liter of hot water
- 2.5 cups of carrot chunks
- salt to adjust the flavor at the end

Instructions

1. Cut the lamb leg into big pieces. It is best to use skin on lamb leg because the skin has lots of gelatin which will make the sauce extra glossy and it will also give the dish more flavor.
2. Wash it under running water to remove the bone dust and dirty impurities. Soak the lamb in clean water for at least 3 hours or overnight will be better. This helps to weaken the strong mutton scent. You can also throw in some ginger, scallion, cinnamon stick, and Sichuan peppercorn. Since my lamb is mild, plain water will work just fine.
3. 3 hours later, the water turned into a red color. That is exactly what I want. People live in the northwest of China love that wild gamey mutton taste. They will be upset if they see me soaking the meat in the water. As a person growing up in the south of China, I prefer a mild taste. Discard this whole batch of soaking water. Dry the meat with a paper towel. We will brown the lamb later. If the meat is not dry, you will get oil splashed on you.

4. Coat the lamb with 2 tbsp of all-purpose flour. This helps to create a starchy shell on the surface of the meat. And it will fall off after a long time simmering which will make the sauce extra creamy like gravy. If you use skin on lamb, you don't need to do this because the gelatin in the skin will thicken the sauce.
5. Heat up your wok and add some oil. Add your lamb in. If your meat is fatty, you don't need to add that much oil, the lamb fat itself will sear the meat which gives the stew extra flavor. But my lam is quite lean that is why I need quite a lot of oil to do the job. Searing also helps to lock the moisture inside the meat so it comes out tender and juicy. Once you think you brown enough surfaces, you can take the meat out.
6. If you got any grease left in the wok, you can just use that. If not, add a little more oil. Keep the heat at medium-low. Throw in some crushed garlic cloves, ginger slices, scallion knots, onion slices, star anise, bay leaves, cinnamon stick, and Sichuan peppercorn. Stir until fragrant. Then push all the aromatic to the side. We are going to caramelize some sugar. Just stir on low heat until the sugar turns into a red color. Keep adding 1.5 tbsp of tomato paste, 3 tbsp of Chinese soybean paste (can be replaced with Chu Hou paste or Sichuan Dou ban jiang). Keep adding 1.5 tbsp of soy sauce. Stir to combine all the sauce together. Then mix in the aromatics. Introduce the lamb back into wok. Stir until the seasonings coat the meat.
7. You can add water to it and simmer the lamb in the same wok. Make it a one-pot recipe. I like to transfer it into a dutch oven. And fill it up with hot water. Don't forget to rinse the wok, that has lots of flavors, we don't want to waste it. Move the ingredients around so they are under the water. Oh, one optional ingredient - a drizzle of dark soy sauce. It is for the color. Cover the lid and bring it to a boil. Turn the heat to low. Keep it at a slight simmer. Let it cook for 2-3 hours.
8. After a long time cooking, all the flavor in the aromatics is transferred into the soup. Pick them out. We will thicken the broth later. It will be annoying to eat if leave the soggy veggies in there. Add some carrot chunks. And we gonna reduce the broth to half. Just turn the heat to high and let it cook without the lid. I got pretty much liquid in the pot so it takes about 25-30 minutes to evaporate, which is just enough time to cook the carrot until tender. If you don't have that much liquid, you might need to cover the lid and make sure your carrot is nice and soft. It kind of looks like curry. Before serving, you always want to give it a taste and if you need to adjust something like salt or sugar. Whatever fits your taste.
9. Serve with rice or noodles. Enjoy!

Notes

(Soybean paste can be replaced by one of these 2 ingredients)

Chu Hou Jiang 柱候酱

Sichuan Dou ban jiang 四川豆瓣酱