

LETTUCE
WITH
OYSTER
SAUCE

*Ho Yau
Sahng Choi*

蠔油生菜

This is a quick, easy, delicious example of Cantonese cooking, using one vegetable that is a Canton staple: lettuce.

1 pound iceberg lettuce leaves. (Only the light green leaves of the lettuce are used for this dish. Discard the outer dark green leaves, as they are usually old and will be tough. Separate the light green leaves individually until you reach the white ones. Do not use white leaves or any of the heart of the lettuce. A 2-pound head should yield enough leaves to weigh a pound.)

Make a sauce—combine in a bowl:

1½ tablespoons oyster sauce
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1½ teaspoons dark soy sauce
¾ teaspoon sugar
1½ tablespoons cornstarch
Pinch of white pepper
½ cup Chicken Broth (page 40)

8 cups cold water
½ teaspoon baking soda
2 tablespoons peanut oil
1 teaspoon minced ginger

*New Cantonese Cooking, by Eileen
Yin-Fei Lo, Viking
Penguin, New York,
c1988*

1. Wash lettuce leaves several times; break each into 3 pieces with your hands. Drain and reserve. Make the sauce and reserve.
2. Place the water in a large pot with the baking soda, and bring to a boil. Drop the lettuce leaves into the water, turning them to make certain all are immersed. Cook for 1 minute, until the leaves soften and turn bright green. Place pot under cold running water to cool. Drain. Loosen the leaves with chopsticks and dry them thoroughly by allowing them to drain in the strainer. Reserve.
3. Heat wok over high heat for 45 seconds and add the peanut oil. Using a spatula, coat the wok with the oil. When a wisp of white smoke appears, add the ginger. When the ginger turns light brown, add the lettuce leaves and stir. Cook for 1 to 1½ minutes. Make a well in the center of the lettuce leaves, stir the sauce, and pour it into the well. Stir and cook until the sauce thickens and turns brown. Remove to a preheated serving dish and serve immediately with fresh rice.