KitchenBooQ

Ants Climbing a Tree (Ma Yi Shang Shu)

Serves: 4 | Cooking Time 30 minutes | Level: Easy



INGREDIENTS

8 oz (225 g) sweet potato glass noodles (vermicelli)
1 lb (450 g) ground pork
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
2 tbsp Sichuan peppercorns, toasted and lightly crushed
2 tbsp doubanjiang (broad bean chili paste) or chili crisp oil
3 tbsp light soy sauce
1 tbsp Shaoxing wine (or dry sherry)
1 tsp sugar
1 cup (240 ml) chicken broth
1 tbsp dark soy sauce (for color)
2 scallions, finely chopped
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
2 tbsp neutral cooking oil

Notes
Cool the dish completely within 2 hours, then store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat in a skillet over medium heat with a splash of water to restore moisture. Because this recipe contains pork, never store it at room temperature; only refrigerate or freeze. Glass noodles can be substituted with regular sweet potato or mung bean vermicelli, but avoid rice noodles as they cook too quickly and lack the right chew. Adjust chili paste or oil based on your heat tolerance.

PREPARATION

1. Soak the glass noodles in hot water for 5 minutes until soft and translucent. Drain thoroughly, cut into 4-inch lengths with kitchen shears, and toss with a drizzle of sesame oil to prevent sticking. Set aside.

2. Heat a wok or large skillet over medium-high heat until smoking. Add the neutral cooking oil, then add the ground pork. Break up the meat with a spatula and cook until browned and slightly crispy at the edges, about 5 minutes.

3. Push the pork to one side of the pan. Add the doubanjiang or chili crisp to the empty space and fry for 30 seconds until fragrant and oil turns red. Stir in the minced garlic, grated ginger, and crushed Sichuan peppercorns; cook for another minute.

4. Combine the light soy sauce, dark soy sauce, Shaoxing wine, sugar, and chicken broth in a small bowl. Pour the mixture over the pork and stir to combine with the chili paste. Bring to a simmer.

5. Add the prepared glass noodles to the pan. Toss gently until every strand is coated in the sauce and begins absorbing the liquid. Cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the noodles are tender and most of the broth has been absorbed or evaporated.

6. Remove from heat and drizzle with remaining toasted sesame oil. Transfer to a serving platter and garnish generously with chopped scallions and an extra pinch of crushed Sichuan peppercorns if desired. Serve immediately alongside steamed jasmine rice.