

The Limehouse Restaurant Recipes

by Kwan Y. Jung, 1988

INTRODUCTION:

The following ingredients and spices are used frequently in cooking Chinese food.

- Salt
- Sugar
- MSG (flavor enhancer which is optional)
- Soy sauce
- Bean sauce
- Salted black bean or black bean sauce
- White pepper
- Red chili flakes
- Sesame oil
- Vegetable oil
- Lard
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Vinegar
- Plum sauce
- Sherry wine
- Red pepper
- Curry powder
- Oyster sauce
- Hoisin sauce
- Soup stock
- Cornstarch and water in solution

Arrange the above within easy reach around the wok to make the actual cooking process easier.

There are two basic steps in the preparation of meat, poultry, fish and vegetables:

1. Cutting
2. Marinating and seasoning

The meat and vegetables can be cut or chopped in 7 ways:

1. Minced.
2. Flaked.
3. Shredded – cut into 2 to 3 inch strips.
4. Sliced – cut into 1 to 2 inch pieces.
5. Diced – cut into cubes approximately 1/2” x 1/2” x1/2”.
6. Chunks – bite sized pieces approximately 1” to 1 1/2”.
7. Finely chopped.

Vegetables are used fresh without seasoning or marinating in cooking Chinese food. Meat, however needs to be seasoned and marinated ahead of time. Meat is separated into two kinds: white meat and dark meat. For example, chicken breast is white meat while meat from the leg is dark. Beef and pork are dark meat whereas fish and shellfish are white.

The seasoning and marinating ingredients consist of the following:

- Vegetable oil
- Salt
- Sugar
- MSG (flavor enhancer which is optional)
- Lemon juice
- Egg – whole, whites or yolk
- Baking soda
- Vinegar
- Sherry wine
- Soy sauce
- Cornstarch and water solution

Meat must be marinated with seasoning ingredients at least 10 minutes before cooking. The seasonings used depend upon the type of meat being cooked. The following is a chart of meats and the appropriate marinating ingredients for each.

	Cornstarch Solution	Wine	Oil	Salt	Sugar	Lemon Juice or MSG	Egg	Baking Soda	Vinegar	Soy Sauce
Beef	X		X		X		Yolk	X		X
Pork	X		X					X	X	
Shrimp	X		X	X		X	Whites			
Chicken – white meat	X	X	X	X			Whites			
Chicken – dark meat	X	X	X	X			Yolk			
Seafood			X		X	X	Whites		X	

Step by step for cooking a good meal:

1. Wok should be heated until it is very hot.
2. Oil is added after the wok is sufficiently heated. Oil should never be put into a cold wok as the oil could be burned long before the work is heated.
3. Other spices are added to the oil at this point. If red chili, pepper or chili flakes is in the dish, they are added after the oil is heated and cooked slightly. Thus the oil is flavored by them. Salt is added at this point whether other spices are needed or not.
4. Ginger or garlic is added after the salt to the oil.
5. It is time to cook the meat. Mix the oil with salt and other spices first then add meat to the wok. Meat may or may not be removed upon doneness depending upon the recipe.
6. Vegetables are now stir fired in the wok.
7. Soup stock or water is added at this point to aid in the cooking of the meat or vegetables and to prevent burning. *(Editor's note: Kwan uses the term "to sizzling" in a few of his recipes usually after adding soup stock. Speculating, it could be that the liquid is used to deglaze the wok and also due to the high heat, rapidly evaporate, resulting in a sizzling sound.)*
8. A cornstarch solution consisting of cornstarch dissolved in water is used in Chinese cooking to thicken liquid into sauce or gravy. It is added to the dish when the meat and vegetables have been fully cooked.
9. The last ingredient added in Chinese cooking is usually green onion as garnish.

In steps 5 through 7, the wok can be covered until the food is fully cooked. Soup stock should be reduced by 2/3 (1/3 liquid remains) before cornstarch solution is added.