

SPICY SICHUAN NOODLES—DAN DAN MIAN

Published May 1, 2001.

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

We wanted a spicy Sichuan noodle recipe that would be a fast, flavorful version of the popular Chinese street food dish. The sauce was simple to put together with Chinese pantry staples available at most supermarkets. Fresh or dried Chinese noodles worked best in our Sichuan noodle recipe, but linguine was good in a pinch.

SERVES 4 AS A MAIN COURSE

If you cannot find Asian noodles, linguine may be substituted. If you are using natural peanut butter or Asian sesame paste that has a pourable rather than spreadable consistency, use only 1 cup of chicken stock. Also note that the amount of sauce will coat 1 pound of fresh noodles but only 12 ounces of dried noodles, which bulk up during boiling.

INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces ground pork
- 3 tablespoons **soy sauce**
- 2 tablespoons Chinese rice cooking wine or dry sherry
- Ground white pepper
- 2 tablespoons **oyster sauce**
- 4 tablespoons Asian sesame paste or peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 - 1 1/4 cups chicken stock or canned low-sodium chicken broth (see note)
- 1 tablespoon peanut oil
- 1 inch piece fresh ginger, minced (about 1 tablespoon)
- 6 medium cloves garlic, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 2 tablespoons)
- 3/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 12 ounces dried Asian noodles or 1 pound fresh Asian noodles (width between linguine and fettuccine) or 12 ounces linguine
- 3 medium scallions, sliced thin (about 1/3 cup)
- 2 cups bean sprouts (about 6 ounces) (optional)
- 1 tablespoon Sichuan peppercorns toasted in small dry skillet until fragrant, then ground (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine pork, 1 tablespoon soy sauce, sherry, and pinch white pepper in small bowl; stir well with fork and set aside while preparing other ingredients. Whisk together oyster-flavored sauce, remaining soy sauce, peanut butter or sesame paste, vinegar, and pinch white pepper in medium bowl. Whisk in chicken stock and set aside.
 2. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large stockpot over high heat.
 3. Meanwhile, heat 12-inch skillet over high heat until hot, about 2 minutes. Add peanut oil and swirl to coat pan bottom. Add pork and cook, scraping along pan bottom and breaking up pork into small pieces with wide metal or wooden spatula, until pork is in small well-browned bits, about 5 minutes. Stir in ginger, garlic, and red pepper flakes; cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add peanut butter/chicken stock mixture; bring to boil, whisking to combine, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer to blend flavors, stirring occasionally, about 3 minutes. Stir in sesame oil.
 4. While sauce simmers, add noodles to boiling water and cook until tender (refer to package directions, but use them only as a guideline and be sure to taste for doneness). Drain noodles; divide noodles among individual bowls, ladle a portion of sauce over noodles, sprinkle with scallions, bean sprouts, and ground Sichuan peppercorns, if using; serve immediately.
-