Jan 1998

Chinese Bean Sauce Noodles with Meat

Dipping sauce:
1/4 cup rice vinegar (also called rice wine vinegar)
1 Tbl. ***layu*** (Japanese sesame chili oil)

2 Tbl. cooking oil
2 to 3 tsp. minced fresh ginger
2 to 3 tsp. minced garlic
1 lb. ground pork
1/4 cup **Chinese bean sauce** (***min see jeung***; also called "yellow bean sauce," "brown bean sauce," or just "bean sauce"--"**Koon Chun**" brand "bean sauce" is good) *
2 tsp. sugar
1 Tbl. sesame oil
3 stalks *negi* (green onion), chopped (about 1/2 cup)
1 lb. fresh Chinese-style egg noodles

Mix together the rice vinegar and *layu* in a small bowl. Set aside.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. While the water is heating, heat the cooking oil in a large skillet over moderately high heat. Add the ginger and stir fry for a few seconds, then add the garlic and stir fry briefly (but do not brown).

Add the pork and cook, stirring until the meat has started to change color, but do not let it brown completely. Drain off excess fat, and add the bean sauce and sugar. Cook, stirring, until the meat is evenly seasoned and cooked. Stir in the sesame oil and negi. Turn off the heat.

Boil the noodles as follows: Fluff up the noodles and drop in the pot of boiling water. Boil and stir the noodles 3 to 5 minutes (or until the noodles come to a second boil). Pull 1 or 2 noodles out of the water to check if they are done--be careful not to overcook the noodles; the noodles should be firm [*al dente*, as j*i-chan* used to say]. Drain the noodles and toss with the meat sauce. Serve with the spicy rice vinegar, to be added to taste. Serves 4.

Do **NOT use "ground bean sauce," "black bean sauce," or Japanese miso paste; these are not the same.*

April 1998

Salmon Musubi (rice balls)
[yield 14 to 16 *musubi*]

I know a lot of purists insist on making their *musubi* (rice balls) by hand. I "cheat" and use an *onigiri-ki*, a plastic press that makes 2 triangular-shaped *musubi* at a time [your friends will be impressed at how uniform and perfectly shaped your *musubi* are!]. Whether you make *musubi* by hand or with a press, it takes a bit of practice to know just how much pressure is needed to press the rice together. Too little pressure and the *musubi* will fall apart; too much pressure and it will be too hard. The first time I made *musubi* in a press, I must have imagined I was Superman squeezing a piece of coal into a diamond. The result was what my friends called DWARF STAR *MUSUBI* © because they were super hard and dense. I had managed to transform a mild-mannered, every-day *musubi* into what seemed like an ultra solid *mochi* rice cake. Don't repeat my mistake!

3 cups rice, washed; add 3 cups or so of water and soak 15 to 60 minutes before cooking
3/4 lb. to 1 lb. salted salmon
6 sheets of *nori* (seaweed); cut each sheet into 3 equal strips

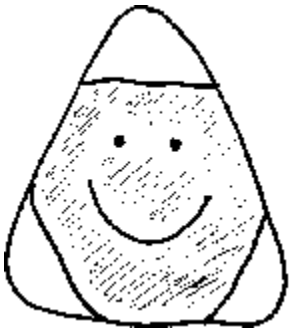
Cook the rice; after 30 minutes, fluff it up. Allow to cool for about 10 minutes. Don't allow to get cold--it will be harder to form into *musubi*.

While the rice is cooking, put the salt salmon in a pot and fill with enough water to cover the salmon. Bring the water to a boil; simmer on low for about 15 minutes [don't boil for more than 30 minutes, or the salmon will get too bland--you want it to stay fairly salty]. Remove from heat, drain, and cool. When the salmon is cool enough to touch, remove the skin, any bones, and the dark parts of the meat (if any). Flake the salmon meat up and set aside.

Use a small *musubi* press (the triangle-shaped type); fill (loosely) about 2/3 full with cooked rice. Keep a bowl of cold water nearby to dip your fingers into, and poke a small well in the center of the rice with a moistened finger. Fill the well with about a teaspoon or so of the boiled salt salmon. Loosely pack more rice over this and press the other half of the *musubi* press over this.

Cool the *musubi* off for about 15 minutes or so, and then wrap the *nori* strips around them.

Variations: Instead of salmon, fill the *musubi* with *umeboshi*, *takuan*, or *nori tsukudani*; or mix *takikomi wakame* into the hot cooked rice just before shaping into *musubi*.



May 1998

Kimpira Gobo

1 large or 2 small pieces of *gobo* (burdock root)
1 medium carrot
2 to 4 tsp. vegetable oil
1 to 2 tsp. sugar
2 Tbl. *sake* (rice wine)
2 Tbl. *shoyu* (soy sauce)
1/2 tsp. *Aji-no-moto* (M.S.G.) *optional
1/4 tsp. *shichimi togarashi* (7 Spice Mixture) *optional

Peel and cut the *gobo* into thin shavings (like sharpening a pencil). While you're cutting the *gobo*, soak the *gobo* shavings in water to avoid discoloration; drain. Peel and cut the carrot into thin shavings also.

Heat a frying pan and add the oil. Stir-fry the *gobo* and carrots on high heat until they begin to soften (about 3 minutes). Add the *sake*, and then stir in the sugar, *shoyu*, and *Aji-no-moto*. Continue to stir-fry on medium heat until the liquid is almost completely gone. Season to taste with the *shichimi togarashi*. Serve hot or at room temperature. Keeps about one week under refrigeration. Good as an appetizer with beer or sake!

July 1998

Asian Guacamole
("*Gari-mole*")
recipe courtesy of Janet Nakahara

1 Tbl. *iri kuro goma* (toasted black sesame seeds)
1 large ripe avocado
1 Tbl. *amasu shoga*, also called *gari shoga* (pickled ginger), shredded
1 1/2 Tbl. rice vinegar
1 1/2 Tbl. *sushi su* (seasoned rice vinegar)
1/2 tsp. *wasabi* (Japanese green horse radish), this can be the pre-mixed *neri wasabi* in a tube or the powdered *wasabi-ko* mixed with water.

Dice or mash the avocado. Add half of the sesame seeds. Add the *amasu shoga*, both vinegars, and *wasabi*. Mix. Sprinkle the rest of the sesame seeds on top.

July 1997

Grilled *Ahi* with Sesame-Ginger Sauce

1 1/2 lb. *Ahi* tuna
2 Tbl. *shiro goma* (white sesame seeds)
4 Tbl. *shoyu* (soy sauce)
4 Tbl. honey
4 tsp. ginger, grated to remove “threads”
2 or 3 stalks *negi* (green onion)

Remove skin and any bones from *ahi* fillet; cut into four serving portions. Toast *goma* by heating in a heavy frying pan, stirring constantly, until lightly browned.

Prepare sesame-ginger sauce by combining *shoyu*, honey, *goma*, and ginger; blend well. Marinate *ahi* for 1 hour. Lightly oil barbecue grill. Place *ahi* on grill and cook over medium hot coals. Baste frequently with sesame-ginger sauce. Cook 3 to 4 minutes on each side or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork.

Place *ahi* on a warm serving platter and garnish with strips of *negi*. Makes 4 servings.

Sept 1998

Ginger-Shoyu Salmon

4 salmon steaks, 3/4 to 1 inch thick

MARINADE:
2 Tbl. ginger juice (grate fresh ginger root and strain out “strings”)
6 Tbl. *sake* (rice wine) [do not use *mirin*, the sweet cooking sake]
1 1/2 Tbl. *shoyu* (soy sauce)
1 1/2 tsp. vegetable oil
2 to 3 tsp. *wasabi-ko* (wasabi powder) or *karashi-ko* (mustard powder, like Coleman’s or S & B powdered yellow mustard)
salt and pepper to taste

Mix the marinade ingredients well. Put the salmon steaks in a ziplock bag and pour the marinade over the steaks. Squeeze out as much excess air as possible, and seal the bags. Refrigerate for 1 hour, turning over occasionally to marinate the salmon evenly. Broil the steaks for about 4 to 7 minutes (depending on your broiler); do not turn over the steaks (too easy to break). When the steaks are done, spoon the pan juices over the steaks before serving.

This is also GREAT grilled over charcoal!

Oct 1998

***Furikake* Popcorn**

1 pkg. microwave popcorn, unsalted kind if possible
3 to 4 Tbl. butter (4 Tbl = 1/2 cube butter) or margarine [note: you may not need to use butter if the microwave popcorn already has butter in it]
1 1/2 Tbl. *Mishima brand nori komi furikake*
1/4 cup mixed *arare* (rice cracker)

Prepare microwave popcorn per instructions on package.
Melt the butter on low heat in a saucepan. Pour the melted butter over the freshly popped (still warm) popcorn, and mix to coat the popcorn evenly. Sprinkle the *furikake* over the popcorn and mix again so the *furikake* will coat the popcorn evenly. Mix in the *arare* and serve. The key to this is using the melted butter or margarine before you mix in the *furikake*. Without the melted butter, the *furikake* will not cling to the popcorn, and most of it will fall to the bottom of the serving container.

Variation: Use spicy arare, like *kaki-no-tane* (sold under several brand names), or *wasabi kaki-no-tane*. Regular *kaki-no-tane* arare has chili pepper mixed in; *wasabi kaki-no-tane* has Japanese horse radish mixed in. [*Uegaki* brand *wasabi kaki-no-tane arare* is good--but be careful, these little buggers are strong!] All *kaki-no-tane arare* (no matter which manufacturer makes it) are shaped like little “bananas,” so people who don’t like spicy *arare* will know which pieces to avoid. [Actually the arare are shaped like persimmon seeds, which is what “kaki-no-tane” means]

Nov 1998

Negi Maki
[Meat rolled around green onions]

Thin sliced meat (meat sliced for Sukiyaki is ideal)
1 cup *shoyu* (soy sauce)
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup *sake* (rice wine)
1 tsp. minced or grated *shoga* (fresh ginger; peel first)
1 tsp. cornstarch
few stalks of *negi* (green onions) [or asparagus]

To make the sauce: combine in a sauce pan the *shoyu*, sugar, *sake*, and *shoga*. Heat to boil and simmer on low for 15 minutes. Cool.

Parboil the negi (or the asparagus). Let cool and roll up in the meat. Grill over charcoal, turning occasionally to cook evenly. Just before removing from the grill, brush the sauce on. Slice into 3/4 inch pieces. Serve immediately.

Dec 1998

Kuromame
(from Mrs. Sachiko Takahashi, who learned this from Mrs. Kamechiyo Takahashi)

Kuromame (mame ni kurasu) is eaten on New Year's Day for good health for the coming year.
Note: Start preparing this on or before December 30 (takes 2 days)

12 oz. *kuromame* (dried black beans)
3 1/2 cups boiling water
6 Tbl. sugar
3/4 tsp. baking soda
scant 1 1/2 tsp. salt
3 Tbl. *shoyu* (soy sauce)
1 jar *kuri kanroni* (chestnuts in syrup) *Optional

Wash and rinse the *kuromame*; put the *kuromame* in a pot and mix in the boiling water, sugar, baking soda, salt, and *shoyu*. Let it soak overnight. The next morning, bring to a boil, and skim off the scum that rises to the surface. Cover with an *otoshi-buta* (wooden drop lid) or ceramic plate (not metal), which is about 1/2 an inch smaller than the diameter of the pot. Simmer on the lowest heat setting for 4 to 6 hours--the *otoshi-buta* will remain on during the whole period. [*The otoshi-buta helps keep the kuromame submerged, helps increase the penetration of the seasoning, and decreases heat loss from the water's surface. Pretty cool, huh*?]

During the time you are simmering the *kuromame*, add 1/4 cup of cold water occasionally, so the water level doesn't get too low. Cool, and serve. Keeps about 5 days in the refrigerator.

If you want to splurge, open up a jar of *kuri kanroni* (chestnuts in sweet syrup), drain, and mix in right before serving.

Alternate method: If a proper size *otoshi-buta* or plate is not available, increase the water to 5 cups and simmer the *kuromame* (on the lowest heat setting) **covered** for 6 to 7 hours. **DO NOT PEEK** during this time.

Pressed for time? Prepared *kuromame* is also available in cans (called "*Kuromame Takarani*"). Just open and serve *(!)*. [*Even purists who insist on making their kuromame from scratch have been known to keep a can or two of this around as a "back up."*]

Jan 1999

Dungeness crab to da max

My absolutely favorite way to prepare crab

1 or 2 Whole Cooked Dungeness Crab (fresh, not previously frozen)
1 or 2 cloves garlic, crushed and minced
2 Tbl. butter (c'mon, live a little)
French bread or sourdough bread, sliced and heated

Disjoint and crack the crab, save the butter (kani miso) in a container.
In a large pot (not teflon type, the crab will scratch the finish), head the butter on medium heat. Add the garlic and heat, stirring constantly for about 3 or 4 minutes. Take care not to raise the temperature too high and burn the butter. Add the crab butter and continue to stir over medium heat for another 3 to 4 minutes. Add the cracked crab pieces and stir so that all the pieces are evenly coated with the sauce. Cover and heat on low to medium heat for a few minutes. Check occasionally to make sure the crab is not burning.

Serve with the french bread. Suck the sauce off each piece of crab before shelling, and use the bread to sop up the sauce in the pot. HMMMMMMM!!!

May 1999

Kim Chee nama age

Kim chee is also great cooked! One of my favorite appetizers at a Japanese "pub" I visit is the stir-fried *kim chee* with pork. Here's a tasty version using *NAMA AGE*, the deep fried firm *tofu*. *Nama age* is solid *tofu* inside--to not confuse it with *age* (also called *aburage*), the "hollow" deep fried bean curd used to make *inarizushi* (cone sushi).

2 piece *nama age* (also called *atsu-age*) 16 oz.
2 Tbl. cooking oil
4 to 6 oz. ground pork
1 to 1 1/2 cup *nappa kim chee*, chopped into bite-size pieces
1 tsp sugar
2 Tbl *sake*
3 to 4 stalks *negi* (green onions) sliced
2 Tbl. *iri shiro goma* (roasted white sesame seeds), pinch slightly to release more flavor
2 Tbl plus 1 Tbl *shoyu* (soy sauce)
1 Tbl sesame oil

Boil the *nama age* for a few minutes, drain, and blot dry with paper towels. Cut into 3/4" cubes, place into a bowl and add 2 Tbl *shoyu* and mix.

Put about 2 Tbl oil into a wok and heat up. On medium high heat, stir-fry the *nama age*, turning gently to evenly brown the pieces without breaking them up. Remove to a plate.

With the oil left in the wok, stir fry the ground pork, breaking it up as you cook. After the pork is browned, add back in the *nama age* and mix in the *kim chee*, sugar, and *sake*; stir together all ingredients for 1 minute.

Add the *negi*, *iri goma*, *shoyu*, and sesame oil. Stir together for a minute or so, and serve hot.

Despite the healthy main ingredient (*tofu*) in this dish, it still passed the "Bobby test." My son loved it (I just didn't tell him it was better for him than a cheese burger and fries).

June 1999

Island-style Boiled Peanuts

These are a popular treat in Hawaii. It takes a little getting used to for some people, because the texture is not as crunchy as roasted peanuts. It's similar to eating the popular Japanese boiled *eda mame* (soy beans in pods). These are wonderful with cold beer on a warm Summer afternoon!

1 1/2 lb. raw peanuts in shell
1 Tbl. Hawaiian rock salt

Mix salt in a large pot with about 3 quarts of water. Stir until most of the salt is dissolved. Add the raw peanuts; there should be enough water to completely cover the peanuts. The peanuts will tend to float to the surface, so if you have a wooden drop-lid (the Japanese *otoshi-buta*) use it to keep the peanuts immersed as you bring them to a boil. If you don't have a drop lid, cover the pot with a regular lid. Stir occasionally so all the salt dissolves, and simmer for about **45 minutes**. As in cooking noodles or *eda mame*, the trick is not to overcook these--so don't forget about these and leave them on the burner for a couple of hours like I did last time! [They came out too soft.]

Drain and cool before serving. Before eating, first remove the outer shell. [*Don't laugh--if you've never had them this way before, you may not know. Some friends of mine in Hawaii watched in amazement as an adventurous mainland tourist ordered a lau lau for the first time and started to eat the outer ti leaf until the waiter ran over and told him not to*.]

You can keep these up to a week or so in the refrigerator.

July 1999

Miso Barbecue Chicken

1 cup *shoyu* (soy sauce)
1/2 cup sugar
2 Tbl. ***miso*** (Japanese soy bean paste)
2 Tbl. peanut butter **[*trust me on this*]**
2 or 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1/8 cup fresh ginger, peeled and slivered
3 stalks *negi* (green onions), chopped
2 Tbl. *mirin* (sweet cooking rice wine)
1 Tbl. *goma abura* (Japanese sesame oil)
1 tsp. *iri shiro goma* (roasted white sesame seeds)
1/2 tsp. to 1 tsp. Chinese chili sauce (***Lee Kum Kee*** *brand* ***chili paste with garlic*** is good)

Combine the ingredients to make a marinade sauce [*I understand this is also a good hangover cure, although I'm not sure if it is ingested or applied locally*]. Marinate **5 lb. of boneless chicken thighs (or breasts)** for 2 to 4 hours and drain. Charcoal grill till cooked.

Nov 1999

Lomi Lomi Salmon

1/4 lb. (or a bit more) salted salmon
3 or 4 fresh tomatoes, finely chopped
1/2 of a round onion (preferably sweet), minced
2 or 3 stalks of green onion, minced

Soak the salted salmon in cold water for 3 to 4 hours, (changing the water several times [this is to remove a lot of the salt from the salmon). Drain the salmon and remove the skin, bones, and white strings. The traditional Hawaiian method is to shred the salmon into small pieces using your fingers, but you may find it easier to use a spoon; use a knife to shred the salmon if you don't like the traditional method. (*Hint: I like to use latex gloves when doing a large batch of salted salmon; otherwise your fingers end up getting "wrinkled" from all the salt.) Place the shredded salmon pieces in a bowl with the rest of the ingredients and chill. Serves 4 to 5. Serve with POI.

NOTE: If you're in a hurry, first remove the skin from the salmon, cut the salmon into 2 or 3 smaller pieces, and put them in a bowl under slow running water. This method will remove the salt from the salmon much faster...so fast sometimes, that if you leave the salmon under running water for too long, you may return to find almost all of the salt gone; then you'll end up having to add salt back in to get the taste right!* Therefore, if you choose this quick method, be sure to occasionally cut a small piece of salmon off to check for taste.

This is the voice of experience speaking, or as Tommy Chong used to say, "Uh, I've **DONE that, man!"*

Note: It is not safe to use fresh, raw salmon for lomi salmon or sashimi unless it has been cured first with salt. That's why lomi salmon recipes always call for SALTED SALMON. If you cannot obtain salted salmon, get a fresh salmon fillet, about 1 inch or less in thickness. If the salmon fillet is thicker than 1 inch, cut it in half to make it thinner (if it's too thick, it will take longer to cure). Pour about 1/4 cup of table salt over the fillet and gently rub in the salt; cover and refrigerate for 1 to 2 days; excess liquid will come out of the salmon as it cures. (Do not use iodized salt...it doesn't always dissolve completely; if available, use Hawaiian rock salt; be generous with the salt...it's better to use too much rather than too little.)

Jan 2000

Shoyu chicken (soy sauce chicken)

1 1/2 Tbl cornstarch
3 Tbl. water
4 lb. chicken thighs
3/4 cup *shoyu* (soy sauce)
1 Tbl. honey
1 Tbl. oyster sauce
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 1/2 cup water
2 one-inch pieces of fresh ginger, peeled and crushed
3 clove garlic, crushed (remove skin)
2 pieces of star anise
4 stalks of *negi* (green onion)
2 Tbl. *mirin* (sweet cooking sake) or sherry
few sprigs of Chinese parsley (also called coriander or *cilantro*)

Combine cornstarch and 3 Tbl water to make a paste; set aside. Brown ginger and garlic in a little oil. Add chicken and brown slightly. Combine *shoyu*, honey, oyster sauce, brown sugar, water, star anise, *negi*, and *mirin*. Add to chicken. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 40 minutes, turning pieces occasionally. Add cornstarch mixture to thicken sauce. Serve and garnish with Chinese parsley.

I also like to make this without thickening the sauce; if you like, you can skip the step where you add the cornstarch/water mixture at the end.

Feb 2000

Salmon miso nabe

This is a type of nabemono (one-pot) dish, so it's an easy meal to put together in a hurry on a cold evening. My wife has made this so many times, she freely substitutes and adds things, depending on what's available (or how much time she has). It's particularly good if you include the clams and shrimp--the soup stock becomes very hearty and tasty.

Salmon miso nabe

6 to 8 cups water
4 inch square of dashi konbu
1 to 2 tsp. Hondashi (or other instant dashi powder)
3 to 4 Tbl. miso
1 or 2 salmon steaks, cut up into bite size pieces
6 to 8 clams (optional)
6 to 8 medium shrimp, shelled and deveined (optional)
1 block of tofu, cut into 1 to 1 1/2 inch cubes
1/2 of a medium nappa (also called hakusai or Chinese cabbage), rinsed and cut into 1 1/2 inch strips
4 pc. fresh shiitake, cut into fourths
1 pkg. shirataki (yam noodle) (optional)
1 daikon, cut into 1 inch pieces (optional)
6 to 12 oz. sake (see note at bottom)

Put the cold water into a pot with the piece of konbu. Bring to a boil and remove the konbu before the water starts boiling; add the dashi powder and miso and mix thoroughly, keeping the water at a low simmer. Add the salmon, clams, shrimp, tofu, nappa, shiitake, and shirataki; this will lower the temperature of the water so you'll need to raise the heat on the pot until it comes to a boil again. Reduce to a simmer for about 5 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. This can also be cooked at the table, if you have a portable burner--it's an easy way to entertain guests, because they can help with the cooking, and there's nothing like the warm communal feeling of eating out of the same pot. And speaking of warm, communal feelings, don't forget to warm up the sake to serve with this meal! [Yes, the sake in the list of ingredients is not for the pot, but for you and your guests to enjoy with the food.]

Serve with rice.
Variations:
You can use salmon neck pieces, if available; although it's a bit more work to eat these parts because of the bones, they have a richer flavor are worth the extra effort to pick out the bones.
You can substitute a bunch of spinach for the nappa, if you prefer.

Mar 2000

Mabo Tofu (Spicy Pork Tofu)*

1 block of **regular** or **firm** texture ***tofu*** (soy bean curd), 16 to 19 oz. [**do not use** soft texture (*kinugoshi*) tofu]
1 Tbl. vegetable oil
1 clove garlic, minced
6 to 12 oz. ground pork (.4 lb. to .75 lb.)
2 to 4 tsp. **Chinese hot bean sauce** (or to taste)--also called "hot bean paste" or "chili paste with soy bean" [not the same as Chinese chili sauce or chili paste]
1 Tbl. *shoyu* (soy sauce)
1/4 tsp. salt or to taste
3/4 cup water or chicken stock
1 Tbl. cornstarch plus 1 Tbl. cold water for thickening
2 stalks *negi* (green onion), chopped
1 1/2 tsp. *goma abura* (Japanese or Chinese sesame oil)

Rinse *tofu* and drain. Cut into 1/2 inch cubes. Set aside.

Heat wok or skillet, add oil, garlic, and ground pork. Stir-fry pork on high heat until done (about 2 minutes). Add hot bean sauce, *shoyu*, salt, water (or chicken stock), and *tofu*.

Cover, bring to a boil and simmer (uncovered) for 2 minutes. Thicken with some of the cornstarch mixture to desired thickness. Add *negi* and *goma abura*. Mix gently to combine all ingredients without breaking the tofu cubes.

*Variations: To make regular, non-spicy **Chinese Pork Tofu**, use **Chinese bean sauce** (***min see jeung***) in place of the hot bean sauce. In place of the ground pork, you can substitute boneless pork cut into strips.