

# SHANGHAINESE “LION’S HEAD” MEATBALLS

BY MELISSA KING

SERVES: 4

ACTIVE TIME: 1 HR | TOTAL TIME: 1 HR 15 MIN

## MEATBALLS

- 1 pound ground pork (preferably 20% fat)
- 2 tablespoons Shaoxing wine
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon chicken bouillon powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon Chinese light soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon white sugar
- ¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
- 2 large egg whites
- 2 scallions, minced
- 1 (1-inch) knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated

## DISH

- Canola oil, for shallow frying (2 cups)
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 teaspoon Chinese light soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon Chinese dark soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon Chinese oyster sauce
- ½ teaspoon white sugar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Dash of ground white pepper
- 2 slices of peeled fresh ginger
- 2 cups chopped napa cabbage (into about 2-inch pieces)
- 2 bundles of dried bean threads (thin mung bean noodles)
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

1. Combine the meatball ingredients into a large bowl, then mix and squeeze the mixture by hand to distribute the ingredients well, about 1 minute. Add 2 tablespoons of water and continue to mix and squeeze until the mixture is smooth and homogenous, about 1 minute more. Do not be gentle. This process emulsifies the mixture and helps give the cooked meatballs their distinctive texture.
2. Divide the mixture into five equal portions, then use wet hands to shape each one into a meatball. Set aside on a plate.
3. Heat 1 inch of canola oil in a preheated large wok or skillet over high heat until it shimmers, about 1 minute. (A little trick to test whether the oil is hot enough: Stick the end of a wooden chopstick or wooden spoon into the oil. If vigorous bubbles emerge from the wood, then the oil is ready for frying. If not, wait a bit longer.)
4. Working in batches if necessary to avoid crowding, gently add the meatballs to the hot oil one by one, leaving a little space between each one. Cook, turning occasionally, until deep brown all over, about 4 minutes. As they're done, use a slotted spoon or strainer to transfer to a 10-inch clay pot or 5-to-6-quart Dutch oven; discard the oil.
5. Add the chicken broth, soy sauces, oyster sauce, sugar, salt, pepper, and ginger, cover, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat and cook, covered, at a gentle simmer for 10 minutes. Add the cabbage, stir gently, and continue to cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until the cabbage has softened, about 5 minutes. Add the noodles, stirring or prodding so they nestle in the liquid, and cook, uncovered and stirring once or twice, until the noodles are translucent and soft, 3 to 4 minutes more.
6. In a small bowl, stir together the cornstarch and 2 tablespoons of water until smooth, then drizzle directly into the broth and simmer until the broth thickens slightly, about 1 minute. Serve hot.

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# KUNG PAO CAULIFLOWER

BY MELISSA KING

SERVES: 2 TO 4

TOTAL TIME: 45 MIN

## KUNG PAO SAUCE

- 2 tablespoons Shaoxing rice wine
- 2 tablespoons Chinese Chinkiang black vinegar
- 1 tablespoon hoisin sauce
- 1 tablespoon dark aged soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground white or black pepper

## CAULIFLOWER

- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 small yellow onion, cut into ½-inch dice
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced or grated peeled fresh ginger
- 1 red, orange, or yellow bell pepper, cut into ½-inch dice
- 1 celery stalk, cut into ½-inch dice
- 7 to 8 whole dried Tianjin or other Chinese chiles, cut or torn in half
- 2 tablespoons roasted unsalted peanuts, roughly chopped
- ¼ teaspoon whole Sichuan peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon canola or other neutral oil
- 1 ½ pounds cauliflower, cut into ¾-inch florets (4 cups)
- 2 scallions, cut into 1-inch batons
- Steamed rice, for serving

1. Make the kung pao sauce: In a small bowl, whisk all of the ingredients together until combined.
2. Make the cauliflower: Heat a wok over high until hot. Add the sesame oil and swirl to coat the wok. Add the onion, garlic, and ginger and stir-fry until lightly browned and fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the bell pepper and celery and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the dried chiles, peanuts, and peppercorns and stir-fry until fragrant, about 1 minute. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl.
3. Reheat the wok over high. Add the canola oil and swirl to coat the wok. Add the cauliflower and stir-fry until lightly browned and the cauliflower is just tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the pepper and celery mixture to the wok and stir-fry until hot, about 30 seconds.
4. Whisk the kung pao sauce to mix, then add to the wok and stir-fry until the sauce thickens, 2 to 3 minutes (see Note). Fold in the scallions and remove from the heat. Serve immediately with steamed rice.

## NOTE

If the sauce is too thin, you can thicken it with a cornstarch slurry. Whisk 2 teaspoons cornstarch with 1 tablespoon cold water in a small bowl, then gradually add the slurry to the wok and stir-fry until you reach the desired consistency.