

Crispy Noodles with Chinese Broccoli (EE-Mee in Thai)

Quarantine Cooking Class – March 19, 2022

Background: This dish was popular in the 1920s in the part of Bangkok where the theatres were. People wanted something quick to eat before going to the theatre. But, the restaurants near the theatres were Chinese Thai and served only large meals. The theatre goers were looking for a quick meal and for it to not be messy so they could keep their clothes looking nice for going to the theatre. What the local restaurants came up with was a “dry noodle” dish - fried noodles with toppings and sauce plus a vegetable on the side.

Ingredient information

Noodles – They form the base layer for this dish. Toppings go on top of a noodle pancake. The authentic dish is made with wonton noodles. These are thin egg noodles. They give the desired crunch on the outside and soft yummy springiness on the inside of your noodle pancake. Rice noodles do not work so well to give this texture. Wheat noodles work OK. But egg noodles, which is what wonton noodles are, work the best to give the authentic texture. Thin egg noodles give the best texture. Easiest to prepare this dish using fresh noodles instead of dry. Look for the fresh noodle section in your nearby Asian grocery store. If you are using dry noodles, cook them according to package directions.

Toppings

- Mushrooms. Shiitake work very well for this dish. But any mushroom can be used. Remember that mushrooms get smaller when they are cooked. So, what looks like a lot when you are chopping them up will not be so much after cooking them.
- Chicken. Shredded breast meat is the most authentic.
- Ham. Cooked type.
- Yellow Chives. They can be difficult to find in the USA. Can substitute green onions or chives.

Vegetable. Chinese broccoli. But can use kale or spinach or broccoli crowns or Bok Choi or, well, any green vegetable in the Asian grocery store. Cauliflower might also work.

Vegan option: Replace ham and chicken with more mushrooms or plant based “chicken” or Tofurky

All the ingredients are cooked separately and then placed on top of noodles similar to how you would put toppings on a pizza.

This is a non-spicy dish. If you want to give it a bit of spiciness, dilute siracha sauce with water to make it pourable. Drizzle this over the dish when it is served.

Use of Worcestershire Sauce – yes, it is authentic to use this. There is a branch of Thai cooking that does traditionally use Worcestershire sauce.

Recipe

Ingredients (serves 2)

6 oz thin fresh wonton noodles.
3 oz Shiitake mushrooms
3 oz chicken breast or crab meat
2 slices cooked or Virginia Ham
12 oz Chinese broccoli or vegetable of choice
6 oz yellow chives (optional) or 2 green onions or a handful of chives
1 tsp vegetable oil to add to boiling water for cooking broccoli
 plus, additional oil to coat pan to fry noodles.
1 tsp sesame oil for coating noodles immediately before frying.

Sauce at Table – to be put on dish when served.

1 Tbsp Light Soy Sauce (We used Mushroom soy sauce and it was yummy)
1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce or Chinese Black Vinegar
1 tsp sugar, or to taste

Sauce for Broccoli/Vegetable

1 Tbsp Light Soy Sauce (We used Mushroom soy sauce)
1 tsp sesame oil
1/2 tsp sugar, or to taste
Can use oyster sauce in this sauce instead of soy

Directions

1. Will be using lots of boiling water for this recipe. Start a large pot of water to heat while you are preparing the ingredients. Then, pour the hot water into each pan as needed.
2. Rinse Chinese broccoli to remove dirt. Cut out the tough parts - the ends of the stems. Set aside. Wait until after cooked to chop it.
3. Wash chives/green onions and remove bad parts. Chop into 1-inch-long pieces. Set aside.
4. Wash mushrooms. Remove the stems. Chop the caps into slices about 1/4 inch thick. Set aside.
5. Cook mushrooms: can do them whatever way you are comfortable cooking them. Authentic for this recipe is to boil them. Shiitake mushrooms will need 2 to 3 minutes to cook. They are done when they are darkened and softened. Button mushrooms will cook in about 1 minute. Use a slotted spoon to remove the mushrooms from the water and let them drain in a colander.
6. Cook the chicken. Can either change out the boiling water for fresh from your large pot of boiling water or re-use the mushroom water to cook the

- chicken. Cut each breast into 3 or 4 long strips. Boil for 5 – 7 minutes. For boneless thighs, boil for 4 – 5 minutes. Remove from water and set aside.
7. Cook the Chinese broccoli. Can change out the boiling water or continue using the water you have. Add 1 tsp vegetable oil to the boiling water. Then, add the broccoli. Cook to the texture that you like. Then, drain and let cool. Set aside
 8. Boil your fresh wonton Noodles – Have the water boiling hard as it cools so much when the noodles are added. Add noodles to the boiling water. Boil for 2 minutes and then check if they are done. Cook until al dente/slightly firm. Scoop noodles out and place into very cold water to stop them from cooking further. Let drain and set aside.
 9. Shred chicken. Shredded is the authentic method to make the pieces bite size. Can also chop it if that is what you prefer. Set aside
 10. Make ham strips. Cut ham slices into bite size strips. Size as would find on a pizza is about right. Set aside.
 11. Make Sauces.
 - a. *Table Sauce*: combine soy, Worcestershire/vinegar and sugar. Whisk to blend. Taste. It should be salty with a touch of sour. Adjust, if needed.
 - b. *Broccoli/Vegetable Sauce*: Combine soy, sesame oil, and sugar. Whisk to mix.
 12. Finish broccoli. Cut Chinese Broccoli into 2-inch strips. Don't cut small. Pour Broccoli/Vegetable Sauce over broccoli.
 13. Fry the noodles. Preheat pancake griddle or frying pan on medium high heat. (350 F on electric griddle is what we used.) Put noodles in a bowl and stir with a chop stick or similar to separate them. Add sesame oil and stir to coat noodles. Put a thin coating of vegetable oil on the griddle or fry pan. Place a single serving of the noodles on the hot pan and shape it like a thin pancake. Press down some on the top with a spatula to flatten it but don't pack it solid. Put chives on top of the noodle pancake. Cook ~ 5 minutes per side. It should be crisp on the part touching the griddle before you flip it. May require 2 spatulas to flip it over. You don't want to lose the springiness in the center of the noodle pancake. It should be crisp on the outside only. When it is near the full cooking time on the second side, monitor the springiness by pressing down with spatula.
 14. Plating the meal. Transfer the cooked noodles to a plate. Place the toppings on with each topping taking up 1/3 of the noodle surface. Drizzle sauce over it just before it is eaten. Place the broccoli on the dish to the side of the noodles.
 15. How to eat it. Don't mix it together. It is meant to be discrete and varied chunks of flavor. Cut off a chunk and eat it with a spoon or fork.

Other info:

Thai language lesson

Delicious: Aroi

There was another Thai word but that is Sydney's other type of language lesson and isn't included in this recipe write up.

Hands vs Chop Sticks vs Spoons

Thai food is closer in consistency to Indian food than to Chinese. Thai ate with their hands as the Indians did. When utensils came along, mostly spoons were used. Chop Sticks are not a good option for Thai recipes/foods because Thai foods are often soups or curries or similar.