

Beijing Lamb Stew Recipe

Ingredients: Serves 4

450g boneless lamb breast, chopped into 1-inch cubes
Vegetable oil, for deep-frying, plus ¼ cup
50g (about 1½ bunches) dried soybean threads
2 scallions, white part only, trimmed and sliced into 1-inch pieces
One 1-inch piece peeled fresh ginger, cut into pieces
 ½ inch square and ¼ inch thick
2 small dried hot red chilies
2 tablespoons rice wine or dry sherry
2 whole star anise
One 1½-inch piece of cinnamon stick
3 tablespoons soy sauce
¼ cup smashed rock sugar
1 medium carrot, peeled and cut into 1½-inch-long wedges
6 Chinese dried black mushrooms (about ½ cup), soaked, trimmed,
 each mushroom cut into 3 pieces
1 cube red fermented bean curd, optional

Method:

Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil over high heat. Add the lamb and cook to remove some of the surface fat, about 3 minutes. Drain in a colander. Place the lamb on a plate and set it aside. Clean the saucepan, fill it with water and bring it to a boil over high heat. Keep the water boiling so it is ready for the bean threads. Heat a large wok over high heat. Add enough oil to come about 1 inch up the sides of the wok and heat it to 180°C. Carefully add the bean threads and cook until they turn golden-brown, about 10 seconds. Using a wide wire-mesh strainer, transfer them to a colander to drain. Turn off the heat under the wok. Add the fried bean threads to the boiling water, turn off the heat and let them soak until softened, about 1 minute. Drain in a colander. Place the bean threads on a cutting board, cut them into 1½-inch-long pieces and set them aside. Discard the oil from the wok. Add ¼ cup oil to a flameproof casserole or Dutch oven and heat over high heat. Add the scallions, ginger and dried chilies and stir-fry until they are fragrant, about 15 seconds. Add the lamb and stir-fry until the lamb is browned, about 2½ minutes. Stir in the rice wine, star anise and cinnamon stick, then the soy sauce, rock sugar and 3 cups of water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover the wok and simmer at a gentle bubble for 40 minutes. Add the bean threads, cover and continue simmering for 20 minutes. Add the carrot, mushrooms and fermented bean curd, if using, to the wok. Mash the bean curd on the side of the wok and stir it into the sauce. Simmer, covered, for 15 minutes, until the lamb and carrots are tender. (The stew can be made up to 1 day ahead, cooled, covered and refrigerated. Scrape off and discard the solidified fat from the surface. Reheat gently before serving). Skim off and discard the fat from the surface of the sauce. Remove the star anise, cinnamon and chilies and serve hot.