

Hangzhou Braised Pork Recipe

Ingredients: Serves 4

900g pork belly, cut into eight 2-inch-square pieces
2 scallions, white and green parts, trimmed and cut into thirds
1 cup rice wine or dry sherry
⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons soy sauce
One 1-inch piece peeled fresh ginger, cut into 5 slices
1 teaspoon ground white pepper
3 whole star anise
One 1½-inch piece of cinnamon stick
5 small dried hot red chilies
450g spinach

Method:

Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil over high heat. Add the pork and cook to remove some of the surface fat, about 3 minutes. Drain in a colander. Rinse the pork under cold running water for 1 minute. Place the scallions on the bottom of a flameproof casserole or Dutch oven (this keeps the pork from sticking to the bottom), and top with the pork. Add 3 cups water, the rice wine, the ⅓ cup sugar, the ¼ cup soy sauce and the ginger, white pepper, star anise, cinnamon stick and dried chilies. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover and simmer gently until the pork is very tender, about 2 hours. Meanwhile, bring a large saucepan of lightly salted water to a boil over high heat, and reduce the heat to low to keep the water simmering. Transfer the pork to a cutting board. Cut the meat from the bones, and discard the bones. Using a slotted spoon, remove and discard the ginger, scallions, star anise, cinnamon stick and chilies from the sauce. Increase the heat to high and boil the sauce, uncovered, until it becomes syrupy, about 7 minutes. While the sauce is reducing, return the saucepan of water to a boil. Add the spinach and cook just until it is wilted and bright green, about 1 minute. Drain well in a colander. Spread the spinach on a platter. Add the pork, the remaining 2 tablespoons soy sauce and the remaining 1 tablespoon sugar to the sauce, and return it to the boil. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the pork, skin side up, to the center of the platter. Spoon the sauce on top, and serve immediately.

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