

YANGCHOW LION'S HEAD

This is a very famous Yangchow dish from the menu of the Ching Dynasty. The pork is very important – some fat is good to keep the meatballs moist and tender. Traditionally, the fresh bacon portion of the pork was used to make this dish. Today, for health reasons, it is not used. Still, pork with some fat is desired. The reason for covering the meatballs with the cabbage is to prevent the delicate flavors from evaporating.



Ingredients [t.=teaspoon, T.=tablespoon]

- 2 lbs. ground pork (best from Asian market, or freshly ground in your favorite market)
- 1 large (2 medium) napa cabbage
- about 6 cups of chicken stock (enough to cover the meatballs in the pot)
- 3-4 finely chopped green onions
- 4 t. finely chopped ginger (or you can use a ginger grater to yield approximate amount)
- 1 egg
- 4 T. Chinese cooking wine or sherry
- 1 t. salt,
- 0.5 t. pepper
- 2 T. cornstarch in a paste
- 1-2 T. vegetable oil

Procedure

1. Wash and drain cabbage. Separate the leaves. Cut off and save hard stem parts.
2. Combine pork, onions, ginger, wine, egg, salt, pepper, and cornstarch paste in a large bowl. Stir with fingers in one direction until it becomes a little sticky. Form 6-8 meatballs. It is useful to have a bowl of cornstarch and water to dip hands in when forming and moving the meatballs.
3. Heat 1-2 T. oil (NOT olive oil) in a wok or large skillet or pot, and stir fry the hard parts of the cabbage over medium-high heat for about 2 minutes.
4. Reduce heat to medium, add chicken stock and heat then carefully place meatballs on cooked cabbage, cover with all uncooked cabbage leaves.
5. Return heat to boil, then reduce to simmer, cover pot, and simmer for about 1.5 hours. Turn heat off, and let dish sit covered for one more hour.