FOODIE CITY WARSAW

Kung Pau Chicken with Jasmine Rice and Smashed Cucumber

Serves 4 as a main course

INGREDIENTS:

Chicken, marinade and sauce

- 500 g chicken breast. For the marinade: 20 ml Shaoxing wine, 8 ml light soy sauce, 1 egg white, 8 g potato starch and a pinch of salt.
- For the sauce: 25 ml Shaoxing wine, 8 ml light soy sauce, 15 g doubanjiang paste, 15 ml Chinkiang black vinegar, 5 g sugar and 40 ml chicken stock.
- To thicken: 8 g potato starch and 25 ml cold water. For frying: 25 ml neutral oil.

Vegetables, rice and accompaniments

- 150 g red bell pepper, 30 g spring onions, 9 g each of ginger and garlic, 1–2 dried chillies, 2 g Sichuan peppercorns and 50 g unsalted peanuts.
- 240 g dry jasmine rice and 360 ml water. For the cucumber: 250 g cucumber, 2 g salt, 12 ml rice vinegar, 5 g sugar and 4 ml sesame oil.

METHOD:

- Chicken. Cut the breast into even cubes up to 2 cm across. Mix the marinade ingredients, add the chicken and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate while you prepare the accompaniments. Wash your hands, board and knife.
- Cucumber. Gently crush the cucumber with the flat side of a knife, break it into bite-sized pieces, salt and drain in a sieve for 10–15 minutes. Mix the rice vinegar, sugar and sesame oil. Toss with the drained cucumber and chill.
- Rice in a saucepan. Rinse the rice under cold water in a sieve and drain. Transfer to a heavy-based saucepan, add 360 ml fresh water and bring to the boil. Stir once, cover and turn the heat to its lowest setting. Cook for about 12 minutes without lifting the lid. Turn off the heat, leave covered for 10 minutes, then fluff with a fork.

- Chillies and peanuts. Snip the dried chillies with scissors. Toast the peanuts in a dry pan, shaking it until they turn light golden. Tip into a bowl. Toast the Sichuan peppercorns separately until fragrant, then crush with a pestle and mortar.
- Vegetables and sauce. Dice the bell pepper and chop the ginger and garlic. Slice the spring onions, keeping the white and green parts separate. Mix the sauce ingredients. In a separate bowl, stir the thickening starch into the cold water.
- Stir-frying. Heat some of the oil in a wok or large frying pan. Fry the chicken in batches in a single layer. When browned underneath, turn the pieces and cook through. Transfer each cooked batch to a clean plate.
- Finishing. Briefly fry the chillies, Sichuan pepper, ginger, garlic and spring onion whites in the remaining oil. Add the bell pepper, then the chicken and sauce. When the sauce boils, stir the starch slurry again and add it a teaspoon at a time until the sauce lightly coats the chicken. Stir in some of the peanuts.
- Serving. Divide the rice and chicken with its sauce among four bowls. Place the drained cucumber alongside. Scatter the spring onion greens and remaining peanuts over the top just before serving.

TIP:

- Doubanjiang brings its own chilli heat. Adjust the quantity of dried chillies to taste.

ENJOY!