

Ants Climbing a Tree (Szechuan)

Preparation time: 30 minutes. Cooking time: 6 minutes.

Serves 4-6

3 oz. cellophane noodles (or 3 oz. of angel hair pasta if you do not have cellophane noodles)

SEASONING:

2 Tbs. sesame oil
3 whole scallions, chopped
1 tsp. minced fresh ginger

1 lb. lean ground pork

SAUCE:

2 Tbs. light soy sauce
1 Tbsp. chili paste with garlic (use less if you do not like your food spicy; I use 1 tsp.)
1 cup chicken broth (or 1 cup of water and 1 chicken bullion cube)
Dash of salt and pepper (to taste – be careful, as the soy sauce and chicken broth also add saltiness)



TO PREPARE:

Place cellophane noodles in hot water for 30 minutes to soften. Drain well. Chop through noodles with a cleaver or knife a few times, so pieces will not be long.

[If using angel hair pasta, cook it until very firm - not quite done (the pasta will soak up some of the liquid in the wok and finish cooking later). Drain pasta, cut in half and hold aside to add to wok later.]

TO COOK:

To heated wok, add sesame oil. When oil is hot, add scallions and ginger and stir fry 30 seconds. Add pork and stir fry 1 minute, until it loses its pink. Add sauce and stir to mix. Reduce heat to medium and add noodles. Cook about three minutes until liquid cooks down, stirring to coat the noodles.

NOTE:

I also add broccoli, mushrooms, asparagus and snow peas to add a vegetable component (which can be added on the side if you don't want to mix them into the original dish). Chop the broccoli into bite-sized pieces and add with the mushrooms when you add the noodles; mix and cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring to cook all vegetables.

When broccoli is almost done (bright green in color), add asparagus and snow peas, cook for one to two minutes ONLY (do not overcook the vegetables).

Remove from wok and serve immediately.