

Yakamein

By Millie Peartree

Total Time 1½ hours

Rating ★★★★★ (749)

Also known as Old Sober, this is a heartwarming and soul-restoring soup with roots in New Orleans, a special dish that makes you feel whole again. Its origins are murky, but some trace them to the 19th century, when Chinese immigrants worked alongside African Americans on plantations and railroads. These days, yakamein can be sought out in New Orleans as a hangover cure. Drawing influence from both Asian and African American cultures, the dish stands alone in what it is. With tender noodles and a rich, savory broth, it can be eaten with ketchup, soy sauce or hot sauce, but it's a full-bodied recipe on its own.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 servings

- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons Cajun seasoning
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 pound chuck roast, thinly sliced (see Tip)
- 4 tablespoons neutral oil, such as canola or vegetable
- 1 cup chopped celery (from about 2 ribs)
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 1 medium green bell pepper, seeded and diced
- ½ teaspoon fine salt
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger

PREPARATION

Step 1

In a medium bowl, mix together Worcestershire sauce, Cajun seasoning and garlic. Toss the beef with the marinade and let sit for at least 30 minutes at room temperature.

Step 2

As the beef marinates, heat 3 tablespoons oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high. Add celery, onion, bell pepper and salt. Sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add onion powder, garlic powder, paprika, pepper, cayenne and ginger; sauté for another minute. Transfer the vegetables to small bowl.

Step 3

Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil to the pot. Working in batches, sauté the meat over medium-high heat, about 4 minutes on each side, until you get a nice crust on the outside. Add vegetables and the beef stock back to the pot with the beef. Stir well and bring to a boil.

Step 4

Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, and stirring occasionally, until beef is tender, about 40 minutes to 1 hour. Taste soup and adjust for seasoning.

4 cups beef stock (preferably unsalted or low-sodium)
8 ounces spaghetti
4 hard-boiled eggs, cooled and peeled
½ cup sliced scallions, for serving
Ketchup, soy sauce or hot sauce, for serving (optional)

Step 5

As the soup simmers, set a medium pot of salted water to boil, and, about 10 minutes before serving, add spaghetti to the pot and cook according to the package directions. Drain the spaghetti.

Step 6

Serve in bowls, making sure that each bowl has noodles, broth and beef. Garnish with halved eggs and chopped scallions. Add ketchup, soy sauce or hot sauce, if you like.

TIP

A chuck roast cut by a butcher may have uneven strips. Just keep an eye on the smaller pieces as they cook, pulling them out and setting them aside if you need. Add them back at the end to make sure they heat up.



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