

Martin Yan's CHINA

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Fortune Noodle Meatball Soup

Makes 6 servings

2 ounces dried wood ear mushrooms
3 ounces fresh Chinese wheat noodles or dried spaghetti

Meatballs

1 pound ground meat
2½ teaspoons salt
1 tablespoon cornstarch
2 teaspoons sesame oil
½ teaspoon ground white pepper

4 cups Homemade Rich Broth or canned chicken broth
3 tablespoons Chinese black vinegar or balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons diced pickled mustard greens
1 teaspoon salt
Pinch ground white pepper
2 green onions, thinly sliced
3 sprigs cilantro, leaves and stems minced
1 tablespoon Chili Oil or a store-bought version

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In a bowl, soak the mushrooms in warm water to cover until softened, about 15 minutes. Drain. Thinly slice mushrooms and set aside.

Bring a medium-sized pot filled with water to a boil over high heat. Add the noodles and cook according to the package directions. Drain, rinse with warm water, and drain again. Place the noodles in a bowl and cover to keep warm.

To prepare the meatballs: put the meat, sesame oil, cornstarch, salt, and pepper in a food processor and process to a smooth paste. Scoop the meatball mixture out to a bowl. With wet hands, roll the meat mixture into walnut-sized balls, using a heaping tablespoon for each ball. Arrange the meatballs, without crowding, on a lightly greased plate.

In a medium pot, combine the broth and vinegar and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the meatballs and return to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer until meatballs are cooked through, about 8 minutes. Stir in the wood ear mushrooms and pickled greens and simmer for 2 minutes more. Add the cooked noodles and cook, stirring, until noodles are heated through. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Ladle the soup into bowls. Garnish each bowl with some of the green onions, cilantro, and chili oil and serve.

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