

# Stir-Fried Noodles with Gravy and Pork Cracklings

*Hokkien Mee*

As dark as midnight in the Cameron Highlands of Malaysia, these rich noodles are pure Malaysian comfort food. I usually get a dish as soon as I get off of the plane. Although it's authentically made with a molasses-like thick soy sauce (pg. 50), I've adapted it for the two types of soy that are widely available here. If you don't have the thick soy, reduce regular soy sauces to 4 teaspoons and add 3 Tablespoon dark soy sauce. You can prepare the recipe with vegetable oil instead of lard, and use store-bought pork cracklings, or simply omit the pork and still have a delicious wok of noodles. This dish is traditionally served with the Malaysian Red Chili Sambal on (pg. 284) but I love it with Pickled Green Chilies (pg. 120).

*Makes 4 to 6 servings as part of a multi-dish meal*

- 1 lb. (454 g.) Fresh thick egg noodles, about 1/8 inch (0.3 cm.) thick
- 3 Tbsp. Rendered pork fat (lard) or vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp. Garlic, roughly minced
- 1 1/2 cups Chicken stock or broth
- 1 Tbsp. Thick soy sauce
- 2 tsp. Granulated sugar
- 16 ea Small shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 1/2 cups Choy sum or other Chinese greens, cut into 1 1/2-inch (about 3.8 cm) pieces
- 1/8 tsp. Ground white pepper
- 1/4 cup Pork cracklings or store-bought

**1.** Par-cook the noodles: Bring at least 1 gallon of water to a rolling boil. Add noodles, stir well and bring back to a boil, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. Cook until noodles are almost, but not quite fully cooked and tender, about 8 minutes. (if using thinner noodles cook them less, thin "lo mein" style will only take about 3 minutes in boiling water) Drain and rinse under cool running water. Reserve at room temperature.

**2.** Make the stir-fry: Heat a wok or sauté pan over high heat. Add lard and garlic; cook until just beginning to brown. Immediately add chicken stock, soy sauces, and sugar; bring to a boil. Add cooked noodles, bring to a boil then cover wok and cook over high heat. After 2 minutes, stir noodles to coat evenly and replace cover.

**3.** Simmer: After one more minute, remove the cover and boil until gravy thickens and coats the noodles, about 5 minutes. There should be about 1/2 cup of gravy that gathers at bottom of wok. If it gets too dry simply add splashes of water as needed.

**4.** Finish the dish: Add shrimp and greens. Cook, stirring constantly, until shrimp are cooked and greens are wilted, about 2 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed with soy sauces, sugar or salt. Add pork cracklings and white pepper, toss well. Transfer to platter; serve hot.



*Pickled green chilies' (pg. 120)  
sour taste is a perfect complement  
to the rich soy gravy.*

## How and Why

1. Using the right amount of pork fat (lard) provides characteristic flavor, and also thickens the sauce. Three tablespoons of lard may seem excessive, but this there as a more than just a cooking medium. The fat emulsifies the sauce as it boils down, increasing sauce body and depth of flavor.
2. Boiling the sauce vigorously helps create a stable emulsion, giving the sauce the proper body. Boil the sauce over a high flame to ensure that sauce will be smooth and even.
3. Add water as needed to keep noodles slathered in sauce. Remember that it is only water that evaporates, not the stock or soy sauces flavor so add back what has evaporated and not risk an overly concentrated sauce.



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