

HOT CHINESE CABBAGE

酸辣白菜 suānlà báicài

Hot Chinese Cabbage is an excellent accompaniment to dry or bland dishes. It's low in calories and high in flavor. This delightfully basic dish is a frequent addition the editor's take-out order.



By Edward Meng

Hot Chinese Cabbage is a common and popular dish on the family dinner table in China. Hot Chinese Cabbage is not only easy to cook, but also very cheap to make. That is the reason why most Chinese families like Hot Chinese Cabbage so much.

The most important ingredient of this dish is Chinese cabbage, an important vegetable for people's dietary needs. Everyone likes it very much. In China, Chinese cabbage has a good name, "King of Vegetables," because Chinese cabbage is full of nutrition and tastes great. The place of origin of Chinese cabbage is Northern China. Later, in the South of China, Chinese

cabbage was mass-produced. In the 19th century it spread to Japan, Europe, America, and other countries. There are many kinds of Chinese cabbage. In the northern part of China (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Shandong) it is grown.

Chinese cabbage is rich in protein, various vitamins, calcium, phosphorus, and fiber. It can be cooked by stir-frying or mixed in a salad, as well as made into stuffing or used for garnishing. Chinese cabbage helps enhance the flavor of meat and decreases such problems as excess nitrites and nitrous acid-salt. Consequently, it reduces cancer which is induced by nitrite and nitrous acid salts.

Although Chinese cabbage is very nutritional, there are some issues that are of importance when you cook it. First, be careful of the overnight-ripe [spoiled] cabbage or any that is not fully preserved with salt. Second, people who have diarrhea or are deficient of energy should not eat too much Chinese cabbage because of possible ill effects.

During my childhood, my family was poor. At that time, the economy of whole country was not good until the Reformation and Opening [which begun in 1978 and morphed over the following years]. Reformation and Opening was an important economic period in China. It changed the old form of China's economy and used new sciences and technologies to develop high production. After that, China's economy improved -- it became better and more powerful. People's lives changed, and they became richer and happier. There were even more vegetables in people's lives; they could afford them.

Although Hot Chinese Cabbage is popular in China, I do not like it anymore. But I'll introduce it to you anyway, even though it has left me with the worst feelings I ever had in my life. As I mentioned, Hot Chinese Cabbage is very cheap and easy to cook; therefore that was the first cooking choice of my destitute family. Really, my childhood was very happy, but because cabbage was so cheap, two meals each day unhappily contained Chinese cabbage.

Every day we ate Hot Chinese Cabbage, and that situation stayed with us a for a long time. No matter how delicious the dish was, I ate it all day, every day. Back then, whenever I saw Chinese cabbage, I could not help but be scared of it. When you eat it at first, it is very delicious. But I ate it too much of it during those poverty-days and now feel it has no flavor. Those days of eating so much Chinese cabbage made me fear

this dish, even until today. We were so poor...it was my worst nightmare. But Hot Chinese Cabbage is really nice dish for most people (except me).

INGREDIENTS

750g Chinese cabbage
 10g Green pepper, chopped
 5g Dried and fried Chinese red pepper [red, dried red hot chili peppers flash-fried and blackened in a tiny bit of oil]
 Vegetable oil
 1 spoon Salt
 30g Vinegar

DIRECTIONS

Making Hot Chinese Cabbage is an easy process. It involves a few simple steps. First, peel the cabbage open and wash it clean, then shred it. Cut the chili peppers into pieces and wash them clean.

Next, pour the vegetable oil into a pot. When the oil heats, put in the dried Chinese red pepper. When the peppers get darker in color, put in the Chinese cabbage and some salt then stir-fry. Next, add the vinegar and stir-fry all these things until well-distributed.

Cover and wait for about two minutes and then move the cabbage to a plate. This dish is complete.

Hot Chinese Cabbage is a very popular dish in Chinese families. Hot, salty, and fragrant are all characteristics of this dish. It suits all people's needs. Hot Chinese Cabbage is a common dish because it is really cheap and easy to cook. I think you will like it (but I hate it).