

A Recipe for Singapore Noodles

My first social distancing takeout special

One evening, a couple days after social distancing went into effect, I got hungry and thought about Singapore noodles. I'd never made them, so I perused my Chinese cookbooks for ideas. I questionably substituted the traditional rice sticks for Chinese wheat noodles from my last public event and gathered some random vegetables and curry powder. It was super easy to make and surprisingly tasty. With about five more orders of noodles left, I decided to reach out and see if anyone in my neighborhood wanted some. My plan was to set them in my foyer and have a zero-contact pickup on a donation basis. I sold out my first night and made a few new neighborhood acquaintances. It was exhilarating, and with some tinkering and planning, I launched Hand Out. Thank you Singapore noodles!

-Kenji Yee of the shui project



Ingredients

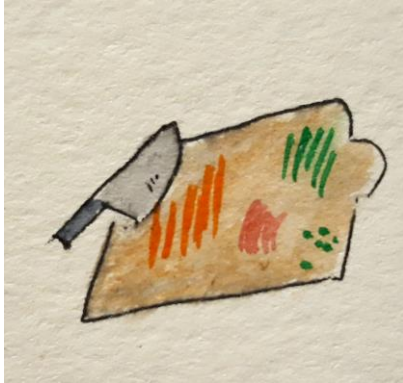
- 10 oz cooked noodles (rice stick is traditional, but you can also try Chinese egg noodles, udon, ramen, even spaghetti noodles)
- 1/3 cup bell pepper julienne
- 1/3 cup white or yellow onions julienne
- 1/3 cup cabbage julienne
- 1/3 cup carrots julienne
- 8 green beans
- 2 Tbs Vegetable oil (or any neutral flavor, low smoke point oil)
- 1/2 Tbs curry powder
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 1 tsp minced ginger
- 1 tsp soy sauce (light soy is preferred, but any soy sauce you have or tamari is great!)
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp sugar
- 1/4 tsp white pepper
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 2 tsp of shaoxing wine (this is available at most any Asian grocery store, also it could be omitted)
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- Pinch of msg (optional)
- Cilantro or scallion to garnish



Illustrations by Natalia Choi

Process

1. The first step is to cook your noodles and prep your veggies. Once the noodles are cooked and strained, run cold water over them until they are chilled. Then, lightly coat the noodles with oil (sesame oil is my preference) to prevent them from sticking together. While the noodles are

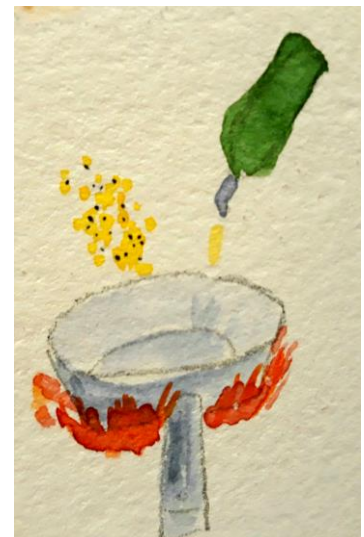


cooking, start prepping the vegetables. For this dish, I cut the vegetables into thin two-inch matchstick shapes so they hang out nicely with the noodles—except the green beans, which I cook whole. The garlic and ginger get peeled and minced.

2. Now it's time to cook and lightly salt each vegetable separately. I prefer to cook my vegetables in small batches to develop a strong sear and maintain crunch, because an overcrowded pan tends to lead to mushy veggies. My pan preference is a well-seasoned carbon steel wok, but most pans will do.

3. Turn your burner to high and add just enough vegetable oil to coat your pan. Once the oil begins to smoke, add the onions and let them develop a little char and then toss a few times, very lightly salt, and set aside in a mixing bowl or a sheet tray. Repeat the steps for the cabbage, the bell peppers, carrots, and the green beans, while being sensitive to the different cooking rates of each vegetable. If you are working with a vegetable that takes a little more time to cook or one you happened to cut thicker, I would squirt some shaoxing wine or water into the wok (once you have a good sear) and then place a lid on top to smother and rapidly steam it. If you are multiplying this recipe by more than two, chances are you will have to break up the individual vegetables into batches so the pan is not cooled off too much to establish a sear.

4. Now, on to the final step. Make sure your pan is empty and clean and turn the heat down to low. Add 1 tablespoon of oil into the pan and then add the curry powder. Stir the curry powder into the oil. It should be bubbling and wafting a wonderful aroma. If the pan is getting too hot, pick it up off the range or add more oil. Now add the minced garlic and ginger and cook with the curry oil. Once aromatic, add the noodles to the pan and toss in the curry oil. When the noodles are evenly stained and coated, turn the heat up to medium. Add the soy sauce, white pepper, black pepper, salt, sugar, and msg. Toss the noodles again until evenly coated. Now, dump all the seared vegetables on top of the noodles. Toss everything again to evenly distribute the vegetables. Feel free to use spatulas, spoons, tongs, hands or whatever works to get everything mixed in while being careful to not tear up the noodles.



5. At this point, taste the noodles. If they don't seem delicious, you could add a bit more salt to bring out the flavors or add more of the dry seasonings to your taste. Once it's super yummy, turn the heat back up to high. If the noodles seem dry add a bit more vegetable oil when you turn up

the heat. After 20 to 30 seconds, check the noodles on the bottom of the pan and if they have developed a crispy texture turn off the heat and add the sesame oil and shaoxing wine. Garnish with fresh herbs of your choice -- cilantro and/or scallion is great.

Additional ideas: Use different vegetables. Add chili flakes or julienned jalapenos for spice. Add firm tofu or any cooked animal protein that you like. Mix up some eggs and cook a thin omelette. Julienne the omelette and add at the end.

