



Chinese Sticky Rice / Chow Lor Mei Fan

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

12 oz (about 1.5 C.) diced (about 1/4" square) Chinese sausage (lop cherng)
9-10 medium dried shitake mushrooms
1/2 C. dried shrimp (hah mai)
3 C. short-grain sweet rice
3 to 4 Tbs. soy sauce
salt (to taste, about 1 tsp)
white pepper (to taste, about 1 tsp)
2 to 3 tsp. granulated sugar
3 to 4 Tbs. sesame oil
3 to 4 stalks green onion, minced

Instructions

This is one of my favorite comfort dishes, and my Dad doesn't dare to not make it for Thanksgiving, otherwise there would be a family revolt! This is his recipe that he taught to me. I've heard of other versions with added chopped cooked taro, chestnuts, and other ingredients. Feel free to experiment. However, I feel that the dried shrimp, dried shitake mushrooms, and the lop cherng are necessary ingredients for this dish. It is not difficult, but it does require time, patience, and concentration (like making risotto), so try not to multi-task while making this.

1. Soak mushrooms in a large bowl, with enough warm water to cover, until mushrooms have expanded and are soft and water is brown color (minimum 1 hour)

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2. Soak dried shrimp in a medium bowl, with enough warm water to cover, until shrimp have expanded and are pliable, and water is light orange color (minimum 45 min.)
 3. Wash, rinse, and soak sweet rice with enough water to cover, at least 2 hours.
 4. Remove mushrooms (reserve the liquid!) from the bowl and if necessary, squeeze excess liquid from mushrooms back into the bowl.
 5. Chop mushrooms (discard stems) so that they are the same size as the chopped lop cherng (sausage). Small cubes 1/4 inch in size are good.
 6. Remove shrimp (reserve the liquid) from the bowl and chop, if necessary, so that they are about the same size as the mushroom and lop cherng.
 7. Drain water from the sweet rice.
 8. Heat a large wok to medium high, and stir fry the lop cherng until the fat is released and lop cherng is darker in color (about 5 min).
 7. Add the mushroom and stir fry an additional 5 min.
 8. Add the dried shrimp and stir fry an additional 5 min.
 9. Remove the lopcherng, mushroom, shrimp mixture from the wok and set aside in a bowl.
 10. Without cleaning the wok, add about 2 Tbs. canola oil and heat the wok to medium high.
 11. Add half of the sweet rice and stir fry (not too vigorously--you can use the spatula to spread the rice across the surface of the wok and allow it to cook about 1-2 min before turning. If rice starts to get too brown, turn down the heat). Stir fry until the rice is translucent-looking, about 5-10 minutes.
 12. Add a little reserved mushroom and shrimp soaking liquid (about 1/3 Cup) to the rice, and allow to absorb and cook. Keep alternating adding a little liquid and cooking the rice, stir-frying occasionally so that rice doesn't stick/burn, until the rice is fairly soft. You will use about 1 to 1 1/2 C. of liquid and this should take about 15 minutes. Do NOT pour the sediment at the bottom of the reserved liquids into the rice.
 13. Add half of the lopcherng/mushroom/shrimp mixture to the rice and stir fry, as if you were making fried rice.
 14. Begin to add seasoning: soy sauce (1 Tb at a time), salt, white pepper, and sugar. Add a little of each seasoning at a time, stir fry, and then taste and add more if necessary.
 15. Stir-fry until rice is translucent and a good texture (not too hard/chewy--if the grains of rice still look "whitish," then add more mushroom/shrimp liquid and cook, stirring occasionally). The dish should have an appealing sheen to it.
 16. Splash with sesame oil (about 1 Tbs or more to taste) and stir fry to mix into the rice.
 17. Sprinkle with half of the chopped green onion and mix to incorporate.
 18. Remove cooked rice from the wok and repeat steps #11-17 with the remaining half of the rice and ingredients. It is easier to cook half a batch at a time in the wok because the rice gets fairly heavy/sticky as it cooks.
 19. Enjoy hot or room temperature.
