

HOISIN-EXPLOSION CHICKEN

(adapted from Barbara Tropp)

1 pound chicken breast, cut in bite size pieces
1 large egg white
1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
1 tsp Kosher salt
4 cups water + 2 tsp peanut oil

1/2 cup whole blanched almonds or cashews
1 medium red bell pepper
6 ounces bamboo shoots, sliced
fresh cilantro leaves

Aromatics

2 tsp garlic, finely minced
1 Tablespoon minced ginger
1 Tablespoon finely minced green onions
1/4 tsp dried red chili flakes

Liquid seasoning

3 Tablespoons hoisin sauce
1 + 1/2 Tbs Chinese rice wine
2 tsp soy sauce

Mix the egg white, wine and salt and process until smooth and thick (30 to 60 seconds) in a food processor or blender. Place the chicken in a bowl and add the egg white marinade over it, tossing well to completely coat the pieces. Refrigerate from 8 to 36 hours, the longer the better.

Toast the nuts in a 350F oven, or by gently frying them with a little bit of peanut oil on a non-stick skillet. Do not allow them to burn. Reserve.

Cut the seeded red bell pepper into squares. If using canned bamboo shoots, rinse them well and blanch for 10 seconds in boiling water – this will refresh their taste. Cut in thin slices. The veggies and nuts can be prepared one day in advance. Mince the cilantro right before finishing the dish.

Combine all aromatics and mix well in a small bowl. Mix all the liquid seasonings in another small bowl. Reserve both.

Velveting the chicken:

Bring the water/oil to a simmer, do not allow it to go into full boil. You want to see small bubbles forming around the rim of the water. Stir the chicken to loosen the pieces slightly, and



drop them in the water, stirring to separate them. Simmer until they are about 80% cooked – this should take about 20 seconds. It's important not to over cook the meat. When in doubt, cook less. Remove the pieces to a plate with a slotted spoon. Once velvety, the meat must be stir-fried right away.

Finishing the dish...

Heat a wok over high heat until hot enough to evaporate a bead of water on contact. Add 2 tablespoons of oil and swirl it to glaze the bottom of the pan. When the oil is hot enough to sizzle one piece of bell pepper, add the peppers and the bamboo shoots to the pan, stir frying them briskly until they are evenly glossed with oil and heated through, about 1 minute. Remove the vegetables to a dish. Return the wok to the stove, add the remaining tablespoon of oil and swirl to coat the pan. Add the aromatics, stir until fragrant, 15-20 seconds, add the liquid seasonings, and stir to combine. Add the velvety chicken pieces and the vegetables, toss quickly to cook through, about 30 seconds. Turn off the heat, add the nuts and the cilantro. Adjust the seasoning and serve over white rice.