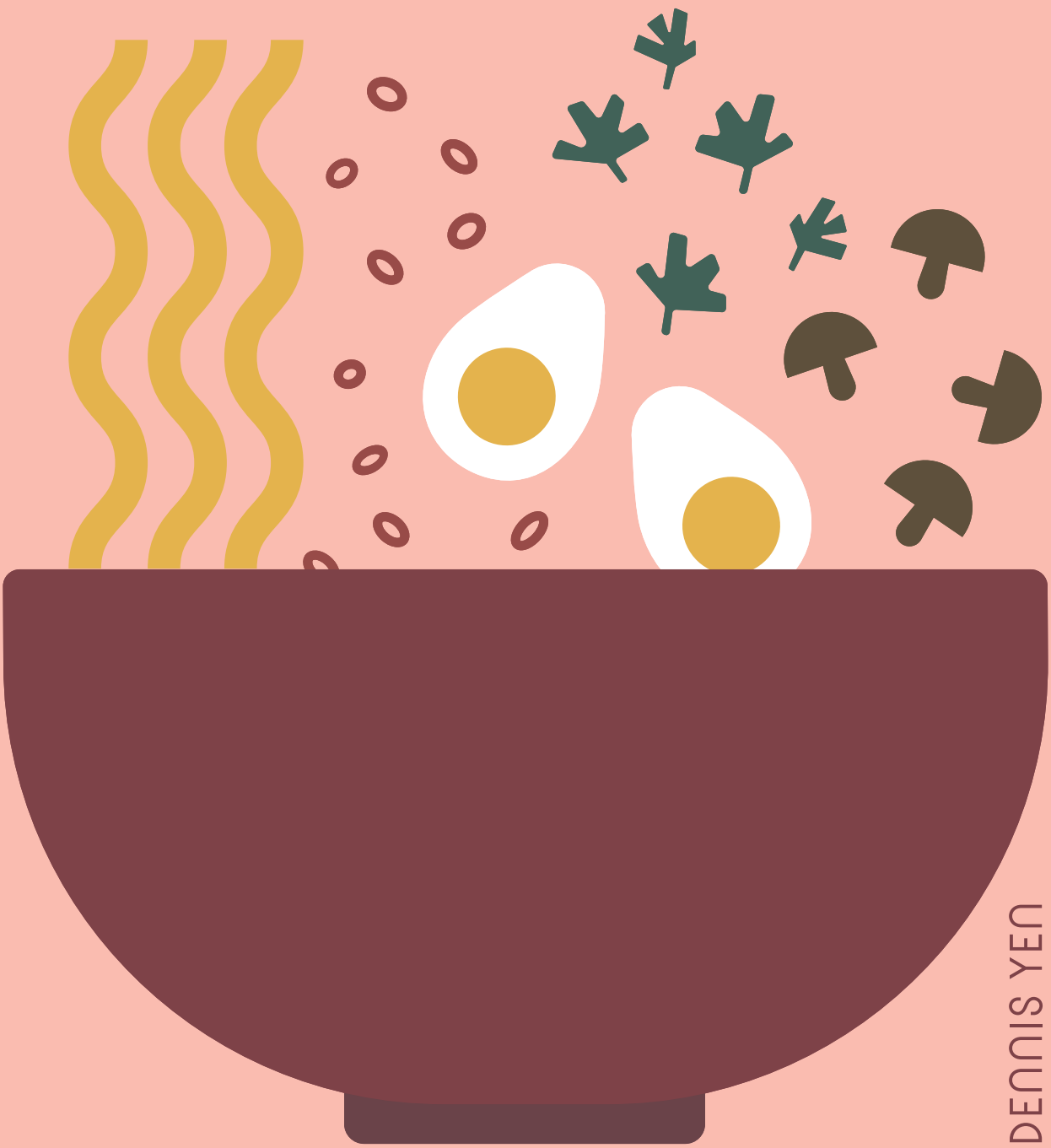
SLURP

RECIPES TO ELEVATE YOUR NOODLES



DENNIS YEN



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SLURP

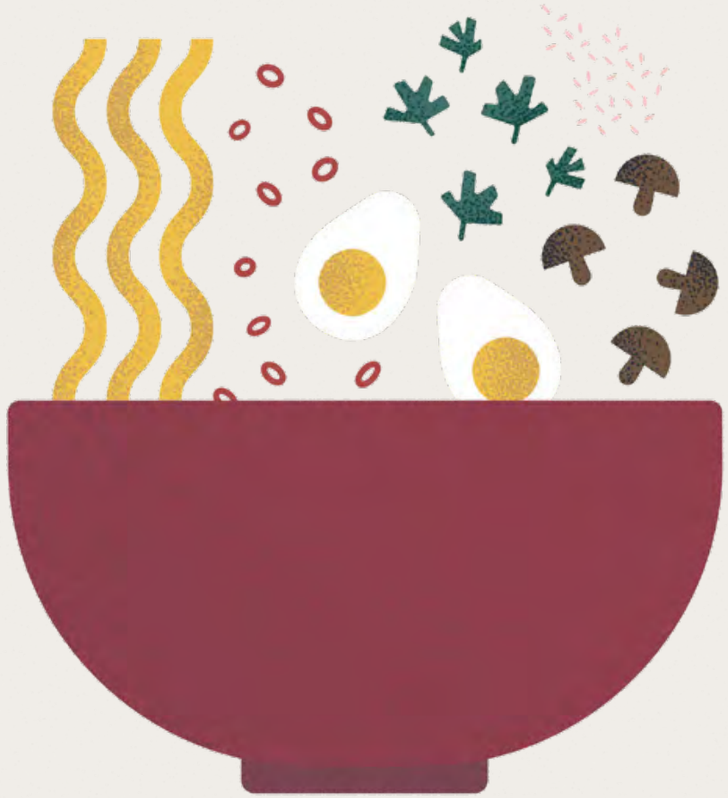
Recipes to Elevate Your Noodles

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For many people, instant noodles are everyday saviors. You can come home from school or work tired and hungry, and in just ten minutes, you can have a bowl of noodles that hits the spot. Noodles and ramen have gained significant attention in recent years, with noodle shops popping up in many neighborhoods and a wide variety of noodle dishes intriguing both food enthusiasts and home cooks. However, for most people, instant noodles are still the only ones prepared at home. More complicated dishes, some with unfamiliar ingredients, are relatively uncharted territory and may feel daunting.

To me, noodles equate to home. I was raised on Chinese and Vietnamese cuisines, both of which are rich in diverse noodle dishes. With Slurp, I aim to usher you into the delightful world of noodles—a world teeming with possibilities. Bring this book into your kitchen and make it as essential as your cutting board. It contains noodle dishes for every occasion, from quick fifteen-minute bowls to more intricate recipes requiring hours of preparation (but not chef-level skills!). You'll also find recipes for flavorful broths and various sauces, allowing you to whip up noodles tailor-made to your palate and preferences.

My hope is, over time, you'll venture out and experiment with the delicious combinations this book offers. Who knows? You might discover a flavor pairing that makes your taste buds dance with every slurp. I hope you do.

Dennis Yen



FOOD IN MY LIFE

I grew up in a large family with an immense passion for food and anything food-related. Whenever we talk over the phone or meet in person, the first question, in Cantonese, is always, “Have you eaten?” In my family, it’s equivalent to asking, “How are you?” and how you feel at that moment depends on whether you’ve eaten or not. For instance, if it’s late at night and you haven’t eaten, immediate concern arises—“Why haven’t you eaten? Is something wrong?” I’ve learned to always say “yes” to the question in order to avoid unnecessary worries.

My profound interest in food stems from my upbringing. I remember every weekend, a five-gallon (twenty-liter) pot simmered on the stove, the scent of its aromatic broth wafting through our home. As far back as I can recall, my mother always prepared a bountiful variety of noodles. One weekend it might be simple rice noodles with a savory chicken broth; another time, a rich beef broth with aromatic spices. But the best were the occasions she prepared the Vietnamese noodle dish, pho. Even today, every time I visit, my mother serves steaming bowls of noodles, with magical broths, every conceivable condiment, and a mountain of toppings. Her food is unparalleled; no matter what she serves, it tastes better than anything else I eat anywhere else.

While my love of food has its roots in my upbringing, it doesn’t mean I always appreciated the fact that my family enjoyed different food than my friends’ families. Growing up in a Western culture in Sweden, eating Asian food was considered peculiar and different. I used to feel embarrassed that we weren’t like everyone else. “Why don’t we ever eat meatballs, potatoes, and gravy with a glass of milk?” I wondered. Instead, we consumed dishes with fermented beans, fish sauce, and unfamiliar warm vegetables. But as I grew older, I began to cherish the meals my mother prepared. Today, noodles are trendy, and even fermented, sometimes “pungent,” ingredients have their place.

For many years now, I’ve been proud of and grateful for the food culture I experienced as a child. It’s largely shaped who I am today. Much of the food I prepare has its origins in Asian kitchens, drawing inspiration primarily from China, Vietnam, South Korea, Thailand, and Japan. Cooking ramen or other noodle dishes as an adult feels instinctive. I adore experimenting and trying new dishes as much as I relish the classics. To me, the food I cook is an expression of love and appreciation; it’s a way to convey memories and narrate my family’s history.

















MY NOODLE PHILOSOPHY

I uphold a simple philosophy when I prepare noodle dishes: it shouldn't be complicated. Crafting a magical bowl of noodles should be as straightforward as boiling pasta or frying sausages. Like any culinary endeavor, creating dishes from scratch naturally takes more time. Personally, I cherish pasta with meat and tomato sauce, but I don't always make the sauce from scratch; oftentimes, I opt for the store-bought variety.

The same principle applies to noodles: you can choose to handcraft the noodles for your dishes, or you can purchase ready-made ones. Both versions have their unique charm. Like all facets of cooking, you get to decide how deeply you wish to immerse yourself in each ingredient. Many people believe that preparing ramen involves an exhaustive effort, leaving you almost drained by the time you're ready to serve. While there's some truth to this, it typically holds only if you choose to create everything from scratch and intend to consume the dish the same day. But, of course, there's a solution. True to my noodle philosophy, it shouldn't be complicated—it doesn't have to be a chore.

One helpful approach to finding a balance with noodle dish creation is to master one component at a time and purchase the rest. For example, you can start by mastering the craft of a kick-ass broth. Once you feel comfortable with this, you can then delve into making your own noodles, before moving on to another challenge.

A useful perspective is to view each noodle dish as a sum of its individual components. These can range from various types of noodles, broths, sauces, oils, toppings, and other accompaniments. Acquire a collection either by buying these ready-made or preparing them from scratch and storing them in your pantry, fridge, or freezer. Then, you're equipped to whip up any dish your heart desires. In my freezer, you'll find wontons and dumplings with varied fillings, broths, slow-cooked pork belly, and handcrafted noodles of different types—all poised to satiate any emerging cravings. My pantry is stocked with an assortment of oils, sauces, spice mixes, and condiments that can be ladled over any noodle. You get the idea. It's a luxury to have access to all these treasures, and the secret is foresight and preparation. Noodles should be simple. Why overcomplicate them?

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Slurp imposes no strict rules. Rather, my aim is to guide you—to be the compass steering your culinary journey toward mastering an array of delectable noodle dishes. One valuable tip, however, is to read through the entire recipe before starting. This ensures you have all the ingredients on hand and provides an overview of the workflow. Some ingredients might be unfamiliar to you: delve deeper on pages 18. Today, several established online retailers offer a vast array of Asian products. Curious about various noodles? Refer to page 14. There are also certain utensils that can facilitate the cooking process, which are outlined on the following page. You probably have most of them already, and if not, improvisation usually works wonders.

KITCHEN TOOLS



DIFFERENT TYPES OF NOODLES, SHEETS, AND WRAPPERS

1. Glass Noodles
Thin and translucent, glass noodles are typically made from mung beans, although they can be made from tapioca and sweet potato. Glass noodles have a delightful texture and absorb liquids well. Thus, they're well-suited for salads with dressings. In this book, I use glass noodles for spring rolls.

2. Ramen Noodles
Available both fresh and dried, these noodles are crafted from wheat flour, salt, and water. Some brands contain kansui, an alkaline ingredient, in the dough (more on page 96), giving the noodles more elasticity (their trademark chewiness) and making them less absorbent in soups.

3. Wheat Noodles
Most commonly sold dried, wheat noodles come in various thicknesses and shapes. They're made from wheat flour, salt, and water, and some may contain eggs. I like kuan miao noodles, which are hand-cut. Wheat noodles work well in both stir-fries and soups.

4. Instant Noodles
There's a vast array of varieties. I've used both economical and pricier types, the distinction (beyond price) being that the costlier ones tend to have thicker noodles, and their accompanying seasoning is often richer in flavor. Instant noodles are a delicious and easy addition to soups.

5. Udon Noodles
Crafted from wheat flour, salt, and water, udon can be bought both fresh and dried. Fresh udon is chunkier and chewier, while dried udon is slimmer, with a smooth texture. Udon noodles are delightful in dishes both with and without broth.

6. Rice Noodles
Like wheat noodles, rice noodles come in various forms. They are made from rice flour, tapioca, salt, and water. Not particularly flavorful on their own, they are typically used in noodle dishes that have aromatic and potent spices. They're commonly found in salads, stir-fries, and soups.

7. Rice Paper
Rice paper, which is sold in sheets, is highly versatile and can change in texture based on the method of preparation. It's made from rice flour, tapioca, salt, and water. Like rice noodles, rice paper has a mild taste, making it suitable for dishes that are more robust in flavor.

8. Spring Roll Wrappers
The sheets I frequently use are made from wheat flour, salt, and water, and measure approximately 8 x 8 inches (20 x 20 cm). You can find them in stores' frozen sections, often labeled "spring roll pastry." There are also versions made from rice flour.

9. Wonton Wrappers
These are thin sheets of dough, usually square in shape, crafted from wheat flour, water, eggs, and salt. They are sold fresh or frozen, with a typical pack containing around sixty sheets.

10. Egg Noodles
Egg noodles are available in different sizes and made from wheat flour, water, eggs, and salt. These noodles are generally sold dried but can be found fresh in the refrigerated section of some Asian stores. They are delicious in stir-fries and soups.





TIPS ON NOODLE PREPARATION

Homemade Ramen Noodles

The cooking time for homemade ramen noodles varies depending on the thickness—thinner noodles cook faster. I typically prepare my noodles at thickness level four on my pasta machine and have learned that the cooking time for these is thirty seconds. But pasta machine settings can vary: the simplest way to determine the perfect cooking time for your specific noodles is to test cook a few. I boil my homemade ramen noodles similarly to regular wheat noodles: in a capacious pot of boiling water. After boiling, I drain the noodles and then rinse them carefully, to remove as much starch as possible. (If I'm using the noodles for cold dishes that aren't submerged in broth, I'll rinse them thoroughly with cold water to halt the cooking process as well as remove starch.)

Rice Noodles

Rice noodles demand a different approach than the usual boiling in a pot of water. Here's how to cook them:

Place the noodles in a large bowl. Boil a generous amount of water and pour it over the noodles (there should be enough water to cover the noodles), then cover the bowl. Let the noodles sit for ten to fifteen minutes, occasionally lifting the lid to gently separate the noodles if they are sticking together.

Taste a noodle or two as they begin to soften: you'll know they are done when they're flexible enough to wind around your finger and they have a pleasant al dente bite. Drain the noodles and rinse with cold water.

It's essential to note that rice noodles vary by brand and size, so soaking times may differ. The same process can be applied to glass noodles.

Wheat Noodles and Egg Noodles

Bring a large pot of water to a boil—to ensure even cooking, the noodles require ample space to move around. The instructions and timing on packaging are only approximate, so tasting is essential. A method my mother taught me is to take a few noodles out of the pot, rinse them with cold water, and sample to check the texture. They should be soft and fully cooked but not mushy. If you're uncertain, it's best to taste multiple times.

After cooking, drain the noodles and rinse them well with cold water. This stops the cooking and removes excess starch. This same approach applies to udon noodles and kuan miao.

PANTRY ESSENTIALS

1. Aonori. Dried seaweed that's washed and chopped. It imparts a delightful sea flavor and is used as a topping or garnish.

2. Black Bean Sauce. Essential in Chinese cuisine, this sauce is composed of fermented black beans and soy. Great in stir-fries with noodles.

3. Chinkiang Vinegar (black rice vinegar). A staple in Chinese cuisine, it provides sweetness and acidity, and is excellent for sauces.

4. Coconut Milk. Consider buying coconut milk from Asian stores, where the brands tend to be richer, creamier, and more aromatic. My favorite brand is Aroy-D.

5. Doubanjiang (fermented fava beans). This key ingredient in many Sichuan dishes is made from fermented broad beans and chili peppers. It brings saltiness, umami, and a delightful heat.

6. Dried Mini Shrimp. A flavor enhancer often used in Asia, dried shrimp are delicious sautéed with garlic, ginger, and shallots, and are useful in soups, stews, and sauces.

7. Dried Shiitake Mushrooms. They offer a rich umami flavor. I use them in soups, sauces, or sliced in dishes.

8. Douchi. Sun-dried fermented black beans rich in umami. They create a complex and profound taste.

9. Fish Sauce. Crafted from fermented anchovies, salt, and water, fish sauce delivers a pronounced saltiness with an aromatic nature.

10. Gochujang. A Korean fermented chili paste with a potent and fruity chili taste that's slightly sweet and salty.

11. Katsuobushi (bonito flakes). The bonito fish is smoked and dried, then shaved into thin flakes, which are often utilized in Japanese cuisine, mainly in soups or as toppings.

12. Japanese mayonnaise. I prefer the Kewpie brand, which is made from egg yolk, apple, and malt vinegar, with a fresh and creamy flavor.

13. Laksa Paste. Bursting with aromatic spices and flavors. Freshen it up with lemongrass, ginger, onion, and chili peppers, and you have an excellent base for the noodle dish laksa.

14. Light and Dark Soy Sauce. Light soy sauce is salty, with a robust umami flavor, while dark soy sauce is less salty, with more color. They are not interchangeable, and the label usually specifies whether the soy sauce is light or dark. Tamari sauce can be substituted for soy sauce for those with gluten intolerance.

15. Mirin. Mirin is a Japanese fermented rice wine with low alcohol content. It delivers umami with a hint of sweetness.

16. MSG. A flavor enhancer representing the fifth basic taste, umami, MSG is used to elevate other flavors.

17. Oyster Sauce. Crafted from oyster extract, it's sweet and salty with a pronounced umami.

18. Palm Sugar. Frequently used in Thai cuisine, it has a stronger flavor than granulated sugar. Perfect for balancing heat.

19. Red and White Miso. Both are made from soybeans. The difference is that white miso is saltier and fermented with rice, while red miso is sweeter and fermented with barley.

20. Red Curry Paste. A classic Thai curry paste that, besides red chili peppers, includes lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, and galangal. Commonly used in curries and soups.

21. Saké. An alcoholic rice wine made from polished rice that has been fermented. It's known for its sweetness and low acidity.

22. Sesame Oil. Buy the toasted variety, which has a more pronounced and robust sesame flavor. I recommend purchasing sesame oil from Asian stores.

23. Sesame Paste. Produced from toasted sesame seeds, this paste is a delightful flavor enhancer. I recommend buying it from Asian stores as their brands are usually smoother and creamier.

24. Shaoxing Wine. A Chinese rice wine used in numerous Chinese dishes, it heightens and deepens the flavor of any recipe.

25. Shrimp Paste in Soybean Oil. A delightful blend reminiscent of fermented fish sauce. It provides a deep flavor suitable for soups.

26. Sriracha. A spicy sauce made from chili peppers and flavored with roasted garlic, vinegar, salt, and sugar.

27. Tamarind Paste. Tamarind is a tropical fruit native to Africa but also heavily used in Southeast Asia. It's made into a paste, which provides a well-balanced blend of sweet and sour.

28. Tsuyu. Bottled liquid umami, derived from kombu (dried seaweed) and shiitake, that is used as a flavoring, primarily in soups. There are vegan versions and those that contain bonito.

29. Wood Ear Mushrooms. This type of mushroom is widely used in Chinese cooking. Sold dried, it offers minimal flavor, but introduces a crispy texture.

30. Yuzu Juice. Yuzu, grown in South Korea and Japan, is a cross between a lemon and a mandarin. It has a refreshing sour taste distinct from other citrus fruits.





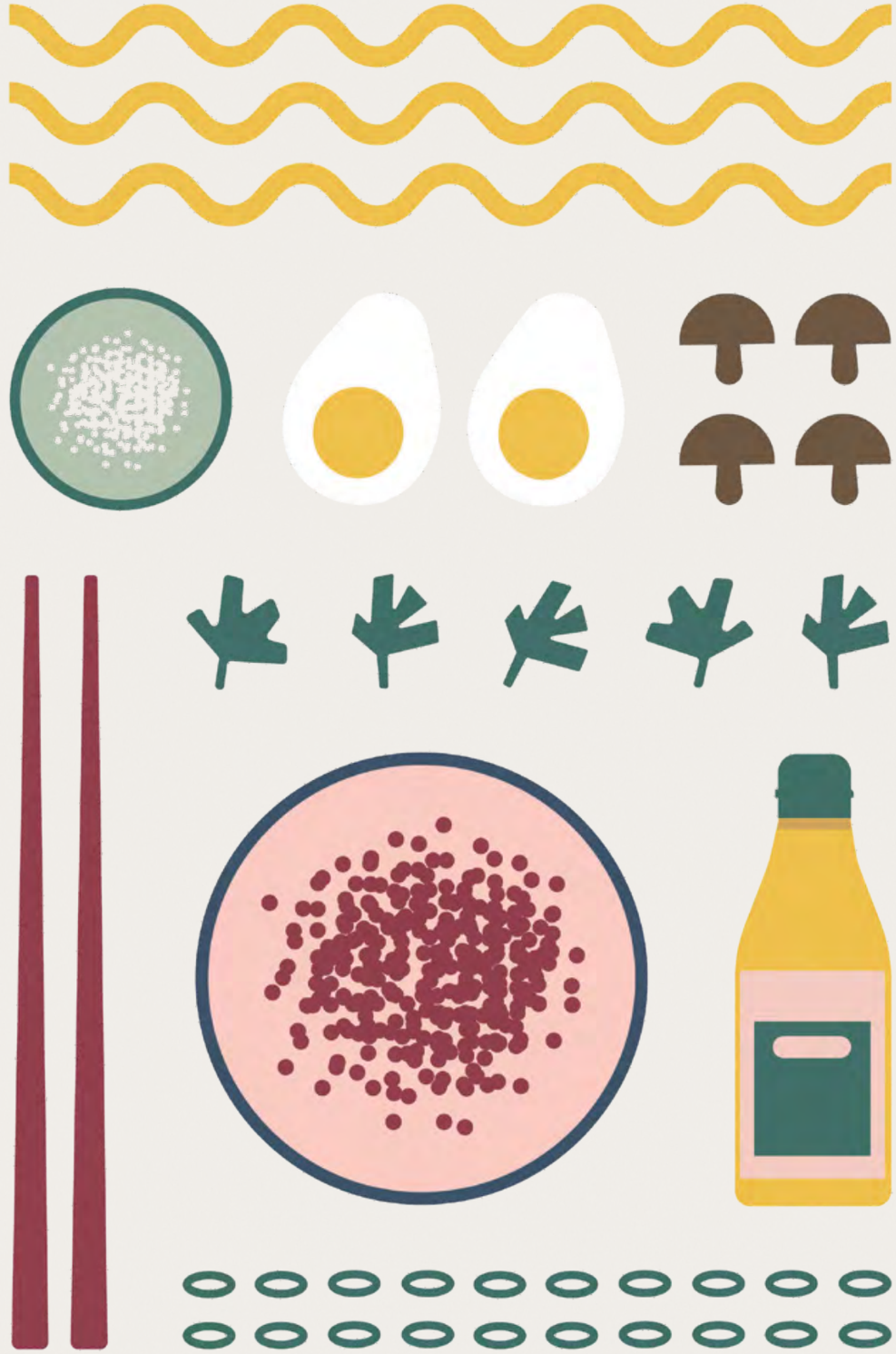
THE IMPORTANCE OF MISE EN PLACE

We've all been there. You're rummaging through drawers and cabinets, swearing that just yesterday you saw that spice packet in the top drawer—or was it the middle one? Or perhaps you overlooked the second line of the recipe, which stated the onion needed to be sautéed before adding it to the soup. The fish you're preparing has been overcooked, and the sauce in the pot has burnt to a crisp. Everything's chaotic, and you ask yourself, "Why does this always happen?"

Of course, there's a solution to this chaos, and the answer is planning and preparation. Applying mise en place—a French term meaning "everything in its place"—is a well-used concept in kitchens and restaurants. It involves peeling, cutting, chopping and prepping ingredients and then organizing them within arm's reach. Mise en place is essential in professional kitchens. If you adapt this concept to your home kitchen and prepare thoroughly, you'll feel less rushed and can focus more on critical tasks, like cooking that fish perfectly.

When I cook, I always try to prep my ingredients when everyday life allows time for it. For me, cooking is calming and relaxing; I want to feel in control. Feeling stressed is the last thing I desire. I believe food prepared with care tastes so much better.

Some recipes in this book have multiple steps and might seem demanding at first glance. My best advice is to read through the recipe at least once before you get started. Ensure all tools and ingredients are ready, and do the necessary preparations before starting the actual cooking. When it comes to noodles, it's vital to be present during the cooking process, and timing is crucial. For instance, after placing the cooked noodles in bowls and pouring the hot broth, the toppings should be added promptly, and the dish served immediately—so be sure you have prepared the toppings before it's time to boil the noodles!



SAUCES AND SEASONINGS

In this chapter, I've gathered some of my absolute favorite condiments and sauces for the majority of dishes I prepare; they're especially great for noodle dishes. I strongly recommend making these sauces, rather than buying them, as they elevate the flavors of the recipes in this book. Moreover, they have a long shelf life, making them a superb foundation for any noodle dish you might want to prepare.


CRISPY
CHILI OIL
CRISPY
SHALLOT OIL
SATÉ
SAUCE
TERIYAKI SAUCE
XO SAUCE

Teriyaki Sauce

MAKES 2 ¾ CUPS (650 ML) 〰 10 MINUTES

This teriyaki sauce is an essential in my pantry. It's the shortcut to many dishes I make at home, and the best part is that it's incredibly simple to create. Use the sauce for marinating or in stir-fries, or reduce it for a thicker consistency. The sauce will last for 6 months in the fridge, but it'll likely be consumed before then.

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup (240 ml) light soy sauce
¾ cup (180 ml) mirin
¾ cup (180 ml) saké
⅓ cup (80 g) granulated sugar

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the soy, mirin, saké, and sugar. Bring to a gentle simmer (do not let it boil). Stir until the sugar is completely dissolved.

2. Pour the teriyaki sauce into a clean glass jar and let it cool.

3. Seal the jar with an airtight lid and store in the refrigerator for up to 6 months.

Saté Sauce

MAKES ½ TO 1 CUP (120 TO 240 ML) 〰 45 MINUTES

This Vietnamese chili pepper–lemongrass sauce is brimming with delightful spicy, sweet, and salty flavors. Use it as a dipping sauce, in broths, for marinating, with noodles, or as you see fit. This somewhat forgotten sauce deserves more attention and must not be mistaken for the Indonesian peanut sauce, satay, which is pronounced the same.

INGREDIENTS:

2 lemongrass stalks
½ cup (120 ml) canola oil
2 large shallots, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
4 large medium-hot red chili peppers, finely chopped
1 small hot red chili pepper, finely chopped
1 tablespoon red pepper flakes
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 tablespoons fish sauce
3 ½ tablespoons sriracha
Salt

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Remove the outer layer of the lemongrass, trim off the hard root end, and finely chop the rest.

2. In a medium saucepan over low-medium heat, warm the oil, add the shallots, and sauté for 5 minutes. The oil should bubble slightly without browning the shallots. In intervals of 5 minutes each, add one ingredient at a time in the following sequence: lemongrass, garlic, and then the fresh chili peppers.

3. After an additional 5 minutes, add the red pepper flakes, sugar, and fish sauce. Allow the sauce to simmer gently for 2–3 minutes. Remove from heat, let cool, and stir in the sriracha. Season with salt to taste.

4. Store the sauce in a clean glass jar and seal tightly. Store in the refrigerator for up to 3 months.

XO Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 2 TO 2 ½ CUPS (500 TO 600 ML) 〰 1 HOUR (+ 45 MINUTES SOAKING TIME)

Dubbed the "Rolls-Royce of sauces," XO sauce has its origins in Hong Kong. While its name alludes to the luxurious XO cognac, the sauce doesn't actually contain any. Instead, many chefs associate the letters XO with luxury and premium quality. This sauce, with its intense and intricate flavors, is a veritable umami explosion. The recipe provided here is a simplified and accessible version, since some ingredients from the original recipe are costly and hard to come by outside of Asia. You can incorporate this sauce in various stir-fry dishes or as a delectable topping. You'll find countless reasons to reach for it. To ensure the XO's longevity, always use a clean spoon when taking sauce from the jar.

INGREDIENTS:

8 dried shiitake mushrooms
½ cup (120 ml) dried mini shrimp
½ cup (120 ml) Shaoxing wine or saké, divided
1 ⅔ cups (400 ml) canola oil
3 ounces (80 g) prosciutto, shredded or chopped into small pieces
4 large medium-hot red chili peppers, seeds removed, finely chopped
1 small hot red chili pepper, seeds removed, finely chopped
2 tablespoons grated ginger
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
¼ cup (60 ml) oyster sauce
1 tablespoon light soy sauce
1 tablespoon fish sauce
2 teaspoons granulated sugar
½ teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
4 teaspoons Crispy Shallot Oil (see page 28)
3 tablespoons red pepper flakes

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place the mushrooms and shrimp in separate bowls. Boil water and pour it over the mushrooms and shrimp to just cover them. Add 2 tablespoons of the wine to the shrimp bowl and mix gently. Let the mushrooms and shrimp soak for 45 minutes.

2. Strain the mushrooms and shrimp, reserving the liquid. Chop the shrimp and mushrooms separately and finely.

3. In a large pot (at least ½-gallon [2-l] capacity) over medium-high heat, heat the canola oil to about 230°F (110°C). The oil should fill the pot to a depth of about ¾ inch (2 cm). If you don't have a thermometer, you can test the oil by dipping a dry wooden chopstick into it: if the oil bubbles around the chopstick, it's hot enough.

4. Add the mushrooms to the oil and cook for 5 minutes, then add the shrimp and cook together with the mushrooms for an additional 10 minutes. Add the prosciutto and cook for 2 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer everything from the oil to a bowl.

5. Add the chili peppers to the pot and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the ginger and sauté another 2 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute, until it releases its aroma (don't let it brown). Scoop everything out of the oil and add it to the shrimp and mushroom mixture. Turn off the heat.

6. In a separate medium pot, combine the reserved mushroom and shrimp liquid, the remaining wine, and the oyster sauce, soy sauce, fish sauce, sugar, and pepper. Bring to a simmer and cook until the liquid has reduced by half. Stir in the shrimp-mushroom-chili mixture and then transfer everything to the pot with the oil. Heat over medium-high until it starts to bubble, then remove the pot from the heat and mix in the shallot oil and red pepper flakes.

7. Let the sauce cool, then pour it into to clean glass jars. Seal them well and store in the refrigerator for up to 6 months.

Crispy Shallot Oil

MAKES 1 ⅔ CUPS (400 ML) 〰 40 MINUTES

Of all the recipes in this book, this is undoubtedly the one I make the most. The reason is simple: the oil and shallots are so delicious, they complement everything. This condiment runs out in no time. Trust me, you'll wish you had doubled the batch from the start. Drizzle this aromatic oil, along with the crispy shallots, over your dishes to elevate any meal.

INGREDIENTS:

1 ⅔ cups (400 ml) canola oil
2 cups (250 g) shallots, thinly sliced
8 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a large pot over medium-high heat, heat the canola oil to about 230°F (110°C). If you don't have a thermometer, you can test the oil by dipping a dry wooden chopstick into it: if the oil bubbles around the chopstick, it's hot enough.

2. Add the shallots to the oil, and maintain a consistent heat.

3. Once the shallots begin to take on a bit of color (about 6 minutes), add the garlic, stirring occasionally with a heatproof spoon to prevent any shallots or garlic from sticking to the bottom.

4. Once the shallots and garlic have a light golden color, remove the pot from the heat and set aside to cool. (It's important to note that they will continue to cook from the residual heat, so remove the pot well before they turn brown. Be careful not to burn them. If you need to cool the garlic and shallots quickly, you can add a bit more oil or place the pot in a cold-water bath.)

5. Initially, the shallots might not seem very crispy, but they will become crispier as the oil cools. Once cooled, transfer the oil, shallots and garlic to a clean glass jar. Seal tightly and store in a cool place.

Crispy Chili Oil

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS (500 ML) 〰 30 MINUTES

I warn you now, if there's anything one can become addicted to in the culinary realm, it's crispy chili oil (also known as chili crisp or chili crunch). As versatile as ketchup, this Asian equivalent is my go-to condiment for virtually everything. It employs the crispy shallot oil from the previous recipe for a result that is simply magical. Ideally, you'd use a thermometer for accuracy. You can adjust the spiciness by using different types of red pepper flakes. For a milder chili oil, I recommend pepper flakes made from Korean chili peppers. If you desire more heat, you can use pepper flakes from Thai chili peppers, or perhaps combine the two for a spiciness level that suits you best.

INGREDIENTS:

2 teaspoons Sichuan peppercorns
1 ½ teaspoons cumin seeds
2 ½ teaspoons fennel seeds
2 star anise pods
2 whole black cardamom pods
⅔ teaspoon whole cloves
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 tablespoon salt
1 ½ tablespoons MSG
1 ½ tablespoons red pepper flakes

2 cups (480 ml) canola oil
5 tablespoons red pepper flakes
3 tablespoons spice mixture (see above)
½ cup (120 ml) Crispy Shallot Oil (see page 26)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Make the spice mixture: toast the Sichuan peppercorns, cumin, fennel, star anise, cardamom, and cloves in a dry skillet over medium-high heat for 3 minutes. Next, stir in the sugar, salt, MSG and first 1.5 tbs red pepper flakes.

2. In a small pot over medium-high heat, warm the canola oil to 310°F (155°C), then remove it from the heat and stir in the 5 tablespoons red pepper flakes. Let cool for 10 minutes, then stir in 3 tablespoons of the spice mixture.

3. Once the chili oil has cooled, mix in the shallot oil. Transfer the chili oil to clean glass jars, seal tightly, and store in the pantry for up to 2 months.