

P.F. CHANG'S CHICKEN IN SOOTHING LETTUCE WRAPS (IMPROVED)

BY TODD WILBUR



While working on the formula for **P.F. Chang's Vegetarian Lettuce Wraps**, I discovered that there were several ways I could improve the clone recipe for the Chicken Wraps that I published in **Top Secret Restaurant Recipes 2**. I've now perfected the flavor of the stir-fry with the addition of mirin (a sweetened sake syrup) and oyster sauce, both of which you can find in your market where the Asian foods are stocked. The "special sauce" that you spoon over your wraps has also been tweaked and perfected. And finally, after reducing the amount of chicken from two breasts fillets to just one, I think this new and improved version of P.F. Chang's most popular dish is the absolute best clone it can be.

Source: **Top Secret Restaurant Recipes 3** by Todd Wilbur.

GET THIS

2 tablespoons granulated sugar
 1/2 cup water
 3 tablespoons soy sauce
 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
 1/8 teaspoon chili oil
 2 tablespoons chopped green onion
 1/2 to 1 teaspoon Chinese hot mustard paste (see Tidbits)
 1 to 3 teaspoons chili garlic sauce

2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons soy sauce
 1 tablespoons water
 2 tablespoons mirin
 1 tablespoons oyster sauce
 2 teaspoons rice vinegar

4 tablespoons vegetable oil
 1 large skinless chicken breast fillet
 one 8-ounce can water chestnuts, drained and minced (about 1 cup)
 one 6-ounce can diced straw mushrooms, drained and minced (about 2/3 cup)
 1 teaspoon minced garlic
 3 tablespoons chopped green onion
 1 to 1 1/2 cups fried maifun rice sticks (see Tidbits)
 4 to 5 iceberg lettuce cups

DO THIS

1. Make the special sauce (for spooning over your lettuce wraps) by dissolving the sugar in the water in a small bowl. Add the soy sauce, rice vinegar, and chili oil. Add the chopped green onion and set the sauce aside until you're ready to serve the lettuce wraps. Eventually you will add Chinese mustard and garlic chili sauce to this special sauce mixture to pour over each of your lettuce wraps. In the restaurant, waiters prepare the sauce at your table the same way based on your desired heat level. We'll get into the specifics of that in step #7.
2. Prepare the stir-fry sauce by mixing all of the ingredients together in a small bowl.
3. To prepare the filling for your lettuce wraps, heat 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil in a large saute pan or wok over high heat. Saute the chicken breast for 4 to 5 minutes per side, or until cooked through. Remove the chicken from the pan to cool. Wipe out the pan.
4. As the chicken cools, chop your water chestnuts and mushrooms into pieces that are about the size of small peas. If you haven't fried the maifun rice sticks, this is a good time to do that.
5. When you can handle the chicken, hack it up with a sharp knife so that no piece is bigger than a dime. With the pan or wok back on high heat, add the 3 remaining tablespoons of oil. When the oil is hot, add the chicken, water chestnuts, mushrooms,

and garlic to the pan. Cook the mixture for 2 minutes, stirring often. Add the stir-fry sauce to the pan and saute the mixture for a couple more minutes, then stir in the green onions and spoon everything out onto a bed of fried maifun rice noodles on a serving dish.

6. Serve the chicken with a side of lettuce cups. Make these lettuce cups by slicing the top off of a head of iceberg lettuce right through the middle of the head. Pull your lettuce cups off of the outside of this slice.

7. Prepare the special sauce at the table by adding your desired measurement of hot mustard and chili sauce to the special sauce blend: 1 teaspoon of chili garlic sauce for mild, 1/2 teaspoon of mustard paste plus 2 teaspoons chili garlic sauce for medium, and 1 teaspoon of mustard paste and 3 tablespoons of chili garlic sauce for hot. Stir well.

8. Assemble each lettuce wrap by spooning the filling into a lettuce cup, adding special sauce over the top and eating it like a taco.

Serves 2 as an appetizer.

Tidbits: Follow the directions on the package for frying the maifun rice sticks - usually by pouring 2 inches of vegetable oil into a pan and heating it to around 400 degrees F. Add the maifun, and when it floats to the top remove it to a paper towel.

You can find the Chinese hot mustard in bottles sold as a paste or you can use dry Chinese mustard powder and make it into a paste. Follow the directions on the bottle for mixing the dry stuff with water to turn it into a paste, which can then be mixed into the special sauce.

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