

CHINESE CHICKEN WITH PEANUTS

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups chicken meat cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cubes (preferably a combination of freshly boned thigh, leg and breast meat)
- 1 egg white
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- Pinch salt
- Peanut oil
- 1 cup raw, shelled and husked peanuts
- 2 tablespoons bean sauce (also called yellow or brown bean sauce, not "ground bean sauce")
- 1 tablespoon hoisin sauce
- 1 tablespoon Sichuan chili paste or chili paste with garlic
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Shaoxing wine or dry sherry
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 6 to 8 smashed garlic cloves
- 6 to 12 small dried chile peppers
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh coriander leaves

INSTRUCTIONS: Mix the chicken cubes with the egg white, cornstarch, sesame oil and salt, and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups peanut oil to nearly smoking in a wok. Add the peanuts, stir briefly and turn off the heat. Allow them to sit (they should brown lightly) for 5 to 10 minutes. Then remove them with a slotted spoon to a bowl.

Mix together the bean sauce, hoisin, chili paste, vinegar, wine, sugar and garlic; set aside. Reheat the oil.

When hot but not smoking, add the chicken cubes and stir to separate. After a minute or so, when the meat changes color, remove to drain in a colander.

Pour off the oil (you may strain and save for another use), clean the wok and put it back over the high heat. When hot, add 3 to 4 tablespoons oil and the chile peppers. When they smoke and blacken (you'll need good ventilation for this), pour in the sauce.

When sizzling hot, add the chicken and cook, stirring, just to heat and coat with the sauce. Turn off the heat, stir in the coriander and place on a serving platter. Sprinkle with the peanuts and serve.