

Buddha Jumps Over The Wall Recipe

(Fatt Tiu Cheung Recipe)

Ingredients: Serves 12

Day 1

¼ lb shark's fin
2 tablespoons white vinegar
1 cup Superior Stock
¼ cup Shao-Hsing wine or dry sherry
2 oz lard or peanut oil
One ½-inch-thick slice fresh ginger, lightly smashed
3 scallions, white parts only
4 whole abalone
1 cup Superior Stock
2 tablespoons Shao-Hsing wine or dry sherry
4 dry scallops, each 1 inch in diameter
2 tablespoons Shao-Hsing wine or dry sherry, for scallops
12 quail eggs
3 small fresh bamboo shoots (1½ lbs)
1 quart cold water, for bamboo shoots
One 4-lb chicken
¼ cup salt
One 4-lb duck
¼ cup salt
1½ lbs pork feet (3 halves), each half cut into 4 pieces by butcher
2 lbs lamb fillet
2½ lbs pork (fresh ham)
1 lb Smithfield ham
2 quarts cold water, for Smithfield ham
12 Chinese black mushrooms

Day 2

3½ cups peanut oil
2½ lbs Chinese turnips, peeled, both ends discarded, cut into 4 pieces lengthwise, then into 1-inch pieces
1 lb carrots (3 large), peeled, cut into 1-inch sections
Four 3-inch-long cinnamon sticks
4 pieces eight-star anise
6 scallions, trimmed and cut into thirds
5 cups Shao-Hsing wine or dry sherry
7 cups Chicken Stock
6 ozs rock sugar (rock candy)
½ cup plus 3 tablespoons double dark soy sauce, regular dark soy sauce, or mushroom soy sauce
1 cup Superior Stock or Chicken Stock
4 bamboo leaves, soaked in hot water for 20 minutes, until softened, and washed
1 large lotus leaf, soaked in hot water for 20 minutes until softened, washed, and dried

Method:

Day 1

To prepare the shark's fin, the night before, soak the fins in a bowl of water with the white vinegar for at least 4-6 hours, rinse, and drain. Place the soaked shark's fins in a steamproof dish with the

stock, wine, lard, ginger and scallions and steam for 30 minutes. Turn off the heat, discard the ginger and scallions, strain off and discard the liquid, and reserve overnight, refrigerated.

To prepare the abalone, the night before (at the same time you soak the shark's fins), wash the abalone, place in a pot with 3 quarts water, bring to a boil over medium heat, lower the heat, and simmer for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and allow to rest in the liquid in the pot overnight. Place the abalone in a steamproof dish with the stock and wine and steam for 1½ to 2 hours, until softened. Discard the liquid and reserve the abalone overnight, refrigerated.

To prepare the scallops, place the scallops and wine in a steamproof dish and steam for 20 minutes, until softened. Turn off the heat, discard the liquid, and reserve the scallops overnight, refrigerated.

To prepare the quail eggs, cook them in boiling water for about 7 minutes, until hard-boiled. Remove from the pot and cool. Shell and reserve overnight, refrigerated. Remove from the refrigerator and allow to come to room temperature on Day 2.

To prepare the bamboo shoots, remove all outer husks down to the tender, cream-white core. Place the whole shoots in a pot with the water, cover, and bring to a boil over high heat. If very tender, simmer for 7 minutes; if a bit tough, simmer for 20 minutes. Turn off the heat, run cold water into the pot, and drain. Allow to cool, cut each shoot lengthwise into 4 pieces, and reserve overnight, refrigerated.

To prepare the chicken, wash and remove the fat and membranes. Rinse under cold running water and drain. Sprinkle the outside with the salt and rub in well. Rinse, drain, and dry. Cut the chicken into 12 pieces and reserve overnight, refrigerated.

To prepare the duck, prepare precisely as the chicken in the preceding step.

To prepare the pork feet, cut up the pork feet, if necessary, and reserve overnight, refrigerated.

To prepare the lamb and pork, cut the lamb into 12 equal pieces and reserve refrigerated, overnight. Cut the pork into 12 equal pieces and reserve refrigerated, overnight.

To prepare the Smithfield ham, place the ham and the water in a pot, cover, and bring to a boil over medium heat. Lower the heat to medium and simmer for 30 minutes. Turn off the heat, allow to rest in the liquid, and return to room temperature. Remove, discard the liquid, cut into 12 equal pieces, and reserve, refrigerated, overnight.

To prepare the mushrooms, soak the mushrooms in hot water for 30 minutes, until softened. Wash, drain, remove the stems, and reserve overnight, refrigerated.

Day 2

Heat a wok over high heat for 1 minute. Add the peanut oil and heat to 350°F. Place the turnips in a Chinese strainer and lower into the oil. Blanch for 2 minutes, remove, drain over a bowl, and reserve. Bring the oil back to 350°F, blanch the carrots and bamboo shoots similarly for 3 minutes, remove and drain, and reserve. Bring the oil again to 350°F, add the quail eggs to the wok, and deep-fry for 2 minutes or until the eggs brown lightly. Remove, strain, and reserve. Remove all but 2 tablespoons of the oil from the wok and set aside. Heat the wok over high heat for 20 seconds. When a wisp of white smoke appears, add 2 cinnamon sticks, 2 pieces of star anise, and half the scallions. Stir-fry until the fragrance is released, about 1 minute. Add the reserved chicken and duck, stir, and cook for 5 minutes. Turn off the heat, remove the entire contents of the wok to a bowl, and reserve.

Wash the wok and spatula. Heat the wok over high heat for 1 minute. Add the 3 tablespoons of the reserved peanut oil and coat the wok with it using a spatula. When a wisp of white smoke appears, add the remaining cinnamon, anise, and scallions and stir for 1 minute. Add the pork feet, lamb, and pork and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes. Turn off the heat.

Place the contents of the wok into a large pot. Add the wine, chicken stock, and rock sugar and stir. Cover and bring to a boil over medium heat. Add ½ cup of the soy sauce and stir well. Lower the heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Raise the heat to high, add the reserved chicken and duck and the contents of the bowl, and simmer for 15 minutes. Turn off the heat. Allow all the contents of the pot to rest in the liquid for 10 minutes. Empty the contents into a bowl, including the cooking liquid, discard the scallions, and allow to cool sufficiently to handle.

While all the meats are cooking, place the reserved blanched turnips, carrots, and bamboo shoots in a wok. Add the superior stock. Raise the heat to high, mix well, stirring, and bring to a boil.

Add the remaining 3 tablespoons soy sauce and stir. Lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Turn off the heat, strain, and reserve. Reserve the liquid for another use.

Wrap the reserved shark's fin, abalone, scallops, and Smithfield ham in cheesecloth. Sew or tie to close.

For this final step, a large pot, about 3-gallon capacity, should be used. Pour 2 cups of reserved cooking liquid from the bowl into the pot. Place a rack on the bottom and cover with bamboo leaves trimmed to fit the shape of the rack. Begin layering the ingredients.

Place the pork feet in a single layer on the bamboo leaf-lined rack. Place a single layer of lamb atop the pork feet. Place a single layer of chicken atop the lamb. Place a single layer of duck atop the chicken. Place a single layer of pork atop the duck. Place the cheesecloth bundle atop the pork. Ladle 1 quart of cooking liquid over the layers. Place the mushrooms over the bundle.

Layer the turnips, carrots, and bamboo shoots over the mushrooms. Pour the remaining liquid, including the spices, over the top. Lay the lotus leaf over the top of the pot. Place the pot cover on the leaf to seal the pot.

Over low heat, allow the contents of the pot to simmer for 1¼ to 1½ hours. Turn off the heat and allow the pot to rest for 10 minutes. Remove all the foods from the pot to a large heated serving platter. Garnish the platter with the quail eggs. Place the liquid, now a rich broth, in a heated tureen. Remove the cheesecloth bundle to another heated plate, discard the cheesecloth, remove the contents, slice the abalone thinly and arrange it with the other ingredients as an accompaniment.

Serve in the Chinese manner; the meats and vegetables together, with some of the broth poured over them, the rest of the broth divided into bowls to drink.

Note: Traditionally, Buddha Jumps over the Wall is served with a selection of five special accompaniments, these to complete the feast and to offer tastes that complement the central dish of the feast. Following are those traditional dishes, as prepared and eaten in Fuzhou. Each of the dishes yields six servings, but since they are meant to accompany Buddha Jumps over the Wall, they will be eaten casually and thus are adequate for twelve. It has been suggested that even these dishes would be enough to have Buddha jump a wall. They might.