

RECIPE

Cha Trung Chiên (Fried Skillet Egg Meat Loaf)

Excerpted from *The Red Boat Fish Sauce Cookbook: Beloved Recipes from the Family Behind the Purest Fish Sauce*

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SERVES 4 to 6

INGREDIENTS

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| 1 ounce dried cellophane noodles | 1 pound boneless chicken thighs |
| 4 cups hot water, divided | 1 tablespoon Red Boat Fish Sauce |
| ½ ounce dried wood ear mushrooms | 2 eggs |
| ½ pound white or yellow onion, roughly chopped | ½ teaspoon ground black pepper |
| 2 tablespoons minced garlic | 3 tablespoons grapeseed, canola, vegetable, or other neutral oil with a high smoke point |
| 2 tablespoons minced ginger | |

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small bowl, soak the cellophane noodles in 2 cups of the hot water for 1 to 2 minutes. After 1 minute, the noodles should be soft enough to cut; if not, continue to soak for an additional minute. Drain the softened noodles in a colander and use scissors to cut the noodles into 2-inch strands. Set aside in the colander.
2. In another small bowl, soak the wood ear mushrooms in the remaining 2 cups of hot water for 10 minutes. Drain and rinse the wood ears thoroughly to dislodge any grit, then discard the tough stems. Rough chop the wood ears and set aside in a colander.
3. Combine the onion, garlic, and ginger in a food processor. Add the chopped wood ears and cellophane noodles and process until all the ingredients are finely ground. Remove the mixture and set aside.



4. Chop the chicken thighs into 2-inch pieces, then grind in the food processor. Four pulses should be sufficient to break down the chicken. Add the wood ear–noodle mixture back to the bowl of the food processor, along with the fish sauce. Give the mixture 2 to 3 pulses, just enough to incorporate all the ingredients.
5. Crack the eggs into the processor bowl. Add the pepper and pulse another 2 to 3 times to incorporate the eggs. Remove the mixture and set aside.
6. Heat a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil, then pour the meat loaf mixture into the hot skillet. The mixture should sizzle when it hits the pan.
7. Use a spatula to flatten out the meat loaf, then lower the flame to medium and cook for 10 minutes to develop the bottom crust.
8. Once the sides of the meat loaf start to brown, give the skillet a firm shake—the meat loaf should loosen from the pan—then slide the meat loaf onto a large plate. Cover the meat loaf with another large plate, facedown, and flip. Remove the top plate and slide the meat loaf, uncooked side down, back to the skillet. Cook for another 6 minutes on medium heat to develop the crust.
9. Transfer to a large dish and serve with steamed rice, scallion oil, and nước chấm.

You can easily double this recipe and freeze the extra batch for later use. To do so, follow steps 1 through 4, then remove half of the mixture and store in a resealable bag in the freezer for up to 3 months. When you want to make another meat loaf, simply defrost, add the eggs, and proceed with the rest of the recipe. You'll have meat loaf in less than 30 minutes!

