

Fish Three Ways/My Mother's Holy Fish Trinity

All Encompassing Instructions (at least 1 hour before cooking):

1. Get 1 fresh whole fish (or defrost one from your freezer overnight)
2. Wash the fish thoroughly and use the back of the knife to scrape off extra scales.
3. Pat dry with paper towel (for faster and more thorough cooking—cut two long slits into the belly, on either side)
4. Rub with salt and keep covered with a sheet of dry paper towel
5. All below measurements are approximate. EYEBALL everything!

I. Pan-Fried

Other Ingredients:

Oil- 2 Tbsp

Ginger- 1" of a root, sliced into ½ in. thick wedges

Instructions:

1. Turn heat on high and wait until the pan is hot, then pour in the oil.
2. Pan fry ginger, flip until brown on both sides. Then remove and place onto plate.
3. Holding the fish by the tail, slowly slide in head first.
4. Cover pan and let fry on high for 3-4 minutes, then 1-2 minutes medium heat (smell for readiness).
5. Move pan to a cool unused burner and wait for oil to stop popping.
6. Uncover pan and wipe lid dry. Set lid aside.
7. Slide a spatula gently under the belly, nudge the fish to the side of the pot, then flip.
8. Bring pan back to heated burner and cover pan.
9. Let fry on high for 3-4 minutes, then 1 minute medium heat (remember to smell).
10. Move pan to a cool unused burner.
11. Once oil stops popping, uncover and place on plate.
12. Skin should be unbroken. Serve immediately while crisp.

II. Hong Shao (or Braised with Soy Sauce)

Ingredients:

Oil- 2 Tbsp
Scallion- 3 stalks, sliced diagonally into thin strips
Red chiles- 2 small peppers, minced
Ginger- 1" of a root, sliced into ¼ rectangular stalks
Garlic- 3-4 heads, slightly pounded
Soy sauce- 2 Tbsp
Sugar- 1 tsp

Instructions:

1. Pan-fry the fish by repeating above steps 1-11.
2. In same pan (can choose to keep in pan or place on plate), sauté garlic heads.
3. Add chiles (or later, if you want it less spicy. You can also choose to de-seed).
4. Drizzle on soy sauce right into the hot oil, then add sugar and a little water.
5. Place fish in pan again, simmer for 3-4 minutes, until sauce is reduced to half the original amount.
6. Use spoon to dress top of fish with sauce, making sure to cover entire fish.
7. Add sliced slivers of scallions and serve.

III. Steamed

Ingredients:

Scallion- 3 stalks, sliced diagonally into thin strips
Ginger- 1" of a root, sliced into ¼ rectangular stalks
Cilantro- 5 stalks, roughly chopped (optional)
Soy sauce- 2 Tbsp
Shaoxin cooking wine- 1 Tbsp

Instructions:

1. Pour water into a deeper wider pot, covering 1 inch of the bottom, and boil.
2. Place a steam grid (or two forks, one facing down in the pot, the other facing up).
3. Place a heat-plate on top.
4. Stuff fish belly and mouth with ginger.
5. When water boils, place fish on plate and cover pot.
6. Keep heat on high and steam 3-4 minutes.
7. Mix soy sauce and wine together.
8. Take out plate with fish and pour out excess water.
9. Drizzle on soy sauce and wine, add scallion and cilantro.
10. Return to pot to steam for 1-2 minutes.
11. Use chopstick to poke thickest part of fish. If easily speared, then fish is done and ready to serve.