

Dan Dan Noodles

Ingredients

For the Chili Oil (if making your own):

- 1 ounce dried red chilies, chopped or about 1/4 cup red chili flakes
- 1 tablespoon (a palmful) Sichuan peppercorns
- 1 inch cinnamon stick
- 2 pieces star anise
- 1 inch ginger root, sliced
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame
- 1 cup peanut oil

For the Noodles:

- 1 tablespoon peanut oil
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 inch ginger, grated or minced
- A splash dry sherry
- 1/2 cup vegetable or chicken stock
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 3 rounded tablespoons Tahini paste or creamy peanut butter
- 2 teaspoon light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon fresh ground Sichuan peppercorns
- About 1/3 cup chili oil, homemade or store-bought
- 12 to 16 ounces medium to wide noodles/Ramen noodles
- 1 bunch farm spinach, washed and coarsely chopped or 4 cups baby spinach
- 1 cup peanuts with skins, toasted and chopped
- 1 small bunch scallions, chopped or thinly sliced

5-Spice Pork for Dan Dan Noodles (optional):

- 1 tablespoon peanut oil
- 3/4 pound ground pork
- 2 to 3 tablespoons (a splash) dry sherry
- 1 tablespoon Hoisin sauce 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon (a scant third of a palmful) Chinese 5-spice powder



If making your own chili oil, place ingredients in a small pot over medium-low heat and cook until a fry thermometer registers about 325°F. Cool to room temperature then strain.

For the noodles, bring a pot of water to a boil. Cook noodles to just-tender but they still have a bite. Reserve half a cup of starchy water; drain.

Heat peanut oil in a wok-shaped pan or large, deep skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in garlic and ginger 1 minute then add sherry, stock, soy, Tahini, light brown sugar and pepper. Add reserved starchy water and noodles, and toss 1 minute. Remove from heat and toss with chili oil.

For the pork (if using), heat the oil in a large skillet or wok-shaped pan over high heat. Brown, caramelize and fine-crumble the pork; deglaze the pan with sherry. Mix in the Hoisin, soy and 5-spice; remove to plate. Toss with noodles.

Top the bowlfuls of noodles with peanuts and scallions, and serve.

Make these vegan or with spicy pork but definitely make them – they're spicy, hot and delish! You can make your own chili oil and use it here and in many other dishes or, use store-bought. Dan Dan is damn good!