

LONGEVITY NOODLES

(serves 8)

- 12 ounces thin fresh noodles, like lo mein or tagliarini (you can pre cook these one day ahead)
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- 12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1/4-inch-thick, bite-size slices (optional)
- 1 red bell pepper (large dice)
- 1 tablespoon finely shredded ginger
- 1 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon Chinese rice wine or dry sherry
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- Salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 2 tablespoons peanut or vegetable oil
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 5 ounces (about 3 cups) thinly sliced Napa cabbage
- 4 ounces (about 2 cups) fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, caps thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup finely shredded scallions

PREPARATION

1. Bring a medium saucepan of water to boil over high heat and cook noodles until just done, 3 to 5 minutes, stirring to prevent sticking. Drain in a colander and rinse with cold water until cool, then shake well to remove water. Return noodles to pot, add sesame oil, and toss.
2. If using chicken in this recipe, place chicken in a shallow bowl and add ginger, one teaspoon rice wine, cornstarch, one teaspoon soy sauce, 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper. Mix gently to combine. In a small bowl, combine remaining one tablespoon rice wine and one tablespoon soy sauce. If not using chicken, still combine all of the above ingredients and set aside.
3. Heat a wok over high heat until a bead of water evaporates almost on contact. Swirl in one tablespoon peanut oil, add red pepper flakes and stir-fry 10 seconds using a metal spatula. Push pepper flakes aside and add chicken, spreading in a single layer to maximize contact with the wok. Let cook undisturbed one minute, until chicken begins to sear.
4. Stir-fry chicken and pepper flakes together, tossing in the wok, for a minute or 2 until just done. Remove to a bowl. If not including chicken in this recipe, add the cabbage and mushrooms and red peppers once the oil is hot, and stir-fry one minute until just wilted but not cooked. Add the sauce mixture and then the noodles, and constantly mix from the bottom up-making sure the bottom of the wok does not burn.