

WOK THIS WAY.

HIGH HEAT AND LO MEIN: THE ASIAN ART OF THE STIR-FRY.

Asian cuisines have different flavors and ingredients, but they all use the wok. The Chinese invented it for stir-fry. Its sloping sides create a big surface that gets really hot, really fast.

BASICS OF CHINESE STIR-FRY WITH BEEF

PREP. Cut the beef into small cubes or thin slices and chop, dice, mince, or julienne the vegetables. The smaller and more uniform, the better.

MISE EN PLACE. English translation: Have your ingredients and tools ready in the order you'll use them, because things are going to happen fast.

STIR. FRY. REPEAT. Cover the bottom of the wok with cooking oil and pre-heat for a minute. Once the wok and oil are hot, cook the ingredients in batches.

THE SAUCE THICKENS. Add the sauce. Start stirring. And don't stop till it thickens. Serve while piping hot—140 to 160 degrees—right away.

Cut the steak diagonally, against the grain, into thin, uniform strips or small cubes. The thinner or smaller, the more tender the beef.

For uniform cooking, everything that goes in the wok should be about the same size and shape. Smaller cooks faster—and in stir-fry, faster is better.

A century ago, the Japanese discovered that mushrooms release *umami*—a fifth taste sensation to join sweet, sour, bitter, and salty.

Chopping peppers: Once the seeds are removed, slice both halves into thin strips. Bunch the strips and chop them into cubes.

Create just the right seared, smoky taste, and you've achieved *wok hei*, the "breath of a wok."

Chinese have used chopsticks since the 2nd century B.C., about 2,000 years longer than we've been using the modern fork.



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