

Serves 2 to 4

Crisped Szechuan Beef

If you like beef jerky, you'll love this Szechuan specialty, made by stir-frying strips of marinated beef until they are crisp and chewy.



*¾ pound flank steak
1 tablespoon soy sauce
5 teaspoons Chinese rice wine or dry sherry, divided
½ cup vegetable or peanut oil
1 tablespoon minced ginger
2 green onions, chopped
2 teaspoons chile paste, or to taste
1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
Freshly ground white pepper to taste*

1. Cut the flank steak across the grain into thin strips 1½ to 2 inches long. Add the soy sauce and 2 teaspoons Chinese rice wine or dry sherry. Marinate the beef for 20 minutes.
2. Heat a wok or skillet over medium-high heat until it is nearly smoking. Add ½ cup oil. When the oil is hot, add the beef, laying it flat in the pan. Let sear (brown) briefly, then stir-fry the meat for 10 minutes, or until the beef darkens and starts sizzling. (This is called dry-frying.) Remove the meat from the pan. Drain in a colander or on paper towels.
3. Remove all but 2 teaspoons oil from the wok or skillet. Add the minced ginger, green onions, and the chile paste. Stir-fry for 30 seconds, then add the beef back into the pan. Splash the beef with the dark soy sauce, 3 teaspoons rice wine or dry sherry, and sugar. Stir in the freshly ground white pepper. Serve hot.

Dry-Frying Beef isn't the only food that can be cooked using the dry-frying method. Chinese green beans, a popular restaurant dish, are also cooked by frying the beans until they are dried out. This gives the beans a browned skin and softer texture. Other foods that can be dry-fried include chicken, fish, and denser vegetables such as eggplant.