

# Mongolia

## Tsuivan (Mongolian Noodles)

Like many arriving in Mongolia for the first time, Australian volunteer Zach's first introduction to Mongolian cuisine was *tsuivan*. While the recipe is simple (noodles, meat, vegetables), every restaurant and family makes their version differently and no two tsuivans are alike. Zach's version uses tofu in place of mutton, with mutton taking pride of place in many traditional Mongolian meals.

### Ingredients

#### For the noodle dough

300g flour

200ml water

Oil as required

#### For the stew

200g seitan or soy marinated tofu, cut into strips

350g vegetables, chopped into narrow strips (choice of white cabbage, carrots, potatoes, capsicum, etc)

1 onion, sliced into half rings

2 garlic cloves, minced

2-4 tbsp water

Oil as required

Salt and pepper

Spring onion, cut in rings

### Method

#### For the noodle dough

Mix flour and water until it is a pliable dough. Let it rest for 15 minutes.

Separate dough into two pieces and roll each piece into a large round sheet. Pour a generous amount of oil into the centre and spread to edges to help prevent noodles from sticking together. Place one sheet of dough on top of the other with the oiled surface facing upwards, creating a two-sheet stack of dough.

Cut the two-sheet stack of dough in half, and place each half on top of each other, with the oiled surface facing upwards. This will create a four-sheet stack of dough. Cut the four-sheet stack of dough in half, and place one half on top of the other in the same way, creating an eight-sheet stack of dough.

From this stack, cut the noodles to about half a centimetre wide.

#### For the stew

Lightly fry garlic and half the onion in oil. Add the carrot and fry for a few minutes, add seitan or tofu and cook well. Add enough water to avoid ingredients sticking to pan. Season well with salt and pepper.

Add chopped vegetables, cover and cook for a few minutes to reduce the volume. Add enough water to cover about two-thirds of vegetables, and simmer for a few minutes. Add the remaining onion.

#### Combining the dish

Place the noodles carefully on top of the vegetables and place lid on the pan, keeping it closed while the noodles cook.

Boil for about 15 minutes, starting on a medium heat and then reduce to a low heat until the water is almost gone.

The noodles should be reddish-brown and somewhat sticky. Fan fresh air into the pot to dry the noodles, at which point they should change colour some more and lose their stickiness.

Use a fork or chopsticks to separate the noodles from each other. If they are still sticky it is because there wasn't enough oil in between the stacks, or they haven't finished cooking.

Toss the ingredients to combine and add spring onion.

### Tips

Traditionally Tsuivan is made with mutton and the addition of cabbage can be controversial in Mongolia.