



## SHANGHAI BOK CHOY "VEGETABLE RICE" (上海菜飯)

*Recipe serves 4.*

### INGREDIENTS

2½ C uncooked long-grain jasmine rice or short-grain "sushi" rice (see note 1 below)

1½ lb shanghai bok choy, washed (see note 2)

½ lb ground pork (see note 3)

½ tsp soy sauce (tamari for gluten-free)

¼ tsp kosher salt

2 slices fresh ginger

Neutral oil for cooking (I use avocado oil)

### ***To serve:***

Soy sauce and/or chili oil and/or our favourite, Bragg's Liquid Soy Seasoning

### METHOD

Wash 2½ cups of uncooked rice, gently rubbing grains against each other with your hand while swirling it in water. I do this directly in a fine-mesh colander or you can wash the rice in the cooking pot filled with water and pour out water several times. Do this until water runs clearer but does not need to be fully transparent. Drain well in fine-mesh colander so most excess water is drained off. Place drained rice in pot. Add 2½ cups of water.

- *Softer rice:* I love my rice on the firmer side so my golden rule is 1:1 water-to-rice ratio for both long grain and short grain rice. If you prefer softer rice, add more water *if* using short grain rice. I still recommend 1:1 ratio for long grain rice. For softer short grain rice, add up to 1:1¼ ratio by adding as much as *3 cups plus 2 tablespoons* of water.
- *Soaking short grain rice:* If using short grain rice, allow it to soak in the measured water before cooking – anywhere between 10 to 60 minutes. OK so yes, this step technically makes this recipe more than 30 minutes but it is passive time. If you don't have the time, skip soaking but definitely use the maximum amount of water stated above to



cook. Continue to cooking step once it has soaked the amount of time you can spare. You do not need to soak long grain rice.

Set pot of rice on the stove over high heat. Cover with lid and cook until water is boiling and steam is escaping (usually 5-7 minutes) at which point, without lifting lid, turn heat ALL THE WAY DOWN TO LOWEST HEAT and let it continue to cook 20 minutes. Fluff and use.

In a small bowl, mix ground pork with the soy sauce and salt. Set aside to marinate.

Finely chop shanghai bok choy into approximately ¼" pieces, separating stem pieces and leafy pieces into two separate piles.

When rice is almost done, start cooking. Set wok or large cooking vessel over medium-high heat. Once heated, drizzle some oil and add ground pork. Sauté with spatula until cooked and slightly browned. Scoop out and set aside.

Drizzle a bit more oil and add ginger slices. Move them around to bloom the flavour, around 5 seconds. Add chopped bok choy stem pieces and sauté until they're starting to get tender. Add the chopped leafy pieces and continue to sauté briefly until wilted. Season with salt to taste.

Lower heat. Add back cooked ground pork and cooked rice to the wok and mix everything well and until warmed through. Discard ginger slices. Serve as is, or optionally serve with Chinese chili oil and/or soy sauce or our favourite, a few drops of Bragg's Liquid Soy Seasoning which tastes similar to Maggi sauce (IYKYK 😊) except with clean ingredients. Enjoy!

## RECIPE NOTES

1. WHAT KIND OF RICE SHOULD I USE? Long-grain jasmine rice is the default in Chinese meals but I actually love using short-grain ("sushi") rice in this recipe for its chewier texture as pictured in this blog post. Either will work. Since this recipe involves only a few ingredients, it's important to make sure the rice is cooked properly aka not soggy and not undercooked. In particular, take care to measure the grains and water with accuracy. I'm obsessed with rice and am sure I could write a whole post just on cooking rice but for now, make sure to follow my recipe instructions on rinsing, soaking (for short-grain rice) and cooking.

2. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *BOK CHOY* AND *SHANGHAI BOK CHOY*? Shanghai bok choy has pale green stems and smooth pale green leaves. Regular bok choy has white stems and curlier, dark green leaves. In taste, Shanghai bok choy is slightly sweeter while regular bok



choy is more verdant. They are similar enough to be used interchangeably in most recipes. Use your favourite in this dish or whichever is fresher at the store. You can also use either the “baby” smaller bok choy plants or the full sized bok choy in this recipe since they get chopped finely.

3. **SUBSTITUTES FOR THE GROUND PORK.** Chinese salted pork (“haam yuk” or 鹹肉) is the traditional meat to use but I use ground pork for two reasons: (1) It is widely accessible at conventional grocery stores. (2) Ground meat in general is one of my favourite weeknight shortcuts because it doesn’t require any prepping whatsoever which saves a TON of time. **ALTERNATIVES TO GROUND PORK:** ground chicken OR pork tenderloin cut into 1/4” cubes. Another great substitution is Italian pancetta cut into 1/4” cubes (in which case omit the soy sauce and salt marinade). See note 4 below for meatless version.

4. **CAN THIS BE MEATLESS? YES.** In fact, my family often made a meatless version of this dish, with shiitake mushrooms. Dehydrated shiitake mushrooms (rehydrated overnight in fridge to use) are more flavourful but you can use milder, fresh shiitake mushrooms too. Chop shiitakes into small 1/4” dice and cook them until tender, then mix them in instead of ground pork in the recipe.