

Francis Wong • Szechuan Spicy Alligator

I grew up in Mandeville, Louisiana. It's across a lake and a 24-mile bridge from New Orleans. My dad and his four brothers brought Chinese food to these small southern towns through their China Inn and Trey Yuen restaurants. They always tried using the fresh local seafood and ingredients and became the first restaurant to serve alligator after it became legal to do so. They had a steady supply year-round from the Kliebert Alligator farm in Ponchatoula, Louisiana. I saw my dad host many dinners in the VIP Room and always let the guests try an alligator dish. He would describe it as a mix between pork and chicken.



Francis Wong, *Szechuan Spicy Alligator*, 2021, watercolor and pen on paper, 9" x 12".

Szechuan Spicy Alligator Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1/2 pound alligator meat
- 1/2 cup celery (chopped)
- 1/2 cup carrot (thin julienne slices)
- 1/2 cup onion (thin julienne slices)
- 2 green onions (2-inch slices)
- 3 dried cherry pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic (chopped)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sesame seed oil
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed Szechuan pepper corn
- 2 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sherry

Marinade:

- 1/2 egg white
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

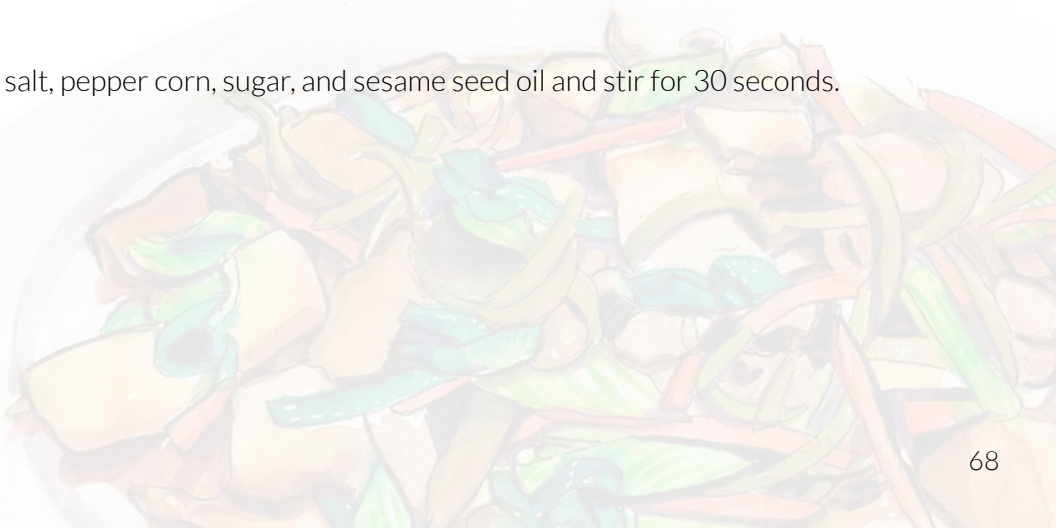
Directions:

To Prepare:

Slice alligator 1/8 inch thick, removing fat and gristle. Season and marinate ingredients for 20 minutes. Cut all vegetables.

To cook:

1. Heat wok or heavy skillet until very hot, adding 5 tablespoon oil for 30 seconds.
2. Add alligator, stir-fry to separate until 70% done.
3. Remove meat from pan and drain oil.
4. Reheat pan with 3 tablespoons of oil. Break cherry pepper in half into the oil until it turns brown. Add garlic; then add vegetables.
5. Stir-fry for 2 more minutes.
6. Add alligator back into wok.
7. Add sherry, vinegar, soy sauce, salt, pepper corn, sugar, and sesame seed oil and stir for 30 seconds.
8. Remove to serving platter.



Francis Wong



Francis Wong grew up in the New Orleans area and escaped into art from a young age. He attended the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and attended the University of New Orleans studying fine art and film. Hurricane Katrina interrupted his college education but educated him on so much more in life. His work is influenced by the magical realness of life in New Orleans and Southeastern Louisiana. Through mixed media paintings, music, and video, he uses art to help heal ancestral trauma and PTSD. His work is a unique hybrid of his Chinese heritage and his Southern and American upbringing. Francis has exhibited his art across Louisiana as well as in New York and Oakland.

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Francis Wong, *The Chariot*, 2019, mixed media on canvas, 2 x 4 feet.