



pilot light
Greg Melikov

When preparing this pepper steak, you must keep the ingredients moving

I first prepared pepper steak using a recipe from a friend who attended law school when I was an undergraduate at the University of Miami. Dominic Koo had three claims to fame: He won a bunch of money on the old "45,000 Question" television show, became a judge and was an excellent cook.

He used two ingredients only found in Oriental specialty stores, but offered substitutes available on any grocer's shelf.

Catnip can take the place of oyster sauce. Several drops of Tabasco sauce and a sprinkling of garlic powder can stand in for chili paste with garlic.

Dominic also had two key cooking tips:

• Test the oil with a slice of onion; if it sizzles, the oil is hot enough.

• Keep the ingredients in motion as much as possible so they cook fast and evenly.

• I recently tried another version, which was adequate, and served it over toast. But I prefer Dominic's recipe.

- DOMINIC KOO'S PEPPER STEAK**
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
 - 1 lb. lean boneless beef, cut in 1/4-inch chunks
 - 1 large white onion, quartered and separated in layers
 - 1 large green pepper, cut in 1/4-inch pieces
 - 2 large tomatoes, cut in eighths
 - 2 tbsp. oyster sauce
 - 1 tsp. chili paste with garlic
 - 1 tsp. soy sauce
 - 1/2 tsp. dry sherry
 - 1 tsp. cornstarch

In large skillet or wok, let oil get hot on high heat 30 seconds. Place beef and onion in oil, stir and toss with spatula and spoon. Thoroughly brown beef and remove. Sauté green pepper and tomatoes until green pepper softens and tomatoes start to break down. Return beef and add oyster sauce, chili paste, soy sauce and sherry combined with cornstarch. Stir and toss to mix, cover and turn off heat. Allow to sit 90 seconds to 3 minutes. Serves 3-4.

- AMERICAN PEPPER STEAK**
- 1 tsp. cooking oil
 - 1 lb. boneless sirloin steak, cut in 3 pieces
 - 1/4 tsp. salt
 - 1 large onion, chopped
 - 1/2 cup beef broth
 - 3 tsp. soy sauce
 - 1 garlic clove, minced
 - 1 large green pepper, cut in 1-inch pieces
 - 3 tsp. cornstarch
 - 1/2 cup cold water
 - 1 large tomato, peeled and cut in eighths

If you like fish, try this stew

When is a stew not a stew? When it is a ragout, or matelote, or meurette, or cassoulet, or jambalaya or gumbo?

Confused? You should be because that wonderful world of stews is also confused.

There is no clear definition of a stew. It's all sort of borderline, because in the beginning there was soup: clear, brown and soothing. Then someone added a little meat. Later another added vegetables. Still later someone added... well, you know what happened. Soon soups became thicker, heavier and were sought as a complete meal. Now add to this some spaghetti or rice, which made our soup even thicker than before, plus regional differences with herbs and spices and personal touches and you have a whole new world.

In essence, you can make a stew from just about anything. Take the famous New Orleans treat, Gumbo Z'Herbes, which breaks all the rules of gumbo as well as stew. Here is a dish made entirely of vegetables, served by the best of the Creole and Cajun families.

AND HOW about oyster stew? It is really not a stew but a soup, an argument that could go on forever.

When Californians of Italian heritage returned from fishing in the Pacific Ocean, the elder fishermen and relatives who didn't go out with the boats would help clean the catch. They received no reward for their labor. So, to compensate them for their work, the captain of one of the fishing boats would go from ship to ship with a large pail, asking each fisherman to "chip-in" some fish.

In their broken English they shouted "chip-ee," which later became known as Cioppino, one of the great fish soups in the world. Often called "a feast of the fruits of the sea" it has as many variations as there are people.

The following recipe contains the addition of a small amount of California brandy, something the local Italian families liked to add to give it a special taste.

- CIOPPINO**
- 2 large onions, chopped
 - 1/2 cup olive oil
 - 1 (14 oz.) can Italian plum tomatoes
 - 2 cups red wine
 - 2 cups water
 - 1 cup California brandy
 - 1/4 tsp. thyme
 - 1/2 tsp. basil
 - 1/2 tsp. oregano
 - 1 lb. scallops, halved
 - 2 lbs. shrimp, shelled and deveined
 - 25 clams, well scrubbed
 - 25 mussels, scrubbed and debearded
 - 2 crabs, cut up

In a deep kettle, sauté the onions in the oil until soft. Add tomatoes, wine, water, brandy, thyme, basil and oregano. Simmer covered over low heat for one hour. Add remaining ingredients and cook another 10-12 minutes. Serves 6.

Heat oil in large skillet, thoroughly brown meat on medium heat on one side, turn and sprinkle on 1/4 teaspoon salt; repeat browning and seasoning. Push meat to side, add onion and cook until tender, stirring. Stir in broth, soy sauce and garlic. Cover and cook 10 minutes. Add green pepper, cover and cook 5 minutes. Blend cornstarch and water, gradually stir into mixture, then constantly stir until mixture thickens and comes to boil, allowing to boil 1 minute. Add tomatoes and heat through. Serve over cooked rice or toast. Serves 3.

Child day care centers offer food program

Child care food programs will be available at two area day care centers, New Schools Children Center, 6500 Wayne Road, Westland, and Riverside Children's Center, 33015 Seven Mile Road, Livonia. The program is designed to provide meals to children in child care centers, outside school hours, and family day care homes. Meals are available at

no separate charge to all children under age 12, migrant children 15 years of age or under, and older handicapped children enrolled in Riverside or New Schools center, according to the center's spokesman Robert Bert. For more information on the programs, contact McFarling at 722-0040.

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Taste of RenCen offers food and fun

A tasty sampling of summer foods, from ham and cheese croissants to almond mousse, will be featured at "Taste of Renaissance." The food bazaar, scheduled from 4:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, will be held on the west outdoor podium of the Westin Hotel. Admission is free.

Participating restaurants and specialty food stores will offer selections of items ranging from 50 cents to \$2 each. Beer will be served at \$1 per glass, wine and mixed drinks \$1.50 each.

Nick Arama of WOMC Radio will emcee the event, and commentate an "Informal Fall Fashions" presentation by the World of Shops. For the sports enthusiasts, there is a putting green

and a chance to win prizes, including golf balls and dinner for two at one of the Center's restaurants.

Entertainment will be provided by the Joe DeLuca Quartet. A contemporary jazz musician, DeLuca recently won an Emmy for composing the theme music for "PBS Late Night," the WTWS talk show.

Throughout the evening, lunches, dinners and brunches for two will be given away.

Cooking demonstrations by Kyoto, "The Art of Preparing Sushi," and Clancy's Place, "The Art of Fine Garnishing," are scheduled.

Free parking is available in Renaissance Center's Lot C.

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