

Chop Suey

Chop suey is a classic American Chinese-style stir-fry dish. It is an excellent recipe for beginner cooks looking to prepare Chinese food at home or cooks who want to experiment with flavors and ingredients. Chop suey is an incredibly versatile meal, and you can easily substitute your favorite ingredients, making it inexpensive, flexible, and always delicious!

In several Chinese dialects, chop suey can be translated to “odds and ends.” Chop suey traditionally features meat, eggs, and leafy or green vegetables like cabbage and bean sprouts. It is served in a savory sauce over rice. There are many variations of chop suey, which makes it difficult to trace the true origins of the dish.

How To Make Chop Suey

Here’s what you’ll want to know about undertaking chop suey in your kitchen. Like any stir-fry, the ingredients are flexible, yet I recommend you maintain the ratios of protein and vegetables to sauce.

Ingredients

The recipe for chop suey requires a few specific ingredients, but you can add whatever meat, protein, or vegetables you have on hand. When following a recipe for chop suey, don’t be afraid to make substitutions if you don’t have all the ingredients. I love the flexibility of this dish! Chop suey can be made in a wok or frying pan. Here is how to begin:

Preparation: Prep all the ingredients before you start cooking and have them ready to go near your pan.

Meat or Protein: Chop suey can include beef, chicken, pork, shrimp, and fish. To make it vegetarian, substitute your favorite plant-based protein.

Pantry Staples: You’ll always want to have a few pantry staples on hand when making Chinese food. Chop suey often includes oyster sauce, Shaoxing wine, light and/or dark soy sauce, and sesame oil.

Chinese cooking wine is a secret ingredient in numerous Chinese recipes. It adds depth and complexity of flavor to sauces. Chinese wine is made from fermented rice. The best substitutes for Chinese cooking wine are dry sherry, mirin, sake, or even chicken broth.

Oyster sauce is the primary seasoning ingredient for the marinade and the sauce. It has a fantastic mix of sweet and savory, which creates loads of umami without making the dish taste overly fishy. If you want to make a dish calling for oyster sauce plant-based, use half the amount called for with soy sauce and add a pinch of sugar.

Oil: In Chinese cooking, you'll want to use oils with a higher smoke point, like canola, peanut sunflower, or safflower oil.

Stock: Beef, chicken, or fish stock will add a lot of flavor to the dish. Use mushroom or vegetable stock if you're making it vegetarian.

Vegetables: Add your favorite vegetable options, but I recommend veggies like bean sprouts, bok choy, celery, mushrooms, carrots, and snow peas. Using a variety of vegetables makes this dish visually appealing and gives it a wide range of textures.

Aromatics: Together with the seasonings, the garlic, ginger, and onion give chop suey its flavor.

Cornstarch: Cornstarch can be used as a thickening agent to help make the sauce rich enough to coat the meat and vegetables.

Chop Suey is a very versatile recipe and a great one for beginners. You can substitute your favorite ingredients, making it flexible, inexpensive, and delicious. Turn chop suey into a dish similar to chow mein by serving it over stir-fried noodles instead of rice. Plan your noodles or rice to finish cooking around the same time as the chop suey and have fun.

(Sources: <https://www.britannica.com>; www.foodandwine.com; recipetineats.com, thetakeout.com)