

Bang bang Sichuan chicken recipe by Khanh Ong

A hot (but not too hot) and spicy dish that's poached then pounded

I have no idea why, but when people think of bang bang chicken they seem to think of a fried dish. But I know bang bang as chicken that is very gently poached, then pounded to get out all your frustrations. This dish was an instant favourite after a break-up a few years back. I was angry and I wanted to smash and scream and just be an absolute handful. Anyway, back to the food. The freshness and crunch from the cucumber perfectly balances out the hot, salty, numbing umami flavour of the Sichuan sauce. Don't worry, it's hot but not "I can't taste anything" hot.

Serves 2

ginger 5-7cm piece, sliced

spring onions 2, whites trimmed, green parts reserved for the Sichuan sauce (see below)

onion 1, quartered

chicken breasts 2 small skinless or 1 large one (about 350g in total)

cucumber ½, deseeded and finely sliced into batons

For the Sichuan sauce

light soy sauce 2 tbsp

Chinese black vinegar 1 tbsp

caster sugar 2 tbsp

sesame oil 2 tbsp

chilli oil 1 tbsp

toasted sesame seeds 3 tbsp

Sichuan peppercorns 1 tsp, ground

sea salt ½ tsp

spring onions reserved green parts, finely sliced (see above)

Place the ginger, spring onion whites, onion and 500ml of water in a saucepan and bring to the boil over a high heat. Add the chicken breasts and bring back to the boil, then cover and turn to the lowest heat to poach gently for 11-14 minutes until the chicken is cooked. (To test, pierce the chicken with a skewer – the juices should run clear.) Plunge the chicken into an ice bath to stop it cooking and set the poaching liquid aside.

To make the Sichuan sauce, combine the ingredients in a bowl with the spring onion greens and 125ml of the poaching liquid and set aside.

Shred the chicken (but not too finely) and pound (bang bang!) with a rolling pin to make flat thin pieces. Arrange the cucumber on two serving plates, then top with the chicken. Pour over the sauce and serve.