

Tibetan food — Recipe for Thenthuk, “Pull” Noodle Soup



Thenthuk is a typical Tibetan noodle soup that keeps the nomads warm during the long Tibetan winters. You can make it either with vegetables or meat. In Tibetan “then” means pull and “thuk” means noodles. Generally speaking, noodle soups of all kinds are known as thukpa, so this recipe is a kind of thukpa. Note that the initial cooking of the broth happens quickly, so best to have all your ingredients prepared before you start actually cooking. If you are wondering, thenthuk is pronounced roughly like “ten” + “too” + “k.” :-)

The Dough

The dough is very important for this noodle soup. It needs to sit for fifteen or twenty minutes so that it can become flexible and easy to pull.

If you want to make thenthuk for two people, put 1 cup of all-purpose flour in a pot and add about half a cup of water.

Mix the flour and water very well by hand and keep adding water until you can make a smooth ball of dough. Then knead the dough very well until the dough is flexible. You want it thick enough that it will stretch when pulled.

Separate the dough into pieces about half as big as big as your fist, and roll the dough between your hands. Make the shape like bananas, or wedges. Then put oil on your hand and roll the pieces between your hands again so they won’t stick together.



Cover the wedges with plastic or a lid so the dough doesn’t dry out.

The Broth

Now the dough is prepared and you can start the broth.

Chop half an onion, a small piece of ginger, a clove of garlic, and one small tomato. If you want to use meat, cut 1/4 or 1/2 pound of any kind of meat into thin bite-size slices. We usually use some kind of stew beef.

Fry everything in two tablespoons of oil for three or four minutes, or until the meat is cooked well. Add a pinch of chicken, beef or vegetable bouillon, a dash of salt, and few shakes of soy sauce.

Add about five cups of water to the pot.

At this time, you can add one potato or daikon, which is a Japanese radish. If you want to use the daikon, slice it thinly. After that rinse it in water with a little bit of salt. That way, the daikon won't taste so strong. If you want to use the potato just slice it thinly and put it in the pot.

While you are cooking, chop a few stems of cilantro, two green onions, and a handful of spinach.

The Throw-down



When the broth starts to boil, you can add the dough. Take a wedge of dough and roll it between your hands so it gets a little longer. Flatten it with your fingers. Then pull the dough off in little flat pieces as long as your thumb and throw them in the pot. See how fast you can pull off the noodles... ("I hear the people in Amdo can do it really fast," says our friend Tenzin.)

When all the noodles are in the pot, cook it for an additional three or four minutes. After that, you can put in the cilantro and spinach. They don't need to cook, really, so you can serve the soup immediately. Before you serve the thenthuk make sure that the taste is right for you, and add a little salt or soy sauce if you like.

Then sit down and enjoy your food and sweat because it really makes you warm!