

## Chinese Spaghetti with Pork Sauce

One of the classics of Chinese cuisine is a thick sauté of ground pork and assertive spices poured over thin noodles eaten with chopsticks. This lovely shift of the predictable Mediterranean flavors to the prominent flavors of soy sauce and vinegar is positively addicting. If you see the butcher has just ground some fresh pork, make this dish the same day you buy it. Pork is the main meat in Chinese cooking and wheat noodles (called *mein*) are as popular as rice, especially in southern China. There are even restaurants devoted to noodle dishes. While many noodles are boiled then panfried, this dish has been simply boiled and then tossed with the extra-thick meat sauce, a style called *lo mein*. This dish of pork and noodles is so popular it has its own melodic translation called "ants climbing a tree," and there are many variations of this lovely homemade meal. You can get fresh thin Chinese noodles in the refrigerated case, or just use Italian vermicelli or angel hair.

Cooking Method: Stovetop

Cook Time: About 25 minutes

Serves 4

- 1 1/2 pounds fresh lean ground pork
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3/4 cup tomato chili sauce (not Chinese chili-garlic sauce)
- 1/3 cup water
- 5 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce (or can be Chinese dark soy sauce)
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar or Chinese black vinegar
- 16-ounces fresh vermicelli or angel hair pasta
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced
- 4 green onions, white and 3 inches of the green, chopped

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil for the pasta. Heat a large heavy skillet over medium-high heat and brown the ground pork, about 10 minutes. Drain to remove extra fat or dab with paper towels. Add the onion and garlic, cooking for 3 minutes, then add the chili sauce, water, soy sauce, vinegar, and pepper to the pan. Cook, uncovered, about 8 to 10 minutes. While the meat is cooking, boil the noodles and chop the cucumber and green onions.

Cook the pasta according to package directions until al dente (tender but still firm, not overly soft). Drain well in a colander and place in a warmed shallow serving bowl. Pour the pork over the top, then sprinkle with the cucumber and green onions. Dig in.