

K's Kitchen: Ringing in the Chinese New Year

By Kathryn Reed

The Chinese New Year, or Lunar New Year as it's now called in some circles, begins today. In anticipation of the commencement of the Year of the Dragon, I thought it appropriate to try a new recipe this past weekend.



Oh my, it's a definite keeper. The flavors and textures are outstanding and complementary.

Ironically, I have given up my subscription to *Sunset* magazine and the recipe is from the January issue. Good thing my sister, Pam, still gets it because I was able to make a copy of the recipe when I was at her house earlier this month.

In the past I would have skipped it because it calls for Brussels sprouts, but now those mini-cabbage looking morsels are a new favorite veggie.

The Chinese New Year is huge, though not so much in Tahoe. The start is on the second new moon after the winter solstice – so it's never on the same date like the Gregorian calendar we use that starts on Jan. 1 year in and year out.

The recipe calls for mung bean sprouts. I bought what Safeway had. Mung wasn't in the name. Drizzling soy sauce is recommended.

I recently discovered there is an Asian grocery store in the Town and Country Center (where Whiskey Dicks is) in South Lake

Tahoe. It's been there nearly a year. While small, it does have items the major grocery stores don't have and the prices are great.

The recipe says it serves six. I disagree. When it's just the two of us, we often have an Asian dish standalone. With this recipe, Sue and I each had two helpings. We were left with one serving to fight over. So, had we invited people over, we either would have needed other dishes or been hungry.

Brussels Spouts and Shiitake Lo Mein

1 oz. dried shiitake mushrooms

4 oz. dried thin egg noodles

$\frac{1}{4}$ C vegetable oil, divided

1 pound Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved

$\frac{1}{2}$ small yellow onion, sliced

1 T minced garlic

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp each white pepper, sugar, and kosher salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ C vegetable broth

2 C mung bean sprouts, rinsed

2 green onions, sliced diagonally

Soy sauce

Put mushrooms in a heat-proof bowl. Bring a medium saucepan filled with water to a boil. Ladle 2 cups water over mushrooms and let sit until very soft, 15 to 20 minutes.

Add noodles to pan and cook until tender, about 6 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Heat 2 T oil in a wok or large frying pan over high heat. Add

Brussels sprouts and onion and cook 3 minutes. Drain mushrooms and squeeze out any excess liquid, then add to wok. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onion starts to soften and Brussels sprouts are bright green, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Stir in seasonings and broth and cook until most of liquid is gone, about 3 minutes.

Add remaining 2 T oil and the noodles, tossing to coat, and cook until hot, about 2 minutes. Add bean sprouts and cook until warm.

Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle with green onions.

Serve with soy sauce.