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Vegetable Chow-Mein / Veg Hakka Noodles (Indian Style)

Vegetable hakka noodles or vegetable chow-mein is a very popular fast food choice in India. Since its adoption by Indian culture it has come to acquire a unique Indian touch to it which might be alien to the authentic Chinese chefs. I have been enjoying it since my early childhood and I would stand by the road-side drooling and observing the vendor cook it. I learnt most of my cooking from my mom, but this happens to be one dish which I taught my mom to begin with. Of course she took it to the next level and then I had to re-learn it from her. So here is her recipe with a few twists of my own.
Ingredients:

Chow-mein / veg hakka noodles ? 1 packet
Paneer (cottage cheese) ? 15-20 small cubes
Cabbage (Patta gobhi/Bund gobhi) ? 1 Cup, finely shredded
Onion ? ¼ cup, finely chopped
Green or Spring onions ? 1 or 2 scallops, chopped
Green chilies ? 2-3 , finely chopped
Carrots ? 1 medium, finely cut or grated
Green beans ? ¼ cup, cut in French style or grated
Tomato sauce as per taste
Green Chili sauce as per taste
Soy sauce ? 2 tbsp
Salt as per taste
Vinegar ? 2 tsp
Cooking oil

Directions:

- Start by boiling the noodles for 10-15 minutes on medium flame. Before you add the noodles to water add some salt (half spoon) and two spoon oil to it. This makes the noodles a bit salty and also coats it with oil which would ensure that it won't get sticky.
- After the noodle has boiled properly (keep it slightly under boiled, as we would be cooking it again), wash it with cold water

Lightly stir fry the noodles at low-medium flame for couple of minutes and keep it separately (**this step ensures that the noodles don't stick while you prepare the veggies**).

- Take little bit oil in a frying pan and fry paneer till it turns brown on sides and keep it separately.
- Heat 3 tsp oil in frying-pan or kadai and then add chopped onions and green chillies to it. Let it fry till the onions become soft, no you don't have to wait till onion becomes golden brown.
- Next, add all the cut vegetables and stir fry them at medium-high flame. Continue to stir the vegetables to ensure that it cooks uniformly.
- After five minutes when the veggies appear to have cooked a bit, add 2 tsp vinegar, 2 tbsp soy sauce, you can add more of soy sauce if you prefer. Add green chili sauce as per your taste.
- Add salt to taste (more than you would typically do for the vegetable along, as we would add noodle later) and increase the heat slightly, to evaporate any water that the veggies might release when you add salt to it.
- Now keep the fried /cooked veggies separately and heat some oil in the kadai and add the noodles to it. Before you add it, I would recommend you wash it again with cold water, before adding, as the noodle tends to get a bit sticky again after it cools down.

Stir fry the already lightly fried noodles at low-medium flame for couple of minutes, keep stirring and then finally add the cooked vegetables and paneer. Mix it properly and serve it decorated with spring onions.

Serves/Makes: 2