

MALA RAMEN

Mala Ramen



This is the tori paitan bowl with mala stirred through it — a tantanmen move. The white chicken broth carries the weight, the mala paste brings the heat and the numbing green and red peppercorn on top of it, and the two together land somewhere neither gets to on its own.

It is built in one pot, in order, and it is on the table in twenty minutes. Written for two.

COOKING TIME

20 minutes, start to finish

SERVING SIZE

2 bowls

INGREDIENTS

Ippin Japan Ramen, Ippin Tori Paitan, Ippin Mala Chili Paste, Ippin Minced Chicken, marinated eggs, naruto fishcake, kikurage, shiraga negi, sesame seeds

KITCHEN UTENSILS

Medium pot, ladle, chopsticks, colander, kitchen scale, two deep bowls, small dish for the extra mala paste

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THE RECIPE



01 Warm the paitan base

Weigh 150 g of Tori Paitan into the pot with about 195 ml of water — the pack ratio is 75 g per serving, thinned 1:1.3 — and stir until it is completely even before it gets hot. Bring it to a gentle simmer and hold it there. A hard boil splits the creamy chicken broth and it will not come back together.



02 Stir in the mala paste

Add 40 g of Mala Chili Paste, 20 g per serving, and stir until the broth turns an even deep red-orange with the chilli oil rising to the surface. Taste it here. This is the point where the bowl becomes mala, and it is the easiest place to adjust — see the note below.



03 Heat the minced chicken

Warm 100 g of Minced Chicken through in the same pot, 50 g per serving. It arrives already cooked and seasoned, so this is about getting it hot, not cooking it — a minute is plenty, and longer only dries it out.



04 Cook the ramen

Cook 200 g of Japan Ramen in plenty of unsalted boiling water — two and a half minutes for the 1.75 mm gauge, a minute and a half for the 1.4 mm — then lift it into cold water for a few seconds and drain it hard. The cold shock firms the noodle, and the broth carries the salt.

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05 Build the bowl

Rinse two deep bowls with hot water and tip it out. Coil the drained noodles into each and ladle the hot mala paitan over, pouring down the side of the bowl rather than over the top so the coil keeps its shape.



06 Top and serve

Spoon the minced chicken on at one side. Add half a marinated egg to each bowl, cut side up, the naruto slices, the kikurage, and a nest of shiraga negi on top. Scatter sesame seeds over, and put a little extra Mala Chili Paste on the table for anyone who wants it hotter.

READY TO SERVE



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The broth should be a deep even red-orange with the chilli oil pooling on top, and the egg yolk should still be soft enough to run when it is broken. If yours is, you have it right.

The mala is adjustable.

20 g a serving is what the pack portions and where we would start. Taste it once the paste is stirred in and take it up or down from there — more for heat and numbing, less if the paitan should lead. Extra on the table lets everyone set their own.

Keep it below a boil.

Paitan is an emulsion. Once the base is in, hold it just under a boil — a rolling boil breaks it and the broth goes cloudy-thin with grease at the edges.

The minced chicken only needs heating.

It comes cooked and seasoned. A minute in the pot is enough; any longer and it dries out and goes crumbly.

Pour down the side.

Ladle the broth against the inside of the bowl rather than over the noodles, so the coil stays neat and the toppings sit where you put them.

Egg cut side up.

Halve the marinated eggs and lay them yolk upward. Face down they lose the one thing they are there for.