



## Norman's lamb tongue with numbing chilli and tahini sauce

'This recipe is from northern China, where middle Asian and Arabian influences blend with the complex beauty of Sichuan cooking to shine brightly. It often uses sliced pork belly but I think lamb tongue, with its tender buttery texture, is much more luxurious. This recipe is also a good way to use up any leftover roast lamb.'

*Norman Lee, retail customer*

Feeds: 4–6 as a shared entree | Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 2 hours | Special equipment: Pressure cooker (optional)

500 g (1 lb 2 oz) lamb's tongues  
2 small star anise  
2 cloves  
½ cinnamon stick  
1 tablespoon Sichuan peppercorns  
3 bay leaves  
1 tablespoon sunflower oil  
Coarsely chopped coriander (cilantro) leaves, to serve  
1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds

### Numbing chilli-oil vinaigrette

25 g (1 oz) crushed Sichuan peppercorns  
100 ml (3½ fl oz) sunflower oil  
2 tablespoons black (Chinkiang) vinegar  
1 tablespoon chilli oil  
(I use Lao Gan Ma brand)  
1 garlic clove, finely chopped

### Tahini sauce

1 tablespoon tahini  
1 tablespoon sesame oil  
½ tablespoon light soy sauce

If you have a pressure cooker, fill it with the minimum amount of water, then add tongues, star anise, cloves, cinnamon, Sichuan pepper, bay leaves and 1 teaspoon salt. Heat until it comes to full pressure, cook for 5 minutes, allow to cool, then drain. Alternatively, add tongues, spices, bay leaves and salt to a large saucepan, add enough water just to cover, bring to the boil, skim surface, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer gently for 2 hours or until just tender — a skewer should pass through with only a little resistance.

Cool tongues until cool enough to handle, then peel off the skin with a small knife while tongues are still warm. Slice tongues thinly lengthwise — you should get about 4 slices per tongue.

Meanwhile, to make vinaigrette, warm crushed Sichuan pepper in oil in a small saucepan over low heat for 3–5 minutes or until fragrant — be careful, it can burn quickly. Remove from heat and steep for 10 minutes to extract all the fragrance. Strain, discarding Sichuan pepper, and combine with remaining ingredients.

Whisk all tahini sauce ingredients with 3 tablespoons warm water until smooth and silky. Add more water if needed; sauce should be a pouring consistency. Season to taste with salt.

For a cold summer dish, arrange tongue on a plate. (For a warm dish, heat oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat, add tongues, and cook, turning halfway, for 3–5 minutes until crisp and golden.) To serve, spoon the tahini sauce over. Splash on the chilli-oil vinaigrette, pile chopped coriander in the middle, and sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds. Toss at the table and serve.