



Hot and Sour Stir-Fried Cabbage

Hot and sour cabbage is a classic stir-fry that's ready in minutes. Napa cabbage is cooked hot and fast with aromatics until tender-crisp and lightly charred. Sauced with a mixture of soy sauce, vinegar and just a touch of sugar, the flavors are spicy, salty and tangy. Chinese black vinegar is made with rice and has a lightly smoky, subtly malty flavor. If not available, 1 tablespoon each of unseasoned rice vinegar and balsamic vinegar is a reasonably good substitute. For extra heat, drizzle with chili oil before serving.

START TO FINISH: 20 MINUTES

SERVINGS: 4

2 tablespoons soy sauce	1 or 2 jalapeño OR
2 tablespoons Chinese black vinegar OR 1 tablespoon unseasoned rice vinegar plus 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar	Fresno chilies, stemmed, seeded and thinly sliced
1 tablespoon white sugar	2 medium garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
1 tablespoon cornstarch	1 pound napa cabbage, sliced on the diagonal about ½ inch thick
Kosher salt and ground black pepper	½ medium red OR orange OR yellow bell pepper, stemmed, seeded and thinly sliced
2 tablespoons grapeseed or other neutral oil	Thinly sliced scallions, to serve
3 árbol chilies, broken in half, seeds shaken out and discarded	

Don't forget to turn the heat to high before adding the cabbage. The vegetables should char hot and fast so they don't leach moisture that would dilute the flavors and make the stir-fry soggy. Also, be sure to stir the soy mixture before adding it to the skillet, as the cornstarch will settle to the bottom upon standing.

1. In a small bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, cornstarch, ½ cup water and ¼ teaspoon pepper until the sugar dissolves; set aside.
2. In a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high, combine the oil, árbol chilies, jalapeños and garlic; cook, stirring, until fragrant and lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Increase to high, add the cabbage, bell pepper and a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring often and pressing the vegetables against the skillet to encourage browning, until charred at the edges and beginning to soften, about 3 minutes.
3. Stir the soy mixture to recombine, then stir it into the vegetables. Cook, stirring, until the cabbage is tender-crisp and the sauce has thickened, 2 to 4 minutes. Off heat, taste and season with salt and pepper. If desired, remove and discard the árbol chilies. Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle with the scallions.