Sauces / China

Chili Crisp

The crunchy, savory, addictive chili oil of Guizhou and Sichuan — hot oil poured over coarse chili flake, then loaded with frizzled shallot and garlic, numbing Sichuan pepper, and earthy fermented soybean. Spoon it over everything until the jar is empty.

Time 60 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 % Neutral oil (peanut or canola)
- ☐ 40 % Shallots, thinly sliced
- ☐ 25 % Garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ☐ 20 % Coarse Korean or Sichuan chili flake (gochugaru / cu la jiao)
- ☐ 4 % Sichuan peppercorns, toasted and cracked
- ☐ 12 % Fermented black soybeans (douchi), roughly chopped
- ☐ 1 % Star anise
- ☐ 3 % Fine sea salt
- ☐ 4 % Sugar

Let's make it.

01 Combine the oil, sliced shallots, sliced garlic, and star anise in a cold heavy-bottomed pot. Set over medium-low heat and let the temperature rise slowly. Starting cold renders the aromatics evenly and infuses the oil before anything browns. Stir frequently. Over 15-20 minutes the shallots and garlic will go from raw, to bubbling furiously, to slowly quieting as their moisture cooks off. Pull them the moment they turn pale gold — carryover heat will deepen them to amber off the heat. Strain the solids out with a spider, draining them on paper towel, and reserve both the fragrant oil (still in the pot) and the crisped aromatics separately.

02 In a large heatproof bowl (metal or ceramic, never glass), combine the coarse chili flake, cracked Sichuan peppercorns, chopped fermented black soybeans, salt, and sugar. Toss to distribute. This dry base is what the hot oil will bloom — having salt and sugar already in the bowl lets them dissolve and season the oil in the same instant the chilies fry. Set the bowl on a folded towel near the stove so it won't slide when you pour.

03 Reheat the reserved infused oil until it reaches 200-220C / 390-430F — it should shimmer hard and a single test flake should sizzle and dance immediately without blackening. Pour about one-third of the hot oil over the chili-spice base; it will erupt, foam, and roar. Stir, then pour in the rest in two more additions, stirring between each. Pouring in stages keeps the temperature controlled so the chili blooms a deep red rather than burning. The mixture should bubble vigorously, then settle.

04 Let the bloomed oil cool to just warm, about 20 minutes, then fold the reserved crisped shallot and garlic back in — adding them now keeps them crunchy instead of dissolving in the hot oil. Stir, taste, and adjust salt or sugar. Transfer to a clean jar, making sure the oil level sits above the solids to preserve them. Rest at least a few hours (overnight is better) so the flavors marry, then refrigerate. It keeps for a month or more.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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