AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN

Paleo Spicy Korean-Style Stir-Fried Beef

SERVES Serves 4

TIME 1¼ hours

Why This Recipe Works

We set out to create a simple beef stir-fry inspired by the flavors of kimchi, a traditional Korean dish of spicy fermented vegetables. Store-bought kimchi often contains preservatives that aren't paleo, so we re-created the flavor using a few potent ingredients: fish sauce, coconut aminos (a common paleo replacement for soy sauce), lime juice, scallions, garlic, ginger, and a generous amount of red pepper flakes. Cabbage and carrots, which are typical ingredients in kimchi, made a perfect slate for the intense flavors. With our flavor profile down, we turned to the beef. Flank steak is the classic choice for beef stir-fry because it's quick-cooking and has great meaty depth. We cut the meat against the grain into thin strips to ensure that it would be tender and easy to eat. We found that freezing the beef for at least 15 minutes made it easier to cut into wide, flat slices that would cook quickly and brown nicely. To encourage deep, flavorful browning, we cooked the steak over high heat in two batches.



Gather Your Ingredients

Sauce

- ◯ **¼** cup coconut aminos
- ◯ **2** tablespoons lime juice
- ◯ **2** teaspoons fish sauce
- ◯ **1 ½** teaspoons tapioca flour

Stir-Fry

- ◯ **2** teaspoons lime juice
- ◯ **1** teaspoon coconut aminos
- ◯ **1** pound flank steak, trimmed and sliced thin against grain into 2-inch-long pieces
- ◯ **5** scallions, white parts minced, green parts sliced thin on bias

Before You Begin

* This recipe calls for a 12-inch nonstick skillet; however, a well-seasoned cast-iron skillet can be used instead.

Instructions

1. FOR THE SAUCE: Whisk all ingredients together in bowl.

2. FOR THE STIR-FRY: Whisk lime juice and coconut aminos together in medium bowl, then stir in beef and let marinate for 10 minutes. In separate bowl, combine scallion whites, garlic, ginger, pepper flakes, and 1 tablespoon melted oil.

3. Heat 2 teaspoons melted oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over high heat until just smoking. Add half of beef, break up any clumps, and cook, without stirring, for 1 minute. Stir beef and continue to cook until browned, about 1 minute; transfer to clean bowl. Repeat with 2 teaspoons melted oil and remaining beef; transfer to bowl.

- **4** garlic cloves, minced
- **1** tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- **1 ½** teaspoons red pepper flakes
- **3** teaspoons coconut oil, melted
- **3** carrots, peeled and sliced 1/4 inch thick on bias
- **1** small head napa cabbage (1 1/2 pounds), cored and cut into 1-inch pieces

4. Heat remaining 2 teaspoons melted oil in now-empty skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add carrots and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add cabbage and cook, stirring occasionally, until spotty brown and crisp-tender, about 3 minutes.

5. Push vegetables to sides of skillet. Add scallion mixture to center and cook, mashing mixture into skillet, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir mixture into vegetables.

6. Stir cooked beef and any accumulated juices into vegetables. Whisk sauce to recombine, then add to skillet. Cook, stirring constantly, until sauce is thickened, about 1 minute. Transfer to serving platter and sprinkle with scallion greens. Serve.