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## GINGER-PORK STEW WITH STAR ANISE

- 3 lbs. boneless pork roast
- Salt
- Oil
- 1/2 large onion, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 quarter-sized pieces of ginger, peeled and minced
- 3 large carrots, scrubbed and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 1/2 cup sake
- 1/4 cup mirin (sweet Japanese cooking wine)
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 2 whole star anise
- Handful of snow peas (about 18 to 20)
- 1 small package frozen udon noodles (optional)

Trim fat from pork and cut into strips about 2 inches long and 1/2 inch wide. Sprinkle with salt. Heat about 1/8 to 1/4 inch of oil in a soup kettle or Dutch oven. In batches, brown pieces of meat in hot fat, transferring each batch to a bowl with a slotted spoon and adding more oil to pan when necessary.

Separate onion slices into half-rings and saute in same pan until onion begins to soften. Add garlic and ginger and saute 2 minutes longer. Return pork to pan. Add carrots, soy sauce, water, beef broth, red wine, sake and mirin, stirring browned bits from bottom of pan. Add sugar and star anise. Cover and simmer for 2 hours, or until pork is very tender.

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Place frozen noodles in water and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until tender, adding snow peas the final minute. Strain. Ladle stew into wide, shallow bowls, Coil 3 or 4 strands of noodles in the center of each portion and garnish with snow pea pods. Makes 6 servings.