

Tracy Island, Sunday, April 29th - morning

Kat looked at the wok, a leaving present from Lil. She had never unpacked it, being unsure about cooking with it. However, wanting to make a meal for her friends, she took it out of its box. ~Mm, I think I could do with some help to cook. She left her apartment and headed for the villa and the kitchen. Opening the kitchen door she looked inside and saw Kyrano alone. Coughing to get his attention, she smiled. "Good morning Kyrano."

"Good morning, Miss Kat. How are you today?"

"I'm fine Kyrano, but I have come to ask you a favour. I need some help."

"How can I be of assistance?" Kyrano queried.

"When I left Lady Penelope's employment to come here, her cook, Lil, gave me a wok as a leaving present. To be perfectly honest, I have never used one before." She hesitated, and then continued. "I thought I would like to cook a meal for my friends, and wondered if perhaps you could give me a lesson on how to use it."

"I can do that," Kyrano said, smiling. "I am not very busy. There is no time like the present, so let us see what we can do." He fetched the family wok from the store cupboard. "Now, you are vegetarian, so I assume that you will cook vegetarian meals."

Kat shook her head. "I could add some meat or fish for my friends."

At that moment, Cherie appeared. "Hi, Kyrano. Hello, Ms. Kat. What brings you here?"

"Miss Kat is having some lessons on cooking with a wok."

"Hey cool! Can I watch?" Cherie asked. "You never know; maybe I could cook for Mom and Dad."

Kyrano nodded and Cherie sat on a chair, ready to watch and help if needed. The chef explained about seasoning a new wok and then began going through the ingredients. He listed items, some that Kat had never heard of and certainly did not possess in her larder.

"Oh, Kyrano!" Kat looked crestfallen. "I don't possess any of the ingredients needed. When you next do a grocery run, could you possibly get some of these ingredients for me?"

"Miss Kat, do not worry. I have more than enough. I am sure that I could let you have sufficient to cook for your friends."

"Really? That would be brilliant! Thank you so much." Kat sounded relieved.

Kyrano explained about horizontal slicing, diagonal slicing, roll cutting, dicing and chopping the

various vegetables.

"Can I try to slice some veggies as well?" Cherie asked.

Kat and Cherie began slicing and dicing onions, potatoes and carrots. When everything was ready Kyrano explained about the actual cooking.

"Now," Kyrano stated. "The most important technique in stir-frying is pre-heating the wok. This prevents the food sticking and absorbing excess oil. Place the wok over a moderate heat, and wait for a few minutes until the wok is very hot, then add the oil and swirl it to quickly coat the bottom and sides."

Kat listened carefully, taking in what Kyrano was saying.

"For recipes that begin by adding the flavouring ingredients, such as garlic or ginger, the wok should be only moderately hot, or these delicate ingredients may burn. If, however, the first ingredient is a meat or hearty vegetable, then the oil should be very hot, just below smoking point. As other ingredients are added, stir-fry over a high heat by stirring and tossing them with a metal spatula or spoon."

Satisfied that Kat was confident in giving it a try, Kyrano let Kat and Cherie add ingredients to the wok, stirring and tossing the vegetables. He then found a bag and placed in it ingredients that he thought she would need, along with some slices of meat. Kat thanked him and left the kitchen. Just as she headed out, so Gordon was coming in. They collided.

"Oh sorry, Gordon."

"Hi, Kat. That's okay. What are you doing here?" he asked, looking at the bulging bag.

"Kat has been having a lesson on cooking with a wok," Cherie explained, as she followed Kat out.

"When's the invite for a meal?" Gordon joked.

"Mm, I am going to have a dummy run first," Kat replied.

Heading back to her apartment Kat tried to remember everything that Kyrano had told her. Back in her kitchen, she seasoned the wok as Kyrano had told her, and then set about slicing a few vegetables. Placing the wok on the heat, she waited until it seemed very hot, then added the oil and swirled it around, coating the bottom and sides. ~Now it has to get hot before I add the vegetables~ she thought to herself.

In her rush to get the vegetables ready, she knocked over a glass dish. Fetching a dustpan and brush to brush up the pieces of glass, she totally forgot the wok. Suddenly, there was smoke in the kitchen. Her smoke alarm went off. Panicking, Kat rushed for the French windows and threw them open. To Kat's dismay the sprinkler system went off, soaking her and the kitchen.

Back at Kat's apartment, Nikki had seen the smoke, and was banging on Kat's door. Dom and Brandon had heard the commotion and had gone to fetch fire extinguishers.

"Kat, Kat, are you okay?"

Kat opened the door, with streaming eyes and coughing. "Yes, I am okay. I was trying to cook with my wok , but I knocked a dish over and while I was clearing up, guess the oil got too hot. Everything seems to be okay now."

Just as she was explaining, Dom and Brandon appeared, fire extinguishers in their hands. A very wet, red faced and embarrassed Kat had to explain to them that she had been trying to cook, and had let the oil get too hot.

"Remind me not to take up any invitations to come to dinner," Dom quipped. At Kat's devastated look, he frowned. "I wasn't being serious," he said.

"Seems like everything's okay in here..." Brandon said. "Is there any damage?"

"No, just sooty walls and ceiling and flooding," Kat answered.

"If you need help cleaning I am available," Nikki offered.

"Me too," Dom and Brandon said in unison.

Kat thanked them, and sighed as she regarded the mess.

From Tawnyangel22 8/9/2005

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