

FLAVOR & FORTUNE

DEDICATED TO THE ART AND SCIENCE OF CHINESE CUISINE

GOJI BERRIES;
TIBETAN BUTTER TEA;
MILK IN THE CHINESE CULINARY;



HUNAN AND THEIR FOODS;
MORE ABOUT SOUPS AND CONGEES;
BOOK AND RESTAURANT REVIEWS. AND MORE

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

About The Publisher

THE INSTITUTE
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促進中國烹飪科學與藝術研究所

The institute was conceived and established in the early 1990s in response to the growing interest in Chinese food and the need for collaboration between professionals and the public at large. Its purpose was and continues to be as an important source of information about the scientific and the artistic significance of Chinese and other Asian foods and cuisines.

The Mission and Goals include:

- 1 To encourage the exchange of ideas and information about all aspects of the science and art of Chinese cuisine
- 2 To foster the study of foods, herbs, diet, cuisines, customs, habits, health, nutrition, technology, and other scientific and culinary applications as they relate to Chinese and other Asian cuisines
- 3 To consult, advise, share and in other ways assist individuals and groups, corporations, associations, government agencies, and private individuals about Chinese and related cuisines

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT	2
About the publisher; Table of Contents; Dear Reader	
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	5
Persimmon cakes; Animals in the zodiac; Confucius on knowledge; Bubble Tea and cooking	
IRVING BEILIN CHANG: A MEMORIAL (1923 - 2017)	6
HUNAN: PROVINCE AND FOODS	7
GOJI BERRIES: ONCE CALLED WOLFBERRIES.....	11
FOOD TIPS FROM A BLOGGER	13
by Rachel Stintson	
MILK: AND THE CHINESE CULINARY.....	14
DAI MINORITY: FESTIVALS AND FOOD	16
ON OUR BOOKSHELVES.....	18
<i>China The Cookbook</i> by Kei Lum Chan and Diora Fong Chan <i>Dumpling Galaxy, The</i> by Helen You <i>Eating Asian American</i> by Robert Ji-Song Ku, Martin F. Manalansan IV, and Anita Msannur <i>Fresh Off the Boat</i> by Eddie Huang <i>Food in Shanghai</i> by Chen Xiande and Chen Zhuyi <i>Most Popular Quick and Easy Chinese Recipes</i> by Lili Weng	
TIBETAN BUTTER TEA.....	22
FIN FISH: ANCIENT AND CURRENT.....	24
ON MANY MENUS	30
SOUPS AND CONGEE: FUJIANESE AND OTHER.....	32
THREE ASIAN CUISINES: COMPARISONS.....	36
THANKS TO OUR DONORS, SPONSORS, AND SUPPORTERS ...	38
RENEWAL FORM	39
RECIPE INDEX AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION.....	40

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The cover picture is a glass of 'bubble' tea, also known as 'boba' tea.
Articles ending with a (JMN) are by the editor.*

FLAVOR & FORTUNE

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Dear Reader:

This third volume of our twenty-fourth year is but one issue away from beginning our twenty-fifth year; and that is a milestone for us, for sure. We appreciate all kind words expressed in recent phone calls to the editor of Flavor and Fortune, which is to our knowledge, the only English-language Chinese food magazine published and printed in the US.

In this issue, be sure to read the article about the Hunan Province and its foods. Information requested often. Also check out the one about goji berries, once known as wolfberries. They are popular indeed, and very high in Vitamin C, one of fruit's best sources of this needed vitamin.

Several who visited Beijing asked about the origins of milk and milk dishes in China's culinary. Yogurt appears on many street corners in lovely glass or ceramic containers in this capital city and in others further north. It is usually made from cow's milk or yak milk; and one can be substituted for the other. Take a look and enjoy the recipes using milk in this issue and others found in the recipe index listings on the magazine's website. We apologize for no detailed nor specific answers to the myriad of questions one reader posed; forty pages in each quarterly issue are controlling. For those pleased with items about minority folk, enjoy and learn from the item about the Dai; and know that will detail the Li minority population in future issues and others.

Check out the items about Tibetan Butter Tea and the one with more about Soups and many Congees many are of Min origins. All should appreciate the article about Fin Fish, all minorities love these swimmers; and delight reading about the books reviewed in this issue. More of all of the above will appear in future issues including an article about Mongol-Chinese in the US, a growing population.

Enjoy upcoming articles about kiwi. The Chinese bitter melon, and about turtles and snails, either reviled or loved. They will be in upcoming issues; lots more, too.

Many thanks for the kudos coming our way; they are heartwarming. So are many other nice comments, and your growing number of culinary requests; and thanks for the 'in advance' wishes for my upcoming 85th year. We appreciate them all!

The Editor,



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HARLEY SAYS:

You need to know 'shi zi bing' are persimmon cakes from the city of Xian. A recipe for them and more is at: www.travelchinaguide.com/tour/food/chinese-cooking/persimmon-cake.htm



HARLEY: Thank you for this information. This magazine's readers and I appreciate it because as you know, only one recipe for this fruit did cross our desk before. We have been to Xian three times, always in either late spring or summer. We have never seen nor tasted them. Truthfully, we did not even know they existed. In addition, we never saw a recipe for them in the thousands of Chinese cookbooks in English we donated to Stony Brook University's Special Collections. We hope to eat them in Xian if we go when they are in season. Until then, we will try to make them next Fall or Winter. Be advised that we research and write all articles, including this one, more than six months before publication: they are not in season now.

FROM SUE-LU IN IDAHO:

Do the Chinese eat any of the animals that are in their zodiac; and when did they start naming them?

SUE-LU: The Chinese eat them all except for the dragon which is a mythical animal. You can read about the twelve Chinese Han zodiac animals, and find recipes for every one but the above mythical one, that is for the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and the pig that some call a boar. After a twelve year cycle, these twelve years begin again with the rat, and the Chinese believe that a complete cycle is five of the twelve years, or sixty years all together. Many Chinese minority populations have the same and/or other animals in their zodiac. The legend we read said these years began before measuring time many centuries ago, and that the Jade Emperor decided on a race to name these years with all animals in his kingdom invited to his birthday party. He decreed that all animals needed to cross a swift river current and get

to a designated spot on the other shore. That legend said the cat and the rat were good friends at that time, both the worst swimmers, so they jumped on the back of the ox. The rat was crafty and pushed the cat into the river before they got to the other side. When the ox got there, the rat jumped off and ran to the designated spot and cleverly claimed first place. The rabbit told the Emperor he thought he would win because he jumped from stone to stone. The pig who came in last told the emperor he stopped to eat as he was hungry, also exhausted after his difficult swim.

SID ASKS:

You once said the main meat Chinese eat is pork, do you know how much each person eats a year?

SID: We recently read that Chinese each eat eighty-seven pounds of pork every year. Also learned half the pork consumed in the world is eaten by Chinese people.

RHONA OF LOS ANGELES:

Heard that Confucius told what knowledge really was. Where is that quote? Also, which cooking methods did he think were Yin and which were Yang?

RHONA: What he said that we think you mean has nothing to do with food. We think you mean what he said about 'real knowledge' was that 'real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.' As to your second question about culinary qualities, we found nothing that Confucius said about that. He did say lots about cutting food. Cooking techniques with *yin* qualities include boiling, steaming, and poaching, those with *yang* ones include deep-frying, roasting, and stir-frying.



FROM JAI LEE IN TAIWAN:

We live south in Taiwan and in the countryside. I have never seen boba tea, can you tell us about it.

JAI LEE: You may know this boba tea as bubble tea, so named for the usually black cassava bubbles; that sink to its bottom. There are a few companies making theirs in assorted colors, though as of the moment we have no color picture of them. This hot or cold tea can be had in many flavors, and with or without milk in it. Now very popular in the US, it was first popularized in your country in the 1980s.

IRVING BEILIN CHANG: A MEMORIAL (1923 - 2017)

With sadness, we report the passing of Irving Beilin Chang on February 4th, 2017. He and his wife Wonona were wed sixty-two years, and both were founders of this magazine with its editor and others. This publication was and still is the only English-language Chinese food magazine, written and published in the US, since 1994. At age ninety-eight and on his last day on earth, Irving did what he loved most, he went swimming in the morning, and for lunch ate what he loved, dumplings. Only after both, did he pass on.

A memorial service was held at the Wycliffe Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach, VA on March 10th and more than two hundred relatives and friends attended. They honored and celebrated his long productive life. Among the many things he accomplished were three well-received Chinese cookbooks written with his wife, every one of them thorough and ahead of its time. In 2014 and 2015, he wrote another cookbook.

Irving came to the US in 1947 for graduate school. He received his MS in Chemical Engineering two years later from Ohio State University, and then worked for more than fifty years for Allied Chemical Corporation. He lived in New Jersey and traveled the world solving problems for this company. After retirement, he and Wonona moved to Virginia Beach VA to be near their son Amos and daughter-in-law Joan. He is survived by

three children and their spouses, seven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren; and he leaves them and two of his sisters, Kay Wang and Margaret Ma.



At the above memorial, his minister shared with many family and friends some highlights of his busy life. These included passions for cooking, eating, and writing about Chinese food. Just last year he published a new cookbook. Before that, he wrote many articles about this cuisine, this last one unique and about foods along the Grand Canal. These were places he visited often, knew well, and did dine in their restaurants and homes.

This book was reviewed and touted as 'outstanding;' it was one that won two awards, one national, the other international. This magazine did review it, and you can check out its review here and elsewhere. It is listed on the *Flavor and Fortune's* web site. All these books show his technical background and attention

to detail; all recipes in them work and taste terrific!

Irving was special to his children, grandchildren, relatives, friends, and colleagues. All have lasting and loving memories of him, this editor included. All recall many conversations about food and some were lucky enough to remember cooking and eating with him. We were blessed to know and love him; and all will miss him! (JMN)

HUNAN: PROVINCE AND FOODS

This province, called 'the land of magic' by some, was cut off to outsiders, misunderstood because no foreigners were permitted entrance to its capital before 1880. More recently, home to Chairman Mao in Shanshan which was his home city, this province of four thousand five hundred sixty-three square miles, in 2015, had a census indicating nearly seven and a half million people lived there.

The provincial capital of Changsha has been there since its founding three and a half thousand years ago. However, it only began serious trading with the west in the twentieth century when foreigners no longer need watch its picturesque land and junks from afar.

This province is south of Lake Dongting bordering on Yueyang and Yiyang. It is a busy place where folks now learn about it adding to what they might have learned about its Han Dynasty past from books. These days, many visit its ruins at Mawangdui and are fascinated. They learn that the country's cuisine is close to equally zesty and piquant, as is that of the Sichuan Province.

They now get to know its various rices, fish, chickens, pigs, fruits, and vegetable dishes first-hand. They do likewise about its well-watered plains in its north, the salty, steamed, smoked, and deep-fried foods from its fertile fields, the long growing season of often more than two hundred and fifty days, and that it is fed by tributaries of the Yangtze River. This is a land of plenty dominated by a bed of water whose provincial name means 'south of the lake' which is Lake Tung-ting. And that lake does contribute to what a local proverb says is: good harvests with every belly full under its heaven.

In Hunan, tea is produced in the south and south-west, tea dust steamed and molded as an essence, sort of like coffee's espresso. They flavor most foods pickled, preserved, and spiced. This cuisine and its people lavish devouring luxuriously flavored snacks and dishes such as Strange-flavor Eggplant, Scallion Oil Cakes, Hunan Chicken, Vegetables with Chicken Strings, Scallop Balls in Tart Sesame Sauce, Pork Strips with Bamboo in Garlic Sauce, Rice-coated Spareribs with Yams, Red Radish Rounds, Drunken Dates, Hot and Sour Cabbage Hearts, and more.

In Hunan there are fish-a-plenty in their many rivers, various rices and bamboo in their fertile fields, fruits and vegetables growing everywhere, young cedar leaves smoked on camphor wood, and speciality wines and teas from their alluvial plains.

The province has more than four thousand local dishes in their Xiang-named cuisine including those from

the past that included exotic elephant trunks gracing Imperial table, ground rhinoceros horn digestives to calm overfed stomachs of their common folk, dishes with sweet basil and red chilies to excite every one's taste buds, and hot and sour dishes with mushrooms, clear soups, to heighten their mealtime delights. (JMN)

STRANGE-FLAVOR EGGPLANT

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds Asian eggplants, baked until they collapse.
- 2 Tablespoons fresh garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 Tablespoon fresh ginger, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried minced piquant red peppers
- 2 scallions, minced
- 1 teaspoon white rice vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 Tablespoons thin soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Preheat the oven to 475 degrees F.
2. Prick eggplants with a fork and bake them for half an hour or until they collapse.
3. Peel and discard their skins, and tear them into thin strips or put them in a blender, then drain them in a strainer.
4. Mix garlic, ginger, minced piquant peppers, scallions, rice vinegar, brown sugar, and two tablespoons of cold water, then add the vegetable and sesame oils and stir them into the eggplant mixture in the wok until they are heated through. Then put it in a bowl, and serve.

continued on page 8

HUNAN: PROVINCE AND FOODS

continued from page 7

UNCLE TAI'S HUNAN BEEF

Ingredients:

1½ pounds flank steak
½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
¼ teaspoon salt
3 Tablespoons dry sherry or *shao xing* wine
1 egg white
3½ Tablespoons cornstarch
4 cups and 2 Tablespoons peanut oil
2 scallions, cut in half-inch lengths
3 Tablespoons dried orange peel
3 thin slices fresh ginger, cut in half-inch cubes
1 long thin fresh pepper, seeded and chopped (optional)
3 Tablespoons soy sauce
2 Tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon sesame oil
¼ cup chicken broth
10 dried hot red pepper pods

Preparation:

1. Slice beef into half-inch wide thin strips
2. Put the beef in a mixing bowl, add two-thirds of a cup of water blended with the bicarbonate of soda, and refrigerate it for one hour or overnight. Then rinse the beef thoroughly under cold running water, drain, and pat it dry.
3. Add the salt to the meat, one tablespoon of the wine, and the egg white, and stir until the wine is bubbly, then add one and a half tablespoons of the cornstarch and two tablespoons of the oil, and stir to blend well.
4. Combine scallions, dried orange peel, fresh ginger and fresh pepper, and set this aside.
5. Combine the remaining two tablespoons of wine, the soy sauce, sugar, and the remaining two tablespoons of cornstarch blended with three tablespoons water. Add the sesame oil and the chicken broth, and stir well.
6. Heat four cups of oil in a wok or skillet and when almost smoking, add the beef and cook about forty-five seconds, stirring constantly. Scoop out the meat, drain it well leaving the oil in the wok, and return the meat and cook for half a minute more, then drain again.
7. Clean the wok and return two tablespoons of the oil to it. Add the pepper and the scallions and stir over high heat for one minute then remove before adding the beef and cooking it for half a minute, then adding the wine mixture and stirring until it is piping hot, the meat is well-coated. Then serve in a pre-heated bowl.

HUNAN CHICKEN

Ingredients:

2 pounds boneless and skinless chicken, cut in thin strips
5 slices fresh ginger, minced
2 scallions, minced
1 small piquant pepper, seeded and minced
2 teaspoons each of granulated and brown sugar
2 Tablespoons dry sherry or rice wine
2 Tablespoons thin soy sauce
½ cup chicken stock
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
1 teaspoon Sichuan peppercorns, crushed
2 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
1 teaspoon sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Blanch the chicken strips, then simmer them for ten minutes.
2. Mix them with the ginger, scallions, and pepper pieces and all of these to just under the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for five minutes, and strain these and set them aside.
3. Heat the oil in the wok and stir-fry these items for one minute, then add the soy sauce, stock, peppercorns, rice wine, and sesame oil for two minutes.
4. Add the sesame oil and stir-fry another minute, then serve in a pre-heated bowl.

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continued on page 9

HUNAN: PROVINCE AND FOODS

continued from page 8

SCALLION CAKES

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons coarse salt
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- 2 scallions, minced
- ½ cup vegetable oil

Preparation:

1. Mix flour, baking powder, one-quarter of a cup cold water, and the salt. Stir until a ball forms.
2. Next, add one-third cup boiling water to the ball and knead until smooth. Then let rest for ten minutes.
3. Knead in the sesame oil and scallions and form a snake; cut it into ten pieces, and knead until smooth.
4. Roll each piece into a circle; and repeat until all are rolled. Then cover them in a stack with a dry cloth and let them rest fifteen minutes.
5. Heat a little oil in a fry-pan and fry them one side at a time, each for twenty seconds, until slightly browned, then transfer, and stack them on a flat plate. Serve them cut into sections, if desired.

SMOKED BELLY PORK AND TOFU

Ingredients:

- ¼ pound smoked belly pork
- 2 Tablespoons peanut oil
- ½ pound smoked tofu cut in one-inch squares, and dried on paper towels
- 5 dried chili peppers, seeded and slivered
- 10 green scallion parts cut into one-inch pieces
- 2 Tablespoons dark soy sauce

Preparation:

1. Put pork in a steamer basket over boiling water and steam for ten minutes. Then remove and let cool before cutting into half-inch cubes. Set them aside to cool.
2. Heat oil in a wok or small pot, and stir-fry the cubes for one minute, then remove and drain them on paper towels before putting them in a serving bowl.
3. Put the drained tofu in the remaining oil and fry until browned, about three minutes, then add the chili peppers and fry them for half a minute, then remove them and discard the oil.
4. Mix the tofu, chili peppers, and soy sauce with the pork cubes and serve hot, warm, or at room temperature, as preferred.

VEGETABLES WITH CHICKEN STRINGS

Ingredients:

- 1 skinless boneless chicken breast cut in matchstick-shaped pieces
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 3 slices fresh ginger, minced
- 1 onion cut in thin slices, each quartered
- 3 Tablespoons dry sherry
- 3 Tablespoons wood ear fungi soaked, then sliced thinly
- 1 large carrot, peeled and cut into matchstick pieces
- 1 large zucchini cut the same way the carrot was cut
- 3 Tablespoons pickled mustard green, slivered
- 3 small chili peppers, seeded and slivered
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- 3 Tablespoons fermented black bean chili paste (or 1 Tablespoon each of mashed fermented black beans, black vinegar, and hot chili oil)
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- ½ cup chicken stock
- 2 Tablespoons cedar leaves. Coarsely chopped
- 1 Tablespoon cilantro, coarsely chopped
- 1 Tablespoon sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Heat wok or large fry pan, add the oil, garlic, and ginger and stir-fry for one minute, then add the onion and continue frying for two more minutes.
2. Next add the sherry and the wood ear fungi and stir-fry another minute before adding the next four vegetables, salt, and the black bean paste or other items instead of them, and both sugars. Stir well.
3. Now, add the stock and bring to the boil, then add the cedar and cilantro leaves and sesame oil, and toss well. Put all into a pre-heated bowl, and serve.

**KNOW MORE
HUNAN RECIPES?
DO SUBMIT THEM**

continued on page 10

HUNAN: PROVINCE AND FOODS

continued from page 9

SCALLOP BALLS IN SESAME SAUCE

Ingredients:

½ pound fresh scallops, each one cut in quarters
1 teaspoon fresh minced ginger
1 teaspoon Chinese rice wine
1 teaspoon coarse salt
¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
3 Tablespoons water chestnut flour in two parts
2 egg whites kept separated
3 Tablespoons Chinese white vinegar
2 Tablespoons granulated sugar
2 Tablespoons thin soy sauce
2 Tablespoons tomato paste
2 large cloves fresh garlic, peeled and smashed
2 teaspoons coarsely minced fresh ginger
¾ cup white sesame seeds
1 cup peanut or vegetable oil for deep frying

Preparation:

1. Put scallops, ginger, rice wine, salt, ground pepper, and half the water chestnut flour in a food processor with a metal blade and process until coarsely minced.
2. Add egg whites, vinegar, sugar, soy sauce, tomato paste, garlic, and the ginger and process again until smooth.
3. Mix half of the processed mixture into a small pot and set it aside.
4. Wet one's hands, and make one-inch balls of the scallop mixture, and refrigerate on a flat plate for one hour.
5. Put sesame seeds on another flat plate, and a sheet of waxed paper on a flat work surface and roll the cold scallop balls in the sesame seeds until they are well coated, then deep-fry them in the hot oil until lightly browned, and take them out with a slotted spoon. Roll them in paper towels, and put them in a bowl on the dining table.
6. Bring the set aside vinegar mixture to the boil, then pour it into a heat-proof bowl and set it on the table next to the fried scallop balls. Diners can dip a scallop ball into the heated sauce, if they wish, or eat the sesame balls plain.

LAMB WITH BAMBOO SHOOTS

Ingredients:

4 Tablespoons vegetable oil, separated in half
10 baby lamb chops
5 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and smashed
10 scallions
1 cup chicken stock
1 Tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 Tablespoon chili paste with garlic
¼ cup Chinese white wine
1 teaspoon five-spice powder
6 ounces canned bamboo shoot slices
8 ounces rice noodles, cooked in boiling water until soft, the drained and used when done

Preparation:

1. Heat half the oil in wok or large fry pan, add the lamb chops and brown each on both sides, then remove them to a plate.
2. In another wok or fry pan, add the other half of the oil and stir-fry the scallions and smashed garlic, and remove from the heat.
3. Mix the chicken stock, soy sauce, chili paste, white wine and five-spice powder, and put this in the first wok, return the lamb chops, add the scallion mixture, and cover the pan and simmer for one-half an hour or until the lamb chops are tender.
4. Add the bamboo shoots and stir until heated through.
5. Put the cooked rice noodles in a pre-heated casserole, add the lamb chop mixture and simmer until hot, then serve.

HUNAN SPARE RIBS WITH YAMS

Ingredients:

1 pound yams, peeled, cut into one-inch sticks
2 Tablespoons honey
2 pounds spare ribs, cut apart, then chopped into one-inch pieces
1 Tablespoon sugar
2 Tablespoons thin soy sauce
2 Tablespoons hot chili bean paste
1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
1 cup uncooked rice, browned, cooled, then ground
1 scallion, minced
1 Tablespoon fresh ginger, minced
1 large clove garlic, peeled and minced
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 Tablespoon hot oil

Preparation:

1. Mix yams, honey, and a tablespoon boiling water.
2. Mix spare rib pieces with the sugar, soy sauce, hot bean paste, and Chinese rice wine, cover, and refrigerate for one hour, then toss them with the ground rice powder, and put on the yams.
3. Now steam this for two hours over boiling water, adding more water if/as needed.
4. Serve in a clean bowl tossing before serving.

GOJI BERRIES: ONCE CALLED WOLFBERRIES

These small berry-like red fruits were cultivated most often in and near Qinghai, the Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures, or in and around the Qaidam Basin. Their early origins may be the largest forest in Dulan County, the second largest goji berry growing area in China said the head of the Prefecture's Institute of Agricultural Sciences. The largest one is a forest in Wulongguo on the Kunlun Mountains and known as the 'Valley of Five Dragons.'

This is an arid area with trees growing to but eighty inches or thereabouts bearing small fruits that do taste better than others grown elsewhere. Many wild varieties grow here, as do the wild black goji berry that health practitioners tout as having lots of medicinal value. Haixi's dried berries have been certified organic and are ninety percent of China's total export production cultivating several new species recently.

This area was once pelted with sand storms but goji cultivation has helped reduce these weather-related problems. They have also improved the entire industry. One local legend tells of walking sticks from goji trees used to treat many an ill patient. These fruits are *Lycium barbarum* and *Lycium chinense*, and related boxthorn fruits in the night shade family, related to the potato, tomato, eggplant, chili pepper, and tobacco plants.

TCM medical doctors say they have many anti-oxidants, anti-inflammatory components that are good for the heart, boost the immune system, reduce high blood pressure, promote weight loss, slow aging, improve eyesight, fight cancers, and are good for diabetics. They also reduce skin damage from too much sun, and

probably delay Alzheimer disease. Another practitioner said if taking Warfarin, a blood thinning drug, do not eat them, and do keep out of the sun because they can cause a rash, particularly if ingesting too many of them. He added for those who want to improve their athletic performance but not indicating which sport, and also improve sleep, and/or weight, then do eat lots of them. Clearly TCM practitioners have many thoughts about the value of these bright reddish-orange berries native

to China. Archeologists report they have been eaten there as long as written records exist, and help people live longer.

These small fruits grow on shrubs or trees in groups of one to three fruits with stamens having long filaments. Once referred to as 'super fruits,' since 2004 more than one hundred twenty million dollars worth have been

exported worldwide from China. When fresh they are fragile. These days, the biggest and best ones are dried in the sun, or with another heat source, then they are packaged and shipped.

Recently large tracts of goji berries have been commercially grown in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous region in China's north-central region. Since 2000, there is a festival celebrating them in August. It is in Yinchuan, the capital of the Zhongning County. This new center of goji cultivation is now producing more than one thousand tons of them each year.

One last comment: These berries have been called 'fruits of the matrimony vine,' 'boxthorn plants,' 'big-life berries,' and 'berries with the most vitamin C.' Because of this, add them to hot main dishes near the end of their cooking, particularly those with lots of liquid, so this vitamin maintains more of its value. (JMN)

continued on page 12



GOJI BERRIES: ONCE CALLED WOLFBERRIES

continued from page 9

EIGHT TREASURE CONGEE

Ingredients:

½ cup dried Chinese red beans
¼ cup raw peanuts
4 cups cooked sticky rice
¼ cup rock sugar
1 teaspoon coarse salt
½ cup walnuts or blanched almonds, slivered
¼ cup cooked pitted Chinese red dates, quartered
¼ to ½ cup *goji* berries

Preparation:

1. Soak the beans, peanuts, and the rice in separate covered bowls overnight; then drain them the next morning, and cook them in separate pots until each one is soft; then drain and combine them.
2. Cover the nuts with boiling water and refrigerate them covered over night. Drain in the morning and rub them in a towel to remove their paper-like skins.
3. Next, put them in a large pot with four cups of cold water, add the peanuts and sticky rice and bring to the boil. Now reduce the heat and simmer until the liquid is creamy and thick, stirring it often. Then, add the sugar and salt, dates and *goji* berries and cook until all are soft. Serve or refrigerate until needed.

DUCK SOUP

Ingredients:

½ roasted duck, bones discarded, meat torn into thin strips.
5 slices fresh ginger, cut into thin strips
1 cup cooked rice
1 cup rice wine
a spice bag with half stick cinnamon, three star anise, and one two-inch piece of lovage root
1 teaspoon dark soy sauce
¼ to ½ cup *goji* berries
5 ounces dried rice noodles, cooked until soft

Preparation:

1. Put duck, and all the other ingredients except the *goji* berries and the rice noodles in twelve cups of boiling water and simmer for half an hour.
2. Then remove and discard the spice bag and its contents.
3. Next add the rice, soy sauce, *goji* berries, and the cooked noodles and simmer for five to ten minutes. Then serve.

GOAT WITH GOJI BERRIES AND LEAVES

Ingredients:

1 pound cooked goat loin, slivered
1 teaspoon ground Sichuan peppercorns
2 cups *goji* or spinach leaves, slivered
2 egg whites
2 Tablespoons cornstarch
1 teaspoon coarse salt
2 scallions, thinly slivered on an angle
½ cup *goji* berries
1 teaspoon Sichuan peppercorn oil
1 Tablespoon cornstarch mixed with one Tablespoon cold water

Preparation:

1. Freeze the meat for half an hour, then sliver it thinly or cut it into thin matchstick strips.
2. Next pour half cup of boiling water over this meat and let it sit for ten minutes, then drain it, and discard the water.
3. Blanch the leaves for one minute in boiling water, then discard the water and set the leaves aside after tossing them with the ground Sichuan peppercorn powder.
4. Toss the egg whites, cornstarch, salt, scallions, cooked meat, *goji* leaves, *goji* berries, and the ground Sichuan peppercorn and its oil in half cup of boiling water. Simmer this for ten minutes, then stir in and thicken with the cornstarch mixture. Serve on a pre-heated platter.

SILVER CLOUD EARS AND PEAR SOUP

Ingredients:

2 large white cloud ears, soaked in two cups warm water overnight, drain and cut out and discard their hard center and the water, and sliver them
1 piece white rock sugar
3 Tablespoons *goji* berries, soaked for half hour in cold water, then drained and slivered
6 cups strained chicken stock
2 ripe pears, peeled, cored, and diced in quarter- to half-inch cubes

Preparation:

1. Simmer cloud ear slivers for ten minutes, then drain.
2. Add rock sugar, *goji* berries, and stock and bring to the boil before adding the pear pieces. Simmer this for five minutes more, then serve in pre-heated soup tureen.

FOOD TIPS FROM A BLOGGER

BY RACHEL STINTSON



If you are anything like I am, your life revolves around food and its delicious dishes, your whole day scheduled around meals and other eating times. Without a doubt, Chinese food is one of the best in the world. So here are a handful of ways to improve your technique and outcome when preparing it. These five essential tips can make your Chinese dishes better, more delicious. You can make them so great that everyone will compliment you as their 'best in the bunch' chef!

1. PREPARING VEGETABLES:

Wash greens and leafy vegetables ahead of time, not at the last moment. Let them drain and not be too wet when stirring them. Put the cut vegetables on a tray or cookie sheet so you do not forget any of them.

2. MEAT AND FISH TIPS:

Marinate fresh meat before cooking it. Cut beef across the grain and in uniform pieces to make it more tender and cook more evenly. Make sure the wok is very hot before adding the oil, and then stir-fry the meat and set it aside, then do any vegetables. Add five-spice powder or another seasoning for depth of flavor and a bit of heat.

3. COOKING WITH OIL:

For stir-frying, drizzle a little down the side of the wok. When deep-frying, be sure the oil is hot enough by putting a bamboo in; when it sizzles, begin adding the food.

4. SPICES AND SEASONING TIPS:

Use fresh ginger, not powdered. Mix cornstarch and water one to two or one to four. Add a few drops of red chili oil if a kick is wanted.

5. RICE RULES:

Use long grain cooked rice for best results. When making fried rice, use cold rice, preferable some that is one day old.

This blogger often has great ideas; check them out at: <http://operationfalafel.com/>.

Or contact this clever creative lady who blogs at: Rachel@e.digitworldhub.com

**IF YOU HAVE
OTHER TIPS,
DO SUGGEST THEM**

MILK: AND THE CHINESE CULINARY

Most Chinese do not drink milk nor do they use it often, some never, in their culinary. Called *niunai*, if cow's milk, many minority populations do use it. These minority people make up more than eight percent of China's population, and they do consume some, but not often as a beverage. None of them drink milk cold and only a few do so at room temperature as many in Europe and folks in the Western world do. All Chinese feed some to their infants and very young children, and most minority folk do cook with it. Some ferment it, and some use it as cheese. Some lose the ability to digest milk and become lactose intolerant soon after stopping its consumption as they become unable to digest the milk sugar called lactose.

Most Chinese drink tea, their most consumed beverage. These days young folk drink more coffee than ever before and they frequent Starbucks or other coffee shops now popular throughout China. There is also a small but growing population consuming whole, low- or no-fat milk, or soy and nut milks, perhaps influenced by western literature. Some folks we queried do believe this is a route to the American dream. However, after some time, even those living in the US give up this practice.

Of the Chinese minorities consuming milk, most are Mongolians and Tibetans, others are from the so-called 'Stan' countries. There are some Chinese in China and elsewhere who, as immigrants from the 'Stan' countries such as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan who do drink milk, and they use it in their coffee and they cook with it. They also ferment it and then use it in that way.

These minority populations boil their milk on low heat for some time, then cool it leaving the cream on top, and it coagulates with a semi-solid layer on top. Then, with chopsticks or another tool, they remove this layer calling it their 'milk film' or another name. This cheese-like product, some mix with stir-fried millet or another grain, or eat it with or on their bread or another bread-like food. Others totally dry the top of this cooked milk and call it 'milk leather.'

Many Chinese ethnic minority people put some milk in a warm place and ferment it until it gets a texture similar to tofu; and they drain off any excess liquid from this partially coagulated food. Some also filter it in cheesecloth or another fabric over a bowl to capture the liquid. Some do use that in their cooked foods; and some of them shape these semi-solids and eat them like cheese, dry some completely, and/or use it in their tea or with a stir-fried grain. They might call it 'milk tofu' or 'dry milk' or 'milk curds'.

Others drink their milk tea warm or hot, some boil it for three or more minutes and add a little salt, butter, or other things and drink or eat it hot or warm. They might make theirs with cow, yak, soy, or nut milks and enjoy them partially or completely solidified.

牛奶

These are economical shelf-stable protein sources that do nutritionally compare to ones made with cow or yak milks. Some, they serve plain, others sweetened or as a savory beverage or in a dish with salt, soy sauce, vegetables, meat, fish, or another protein source.

On the next page are a few recipes for these items. Many but not all do stay for several days without refrigeration, longer with it. Tofu pudding, called *douhau* by some, is a soft pudding made mixing soy milk with *nagari*, a natural magnesium chloride, or with gypsum for its coagulation abilities. Sweetened or put on top can be brown sugar, maltose, or another sweetener. It can be found for sale in many parts of China plain or stirred with red bean soup, durian, creamed black sesame paste, mango paste, any juice, chopped onions or scallions, soy sauce, minced mushrooms, cooked ground pork or another meat or fish, or just with minced garlic. Sweet or savory, these common milk-foods are eaten as a part of any Chinese meal, or as the entire meal in some places in China. (JMN)

continued on page 15

FRIED MILK

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh whole milk
- 6 Tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 Tablespoons custard powder
- 2 egg whites, lightly beaten in a bowl
- 1 cup milk
- 2/3 cup chicken broth
- dash of vegetable oil and one of salt
- 5 Tablespoons baking powder
- 1 Tablespoon yeast
- 3 Tablespoons oil
- 2 Tablespoons oyster sauce (optional)
- 2 Tablespoons super-fine sugar (optional)

Preparation:

1. Mix milk with half the cornstarch and half the custard powder and set this aside.
2. Then, heat a wok or pot, add the broth, and when it boils, reduce the heat and add the milk mixture and a dash of vegetable oil and the salt. Keep the heat low, mix in the egg whites and pour this mixture into a flat-bottomed metal plate. Let it set in the refrigerator and cool about half an hour, then mix in the baking powder and yeast, and simmer this until golden, then chill covered until totally set.
3. Now, add oil to a clean pot, and deep fry the milk solids until golden, then refrigerate them until firm. Serve with oyster sauce and the sugar, if desired.

DEEP-FRIED MILK CAKES

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- 3 cups milk
- 2 Tablespoons sweet butter
- 1 cup cornstarch
- 2 Tablespoons white sesame seeds, dry-fried on low heat
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar, blended until fine

Preparation:

1. Mix flour and milk in a small bowl until well-dissolved.
2. Melt butter in a small pot, pour in flour and milk batter and stir until thickened, then let this cool and congeal.
3. Turn out on a flat plate, cut into diamond-shaped pieces, and coat well with cornstarch.
4. Heat the oil, and fry until exterior is brown and crisp on both sides, and pat both of them with paper towels.
5. Mix ground sesame seeds and sugar. Sprinkle on both sides of the congealed milk, cut into squares, and serve.

MILK AND FISH

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup fresh whole milk
- 3 Tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 teaspoons custard powder
- 1/2 cup broth
- 1/2 teaspoon coarse salt
- 3 Tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 1 egg white
- 3 Tablespoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons yeast powder
- 1/2 cup any white cooked fish fillets, mashed
- 1 Tablespoon granulated sugar

Preparation:

1. Mix milk, cornstarch, and custard powder.
2. Heat a wok or saucepan, add the broth, then add the milk mixture, salt, and one-third of the oil and stir until sticky and slightly thickened, stir in the egg white, and cool until set in a flat pan.
3. Mix baking powder and yeast powder, then slowly add two or three tablespoons of cool water and the mashed cooked fish. Spread carefully on the coagulated milk mixture, then cut it into ten pieces.
4. Heat a clean wok or fry pan, add the remaining oil, and deep-fry the cut milk pieces topped with the fish mixture until golden on one side, turn over, then fry them on the other side until golden. Drain on paper towels, and put them on a platter, sprinkle with the sugar, and serve.

MILK WITH CRAB

Ingredients:

- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 cups crab meat
- 6 Tablespoons vegetable oil, divided in half
- 1/2 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1 sweet Chinese sausage, sliced thin, each slice cut in quarters
- 10 egg whites
- 1/2 teaspoon ground dried mushroom powder
- 1/2 cup slivered blanched toasted almonds

Preparation:

1. Bring milk to the boil, then allow it to cool, and stir in the cornstarch, and stir until it is completely lump-free.
2. Mix half the oil, the salt and the crab meat, and put in a pre-heated wok or fry pan and stir-fry until the crab meat is heated through, then remove it to a bowl lined with paper towels.
3. Put sausage pieces in a dry wok and stir-fry until they are almost crisp, then remove and dry them with several paper towels.
4. Beat egg whites until foamy but not dry, add the mushroom powder, then add the milk mixture, crab, and sausage pieces one by one, stirring gently after each addition. Then slowly add the rest of the oil mix with the foamed egg whites stirring until they are just about set. Sprinkle the almonds on top and put into preheated individual soup or rice bowls; then serve.

DAI MINORITY: FESTIVALS AND FOOD

These are the water-splashing folk also known as the water-sprinkling ethnic population. They enjoy this event beginning on the third day of their New Year, a festival that occurs around the middle of April. It is their Lunar New Year, and they dress in their finest and celebrate it. Designated as a Chinese National Intangible Holiday, during its first day or two. On this holiday, they wash all Buddha statues, and then make merry, watch dramas about the Dai, fly lanterns called *kongming* with candles in them, and after dark, let them fly into the heavens. They also fly kites, make music, and do lots of feasting during this Buddha birthday bash celebrating this icon they adore.

Their water-splashing festival is also celebrated in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, and everywhere Dai people live as this Dai Buddhist holiday is enjoyed by all Dai.

It has been enjoyed since the 12th century CE, and is a holiday the Dai adore. Before the holiday, they clean their houses and make them spic and span. They prepare and cook many fine Dai foods, have a Reunion Dinner the night before, ala New Year's Eve, and every guest who does drop in this night or any day of this week-long holiday are invited to enjoy it with them.

As already indicated, the Reunion dinner starts the night before, but if all the family can not get there for it, they may delay it until the night of the day it begins. They like having all the family there, gathering at the

home of the eldest, space permitting. Visiting elders and others are invited to join on the second day, and their water splashing events, as seen in the picture on this page, usually begins on the third day.



Water splashing is celebrating the coming year, good health, and their good fortune. The water splashed on this holiday is to wash away any ill fortune left over from the year before, and to set the tone for the coming year not wanting any this year either. The splashing usually begins on the third day and on that day they also have dragon boat races, fireworks at night called *gaosheng*, and singing and dancing day and night on every day of this upbeat holiday.

For the Dai, water is their God of Life. This god brings his people happiness, holiness, and light. For them, clean water early in the day makes everyone happy because together, they are washing away thoughts of any disaster that did or might befall them. Doing so, they chase each other with pails of water for good luck, and they bang on elephant drums for happiness. They also beat gongs to scare away evil spirits as they are making merry.

Something else happens during these festivities. On this holiday young folk seek marriage mates. Young girls having already made small decorated cotton bags to throw at the boys to attract their attention. If the boy it is aimed at fails to catch the one thrown at him, he needs to put flowers in her hair. If she fails to catch one he has thrown back at her, she must put a flower in the button

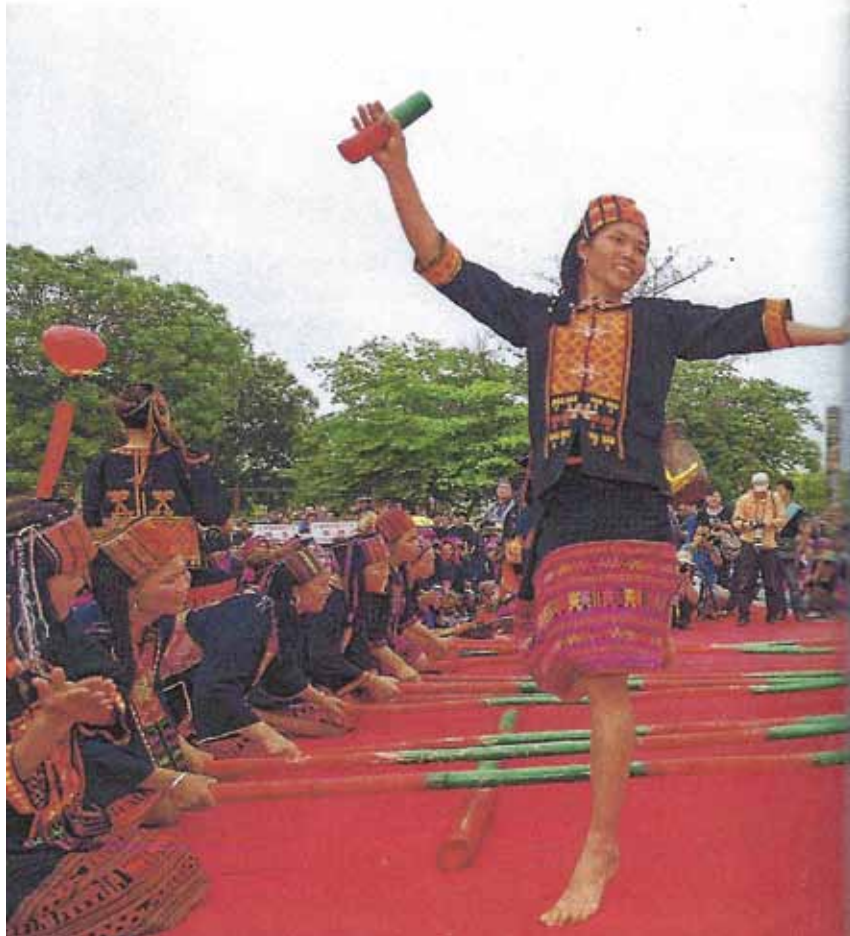
continued on page 17

DAI MINORITY: FESTIVALS AND FOOD

continued from page 16

hole of his shirt. Playing back and forth this way, if a boy and a girl take a fancy to each other, they can sneak away to a quiet place and initiate their romantic relationship; and many do.

Many boats have *gaosheng* or gunpowder-filled bamboo tubes at the ready. They ignite them and let them ascend upward. This is both fun and a contest. The tube that goes the highest will win a prize and that



Before this festival, girls and their mothers have prepared sticky rice cakes and special dishes for each other, for their guests, and for any close friends and family who drop by. They also use them when calling on neighbors and friends to wish them the best for the coming year.

In the streets, young and old do peacock and white elephant dances and they all love watching the races from the river banks. In front, that is in the bow of most boats, someone will shoot one or more arrows as they cheer each other on.

person will get lots of kudos if they are the winner or one of them.

They say these tubes are tribute to their gods, the water god included. They are also tributes to their sages, their folklore, and to each other, and they have been making these items for months in anticipation of this event.

The picture on this page is a girl doing a 'bamboo pole dance' one of many events done during this water-splashing holiday. (JMN)

ON OUR BOOKSHELVES



Kei Lum Chan and Dora Fong Chan. **China The Cookbook. London UK: Phaidon Press Limited, 2016. 720pp., 27.5 x 18.8cm., hardbound. ISBN 978-0-7148-7224-7. No price given.**

This book has seven hundred and ten recipes written in standard style. Its methods are detailed and wordy; and they

are in chapters titled: Appetizers and Salads; Soups; Fish & Seafood; Poultry; Meat; Vegetables, Tofu, and Eggs; Rice, Congee, & Noodles; Desserts; Guest Chefs. All recipes are one or two to a page, and titled in Chinese and English. Each one tells its region of origin, the cooking time needed, number served; and the needed ingredients, often in both ounces and grams. Its project editor is Michelle Meade, the many photographs are by D.L. Aiken, both tended to carefully.

An introductory chapter discusses the history of the Chinese food culture, regional cuisines including China's eight great ones and others, their twenty-three cooking techniques, and twenty-one equipment items; all on twenty-two pages. At the book's end are a hundred and sixty-three Chinese and English Glossary items discussed on fourteen-pages, the same number of pages have a three-column cross-referenced Index, a single-page gives a forty-three item Bibliography. One more page provides recipe notes.

The recipes are detailed, many are unusual such as one for goat and eel, another for unusual mushrooms. Each of three of the chapters (Fish & Seafood; Meat; and Vegetables, Tofu & Eggs) include more than one hundred recipes.

Some of the photographs, all in color, are of places in China, and most all are of its completed dishes. Some are not where expected as they are where the Chinese eat them including some of the forty-three soups in the Desserts chapter; the Chinese do eat many soups at the end of their meal.

MUSHROOMS WITH PEACH KERNELS

Ingredients:

2 ounces/50 G dried black mushrooms
1 cup (15 ounces/150 G)) peach kernels
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil and extra for deep frying
2 teaspoons sesame oil
½ ounce /20 G ginger, about an inch in length, half sliced, half chopped
1 cup (8 FL ounces/250 ML)vegetable broth
1 teaspoon thin soy sauce
½ teaspoon granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cornstarch
steamed rice, to serve

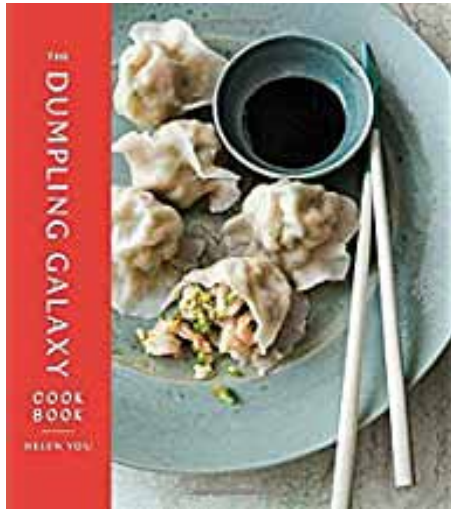
Preparation:

1. Put the mushrooms in a bowl, cover with cold water, and soak for at least twenty minutes or until softened. Remove the mushrooms, squeeze dry, and discard the stems.
2. Bring a saucepan of water to a boil, add the peach kernels, and blanch for four or five minutes until the skins begin to wrinkle. Drain and rinse under cold running water. Peel and dry the peach kernels thoroughly using paper towels.
3. Put the peach kernels into a wok or deep saucepan, add enough vegetable oil to cover them, and deep fry over medium-low heat for 5-10 minutes until the kernels are crunchy. Use a slotted spoon to carefully remove the kernels from the oil and drain on paper towels. Discard the vegetable oil.
4. Heat the sesame oil over medium heat. Add the ginger slices and stir-fry for one minute until fragrant. Put in the mushrooms and vegetable broth, bring to the boil, reduce to low heat and simmer for one hour. Stir frequently to prevent burning. Transfer the mushrooms to a bowl.
5. Heat the remaining two tablespoons oil in the wok over high heat, then add the chopped ginger and stir-fry for one minute until fragrant. Mix the mushrooms and peach kernels, add the soy sauce, sugar, and salt. After mixing the cornstarch with one tablespoon water, stir everything into the wok. Bring to a boil, stir for thirty seconds to thicken the sauce, then transfer to a serving plate and serve with rice, if desired.

continued on page 19

ON OUR BOOKSHELVES

continued from page 18



Helen You with Max Falkowitz. *The Dumpling Galaxy*. New York: Clarkson Potters Publishers, 2017. 128pp., 21x18.4cm., hardbound. ISBN 978-1-101-90663-7. 19.99US\$.

With fifty-four recipes written in standard style, one can find them in chapters titled: Classic dumplings, Green Dumplings; Faraway Flavors; Dessert Dumplings; Sauces and Sides. They are discussed, then illustrated by several photographers listed on its first pages, as are pictures of places in the Chinese area of Queens.

In the twelve pages before them is an introduction, a section titled: Chinese Dumplings 101, information about dumpling differences, tools to have on hand when making them, shaping and folding these small bites, and two pages with a picture of what the authors call their 'Galaxy of Flavors.'

Among the recipes are forty-three for dumplings; the one for Money Bags follows in the next column. All are clearly detailed, with tips accompanying most of them. On the back cover, Pete Wells of the New York Times says this eatery of the same name is "one of the most sought-out food destinations in New York City (that) sits at the end of the number 7 train in Flushing Queens."

After twenty recipes for the basic or common kinds are new flavor ideas in the Faraway chapter. These can help dumpling lovers create and enjoy new dumpling ideas from this long-line find in the outer borough of Queens just across the river from Manhattan.

MONEY BAGS

Ingredients:

1 and 3/4 pounds medium-size headless shrimp, peel and veins discarded, chopped into half-inch pieces
1 stalk celery, finely chopped
3 scallions. Finely chopped, white and green parts separated
2 Tablespoons sherry wine
1 Tablespoon soy sauce
1 Tablespoon hoisin sauce
1/2 teaspoons freshly grated ginger
1 teaspoon kosher salt
48 store-bought spring roll wrappers
4 cups vegetable oil

Preparation:

1. With hands, mix shrimp, scallions, wine, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, ginger, and salt.
2. Place spring roll wrapper on flat surface, cut 1/2 inch strip off one edge and set aside, layer second wrapper on top at 45-degree angle making eight-point star, and put one tablespoon of the filling in the center and pat to get rid of any bubbles, then gather the corners to make a pouch.
3. Securely wrap the reserved strip around the neck of the pouch tucking one end into the ring, and wet one finger and seal this strip around the neck. Repeat making twenty-four dumplings.
4. In a large pot, heat oil over medium-high heat; put five or six dumplings in the hot oil, and fry for two minutes; then transfer them to a paper-towel-lined plate. They will darken as they cool. Repeat until all are fried; then serve immediately.

continued on page 20

ON OUR BOOKSHELVES

continued from page 19



Robert Ji-Song Ku, Martin F. Manalansan IV, and Anita Mannur, editors. *Eating Asian American*. New York NY: New York University Press, 2013. 444pp., 25.4x17.7cm., paperback. ISBN 978-1-4798-6925-1. No price given.

This 'Food Studies Reader' has twenty chapters by seventeen authors, three by its editors. There are no recipes, very few b/w pictures, and just one in color on the cover mimicking Thai siracha sauce. Almost all chapters are from 2010 and 2011 meetings of the Association for Asian American Studies, many by cohorts at Binghamton University in New York State.

The book reminds of social, political, economic, and historical forces, also power inequalities its authors say have circumscribed Asians both materially and symbolically in the alimentary realm forcing them into lifetimes of restaurant or agricultural work or in food industries, too. They tout it as the first book-length collection of scholarly essays in these areas. The introduction and elsewhere mentions several non-Asian scholarship items pointing out racialization, Asian politics, and some insights. It falls short in its four hundred forty-four pages and sixteen-page bibliography.

Too many Asian groups and authors are not mentioned, a disservice given to populations and people they fail to mention. These may be folk not attending these very meetings where the editors met and conceived this volume. It is a start, and we do hope they expand their own research and writing in future publications be they books, essay compilations, articles, or other items in print in the US, Europe, Asia, or anywhere.



Huang, Eddie. *Fresh Off the Boat*. New York NY: Spiegel & Gram Trade Paperbacks, 2013. 277pp., 20.4x13cm., paperback. ISBN 978-0-8129-8335-7. 15.00 US\$.

This book has no recipes; and is not a cookbook. It is often funny, a provocative true tale and memoir of a Chinese-American boy growing up and trying to fit in, but does not. He finds himself in a stifling culture and not fitting in any level nor any time. As the son of a brash intense restaurateur father, both have a passion for food as this son seek different ways to seek it. Like his dad, he eventually becomes a chef and a restaurateur finding his place in society, though not really saying so.

From boyhood through manhood, he tells of trials and tribulations growing up. This memoir of his living a continent away from his heritage, a brash youngster who does not fit in, does show him loving his family and friends, always searching for things including the perfect dumpling. He functions better as he ages, continues his search often unaware he is doing so.

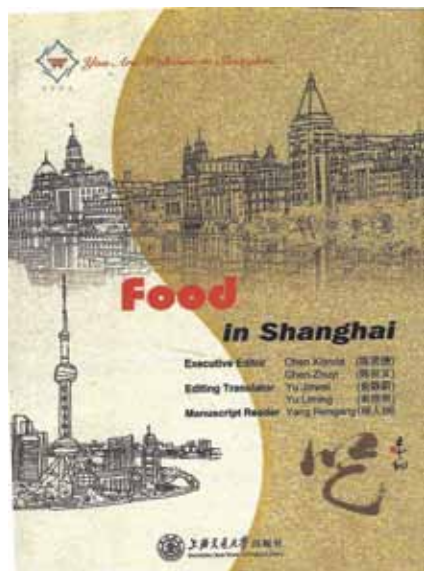
Reading his trials is sometime a belly laugh, often a tale of his tribulations. This book and its tales reflect his anger. It is anything but about a kid from a model minority as he shares his inability to cope in an environment he does not seem able to deal with. Reading what he goes through is delving into his anger more than his ethnicity as he tries to adjust to his new environment.

The book ends abruptly hardly learning about his becoming an American, a cook, or a restaurateur; so does this review!

continued on page 21

ON OUR BOOKSHELVES

continued from page 20



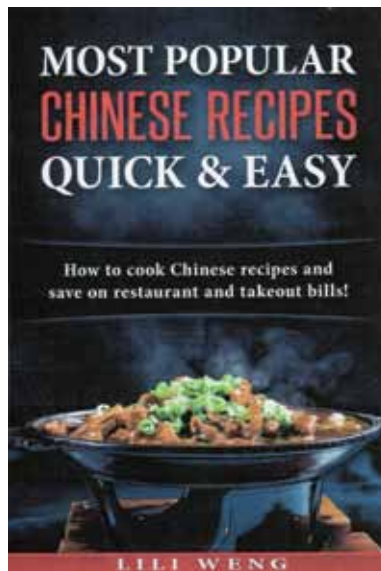
Wang and Naili
Xiande, chief
editors. *Food
in Shanghai.*
Shanghai,
China:
Shanghai
Jiao Tong
University
Press, 2010.
244 pp.,
18.4x12.9cm.,
paperback.
ISBN 978-7-313-
06378-6. 39¥
Chinese ¥.

Not a cookbook, this volume has no recipes. It is a volume in the 'You are Welcome to Shanghai' series; the other three are titled: *Entertainment in Shanghai*, *Tour in Shanghai*, and *Lodgement in Shanghai*. They were published just prior to 'Expo 2010' in the vibrant East Coast city hosting it.

In five parts, it details eighteen items in the 'Traditional Chinese Restaurants' chapter, five others in the one titled 'Well-known Specialty Restaurants,' five others in the 'Elegant Western Restaurants' chapter, thirteen others in the 'Trendy Dim Sums in Shanghai' one, and five more in the 'Unforgettable Traditional Shanghai Classics.'

Each restaurant is thoroughly vetted with pages of information, hours of operation, address and telephone number, and background including when it started, and many of its dishes described in detail.

This thorough look at almost all of the many, many places mentioned are worth knowing about. Read about them, intellectually taste and delight in the dishes they have. Get to know the foods, many are true gems. The book is a joy to read and relish!



Weng, Lili.
*Most Popular
Quick and Easy
Chinese Recipes.*
Middletown DE:
no publisher
given, 64pp.,
23 x 15.5 cm,
paperback. ISBN
9781539929642.
No price either.

The front cover says "How to cook Chinese recipes and save on takeout bills!" The rear cover has four well-spaced sentences about the food in this volume. On both there are one and four color photographs, respectively, of recipes in it; one of the four on the rear cover is almost obliterated by the ISBN picture in front of it. All are simple and easy to make, except for the one of Peking Duck that can in no way be cooked in the time recommended.

The recipe pages have no color pictures. The recipes themselves skip spaces between textual lines and they use standard style. There are twenty-five recipes, most are Chinese, the ones that are not are Americanized Chinese recipes such as is Crab Rangoon.

Before the recipes, two pages at the beginning include copyright and disclaimer information. After the recipes are two pages with charts of Chinese tools and utensils, a half-page with text titled Conclusion, and five conversion pages of oven temperatures and metric and Imperial conversions for volume, liquid, and weights. Two others are chart abbreviations, though not in page order given in the contents listing.

The recipes are for common Chinese-American restaurant dishes, most are Cantonese, two are soup, a few are dim sum items, and most are main course dishes. The first is for Fried Rice, the last for Perfect Rice, and those in between are in no logical order. Every recipe gives the number of servings, preparation and cooking times, as: Prep Time and Cook Time.

TIBETAN BUTTER TEA

Known as *po cha* or *cha suma*, this churned tea is something Tibetans love. To make it they use black tea leaves, yak butter, and salt mixed with water. This tea is unique to Tibetans and others in and near the Himalayan mountains. It is an acquired taste somewhat like a salty soup with no sweetness. Many wonder why it is so loved, but those that do like it, adore it. Always served to guests, they commonly drink several bowls in small sips; and we must advise they never drain their bowl of tea entirely. They do not need to because someone constantly tops it off.

It is common to boil black tea leaves for a long time, add the butter with some using butter made from cows, and adding lots of salt. This they strain with a colander or a horse-hair devise, and allow it to sit on a brazier keeping it warm all day. They use special tall churns, and if you go to a monastery, a monk might pour some for you. Modern folk do use tea bags, but for those that go out for Tibetan tea, these churns are what to expect. As to the butter, it is added at the end, just before drinking.

Tibetans, in their language, also call it *ja srub ma* which they tell us means churned tea. If one goes to Nepal or Bhutan one gets it there, too. Correctly, it has lots of black tea leaves scraped off a tea brick of pressed leaves often made with *pu-er* which is a fermented tea. Tibetans we know like to drink theirs with yak butter, an acquired taste. They like to drink it morning, noon, and night, and in their climate, it does a great job of keeping chills away from them.

Most families have a pot of this tea keeping it warm usually in a copper pot on their stove day and night. They drink it often, know it has lots of calories, and always serve some to their guests. Most sip it slowly from wooden or China cups they like filled to the tippy top. They never leave their tea untouched after they pour it, nor do they wait to have it after it cools down. They like it very hot, and start drinking it immediately after theirs is poured. Some they might pour into or on or over their *tsampa*.

Tsampa is a major food to Tibetans. It is made with ground highland barley, tastes nutty, and they love theirs with yak butter as it takes away all chills they feel in their very cold climate. One chap educating us said that butter tea was brought to their country when Princess Wenchang came from China to marry their King named Songsten Gampo. That was in the seventh century CE.

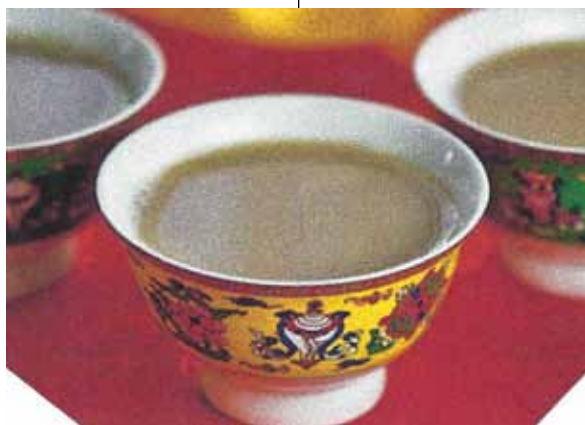
Then the Tibetan plateau was divided into three regions known as the U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo regions. The first or U-Tsang is modern-day Tibet. The second or the Kham region is Tibet's Autonomous Region along with the western part of the Sichuan Province, the southern part of the Qinghai Province, and the northwestern part of the Yunnan Province. The third or Amdo region includes both the northern and eastern parts of the Qinghai Province, the southwestern part of the Gansu Province, and the northern part of the Sichuan Province, each having small differences in culture, culinary, and language.

Amdo people, for example, like to drink salty milk tea but not salty butter tea. The poor folk in this region sell their butter. They milk their yaks every day, spring and summer, heat that milk, and separate the butter from the milk and cream; then they use the milk for their tea and their *tsampa*. They like both mixed with some curds and with many black tea leaves. They tell us they eat highly caloric *tsampa* with their hands and use no flatware to do so.

In the Kham region, nomads and others like their tea slightly sweetened and mixed with yak milk. The nomads in the Tibetan Autonomous Region of U-Tsang like theirs made into what they call 'butter tea.' Many of them live at seventeen thousand feet above sea level and they really do need many calories to stay warm and healthy. They like good mind-body balance, strong blood and muscles, and they like to eat fat and marrow, and drink many fluids.

These people also like to meditate, trek long distances, go on pilgrimages, and tend to their other daily activities.

continued on page 23



TIBETAN BUTTER TEA

continued from page 22

One chap told us he uses extra salt to regulate his water balance. It counteracts many of the diuretics he gets in his black tea. He added that folks in his region have been using Tibetan tea since Tang times (618 - 709 CE) when the Chinese Princess came and married their Tibetan King.

He said the barley in their *tsampa* adds fiber, vitamins and minerals that he needs; and he specifically mentioned the selenium and magnesium in it. He confirmed that tea is always on his stove, he drinks it often, and it helps him when trekking long distances. He also often adds rice, orange rind, and spice(s) to increase its taste and texture.

He said that his king taught him and his people to appreciate five fermented pu-er types of tea. They are *bod jha* tea made with scraped black brick tea, butter, and salt; *jha thang* tea made with similar tea and small pieces of butter floating on its top; *jha kar* tea which is weaker and with less caffeine and more milk than the other teas mentioned; *mang jha* tea which is a special tea reserved for ceremonies; and *njar jha* tea, a sweeter tea made with fewer spices and made differently. He said all these teas are loved and often served in special wood or china tea cups with lids. He added that they are decorated with silver or gold on their exteriors, and that this king taught him and others that before they sip any tea to chant a prayer and blow the butter around the top of the tea. He did tell us that this king taught his people to energetically stir some *tsampa* into their tea, and to sip it slowly while enjoying it. (JMN)



TIBETAN BUTTER TEA IS PO CHA

Ingredients:

1 heaping Tablespoon loose black tea from the Pemagul area of Tibet

1 tea churn they call a *chandong*
salt, to taste

½ cup, more or less, full-fat yak milk, to taste

2 Tablespoons full fat yak butter, to taste

Preparation:

1. Boil five or six cups of water called *chaku*, and put the tea leaves in and boil it for five minutes or so, then strain the tea leaves out of the water.

3. Put one quarter of a teaspoon of salt, two tablespoons of yak butter, and a half a teaspoon of milk powder into their *chandong* which is a kind of a churn to shake the tea for two to five minutes or more. This tea or *po cha* tastes better the longer it is churned or shaken. A blender can be used instead of a Tibetan churn like the ones on this page.



FIN FISH: ANCIENT AND CURRENT

Paleolithic to present, early Emperors to today's ruling class, fine Chinese food always includes fish with fins on meal laden tables. These swimmers made it to tables and tummies by line, skiff, or boat, and more recently by express courier, train, plane, and jet. Virtually every kind of fish with fins has and continues to reach the Chinese fresh and raw, cooked in myriad ways, also salted, dried, pickled, fermented, and more from earliest times to today.

Early fishing boats never set sail without making proper tributes to Tin Hau, the patron saint of Hong Kong and further afield fishermen. They have been doing so for more than five thousand years in China catching many kinds of fin fish along their more than three thousand mile coastline. They have done the same in their many freshwater lakes, canals, ponds, and rivers.

Ways and varieties of fish were written about before Fan Li, a military strategist in the Late Spring and Autumn Period (770 - 476 BCE) wrote China's first farming/fishing manual. He and others did pave the way for China's extensive and ever-growing aquatic industry. Ideas came from things seen in elaborate kitchen murals such as one in a tomb in Honan excavated in the early 1960s showing ten people working in a kitchen, one holding up a dish of fin fish.

There were many items dated before and after China's capital was moved to Luoyi, a city we now call Louyang in the Spring And Autumn period (770 - 476 BCE). Some years later, about 300 BCE, we read that King Wen had a lake dug so fish could swim freely. Another item we read says salted fish was wrapped in rice and left to ferment. These and other items discussed in late Han times (circa 20 - 220 CE), some appearing in a book titled: *History of the Later Han* about fish as medications saying 'a patient was seen spitting out half a gallon of worms mixed with pieces of raw fish' assuming both were taken together.

We know of fin fish located in *The Book of Songs*, said to be from the late Zhou Dynasty (11th century BCE to 256 BCE) asking "if you eat fish must it be bream from the Yellow River," and of three species of sea bream called *tiao*, and probably other fin fish from China's waterways including the Yangtze and the Pearl Rivers.

Fin fish were used at special meals and special gifts in early times. One was given to Confucius (551 - 479 BCE) by the Duke Zhou of Lu honoring the birth of his son. That was a carp when this sage became a father around the age of seventy.

There are other honorific fish references including one from the Han Dynasty (202 BCE - 200 CE) written about in a dictionary known as *Shou Wen Jie Zi*. It was completed in 100 CE, and it discusses more than seventy different species of fin fish. These honorific fish were gifts for people and their tables, and they did not just come from these three rivers. Some may have come from one of China's four seas, five lakes, and/or its numerous ponds.

Some were probably eaten raw as did Confucius who said he ate 'refined thin sliced raw fish called *kuai*. It may have never been sliced too thin for him. Thus, raw or prepared, fin fish were nor new foods nor new gift ideas long before the birth of the son of this sage born a year after his marriage.

Lots later, poet Su Dong Po in 1080 CE, wrote that "seeing the river's broad curves I see her fine fish." He and people everywhere hung curtains to catch them stretched between two boats and weighted down with iron hanging to the river bed in paths of fish.

One can read about old and new ways to catch fin fish in a recent volume titled: *A History of the Fishing Industry in China*. In it and thanks to anthropologists and archeologists, modern gourmets and others can look back at fish found or caught then eaten; and they can look at fossilized remains including those of the common carp, the grass carp, and other fish.

Paleolithic finds near the Upper Cave at Zhoukoudian near Beijing and others show hundreds of kinds of fin fish available in early China as they are today. Not only were whole or parts of fish available, but fish sauce made from fin fish was used as a major Chinese condiment for more than three thousand years, especially in coastal regions.

How it was and is made remains basically the same. It uses natural fermentation, fresh fin fish put in high

continued on page 25



FIN FISH: ANCIENT AND CURRENT

continued from page 24

concentrations of brine and kept outdoors for two or three years before being collected as fish sauce. Nowadays the time is shortened as they incubate the fish at fifty or sixty degrees Celsius for hours, not years.

Actually, there are two types of fermented fish products, the one mentioned and one a fish paste. Both were and are popular in rice and other dishes; and both contain significant amounts of protein and essential amino acids including lysine. The latter one compensates for low lysine in rice, and both are good sources of other minerals.

Fin fish contain lots of protein, more than milk, eggs, or beef, and are readily digested and of good biologic value. Their oils are rich sources of vitamins A and D, have considerable iodine, fluorine, and phosphorus, and if small and their bones are consumed, they provide lots of calcium, too.

Some worry that there are good fish and bad fish. The latter can have high amounts of mercury, PCBs, and other deleterious items, but most have healthy fats reducing risks if not too much is consumed. Professionals say two meals a week will do, preferably not deep fried when cooked. They recommend herring, salmon, sardines, and swordfish, among other sources. Some of them worry about tuna as there are some from places that can also have lots of mercury with their many omega-3 fatty acids.

The Chinese classify all fin fish as nutritious and valuable food. They believe people should eat lots as increased fish consumption is linked to lower risk of heart problems, reduced risk of stroke, and reduced mood disorders and depression.

That said, here are some fin fish recipes to include as you enjoy greater consumption of them; and as Emperor Kangxi (1662 - 1722) wisely said, "We ate fish kept fresh on ice, yellow croaker wrapped in lotus leaves, snow white shad stuck on willow twigs, and others from boats of fish vendors everywhere." Note a typical fish in tomato sauce shown on page 27. (JMN)

RAW FISH CHINESE-STYLE

Ingredients:

½ pound firm white fish, very thinly sliced
2 Tablespoons hot peanut oil, ½ tablespoon set aside
¼ teaspoon dry mustard powder, mixed with set aside peanut oil
½ teaspoon Chinese white vinegar

Preparation:

1. Carefully dry every fish slice.
2. Mix set aside peanut oil with the mustard powder and the vinegar and brush this on one side of each slice, and plate in overlapping slices in a design on a small platter. Refrigerate covered until very cold (about one or two hours), then serve.



continued on page 26

FIN FISH: ANCIENT AND CURRENT

continued from page 25

STEAMED FISH

Ingredients:

1½ ponds fish fillets, cut across in two-inch pieces
2 Tablespoons preserved dried turnip, minced
2 teaspoons salted black beans, mashed
½ teaspoon coarse salt
1 teaspoon sesame oil
2 teaspoons thin soy sauce
1 slice fresh ginger, minced
1 small scallion, minced

Preparation:

1. Put fish in large heat-proof bowl.
2. Mix minced turnip, black beans, salt, sesame oil, soy sauce, and the minced ginger and scallion and pour into the bowl with the pieces of fish and gently toss just one time, then steam for twenty minutes, put this bowl on a plate, and serve

ZHEJIANG FISH BALL AND WATER SHIELD SOUP

Ingredients:

1/3 pound any white fin fish, minced
1 square firm bean curd, minced
½ teaspoon coarse salt
1 pound water shield, fresh or bottled and drained, and cut in one-inch pieces
2 quarts fish or chicken stock
garnish of minced cooked ham, and fresh coarsely chopped cilantro, and/or other greens

Preparation:

1. Rinse and dry fish, and mince it with bean curd and salt. Squeeze this together and make one-inch balls.
2. Bring half the stock to a simmer, and add a few fish balls at a time. After eight minutes, remove them with a slotted spoon and set them in a bowl, cover, and refrigerate.
3. When ready to serve the soup, put stock, fish balls, and water shield pieces into a pot and bring to the boil for three or four minutes. Then put them into a pre-heated soup tureen or pre-heated individual bowls, add garnish, and serve.

CARP WITH HOT BEAN SAUCE

Ingredients:

1 two-pound fresh carp scaled, guts and gills discarded
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
½ cup chicken or fish stock
1 Tablespoon minced fresh ginger
1 Tablespoon minced fresh garlic
1 Tablespoon hot bean sauce
1 Tablespoon fermented rice
½ teaspoon coarse salt
½ teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon Chinese white vinegar
1 teaspoon Chinese Shao Xing rice wine
1 Tablespoon cornstarch with like amount of cold water
1 scallion, coarsely chopped
2 teaspoons sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Make three parallel cuts in the flesh on each side of the fish down to close to the center bone.
2. Heat wok, add the oil, then in half minute, add and stir-fry the ginger and garlic, and in one minute, add the bean sauce and the fermented rice and stir for another one minute then add the fish and the stock and reduce the heat to a simmer and cook it for five minutes. Turn the fish over carefully with chopsticks and simmer for another five minutes.
3. Stir the cornstarch mixture and pour this over the carp and in one minute put the fish on a pre-heated platter and garnish it with the scallion pieces. Next, pour the sesame oil over the fish and serve.

**NEED A
SPECIAL RECIPE?
ASK AND
WE MAY INCLUDE IT**

continued on page 27

FIN FISH: ANCIENT AND CURRENT

continued from page 26

FIN FISH TAILS

Ingredients:

2 fish tails, scales discarded, each cut in half the long way, discarding the bones
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
2 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and smashed
5 fresh whole ginger slices
1 teaspoon sugar
1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
2 teaspoons of cornstarch mixed with one Tablespoon cold water
½ teaspoon Chinese white vinegar
1 teaspoon sesame oil
3 Tablespoons thin soy sauce
1 scallion cut into one-inch pieces

Preparation:

1. Heat wok, add the vegetable oil, then brown the garlic and ginger pieces for one minute.
2. Next, add fish tailpieces, skin side down and fry for one minute, then add the soy sauce, sugar, and the rice wine, cover, and simmer ten minutes.
3. Uncover, add the cornstarch mixture after just stirring it, then add the vinegar, sesame oil, and the soy sauce, and stir gently for one minute.
4. Put scallions on top of the fish tail pieces, put fish tail and the sauce on a pre-heated platter, and serve.

FISH-STUFFED BEAN CAKES

Ingredients:

½ pound skinless and boneless fish fillets
½ pound peeled shrimp, veins discarded. minced
½ teaspoon coarse salt
1 egg white
7 half-pound firm bean cakes, each cut on the diagonal, making a pocket on their cut side
1 to 2 Tablespoons cornstarch
1 cup vegetable oil

Preparation:

1. Mash fish fillets, and mix them with the minced shrimp, salt, and the egg white. Divide this into fourteen batches and make a flattened ball with each batch.
2. Stuff each triangle with the flattened fish and gently flatten them a bit more being careful not to break the bean curd triangle, and dip the long edge in the cornstarch shaking off any excess.
3. Heat oil in a wok or deep pan, and fry a few of the triangles until light tan, then drain them on paper towels and fry some more until all are fried.
4. Put them on a pre-heated platter, and serve.

SEA BASS WITH HOISIN SAUCE

Ingredients:

1 whole sea bass, scales, guts, and gills discarded
3 Tablespoons dark soy sauce
2 Tablespoons hoisin sauce
1 Tablespoon hot chili oil
2 Tablespoons sesame oil
1 teaspoon minced fermented black beans
1 Tablespoon minced fresh ginger
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1 Tablespoon cornstarch mixed with the same amount of cold water
1 cup angle-sliced snow peas, strings discarded

Preparation:

1. Dry fish inside and out.
2. Mix the next six ingredients (soy sauce through ginger) together and marinate the sea bass for two hours in it covered, in the refrigerator.
3. Put fish and the marinade in a heat-proof bowl or platter with a one-inch or greater edge, cover with foil with holes pieced on the top side ten times with a fork, then steam this fish over boiling water for twenty minutes.
4. While the fish is steaming, boil snow peas for three minutes, drain, and keep them warm in a hot oven.
5. Uncover, and serve on this or another clean pre-heated platter, surrounding the fish with the cooked snow peas.



continued on page 28

FIN FISH: ANCIENT AND CURRENT

continued from page 27

SICHUAN DRY-COOKED FIN FISH

Ingredients:

2 pounds whole fin fish, scales, gills, guts discarded, rinsed and dried with paper towels
1 teaspoon salt
3 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
1 cup vegetable oil
1 dried Sichuan pickled pepper, seeds discarded, pepper slivered
3 Tablespoons hot soybean paste
5 scallions, white part slivered, one set aside
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, minced
2 large cloves fresh garlic, minced
1 cup fish or chicken stock
1 Tablespoon cornstarch, optional

Preparation:

1. Rub salt and wine on the fish skin and its cavity, and set aside for ten minutes.
2. Heat wok, add the oil, and deep-fry the fish on each side until the skin shrinks, about one minute per side, then remove the fish to a plate, and half the remaining oil to a small bowl.
3. Add the Sichuan pickled pepper and all the prepared soybean paste, scallion, ginger, and garlic pieces to the remaining oil in the wok and stir for one minute or until the oil becomes red, then add the stock and bring to a boil.
4. Return the fish, reduce the heat to a low boil and cook it ladling the stock over the fish for ten minutes, adding the cornstarch mixed with one tablespoon cold water, if desired, until somewhat thickened, about another minute.
5. Remove the fish to a platter, pour any remaining sauce over, sprinkle the set aside scallion slivers, and serve.

FISH, GREENS, AND GARLIC

Ingredients:

1 pound fin fish fillet pieces, rinsed and dried with paper towels
1 egg. Beaten well
2 Tablespoons cornstarch
1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger
½ teaspoon sesame oil
1 cup coarsely chopped Chinese greens (such as bok cai and/or silk squash)
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
5 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and sliced
½ cup chicken or vegetable stock
2 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
1 teaspoon sesame oil
½ teaspoon ground white pepper
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 Tablespoon water chestnut flour

Preparation:

1. Dip fish fillets in egg, then coat them with cornstarch, and refrigerate them in a single layer on a plate for one hour.
2. Blanch the greens in two cups of boiling water, drain, and set them aside.
3. Heat a wok or fry pan, add the vegetable oil and fry the fish fillets, one side at a time, until crisp and almost done, then remove them to a pre-heated platter covered with paper-towels.
4. Add the garlic slices to the remaining oil in the pan and fry for one minute, then add the stock and greens, and stir-fry for one minute and take them out with a slotted spoon putting them on a pre-heated platter, and move the fish fillets to this platter.
5. Mix sesame oil, ground pepper, sugar, water chestnut flour, and two tablespoons cold water and put this in a very hot wok, stir once, and let it come to a boil while stirring until it thickens, then pour it over the fish and greens, and serve.

continued on page 29

FIN FISH: ANCIENT AND CURRENT

continued from page 28

COD FISH FILLETS WITH BITTER MELONS

Ingredients:

2 large cod fillets, scales and skin removed and discarded
½ cup vegetable oil
3 slices fresh ginger, slivered
3 cloves fresh garlic, mashed
½ pound bitter melon, peeled, seeded, and cut in three-inch chunks
1 teaspoon thin soy sauce
2 teaspoons oyster sauce
½ teaspoon coarse salt
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
2 teaspoons cornstarch mixed with the same amount of cold water

Preparation:

1. Mix fish, egg and cornstarch.
2. Heat a wok or fry pan, add the oil, and fry the fish fillets one each side until golden, then remove them to a pre-heated platter.
3. Add the ginger and the garlic and stir-fry for one minute, then add the pieces of bitter melon and stir-fry them for two minutes before adding one cup of boiling water and simmer for three minutes, then return the fish fillets and all other ingredients to the wok or pan and simmer for two minutes, then serve.

BEEF AND FISH

Ingredients:

2 teaspoons rendered chicken fat
1 thin slice fresh ginger, minced
1 clove fresh garlic, minced
2 Tablespoons brown sugar
2 Tablespoons dark soy sauce
½ pound flank steak, sliced thinly, then cut into one-inch strips
½ pound thin slices of boneless and skinless fish fillets, cut into one-inch strips
3 Tablespoons cornstarch
½ cup vegetable oil
2 scallions, cut lengthwise in half, then into one-inch pieces

Preparation:

1. Heat wok, then add chicken fat, and stir-fry the ginger and garlic for half minute, then stir in the brown sugar and soy sauce.
2. Mix beef and fish strips with the cornstarch, then add to the wok and stir-fry until the meat is no longer pink and no longer than two minutes, then set aside in a strainer over a bowl.
3. Heat a clean wok, add the vegetable oil, then add the set aside the drained beef and fish, and stir in the soy sauce mixture and toss well before adding the scallion pieces, and stirring two or three times then transferring to a pre-heated bowl, and serve.

FLOUNDER, GARLIC AND CONPOY

Ingredients:

1 lotus leaf, soaked for twenty minutes in warm water
1 dried scallop (conpoy) soaked until soft, then hand-torn into thin shreds
1 pound boneless skinless flounder dusted with one Tablespoons cornstarch
1 scallion, shredded or angle sliced
2 Tablespoons peeled minced garlic
½ teaspoon coarse salt
1 Tablespoon each thin and dark soy sauce

Preparation:

1. Line a bamboo steamer basket with the soaked lotus leaf.
2. Add the shredded conpoy, then the cornstarch-dusted fish fillets, the shredded scallion, and minced garlic and the salt. Sprinkle with both soy sauces, and close the lotus leaf over and around the fish.
3. Put over boiling water and steam covered for ten minutes, remove to a platter, then serve.

FISH IN LETTUCE WRAP

Ingredients:

1 pound minced boneless and skinless white-flesh fish
1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
2 Tablespoons hoisin sauce
2 Tablespoons thin soy sauce
1½ Tablespoons cornstarch
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
2 teaspoons fresh ginger, minced
8 ounces drained canned water chestnuts, sliced thinly, each cut in quarters
1 small onion quartered then each quarter sliced thinly
salt and ground black pepper, to taste
10 whole leaves butter, bibb, or another soft lettuce

Preparation:

1. Mix fish, rice wine, hoisin and soy sauces, and the cornstarch.
2. Heat a wok, add the vegetable oil, and stir-fry the garlic and ginger for one minute, then add the fish mixture and stir-fry stirring gently two minutes, then put into a strainer over a bowl.
3. Now add the water chestnut and onion pieces to the wok and the salt and pepper and stir-fry for two minutes, then remove with a slotted spoon to the bowl with the fish mixture.
4. Put a heaping tablespoon (about one-tenth of the fish and vegetable mixture) on to a lettuce leaf, fold in the ends and roll the leaf closed sitting it on the end of the lettuce leaf on a pre-heated serving platter. Repeat until all are rolled, then serve them immediately.

ON MANY MENUS

Macao & Wok; Truhlarska 1108/3; Prague, the Czech Republic; their single phone/fax is: 420 222 316 093; their website is: www.macaorestaurant.cz

Opened in 1993, this restaurant is one stop on the Yellow Line from the center of town. Boasting 'classical Chinese' and 'original Chinese' food it says in their language and English one sees before one enters. We were worried walking from the metro as no one we queried a long block away had ever heard of its existence. We queried two men, both employees at the desk of a hotel half a block away. They were no help, either. Three fellows some fifty feet from the front door on the corner and near a large sign above the entrance did no better. Then, I tripped and as I straightened up, I looked up. On the front of the building was Chinese writing and I did recognize the first two characters; they said "China."

Here, the menu is in Chinese, Japanese, and English serving Peking Duck, Sichuan Duck, Pork Tongue, Seafood Fried Noodles, Baby Bok Cai, Ma Po Tofu, and other foods on their fifty-five page menu. On their tables are salt and pepper shakers, soy sauce in a small bottle, hot sauce in a smaller container, and a glass of toothpicks. Our tea came quickly; it was in a glass teapot. Our teacups were small black Chinese ones. Also on the table were two different mustards and a dish of horseradish, all in a basket.

The tea was Jasmine, every setting came with a flat plate, and a knife and fork. Just before our dishes came, a silver-colored rectangular-shaped heater for them arrived with two candles to keep our food hot, and they maintained their temperature throughout.

Every portion was huge in this some sixty seat main area that included a large round table, but not the private room we saw on our way to the bathroom.

The Pork Tongue appetizer was excellent. It was thin sliced, in soy sauce, and accompanied by a few scallion pieces. The Mao Doufu arrived in lots of super sauce and with lots of pork in it, the bean curd was silken and spicy and could not have been better. We did have duck two ways, one a half order of Peking Duck, the other sliced in two rows on lots of green peppers, bamboo shoots, and a few onion pieces, all stir-fried before they plated it all.

We also had Seafood Fried Noodles, a huge dish topped with cilantro and parsley, and filled with shrimp and squid, leeks, mushrooms, bean sprouts, carrot strips, and two big mussels. No way could we even put a dent in this huge portion. We noted others eating nearby left lots over, as we did. We wished we could return another time, their lunch menu had fifty-five dishes, one-third of them shown plated and in color, caloric and nutrient content given for them.



continued on page 31

ON MANY MENUS

continued from page 30



China Station; 1015 Route 25A' Stony Brook, NY 21790; phone: (631) 751-6888

This station stop is almost always crowded as they make delicious toothsome hand-pulled noodles for university students and their other customers. Eat them there or take them out, either demands coming back for more. Their dumplings and pancakes, the soups and congees, all hot and cold dishes, and those with noodles pulled here at this eatery cry out for seconds, thirds, and more.

Though the menu shows a smiling caricature of a chef pulling their signature noodles, the soups and noodle dishes and all items are seven-day a week fine renditions of China's northern-style foods. This is an elbow-to-elbow noisy place that serves good dishes, soups and congees of dozens of descriptions, and many bun, noodle, and pancake items all under ten bucks.

For those not knowing what to order, turn the menu over to see the twenty color photographs of the more than one hundred selections. The aromas from the many woks and soup pots entice as do loaded plates and bowls going by. Good luck as one tries to select among every item. Yes, all are under ten dollars. Tasting is no more help, it just adds to wanting more than the stomach will hold. Over-ordering is what we have done on more than one occasion. Repeated visits are better to enjoy the well-laden bowls and plates at this station.



This is the menu cover, and in it are many pictures of dishes served here.

SOUPS AND CONGEEES: FUJIANESE AND OTHER

Soups are what those from the Fujian Province love most during and/or at all meal times. For those who are Fujianese, no meal is considered a meal without two or more soups, served at any time during a meal or when enjoying a snack.

This magazine has published many recipes for many soups from the Fujian Province though not always so designated in an article. Many soup recipes in the last few issues elicited positive comments and considerable appreciation. With that in mind, the following recipes from our files are shared for your pleasure.

Folks in Fujian love soups made with fermented rice, so feel free to add some to any of these recipes. For those that prefer their foods piquant, any one of them can be enhanced with a favorite hot sauce. Those suggestions are valuable for the nine soups in Volume 24(I) which had a classic *mala* pot popular for Sichuan soups on its cover and nine different soups within. The large number of letters of appreciation is why we provide eight other soups that follow. Enjoy them all! (JMN)

AMARANTH AND DOUFU SOUP

Ingredients:

½ pound soft *doufu*, cubed
4 Chinese black mushrooms, soaked for one hour, stems discarded, caps slivered
5 fresh water chestnuts, peeled and minced
1 teaspoon salt
6 cups chicken broth
1 carrot, peeled and slivered
1 teaspoon sesame oil
2 cups amaranth leaves, half chopped, half cut in half
1 Tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 1 cup cold water

Preparation:

1. In a large pot, add the cubes of doufu, mushrooms, water chestnuts, salt, and the chicken broth and the carrot and bring to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer for ten minutes.
2. Now add the amaranth leaves and the cornstarch mixture, raise the temperature to the boil, and stir for two minutes, then serve.



continued on page 33

SOUPS AND CONGEES: FULIANESE AND OTHER

continued from page 32

OLD CUCUMBER SOUP

Ingredients:

2 cups ground or finely minced beef
2 shallots peeled and minced
½ Tablespoon ground white pepper
1 Tablespoon Shao Xing wine
½ teaspoon salt
1 old cucumber, peeled, seeded, and sliced thinly
2 Tablespoons cornstarch or water chestnut powder
3 cubes chicken bouillon
2 Tablespoons coriander, minced
1 Tablespoon sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Mix beef with the minced shallots, ground white pepper, wine, and salt, and dust one side of every cucumber slice with the cornstarch or water chestnut powder, then put one teaspoon of this between every two cucumber slices so dusted, and press them together.
2. Put these into a pot with eight cups of water with the bouillon cubes and simmer for twenty minutes, then add the coriander and sesame oil, and serve.

FISH BALLS WITH MUSHROOMS

Ingredients:

1 pound fish fillets, skinned with bones removed, then minced
2 Tablespoons lard softened
2 Tablespoons cornstarch
½ teaspoon coarse salt
1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
2 egg yolks
8 cups chicken or fish stock
2 slices fresh ginger, cut into very thin sticks
3 large dried mushrooms, soaked for an hour, stems removed and discarded, then cut into thin slices, and each slice cut into half-inch long pieces
4 ounces canned bamboo shoots, cut into thin sticks each cut half-inch long
3 Tablespoons fresh soy sprouts, their tails removed
1 scallion, cut in half the long way, then into half-inch lengths

Preparation:

1. Mix fish with the lard, then add the cornstarch, salt and rice wine, and mix well before adding in the egg yolks. Shape this mixture into one-inch balls and set them aside.
2. Bring stock to a simmer, add ginger, mushroom and bamboo shoot pieces, then carefully add the fish balls and soy sprouts, and simmer for ten minutes.
3. Pour into one large pre-heated soup tureen or pre-heated individual soup bowls, sprinkle scallion pieces on top, and serve.

MASTER INDEX ON OUR WEBSITE INCLUDES TWO HUNDRED PLUS SOUP RECIPES

continued on page 34

SOUPS AND CONGEES: FULIANESE AND OTHER

continued from page 33

SIZZLING SHRIMP SOUP

Ingredients:

1 cup very small shrimp
1 egg white
2 teaspoons water chestnut flower
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 cups chicken broth
3 canned water chestnuts, minced
3 Tablespoons frozen green peas, defrosted
2 teaspoon bamboo shoots, minced
1 Tablespoon cornstarch mixed with same amount of cool water
1 cup vegetable oil
1 rice cake, broken into small pieces

Preparation:

1. Put fish pieces, sea cucumber pieces and stock into an eight-quart pot. Bring this to a simmer, then add the blanched string bean and the asparagus pieces and stir well.
2. Next, add the ground pepper, beaten egg, salt, and wine, and simmer stirring for two minutes. Then add the sesame oil, and serve.

CORN AND CRAB SOUP

Ingredients:

1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
2 slices fresh ginger, minced fine
5 cups chicken broth
4 medium Chinese black mushrooms, soaked until soft in two cups of warm water, stems discarded and the mushrooms minced, soaking water added to the broth
2 cups canned creamed corn
1/2 cup fresh crab meat, coarsely minced
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 Tablespoons cornstarch mixed with the same amount arrowroot flour and one quarter cup cool water
2 Tablespoons sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Heat a wok, add the vegetable oil, then the ginger and stir before adding the broth/mushroom water and bring to a simmer.
2. Now add the mushrooms pieces and the cream corn and when thoroughly heated add the crab meat, ground pepper, and the cornstarch/arrowroot mixture and bring to the boil. In one minute or when thickened, add the sesame oil and serve.

SEA CUCUMBER SOUPY STEW

Ingredients:

1 small white fish, skin and bones removed, then cut into one-inch pieces
1 small soaked sea cucumber, diced, then simmered until soft
5 cups chicken stock
3 Tablespoons string beans, cut into thin slices and blanched
3 asparagus, cut into thin rounds, and blanched
1 teaspoon ground white pepper
1 large egg, beaten well
1 teaspoon coarse salt
1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
1 Tablespoon sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Put fish pieces, sea cucumber pieces and stock into an eight-quart pot. Bring this to a simmer, then add the blanched string bean and the asparagus pieces and stir well.
2. Next, add the ground pepper, beaten egg, salt, and wine, and simmer stirring for two minutes. Then add the sesame oil, and serve.

SPARE RIB SOUP

Ingredients:

1 pound spare ribs, blanched in boiling water, then rinsed and drained
3 slices fresh ginger, slivered
2 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
10 pitted red dates, each cut into four pieces
5 cups chicken stock
20 goji berries

Preparation:

1. In a soup pot, bring the ginger, dates, rice wine, and the drained spare ribs to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for two hours.
2. Remove the ribs and cut meat into half-inch pieces and return them to the soup.
3. Now add the goji berries and simmer another ten minutes, then serve. Discard the bones or use in Mung Bean Congee recipe on page 35.

continued on page 35

SOUPS AND CONGEEES: FULIANESE AND OTHER

continued from page 34

MUNG BEAN CONGEE

Ingredients:

bones from spare ribs in the above recipe
several beef bones
1 chicken carcass
1 ounce mung bean noodles, soaked until soft, then cut into one-inch pieces
1 cup cooked glutinous rice
2 slices fresh ginger
3 Tablespoons fermented rice
3 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
3 chicken bouillon cubes
2 cups shredded Napa or another cabbage
2 scallions, shredded

Preparation:

1. Boil the bones in three quarts of water in a large pot for one hour, then remove them with a slotted spoon.
2. Strain the liquid and cut meat into half-inch pieces; discard the bones, and return both to the pot.
3. Add mung bean pieces and the glutinous rice and the fermented rice. Stir in the ginger and simmer this for another hour.
3. Then add the rice wine and the bouillon cubes and simmer for an additional half an hour.
4. Next add the cabbage and simmer five minutes, then sprinkle with the scallion pieces and serve in pre-heated individual soup bowls.

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AND MUCH MORE**

THREE ASIAN CUISINES: COMPARISONS

Often asked to compare another specific Asian cuisine with its Chinese origin; here are thoughts doing so with the Japanese and Korean cuisines.

In ancient times, China was the most prosperous of these three countries, particularly for those living south of the Great Wall. Chinese farming areas provided more and better foods compared to those in Central Asia, West Asia, Japan, or in Korea; and its culinary history is older. The Chinese had more and better fruits and vegetables than the others, and they had more and better staple foods; meats too.

Milk and milk products were not important sources of animal protein in these countries. The Japanese rulers did understand they provided better foods for their people, but that was not until the late Meiji Period (circa 1876 and beyond). Then their emperors told their people they were consuming some milk products twice every day, and they should, too.

In Japan during the Nara (710 - 794 CE) and Heian (794 - 1185 CE) periods, there was a type of milk product called su, but that was available mostly to those in the royal court. It did not become popular until the late 19th century in Meiji times. On the Korean peninsula, royalty had milk and used some in their gruel, but common folk had little.

In Korea and in Japan, they had various kinds of wheat they ground into flour. They baked most into bread or steamed a little into buns and rolled even less into skins for their dumplings. In China, rice was the major crop in the south, steamed or boiled. Steaming was more popular when the grain (rice) was whole, less so if ground into flour. Steaming probably did originate in China grinding more common in Korea and Japan. It was also popular in Northern China because rice was less available there.

Chopsticks and bowls were used in all three places, plates were too, for staple and non-staple foods. In some regions of Northern China, they did steam their wheat, ground or not. They called these products mantou, and rarely, baked them. Some added more water to their ground wheat and did stretch this by hand and called it la-mien. Others pulled it with sticks and called it hsien mien.

People in these three countries used soup spoons to eat their non-staple foods and their rice until the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644) when chopsticks became popular. The spoon is now the only utensil in China used for soup, and most use chopsticks for non-liquid items except in Korea where the soup spoon is often used for rice. Not so in Japan. In all three countries, rice and soup are often served in different-size bowls, non-staples served and eaten from larger ones or from flat serving plates.

Other differences by country include how they ferment many foods; and the different molds used to make their soy sauces and other soy products. They might use a different starter to ferment their soy beans for the other soy products.

China calls their most important one, which is bean curd, doufu. They also call it 'meat from the soil.' They can steam or press it as do those in Japan and Korea who prefer theirs more silken. All adore it and now use chopsticks to eat it and most foods.

Chopstick use began in China before the Han Dynasty (202 BCE - 220 CE) and are mostly made of wood; in Japan, too. In Korea most are made of metal. Dates first used in Japan and Korea are less clear.

continued on page 37

THREE ASIAN CUISINES: COMPARISONS

continued from page 36

Some minority people including the Mongolians kept their culinary culture, culinary utensils, and oral and written languages; and they have all or some of their own holidays and customs which are less similar than any culinary and festival traditions.

Among beverage use, tea and wine were important in all three countries and still are, as are Buddhist commandments. These are still adhered to by Buddhists including how to slaughter animals. These do not apply to ordinary folk, only to monks and nuns in all three countries.

Pork is the main meat in China, beef the principal one in Korea, and fish is most traditional in Japan. Fresh water ones are common in China's coastal regions, salted or preserved ones more common for those living further from the sea. Raw meat and raw fish did once prevail in all three countries, except for Japan, that is less true now.

The Chinese lead the way cooking all their foods before eating them. Those eaten cold were mostly cooked then cooled before eating. Other than vegetable oils, many Chinese use lard, chicken fat; and vegetable oils. The Japanese and Koreans use less fat, and a good number of Koreans use linseed oil for cooking; Chinese and Japanese rarely do.

In China, lots of foods are preserved, many dried or salted. Taoists in China lead the way in eating nutritious foods as they believe many have healing properties, and that food and medicine share similar impacts.

As to tools when preparing foods, Chinese lead the way using the fewest and simplest ones for cooking and preserving. They believe knife skills are needed and they have lots of talent when cutting their foods. This impacts their taste and texture.

When eating foods in ancient China, large families and large groups dined with males at one table or at one time, females at others. Religious folk often ate alone but near others but at their own tables. They believe seniority an important consideration, so elders ate

together and rarely with young folk. These were true for Koreans and Japanese, too.

All eating and many cooking behaviors are rapidly changing. For them, they are more democratic now than they were. Food preparation, particularly in China, is where more foreign foods have entered their cuisine, though prepared Chinese style.

In Japan, there are greater changes; some include more use of oils and animal products as meat consumption has increased considerably. More and more foreign foods are also now consumed in Japan than ever before; and Korean food adaptations are between those of China and Japan.

In summary, the Chinese dietary and food preparations are the oldest and changed the least except in their large cities. Foreign foods are more popular in the large cities; and their diets have changed lots over the centuries. However, their foods are still prepared Chinese ways, but with newer to China ingredients. They have changed their preparations the least, the Japanese the most. Korean changes are between them. Some say the Japanese changed the most, but we have seen no studies to substantiate this.

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RECIPES IN THIS ISSUE

RATES

Amaranth and Doufu Soup.....	32	Milk with Crab.....	15
Beef and Fish.....	29	Money Bags.....	19
Carp with Hot Bean Sauce.....	26	Mung Bean Congee.....	35
Cod Fish Fillets with Bitter Melons.....	29	Mushrooms with Peach Kernels.....	18
Corn and Crab Soup.....	34	Old Cucumber Soup.....	33
Deep-fried Milk Cakes.....	15	Raw Fish Chinese style.....	25
Duck Soup.....	12	Scallion Cakes.....	9
Eight Treasure Congee.....	12	Scallop Balls in Sesame Sauce.....	10
Fin Fish Tails.....	27	Sea Bass with Hoisin Sauce.....	27
Fish Balls with Mushrooms.....	33	Sichuan Dry-cooked Fin Fish.....	28
Fish, Greens, and Garlic.....	28	Silver Cloud ears and Pear Soup.....	12
Fish in Lettuce-wrap.....	29	Sizzling Shrimp Soup.....	34
Fish-stuffed Bean Cakes.....	27	Smoked Pork Belly and Tofu.....	9
Flounder, Garlic, and Conpoy.....	29	Soupy Stew.....	34
Fried Milk.....	15	Spare Rib Soup.....	34
Goat with Goji Berries and Leaves.....	12	Steamed Fish.....	26
Hunan Spare Ribs with Yams.....	10	Strange-flavor Eggplant.....	7
Hunan Chicken.....	8	Tibetan Butter Tea is Po Cha.....	23
Lamb with Bamboo Shoots.....	10	Uncle Tai's Hunan Beef.....	8
Milk and Fish.....	15	Vegetables with Chicken Strings.....	9

Zhejiang Fish Ball and Water Shield Soup..... 26

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