

FLAVOR & FORTUNE

DEDICATED TO THE ART AND SCIENCE OF CHINESE CUISINE

SNAILS, SNAKES, AND TURTLES;
CELTUCE, A CHINESE VEGETABLE;
KAIFENG: A CHINESE--JEWISH HAVEN;



MONGOLIAN-CHINESE IN THE US;
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN EARLY TIMES;
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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FLAVOR & FORTUNE

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*All pictures are from tiles or camera of the editor, except other authors whose pictures can be from their files or camera.
Articles ending with a (JMN) are by the editor.
The cover is the Chinese vegetable celtuce.*

FLAVOR & FORTUNE

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Dear Reader:

Welcome to this, the last issue of the 24th year, our ninety-third issue. The first year had a single issue because it was printed in the wrong color, the wrong size, etc.

This issue leaves your editor equally red-faced, the blame all hers. More important, sincere apologies to both Li and Dai minority populations. The picture on page 17 of the previous issue is of the Li, not the Dai, as indicated. We now know why that picture went missing. It went with the article on page 17 of this issue and should not have. Check out the article about the Li doing their Bamboo Pole Dance in this issue. Again, many apologies for that error. Also for a typo on page 36 omitting a 'c' in circa. Clearly, my mistake for these and any others made. Yes, I do need a younger more accurate editor for you, our readers. Suggestions, please.

In this issue, enjoy the article about celtuce, a Chinese vegetable not yet seen in bins in American supermarkets. It begins on page 7, and is often available in Chinese and other Asian markets. Read about it, prepare it, and do enjoy eating it; we love it hot or cold, and any way it is prepared. And do enjoy the articles about Mongolian-Chinese in the United States, and about Early Chinese Food in the United States.

Rarely seen is an item about Snails, Snakes, and Turtles; it is on page 33. Alcoholic Beverages in Early Times is unusual, too, and on page 14. The one with a mite of humor can be enjoyed on page 13, its title is Rare Dishes for Kings. Can you suggest other dishes and humorous articles? A rare report about Kaijeng: a Haven for Jews in China after the middle of the 1800s is unusual, too, and on page 22.

There are these items and others. We do call your attention to the Letters to the Editor column as it often garners special kudos from readers. We suggest you check it out in this issue and in previous ones. Use the web-based total index to do so.

The Editor,



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SIRS:

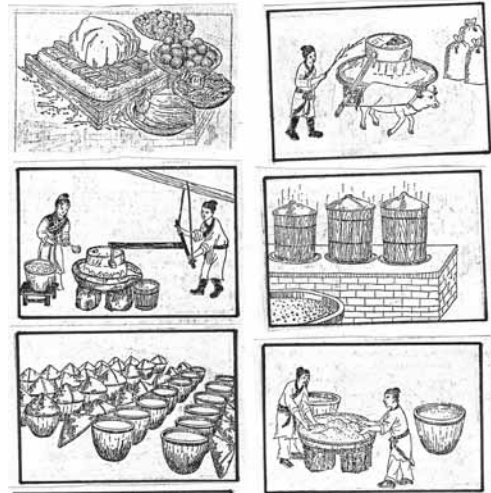
Can you share something about the Corban holiday in China including how long it has been celebrated there, who celebrates it, etc?

TO WHOMEVER: With no name, we are unsure who sent this, and recently did receive a question close to yours about this Muslim holiday introduced to China in about the 7th century CE. Now celebrated by about one-quarter of China's minority populations on the tenth day of the tenth month of their Lunar calendar, eighteen or more million Chinese minority folk may be doing so in various ways including, in alphabetic order, the Baoan, Dongxiang, Hui, Kazak, Sala, Tajik, Uzbek, and Uyгур people. That is, if they want to. They might slaughter a sheep, a cow, or a camel, and roast it for their family and any guests. Young folk might come and eat with their family and then go to dance into the night. Elders might eat then go to a Mosque to exchange holiday greetings and/or worship.

EDITOR:

What can you tell us about the Yuan Court person who wrote a cookbook in the early 1330's?

TO WHOMEVER: We think you mean Hu Ssu-hui (spelled several ways). He was a 'nutritionist' so-called, though that word did not exist then. He did write about foods that are good for the body and the mind. This Turkic fellow wrote in Chinese, and his book was translated by Drs. Paul Buell and E.N. Anderson into English. They titled it *Necessary Knowledge of Drinking and Feasting*. About the Mongol elite, it includes Turkic, Chinese, Kashmiri, Persian, Mongolian, Sinkiang, people's recipes and thoughts popular in Northwest China at the time of its original publication which you dated correctly. These culinary worlds did meet at the court and thanks to that, we learn that few vegetables were used, there is a fondness for meat and lots of onions and cabbage, also other *Brassica* vegetables, melons and fruits. In an article, Dr. Anderson once gave a talk at the 6th Symposium in 1999 in Fuzhou on Chinese Dietary Culture where I first learned about this translation. He detailed a lot about their bi-lingual Chinese/English volume. We suggest you consult it as we have on many occasions. It is a valuable way to learn many details about foods of those times. Speaking of this book, Anderson did say it shows considerable "cultural complexity from these many years ago" and that "meat was obviously important on the menu." He mentions wheat, barley, sheep, goats, lentils, and chickpeas as early domesticates...pigs and cattle, too, and that rice was widely and intensively cultivated before 6,000 BCE. This translation is the best and most detailed look at food in Northwest China when it was written.



GLORIA OF NEW YORK ASKS:

What was the earliest use of the soy bean, soy sauce, and/or soy paste?

GLORIA: The earliest archeological evidence we found was of soybeans in the Han Tomb at Mawangdui near Changsha in the Hunan Province. This is in south-central China and in a tomb sealed in 165 BCE, opened in 1972 CE. We once did see a comment that soy beans did exist in 200 BCE as fermented black soybeans that looked shriveled and soft and had some small salt crystals on them. They may have been made in a multi-step process cooked then inoculated with *Aspergillus oryzae* mold and put in salt water for about half a year before being used. They were first written about by Sima Qian who said they did ferment in one thousand earthenware vessels circa 90 BCE; are mentioned earlier in 173 BCE as one of the necessities of life along with firewood, rice, salt, fermented black beans, and cooking utensils. He says they are included in the 40 BCE volume titled *The Handy Dictionary for Urgent Use* which was written by Shi You. In 1596 CE, these and soy sauce are detailed in Li Shizhen's *Bencao Gangmu, Great Pharmacopoeia*. *The Washington Post* newspaper, in 1884 CE, did write about "salted black beans", and a chronology from the SoyInfo Center advises from an article by Wong Ching Too in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, a newspaper, that in 1960 the term 'fermented black soybeans' was first used by Mimie Ouie in her cookbook: *The Art of Chinese Cooking*. Perhaps the best early history of these beans is in Joseph Needham's *Science and Civilization in China, Volume 6, Biology and Biological Technology, Part V: Fermentations and Food Science*. That volume is by H.T. Huang and he says they are botanically known as *Glycine max*. That book is available in many libraries that have good computer access.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

continued from page 5

FROM HENLEE OF BUTTE MONTANA:

Just read about Deguines who discovered America. Do you know about him/her, and can you advise?

HENLEE: Deguines was a French scholar who did spark a controversy in about 1761. So did Professor Neumann (no relative) in 1841. Both said a Chinese Buddhist monk named Hwei-Shin, also spelled Hu-Shen, journeyed some seven thousand miles to the coast of America in 499 CE with other monks. Deguines said the same. They said he made his way to a huge canyon that had bands of color along its sides (maybe the Grand Canyon) and crossed rivers (some speculate they could reach Mexico and Mayan civilization). We once read that since some stones with holes had been from this trip, they could have been Chinese man-made ship anchors. There are Mayan artifacts that do look similar to Chinese ones. Other researchers did say America was peopled with folks from Asia getting there using a Bering Straits land-bridge. One chap, named Faber, in 1992 did write that America was peopled from North to South migrations from Asia; and that this Buddhist monk sailed to Fusang in 499 CE. That name is of a succulent plant found there which could be agave. He also writes about threads made from bark that are made into cloth and lots of copper, gold, and silver jewelry, perhaps Mayan. A 1997 article in the November *Scientific America* discusses an archaeological site in Zimbabwe abandoned in the 1400s that had Ming Dynasty celadon dishes (which could be related to China). Another researcher notes that long distance ship travel did reach both US coasts as prevailing winds helped them do so. Yet another says Columbus was not the first to discover the New World. His proof that Chinese and Japanese artifacts mixed with Native American ones on the way to Peru, and that Russian scientists claim Asian geographers did have knowledge of the Americas in 1500 BCE. A Dr. McKensie also writes that early explorers did say that Japanese survivors married Indian women, and they tell legends about immigrants from Asia in *The China Syndrome*. There is information in *Archeology* showing Chinese steel blades in Alaska; pottery from China in Ecuador; and Charles Boland writes in *They all Discovered America*, saying voyagers to the New World came in four categories: 1) Those who came and then settled in America, 2) Those who visited and left, 3) Those who arrived accidentally, and 4) Those who are missionaries. Jackson, another writer, points out that China and Mexico both use sky-dragons, have complex and somewhat similar rain-making ceremonies, and both use jade in their grave markers. Diodorus of Sicily in the 1st century BCE writes that Phoenicians sail along the west coast of Africa and could be blown off course arriving at an island finding more than a thousand stones with markings. These stones are now in Harrisburg PA in the State Museum. They do have Chinese-type markings.

This is only some of the evidence of these Chinese connections. Many can be checked the Pine Street Foundation's web site titled; Did the Chinese Discover America?

ELVYNE IN SHANGHAI ASKS:

Any knowledge about the Bai ethnic minority including how many and where most of them live?

ELVYNE: Most of this ethnic minority live in the Dali Bai Autonomous County in the Yunnan Province. Their minority language is part of the Sino-Tibetan language family, and they do very artistic painting, do laquer work, and making gifts we might call 'crafts.' Many are very creative as can be seen in their homes, their communities with gate towers and screens fronting their courts with gables colorful with beautiful wood carvings under them, flowers blooming year-round in front of them. As to your other query, according to the 2010 Chinese census, more than two million Bai live in that province's Dali Bai Autonomous County, others near Erhai Lake at the foot of Cangshan Mountain in Xizhou. We read this is the capital of Yi Mou Xin; but never located it on a map; can you? One other thing, Bai people love spicy foods and cured cold ones; they eat lots of fish, and those at higher elevations prefer corn as their main staple while those closer to sea level enjoy rice as theirs; and all of them like fish with their rice. Do you know their name means 'white' and Bai women often wear something white.

THE SOY INFO CENTER ADVISES:

I admire you for continuing your periodical—being productive and useful each day. Thank you for writing such a terrific review of our book *History of Soybeans and Soyfoods* in China. H.T. Huang would have been pleased as well. You are welcome to publish it in *Flavor and Fortune*. Do you realize that China now imports more soybeans than all other countries combined, a dramatic shift from before World War II when China and Manchuria were the world's leading exporters? This new policy is designed to conserve water, and enable Chinese to eat more pork, fish, and poultry. We think China can import soybeans at lower cost than it can grow them domestically.

CELTUCE

This cultivar in the lettuce family has a one-inch-round stem and many leaves at the top of its stem of about twelve to fifteen inches in height. In the US, called celtuce, a name given it in 1938 by the Atlas Burpee Company; the Chinese call it *wo sun*. Some countries call it stem lettuce, asparagus lettuce, Chinese lettuce, Irish lettuce, or 'raw lettuce.' Other Chinese call it *pen-tsao*. Many in both countries tell us they eat it raw with salt and vinegar or cooked with any sauce. We use it raw in salads and cooked as a leafy vegetable with sticks cut from its stem.

In the *Latuca* family, botanists tell us there are more than one hundred species, some growing three to four feet tall. Nutritionists tell us it has many nutrients in small amounts, including vitamins A, C, and K, and the minerals calcium and potassium. The literature tell us their amounts are many, maybe because of the many species, so we offer none because we know not which is correct and for which cultivar.

Most popular in the Sichuan Province, there many hotels and restaurants serving the stalks sliced round or cut in thin sticks. The dark green leaves are often blanched then doused with sesame oil and vinegar. Found on banquet tables at almost every banquet or buffet restaurant in that province, it is popular there and in Chinese supermarkets everywhere.

Elders tell us they adore celtuce, younger folk seem less familiar, but when they get to know it, they learn to love its nutty, mildly sweet, and sometimes faintly sour stalks and its dark green leaves. Not everyone knows it, perhaps because this vegetable does not always travel well. We wonder if that is why they are not recognized cooked or fermented, and in hot soups or stir-fried dishes. This is a shame because if they were, more would order them made a myriad of ways. TCM practitioners tell us they give them often with many a medication to mask a bitter

taste, still the Chinese do not always recognize them.

In China, their seeds are considered an aphrodisiac, and may be why they are so popular there. In India, known by their botanical name, *Lactuca indica*, many still do not knowing any of their species; is that because so many do look alike? Few seem to know where they originated even in that country and with that name.

In China, some elders tell us these vegetables are related to the deity Min, the god of fertility. Quite a few of them did know where they came from and do like them raw or cooked. Where some of their varieties did originate is not always clear, but what is known is that they went to Malaysia from China. They seem popular throughout Southeast Asia, but not as a plant, rather for the oil pressed from their seeds, and not for the seeds themselves.

In China, the stems are peeled, then sliced or made into sticks, then par-boiled or just blanched; and they are often stir-fried, put in boiled dishes, in soups, or quickly stir-fried. In

China, we had some blanched, then served at room temperature. We were told this is important because they can harbor bacteria or viruses and we should not eat them raw. No place else did we hear this advice. This is not a problem if the stems are peeled and celtuce is cooked. We recommend that and suggest you do so before planning to eat them in a salad. The Chinese do use them in dozens of dishes; and once you try some, we bet you will, too.

Incidentally, the first recipe below the Chinese say looks like it has crab meat in it, but that is not true; so its name is not an oversight. Vegetarians love this dish for its taste, some for its name. You can decide after you adore it, as they do. (JMN)

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CELTUCE

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MOCK CRAB WITH EGGS

Ingredients:

½ pound potatoes, peeled and diced
½ pound carrots, peeled and diced
½ pound celtuce stems peeled, sliced and cut in quarters
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
1 Tablespoon fresh ginger, minced
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1 teaspoon coarse salt
½ teaspoon ground white pepper
5 eggs, separated, and each beaten until thick
1 Tablespoon sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Peel, then blanch each vegetable stem separately for one minute. Then drain them one by one on paper towels before cutting them and mixing them together; one chap said this was to assure no uninvited guests in them.
2. Then, heat a wok or fry pan, add the oil, then the ginger and the garlic, and stir for one minute before adding them one at a time and stir-frying them for up to one minute each; he said this provides many different textures of their stems.
3. Then add the egg whites, and stir-fry them and all the stems for one minute before adding the egg yolks and frying them for one more minute. Next add the sesame oil and fry this as a pancake on the first side until golden then turn it over and fry this pancake-like item on the second side, also for one minute on the second side. Now put it on a pre-heated plate, cut it into wedges, and serve immediately.

CELTUCE, SCALLIONS, AND OIL

Ingredients:

3 celtuce stems, peeled, thinly sliced, the slices slivered
1 teaspoon coarse salt
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
3 scallion, green parts only, slivered
2 teaspoons powdered sugar

Preparation:

1. Mix celtuce strips and salt, then put in a colander or strainer and drain them for half an hour, then rinse and drain them.
2. Heat oil in a wok or fry pan, add the scallion slivers then the sugar, and toss well before mixing these with the celtuce strips and stir-frying them for one minute, and then remove all to a pre-heated plate or small platter, and serve.

STIR-FRIED CELTUCE

Ingredients:

2 celtuce stalks, peeled and angle sliced
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
2 Tablespoons sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Mix celtuce slices and half the oil and set aside in a small bowl.
2. Heat the rest of the vegetable oil and when hot, add celtuce pieces and their oil and stir-fry for two minutes.
3. Add the salt and sesame oil, and put everything in a pre-heated bowl, and serve.

CHICKEN THREE COLORS

Ingredients:

2 boneless chicken breasts, cut into one-inch cubes
1 egg white
1 Tablespoon cornstarch
1 teaspoon Chinese Shao Xing wine
1 teaspoon coarse salt
3 celtuce stems, peeled and cut in to thin circles
1 carrot, peeled and cut at angles then into thin angle-shaped circles
1 green pepper, seeded and cut in diamond shapes
3 slices fresh ginger, minced cloves and the fresh garlic, peeled and minced
1 scallion, angle-sliced
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon coarse salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Preparation:

1. Mix chicken breast cubes with the egg white, cornstarch, wine, and salt and let rest for ten minutes.
2. Next, heat a wok or fry-pan, add the oil, and the marinated chicken cube mixture and stir-fry this for two minutes, then add the celtuce, green pepper and scallion pieces and stir-fry another minute or two.
3. Now add the ginger, garlic, sugar, and the ground pepper, and stir for two more minutes, then put everything in a pre-heated bowl and serve.

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CELTUCE

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SONG DYNASTY BEEF, CELERY, AND CELTUCE

Ingredients:

½ pound beef steak, sliced thin
2 teaspoons cornstarch
2 teaspoons Shao Xing wine
1 teaspoon coarse salt
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
3 stalks celtuce, peeled and angle sliced
3 stalks celery, strings removed, and angle sliced
2 scallions, minced
1 red chili pepper, seeded and thin sliced
1 teaspoon Sichuan peppers, mashed
5 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and smashed
1 Tablespoon *sa cha* sauce
1 Tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 scallion, angle sliced, separated by color
½ cup chicken stock

Preparation:

1. Marinate beef in a mixture of cornstarch, wine, and the salt for fifteen minutes.
2. Then heat a wok or fry pan, add the oil, then the beef and stir-fry this for one minute, then remove it to a strainer set over a small bowl.
3. In remaining oil, fry the celtuce, celery, scallions, and the mashed chili pepper for one minute, then add both sauces and stir this twice, then add the white scallion pieces and stir-fry for two minutes.
4. Now add the chicken stock and beef pieces and stir three times before putting everything into a pre-heated bowl, sprinkle the green scallion pieces on top, and serve.

GARLIC CHIVES, BROCCOLI, AND CELTUCE

Ingredients:

3 broccoli stems, peeled and cut as matchsticks
3 stalks celtuce, peeled and cut as matchsticks
3 garlic chives, minced
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
1 cup cold chicken stock
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1 teaspoon coarse salt

Preparation:

1. Blanch the broccoli and celtuce separately, each for two minutes, then drain well.
2. Heat a wok, add the oil and fry each vegetable separately for two minutes, then drain each one and then toss them together.
3. Mix chicken stock with the cornstarch, then add the garlic chives and salt to this and bring to the boil until it thickens, then pour into individual pre-heated soup bowls, and serve.

PIQUANT CELTUCE

Ingredients:

2 celtuce stalks, peeled, the leaves saved for another use, the stalks sliced and cut into thin strips
½ teaspoon coarse salt
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
1 teaspoon Sichuan peppercorns, crushed
1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
1 red chili pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
1 Tablespoon thin soy sauce
1 Tablespoon granulated sugar
2 Tablespoons white vinegar
1 teaspoons sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Mix celtuce strips and salt with one cup cold water for half an hour, then rinse and drain, and dry with paper towels.
2. Heat the oil in a wok or fry-pan. Add the Sichuan peppercorns, and stir-fry for one minute.
3. Add the rest of the ingredients, and cook for one more minute, then turn off the heat and stir in the celtuce with the heat source turned off. Let this rest two minutes, then serve hot or warm.

CELTUCE WITH DRIED SHRIMP

Ingredients:

2 Tablespoons dried shrimp
1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
3 stalks celtuce, stems peeled and slice thin
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
3 Tablespoons vegetable stock
1 teaspoon cornstarch mixed with same amount of cold water
1 teaspoon thin soy sauce
3 sets of leaves from tops of celtuce, chopped

Preparation:

1. Mix shrimp, wine and celtuce stems with three tablespoons boiling water; set aside for half an hour.
2. Heat wok or fry pan, add the oil and then the shrimp mixture and stir-fry for two minutes, then add stock and cornstarch mixture and stir for one minute, then add the soy sauce and the celtuce leaves and stir-fry another two minutes, then serve in a preheated bowl.

MONGOLIAN-CHINESE IN THE US

The 'hot pot,' also known as the 'fire pot,' is usually credited to the Mongolians. It is usually brass with a central funnel filled with hot coals, has a surrounding bowl with liquid where pieces of meat and vegetables cook in the liquid in it, then enjoyed by diners cooking their foods in it. Classically, it featured lamb, cabbage, and other foods, usually eaten in Fall and Winter, an eating experience some refer to as their Chrysanthemum Hotpot meal. It is now enjoyed in Beijing and other northern cities and their countryside and wherever Mongolians live these days, the United States included.

Mongolia is a land-locked country north of China and south of the Soviet Union. It is six hundred and four thousand square miles, and is the eighteenth largest country by land mass in the world after Iran. More than three million people are its inhabitants, ninety-seven percent of them nomads.

About twice the size of Texas, some call it 'the land of extremes' because it has no sea to moderate its climate and little humidity. It has more than two hundred fifty days of sunshine annually. Others call it the 'Land of Genghis Khan' because he founded the Mongol Empire in 1206. His son Kublai Khan founded China's Yuan Dynasty; and after the death of his father, it was split into four Khanates.

The capital of this country is Ulaanbaatar; it has a population of about one and a half million people. This city had Neolithic beginnings (circa 5500 BCE), and now has twenty-one provinces. This capital city is an equal political entity. Correctly called 'Mongolian People's Republic,' it was founded in 1928.

Most of its nomads live in *gers* once called *yurts*. Now it does require twelve years of primary and secondary education. Currently, sixty percent of its youth enroll in college. This is the world's oldest nomadic civilization still herding their animals. They also mine many minerals including but not limited to copper and tin, and they extract lots of coal.

Their southern neighbor is Inner Mongolia, not a country but a political jurisdiction of China correctly titled 'Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region.' It has about twenty-five million people, five percent are Kazakh, Russian, and Korean, the rest are Mongolian Chinese whose main diet is meat and milk, the meat from their sheep, cattle, goats, camels, and horses. They eat them all, and

most like them roasted. Their milk they like dried, and they call these curds *aaruuul*. When eating out, they often order chicken or fish.

These days, many more Mongolians live outside of Mongolia; the United States one such place. Their country gained independence from China in 1911 and ten years later became a satellite of the Soviet Union. Then, in 1990, it gained independence.

Mongolians who went to other countries came to places where there were almost no nomads, no one was seeking pasture for their animals as they had in Mongolia whether Mongolians, Kalmyks, Buryats, and others who did live there.



A good number of them also came to the US from Inner Mongolia. Many did go to work with Owen Lattimore on the East Asian Affairs Program based at John Hopkins University, not all living there. Some came from Europe in the early 1950s, others from Taiwan and India, and still others came later after the 1990s collapse of the Soviet Union. These Mongolian folk now number about five thousand and are living in many places in the US including Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, West Virginia, Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, California, and Illinois.

Most of them retain much of their heritage, many work with American counterparts, their children attending American schools. Some work for American TV and radio, others for social media and all kinds of work places. Most are slowly acculturating, some intermarrying non-Mongolians, some not liking that they are slowly eroding or abandoning their heritage.

Before and since coming to the US, many Mongolians still use their lunar calendar, many still use the Chinese zodiac, and some now practice Western arts such as oil painting and metal sculpture, others writing poetry and in other literary areas.

Except at special events, most wear Western-style clothing, though some do wear a *del*, their long gown-like item made of wool and a bright sash around their waist. They also sport high boots and a fox-skinned hat called a *toortsog*. Most are between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five and did first come to the US for college or graduate school. When ill, many still prefer Tibetan or Mongolian doctors and many still use folk medicine.

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MONGOLIAN-CHINESE IN THE US

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Most Mongolian immigrants speak English and their tribal language, a part of the Uralic-Altaic language family. They write a phonetic Cyrillic script or one close to Uighur; and more women than men try to preserve their Mongolian culture in their foods and in life-cycle events including marriage practices. Many of these are related to Tibetan Buddhism, and they do so if they have young children.

Their Mongolian food is retained especially during holidays and at ceremonial events; they still drink lots of tea with evaporated milk, butter, and nutmeg, or *airag*, the fermented milk of their female horses. They like *nermel*, their home-brewed vodka, *tarag*, their home-made sour yogurt, and they use a lot of *shar tos*, their melted butter mixed with curds, flour, and fruit. Many also make *bortsk*, a cake baked with yeast and flour, then fried in oil. They call that *khuushuur*.

They also make lots of *buuz*, their steamed dumplings and snack on them any time of the day or night. For main meals, they prefer their *malchan*, a boiled lamb and onion dish with *bulmuk*, a flour-based gravy. Their elders still drink *tarag*, a fermented milk. During their 'white month' celebrated at the start of the Lunar New Year which is at the end of January or the beginning of February, they make and eat many Mongolian foods as they do on other less-celebrated holidays.

They do celebrate *Urus-Ova* during a week-end in summer to honor Buddha, and *Shagj-muni* in the middle of winter. They honor Chinggis Khan at the three-day July Festival called Naadam, known in their language as *Eviin Gurban Naadam*. At this holiday, they watch or participate in horse racing, and in archery contests and wrestling events. At this Mongolian celebration, they do make and eat many of the above-mentioned foods.

Many Mongolians prefer living in Chinese-American or Vietnamese-American communities where they do know others who came to the US on student visas. They maintain this comradery and now belong to Mongolian-American Cultural Associations to continue it.

If you want to try their meat-milk-flour dependent foods, do prepare one or more of them below or try them at one or more Mongolian restaurants. They are in many states in the US. Look them up on the web or a local telephone directory. Some are called as are those in Flushing NY, Little Sheep Mongolian Hot Pot; Little Lamb Restaurant; or Happy Family Little Lamb Restaurant. There are these and those known by other names in many of the states they moved to. They like these dishes and their hot pots; also check them out in this magazine's index and in other places. (JMN)

BUUZ

Ingredients:

- ½ cup dried Chinese red beans
- 1 cup unbleached all purpose flour
- ½ cup pastry flour
- 1 pound ground lamb
- 1 Tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 3 scallions, minced
- ½ cup minced celery and cilantro
- 2 Tablespoons and 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons coarse salt
- 3 black mushrooms, soaked, stems discarded, then minced
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 Tablespoons flour

Preparation:

1. Mix both flours with two tablespoons boiling water and knead until smooth, then cover and rest dough for half an hour.
2. Mix lamb with the minced ginger, garlic, scallions, celery, and cilantro, then add tablespoons of vegetable oil, the salt, minced mushrooms, and cornstarch. Then add two tablespoons boiling water and stir well, and set this filling aside to rest for fifteen minutes.
3. Roll the dough into a rope forty inches long and cut it into one-inch pieces. Roll each piece until thin, about two and a half inches in diameter and dust each one with a little flour before stacking them.
4. Next, fill each round with a tablespoon of the filling, wet the edges very lightly, and pleat them shut, putting them on a cookie sheet but not touching each other. (These can be frozen until firm for later use, then put in a six ml plastic bag, sealed and frozen) or boiled immediately until they rise to the surface. Remove them with a slotted spoon and tossed with the rest of the oil and served.

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MONGOLIAN-CHINESE IN THE US

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LAMB PASTRIES

Ingredients:

same filling material as for the *buuz*
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper substituted for the garlic
1/4 cup black vinegar
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil for frying

Preparation:

1. Mix filling as for the *buuz* substituting black pepper for the minced garlic, and refrigerate covered over night.
2. Make wrappers the same way as for the *buuz*.
3. Use four tablespoons of boiling water and three more of cool water kneading the dough and until smooth. Then cover it with a towel and allow it to rest for half an hour before cutting it into four pieces. Roll each into a rectangle ten inches square.
4. On one piece of dough, add one-eighth of the filling on half the dough and fold it over. Put another eighth of the filling on half the now smaller rectangle, wet the edges and pinch them closed. Repeat until all dough and filling has been used providing four multi-layered squares making four multi-layered squares, their edges wet and pinched closed with a fork.
5. Heat a fry pan, add the oil, and gently fry as many as fit on each side until golden brown; repeating with those as yet not fried.

MONGOLIAN MEAT

Ingredients:

2 pounds boneless lamb, venison, or dark meat chicken, cut into two-inch thin strips
salt and pepper, to taste
1 Tablespoon Chinese white vinegar
3 Tablespoons dark soy sauce, divided in half
2 Tablespoons honey or maltose
1/2 teaspoon brown sugar
1 Tablespoon cornstarch
1 Tablespoon lard
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
5 scallions, coarsely minced
1 small onion, coarsely chopped
1 cup soaked until soft, dried Chinese black mushrooms squeezed of their liquid, slivered
1 Tablespoon sesame seeds

Preparation:

1. Marinate meat with salt and pepper, vinegar, and half the soy sauce for half an hour.
2. Mix other half of the soy sauce with honey or maltose, the cornstarch, and three tablespoons cold water, and set this aside.
3. Heat the lard and vegetable oil, add the scallion pieces and the chopped onion and stir-fry until they are soft, then add the meat mixture, and stir-fry until no longer pink.
4. Then add the honey mixture and the mushrooms, and continue to stir-fry for three minutes more.
5. Add the sesame seeds, toss quickly, and serve on a pre-heated platter.

MONGOLIAN HOT POT

Ingredients:

1/2 pound beef fillet. Slivered
1/2 pound boneless pork cutlet. Slivered
1 whole boneless chicken breast, slivered
1/2 pound skinless and boneless white meat fish fillet
1 pound tiger shrimp, cut the long way then in half
5 ounces bamboo shoots, cut in half-inch strips
4 ounces snow peas, stings removed, cut in half the long way
1/4 cup baby corn, cut in half the long way
4 ounces canned straw mushrooms, cut in half the long way
1/2 firm bean curd, cut in long strips
2 ounces soaked rice noodles, cut in two-inch pieces
8 cups chicken stock
2 chicken bouillon cubes
5 slices fresh ginger, slivers
2 stick celery, cut in two-inch pieces then slivered
1 teaspoon sesame oil
3 scallions, cut in two-inch pieces then slivered
1 large bowl cooked rice, to be shared by all
1 egg, per person, if desired

Preparation:

1. Plate carefully all meat, fish, seafood, mushrooms, and bean curd, and all other vegetables so diners can help themselves. Adjust the amounts, above is intended for four people. It can be doubled or divided, as needed.
2. Heat hot pot with coals or electricity, as designed, and put the chicken stock and the bouillon cubes, the fresh ginger slivers, celery, sesame oil, and the scallion slivers in the ring, and when hot, seat diners with long-handled forks and chopsticks for each person, and rice bowls, and a n egg, if desired.
3. Bring ring with the stock to the boil and let diners cook any foods on the platter to their desired doneness. When all foods on the platter are consumed or as much taken as desired, diners can break their egg into the liquid or cook it in its shell, as desired, then eat it and the stock, as they prefer.

RARE DISHES: REALLY FOR KINGS?

A common question: Did King K.B. Ling really reign when the Yellow River overflowed frequently? We once read that he did and it did. But we also wondered if he needed a flood control office with large appropriations? Were the funds so large that the officials used huge sums to fill their own desires, their bellies, and the flood control needs? Did they have enough for grand eating, lots of drinking, and more to fill their stomachs with rare foods? We did learn that many specialties were made from this loot; and we wondered if the kings of those days got their share and really enjoyed them?

We also read that to satisfy these folk, they needed to and did devise new dishes. One source called their meals 'lavish' while another said they were 'ridiculous.' We do not know which is true; do you? We do not wish to judge their meals or their dishes. We simply want to share a few things we recall, then you decide.

The most famous among them was a dish made of monkey brains consumed when the guests were seated and the Number One waiter removed a cloth over a bulge in the center of the table. There in perfect view he used a hammer to break open the skull of a live monkey; its brains for the guests to stare at. The head was cleanly shaved, the monkey strapped down, and the furry thing simply stared back from the hole cut in the center of the table. Then, the waiter then poured boiling water over the aperture protruding from the broken skull. Diners were instructed to use their chopsticks, and to enjoy the brains said to be a tasty treat. This meal, like many others, was sponsored by the local Flood Control Bureau.

Another marvelous meal at the same location included a Cantonese dish of several poisonous snakes. They were to be selected and enjoyed, but before that, they needed to select the snakes from those brought to the table by the chef in a wire cage. They were ugly and slimy-looking, ready for preparation, as requested. The guests were to look them over and select the best among them, and how they wanted them prepared. The famous chef doing the job returned from the kitchen to tell all at the table that he planned to combine them in a dish known as *Sanshehui*. Those who ate his spectacular dish, did get itchy soon after they did, sensations throughout their entire bodies. Their sweat became thick and deep yellow, their energy invigorated, their headaches disappeared, and their eyesight better than ever.

At another Flood Control meal at another eatery there was a duck dinner beginning with a soup made with duck and with sheep testicles prepared to restore all sexual desires. This meal continued quickly, and the

guests were invited to retire to rooms set aside for their needs, companions provided, of course.

One other meal featured a batch of just born mice. In this Sichuan Flood Control dinner, the meal began with a soup, each diner supplied with an infant mouse there to be swallowed. These folk did report they did enjoy them but not their squeaks and squeals as they slid down from throat to belly.

A last dinner for these Flood Control diners came with a delightful dish called 'Eight Rarities Repast' served in three sittings in different places at different times. One included the palm of a bear, another a tiger tail, and the third a camel hump. Each was prepared with a mushroom, names unknown but for one of them. It was called *yutou* and said to look like an actual brain. That multi-location meal also had a dish made with the tail of a carp, the lips of an orangutan, the breast of an osprey, and the brain of an elephant nursing her twins.

Let us not forget a meal omitted, almost forgotten, that began with a large platter of yet another paw, that of a goose and his gander prepared over a low fire cooking for twenty-four hours, then dressed with a mix of arrowroot and lotus paste mixed with lots of avocado oil. The part of the geese they usually walked on were soft like gelatin. They melted in the mouth as they touched the tongue.

If you were you invited to attend one or more of these Flood Control extravagant repasts, we wonder what you would think of them. We encourage you to search your brain for other dishes that might be presented. We did ask this question of many who said they would adore eating at such a fine eatery.

Many told us what they might have had; what rare and costly dishes might be set before them. Some suggested foods of the sea, others mentioned fowl, a very few spoke of cold dishes, some of meats or soups or vegetable items. Not one spoke about a sweet dish, a rice or staple one made with flour or nuts, none spoke of one with corn or potatoes.

If you could select one dish in any meal category, what would it be? How would you describe it? Do feel free to detail one main course not already mentioned, different from those spoken of. Search the innermost recess of your brain assuming it is not impacted by flood foibles so you can be hired to make it. We wonder what you are thinking, what recipe or recipes would you make? Which one or ones would you then want to eat? Share them with us and our readers, and tell us if you will be the first to be chosen. We anxiously await hearing from you as you help us feed King K B. Ling. (JMN)

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN EARLY TIMES

Occasions with alcoholic libations did exist in China in the earliest of times. Many were at religious services, all enjoyed for their taste, aroma, and induced states of euphoria heightening the senses, rarely bringing solemnity, and many times dignity to an occasion.

In most Asian countries, China included, alcoholic beverages were called 'wines' no matter how much alcohol was in them, or the method used to make them. In China, all were called *jiu*. This is best translated as 'wine' made from cereals with or without yeast added. Few were from fruit, a few made of yet something else.

Before and during the Shang and Zhou Dynasties (21st century - 1045 BCE, and 1045 BCE - 221 BCE, respectively), the popularity of these beverages did increase. Many were long-fermented and consumed by ordinary folk at less than ordinary meals or special events, and/or by priests as they honored the dead, attended to their burials, or performed other religious rites.

At many such events, different *jiu* drinks were found in storage or pouring containers. A few were in drinking cups set out with the deceased for use in their afterlife. Those who found and dated them were amazed at the number with liquid still in them.

By the last years of the Zhou Dynasty, Confucian protocols did discuss how these beverages and the foods found with them were made. This did help wine connoisseurship enrich the lives and knowledge of the living. Today, folk are amazed at how they influenced their industries.

By Han Dynasty times (206 BCE - 220 CE), poems and tales shared behaviors such as games played on drinking occasions if the beverages were distilled or

not. There were white ones made with cereals, grapes, or other fruits, clear or dark ones made with still other items. A few reported swilling them appropriately a few told yet other tales of their consumption. Some told of having them with food, most only reported of guzzling them, and quickly.

Folks of the status of Lady Dai, whose remains are at Mawangdui in the Hunan Province from about the 2nd century BCE, have a little liquid in them, a few have a cup full or more. A few are two-eared drinking cups, others flasks or bowls for heating, storing, or pouring them. Some are ceramic a few are stone, and many

are bronze or another metal, a few with ceramic edges to insure no poisoning from a metal.

By the Tang Dynasty (618 - 906 CE), there is much written about these beverages and what holds them, about the intoxication they can cause, and about general drinking behaviors.

Alcoholic beverage use does increase daily as it does for special occasions such as festivals, sacrificial times, and many other times, too.

Some containers hold liquids from cereals raw, steamed, or cooked. Most are written about extensively as are their containers. Modern researchers note some are adulterated with sugar or diluted with water, some are clear, some of various colors, and they think some are to be used young, others when aged. Some were made with Sinkiang grapes, a few called 'food for the Gods,' and these are deemed popular.

According to historical records in *Shinchi*, by the time of the last Zhou Emperor infatuated with the beautiful Ta Chi, one finds ponds excavated and filled with yellow wine dedicated to her. Others have meat hanging from trees around these 'Ponds of Wine and Forests of Meat'

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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN EARLY TIMES

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that decorate places for things clearly sybaritic. Are their lives so licentiousness that they do not last long? Does drinking become a greater activity for common men? Tipplers know how to play the *chiu-chuan* guessing game, others select the sum of fingers game held out by its participants.

Grape wines are introduced to China from the west as is wine distillation. Some make *kaoling* (sorghum), providing pleasure as their alcohol content increases more during the Tang and Song Dynasties (618 - 907 CE and 960 - 1279 CE, respectively) when poets such as Li Bo gain reputations and inspirations drinking them.



In these times, white 'wines' often have alcoholic content ranging upward from forty percent compared to wines nowadays measuring twelve to fourteen percent. A most famous one known as *Bai Jiu*, now more popularly called *Mao Tai*, is potent and made in the Guizhou Province from *kaoliang*. Others are made with glutinous rice and produced in or near Shanghai. One of lesser potency, a famous one from the Zhejiang Province, has an alcohol content of fourteen percent and is called Shao Xing wine.

The history of beer begins in the town of Qinghai at the German concession that has a brewery there. Bottled and spelled Tsingtao, it was and is made in the largest brewery in China. There are many other breweries making beer, probably more than a dozen. It is interesting to note that in China a bottle of beer costs about a quarter and billions of bottles do circulate at any one time. Though popular, most popular alcoholic beverages are still made with raw, cooked, or steamed rice, beers with sprouted hops, malts, and/or grains.



In rice wines, individual grains become liquid, and if there are any solids left, they are strained out and discarded or fed to local animals. Before doing so, they might be inoculated with mold or microorganisms from earlier batches and used in that way. They are

often heated, incubated, cooled, and set aside, then strained, used or sold.

Years back, only young males could work with wines, had to face west, be clean, and not have sexual relations during wine-making seasons. Most wines were made with river water in Spring or Fall which are considered the best seasons to make wine.

Early oracle bone records of foods and regular and medicated wines were often reported on Chinese lunar calendars. Some were recorded on chop-stick-like items from the Shang Dynasty. They are the oldest such records in the world. These wines could act as solvents soaking up components from herbs or other items stored with them. Medicated ones were consumed to stimulate blood circulation, relax muscles and joints, and relieve rheumatic pain. Many are still in use along with newer ones designed and made more recently as health products.

The Chinese believe these beverages strengthen other medicines and/or help cure diseases. In the *1330 Principles of Correct Diet* by the Turkic court therapist, Hu Si Hui, there is a discussion of many of them and some diet therapies known and used during his time. His thinking still influences folks in current generations. He knew and shared how to make them, take them, even develop new formulations to nourish the body and be tonics. Some were made with herbs and fruits added as are those seen in glass jars below. Many TCM practitioners speak about drinking medicated wines and eating seasonal foods during the Chinese Lunar months.

Early shamens did use mind-altering liquids to induce trances; many made with alcohol. Some can be traced to the Shen Nong period (circa 2000 - 1500 BCE) and the Chinese did make the oldest alcoholic beverages for improving health.



We know from the preserved beverages unearthed at their excavations and from a few written items found with them, that they are earlier than Roman ones recovered from shipwrecks found in the Mediterranean Sea.

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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN EARLY TIMES

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Some are found in *ding*, *li*, *hu*, *zeng*, *xian*, *jiao*, or other early containers, a few elsewhere. One researcher told us that drinking etiquette appears in writings of many archeologists telling people not to guzzle, and to wait to drink until elders finish theirs. One chap points out that in *The Book of Rites*, it shows a close relationship between wine and politics, and between government patterns of leaders and ordinary citizens. *Jiu* was and still is the main word the Chinese use for all alcoholic beverages whether from fermented grains such as millet, wheat, hops and other starches, or not fermented ones.

We did learn that alcoholic beverages made from cereals such as rice need sophisticated technology to convert their sugars, many use molds, malts, ferments, or mineral acids. Man's saliva has an enzyme called ptyalin that can also do the job. Common people, tells us they drink these beverages more on holidays, festivals, and when entertaining than at other times.



We did learn that *Maotai*, also known as the 'Glory of China' originated in the town of that name in Renhuan County in Guizhou Province and that it is stored about three years before going to market. *Fengjiu* is from the Apricot Flower Village in Fen Yang County in the Shanxi Province, *Wuliangye* is named for the five cereals used to make it including: rice and glutinous rice, sorghum, maize, and wheat. It comes from Yibin City in the south of the Sichuan Province; and that *Luzhoulaojiaotequ* is made in Luzhou City in the Sichuan Province.

Rice wines are very old Chinese alcoholic beverages, the most famous among them *Shao Xing*, is made in that city where there is a great wine museum. We did visit it when in there in Zhejiang Province many years ago. The picture of its most fascinating room; we share

on this page. This wine is very popular in cooking, as a seasoning, and in many Chinese medicines.

One TCM practitioner said to tell readers that rice wine improves ones *qi* and blood circulation, maintains health, protects most organs, keeps skin healthy, warms and revitalizes the body, assists digestion, disinfects, is used in many decoctions, and mothers should use it daily post-partum for thirty days.

He went on to say that China makes potent liquors now called brandies, and he agrees that the most popular is *Maotai*, another *Bamboo Leaf Liquor*. It is sweet and often greenish-gold, with a long, history, written on ancient turtle shells, animal bones, and other/oracle bones, most ten times older than he is. He adds we should tell our readers that some add matrimony berries, ginseng, haw fruit, etc. while others include poisonous and non-poisonous snakes; other animals, too.

He continued that according to ancient historical records, there were eight things considered necessary for life including firewood, rice, oil, salt, liquor, sauce, vinegar, and tea. Liquor, he said was removed during the Yuan Dynasty (1279 - 1368) when rulers deemed it not needed daily, so only seven are now deemed necessary.

During the Shang Dynasty, he went on, many bronze containers were found to store ritual wines. Confucius did describe some of them, and some are on display at the Mawangdui site. He adds that Emperor Wudi (141 - 87 BCE) did send his first minister, Zhang Qian, to Afghanistan (circa 138 BCE) and that he did return with grapes and grape wine.

Many alcoholic beverage are components of Chinese social activities; and they have ferments using liquids and molds, some as indicated, found in empty buckets from rice or bread making. The Chinese believe most alcoholic beverages are warm or hot, beer is cold, and both can tenderize meat, remove fishy flavors, and can be added to many dishes to enhance their taste and texture.

While he also said most Chinese drink moderately, he admitted that some do so to excess, others just for health, and that people need not do so in excess. He also said to keep most refrigerated, and to use in soups, main courses, and desserts as the Fujianese do as it can be very healthy. He then said good-bye telling us that alcoholic beverage have different tastes, can and should be used to season foods, and that their medicated liquids are effective when used as prescribed, are health giving and popular, and we should try them. We promised to do so. (JMN)

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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN EARLY TIMES

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RED WINE LEES

Ingredients:

1 pound long grain or glutinous rice
2 ounces red rice yeast
1 Tablespoon granulated sugar
1 dry Chinese wine yeast ball
1 Tablespoon cornstarch

Preparation:

1. The day before planning to steam the rice, rinse it several times, then soak it overnight with enough water for two inches above the rice.
2. Also the day before, cover the red rice yeast in a glass container covered with three cups of boiled but cooled water, and let this sit overnight
3. In the morning, put the wine yeast ball in a small bowl barely covered with boiled but cooled water, and set it aside.
4. Steam the rice, then add the soaked yeast ball and smashed with fork or fingers, then add the cornstarch and stir well. Cover with cheesecloth, or any loosely woven material and set aside in a cool dark place for a week, stirring once each of the seven days.
5. Carefully drain the wine lees into a clean empty jar, cover it and refrigerate. Do add half teaspoon of coarse salt if planning to keep it for more than a month or two. One can use the solids or the liquid, as desired. One can decant the liquid and use as a wine for cooking.

BEEF BRISKET IN RED WINE

Ingredients:

1½ pounds brisket of beef, blanched for two minutes, its water discarded
1 Tablespoons each white and black peppercorns tied into a spice bag
1 half tangerine peel, cut in big pieces
2 Tablespoons fresh ginger, thinly sliced
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1 large onion, peeled cut in half, then into wedges
2 Tablespoons brown bean paste
2 Tablespoons dark soy sauce
1 cup Chinese red wine
2 carrots, angle-cut
1 large piece brown rock sugar, smashed
1 teaspoon coarse salt, if desired
3 cups cooked rice

Preparation:

1. Put beef in large pot, add water to completely cover it and add the spice bag, tangerine peel, and fresh ginger.
2. Bring this to the boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for half an hour, then remove the beef to a bowl, remove the liquid to a jar, and set both aside for one hour. Then cut the meat into smaller cubes.
3. Heat oil in a wok or large pan, add the beef and stir-fry for two minutes, then add the onion pieces and stir-

fry another two minutes before adding the reserved broth and stir well.

4. Now add the bean paste, soy sauce, wine, and the sugar (the salt if using it). Reduce the heat to low and simmer for forty-five minutes. Serve on or next to the cooked rice.

PORK BELLY IN WINE

Ingredients:

1 pound pork belly with its skin left on
2 Tablespoons dark soy sauce
1 cup Shao Xing wine
e Tablespoons vegetable oil
½ cup preserved minced Shao-xing-style minced mustard greens
3 Tablespoons fresh ginger, slivered
3 scallions, slivered
1 piece brown rock sugar, smashed
1 Tablespoon Maotai or another Chinese brandy

Preparation:

1. Slice pork belly into thin slices, and marinate in the wine for one hour, then dry the slices well with paper towels.
2. Heat wok or fry pan, add the dried meat slices and fry them until browned, then remove and discard oil.
3. Now put the meat slices in a bowl, the nicest ones first, then add the mustard greens, then the ginger and scallion pieces, and sprinkle the smashed sugar over this. Press all down and put a heat proof shallow bowl or plate on the top and steam over boiling water for three hours.
4. Remove carefully, put the bowl on a trivet and remove the liquid to a measuring cup and refrigerate both until the fat in the cup hardens. Then discard this solid fat.
5. Press this down again, add the Mao Tai, and put it the bowl into a steamer for two hours over boiling water.
6. Remove and turn it out on a flat plate with low sides. Before serving, cut it into wedge-shaped pieces.

WALNUTS IN WINE SAUCE

Ingredients:

¼ pound white and brown rock sugar, crushed
2 Tablespoon honey
1 egg white
½ pound shelled walnut halves
¼ cup kaoliang wine

Preparation:

1. In a bowl, mix sugar, honey, and five ounces warm water and stir until all the crushed sugar is dissolved.
2. Now strain the egg white removing the chalaza (its thick part), and beat it until it lightly foamed before stirring it into a pot with the sugary syrup. Add seven ounces cool water, and bring to the boil, adding the walnuts and the wine. Pour this into four to six small bowls and serve.

ONIONS: AND SOME RELATIVES

ONIONS

are in the *Allium* family and botanically called *Allium cepa*. They are related to garlic, shallots, and leeks, among other items. Already discussed in Volume 23(2) on pages 16 - 19 and 24, they can be biennials or perennials, most harvested in the Fall. If they are left in the ground, they will grow bigger and better the following spring.



They are bulbs bred and grown in China for some seven thousand years. The Chinese call them *yang cong* meaning 'foreign' even though they have been around that long. Some call them 'jade onions' no matter their color, size, or variety. All varieties are popular in the Chinese culinary if consumed for health as medicinals or as vegetables.

Green onion tops are erroneously called their stalks. They die back in Fall and reappear the following spring, if left in the ground and not removed. They were first described in the western world in 1753 by Carl Linnaeus. Their red cousins share the same tan exterior as do white ones and all in this family, no matter the color of their flesh, are eighty-nine percent water, four percent sugar, one percent protein, and two percent fiber.

For those with pets, we recommend not letting them in house or garden because if cats or dogs ingest them, they can get sick because too much or too many can be toxic for them. On the positive side, they can repel moths and prevent small insect bites if made into a poultice for the skin. They have been used as such and in other medicinal ways for almost as long as they have been around thanks to their cinnamic acid, caffeine, asafoetida, volatile oils, and other stomach-bothering constituents.

Chinese TCM practitioners say they have a warm, sweet yet pungent nature and can positively impact liver and lung channels. They are not always nice when slicing or dicing as they can bring tears to the eyes. Do that task under cold running water to reduce their tearing impact.

The Chinese use onions to treat high blood pressure, relieve constipation, reduce skin ulcers, treat wounds, stop vaginal itching, and reduce other irritations. In the kitchen, use them in major and minor dishes where they are always appreciated.

SHALLOTS,

relatives of onions, often grow in bunches, have tan exteriors as do onions, and can be white or red within. Their bunches are almost always called clusters, their bulb a type of *Allium cepa* that is different from their brethren. Many originated in Central Asia, others in China, and they are preferred when fried and crisp. They can be purchased that way. Chinese cook them at least until they wilt though they prefer them crisp, and they do like to mix them with other ingredients.



In China, the word for shallots varies by region. It can be *yang cong*, *jiu cong*, or *qing cong*; onions are most often called *yang cong*. The recipes that follow when cooking them, substituting one for the other is common and acceptable. Our Chinese friends tell us they rarely do that but we often do, particularly when one is unavailable.

Reasons differ, but these friends tell us they do respect taste and their textural differences. They sense these changes but this does not bother many of them. If it bothers you, simply do not do that. We suggest you do as you like for all these bulbs.

LEEKS are also related, and botanically called *Allium ampeloprasom*. In the past, they were called kurrats. They are the mildest members of this family, and even though they are, Buddhist monks do not eat them because they believe they raise their sexual energies. Actually, they do not eat any *allium* bulb for this reason.



This family member is the tallest and most layered among them. They also hold the most dirt and sand in their green tops so do wash them carefully. Often sold in bunches though they do not grow that way, we use leeks very carefully rinsed to get rid of all dirt or sand in their interiors. Sometimes, we cut them in half the long way and then rinse them.

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ONIONS: AND SOME RELATIVES

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SCALLIONS

are white in their lower part which is less than half way up, green in their upper parts, as are leeks. When planted and after sprouting, most growers pile up the soil around their bottom part trying to keep most of this section white; the more white the better. Some users do discard the green part and only use the white part as this is more tender and has a different taste. Those that do, like them with as much white as possible, while those that use the green tops do want them as tall and as tender as possible.



The Chinese and others who discard the green tops do save them if they plan to use them in soups and long-cooked dishes. We consider that a waste, add them to salads and other dishes and never throw them out. We find uses for them, we do cook the green part separately and longer. We love scallions and leeks and are careful to cook their whites for a short time, the green parts for more time than most recipes do.

With long cooking, leeks retain their shape and texture better than scallions do. And we know that leeks are the mildest in this family. We like them and cook either one only for a little time so they have good texture. We know that many folk have no or less trouble digesting and tolerating them.

LEEK OMELETTES

Ingredients:

4 leeks, cut in half the long way, rinsed of all sand, then angle-cut in thin slivers
5 eggs, beaten well
1/4 teaspoon coarse salt
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
1 Tablespoon Chinese sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Set aside one tablespoon of the green slivered leeks, and rest the rest of the leek pieces with the eggs.
2. Heat a wok or fry pan, add both oils and when hot, add the egg mixture, and stir just until it starts to set.
3. Then turn over the almost set leek-egg mixture and allow it to start to set on the other side.
4. Remove this to a cutting board and cut it this omelette into eight wedges.
5. Serve them on a pre-heated platter and do garnish them with the set aside pieces of green leeks.

GOAT AND ONION SOUP

Ingredients:

1/2 pound goat fillet, sliced thin, then cut into one-inch long pieces
2 teaspoons dark soy sauce
2 teaspoons rice wine
2 teaspoons sesame oil
1/2 teaspoon each, coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
2 Tablespoons cornstarch
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1 cup diced onions
1/2 fresh chili pepper seeded and slivered
2 peeled onions, one red and one white, cut in large pieces top to bottom
1/2 cup fresh coriander leaves and stems, coarsely chopped
6 to 8 cups boiling chicken broth
1 Tablespoon Chinese black vinegar

Preparation:

1. Mix goat meat, soy sauce, rice wine, and sesame oil with the salt, pepper, and cornstarch, and marinate it in this for half an hour before draining and drying the meat with paper towels. Reserve the marinade refrigerated for another use. It will stay refrigerated for several days.
2. Heat a wok or fry pan, add the oil, and stir-fry the drained marinated meat for two minutes, then add the chili pepper and leeks and stir-fry for another minute until the meat is no longer pink.
3. Remove the meat from the wok or pan and continue to fry the leeks for another two to three minutes.
4. Then, put all these cooked foods in a pre-heated soup tureen with the coriander, the boiling chicken broth, goat meat, and vinegar, and mix well., then serve in a pre-heated tureen or individual soup bowls.

LAMB, LEEK, AND OTHER GREENS

Ingredients:

1 pound lamb fillet, sliced thin
2 teaspoons each, dark soy sauce, rice wine, and sesame oil
1/2 teaspoon each, coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
2 Tablespoons cornstarch
1/4 cup vegetable oil
5 fresh chili peppers, some hot some not
5 peeled and crushed fresh garlic cloves
1 leek, angle sliced
1 cup fresh coriander leaves, coarsely chopped

Preparation:

1. Mix meat, soy sauce, rice wine, and sesame oil. Then add salt and pepper and cornstarch and marinate for half an hour. Then drain and dry the meat with paper towels.
2. Heat a wok or fry pan, add the oil, and fry the drained marinated meat for two minutes, then add the chili peppers and garlic and stir for another minute.
3. Put this in a pre-heated serving bowl, sprinkle the coriander leaves on top, and serve.

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ONIONS: AND SOME RELATIVES

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SPARERIBS AND CARAMELIZED GINGER

Ingredients:

3 to four pounds spare ribs, chopped in individual one-inch pieces
2 cups vegetable oil, reserving one tablespoon to oil a serving platter
1/4 cup fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
3 leeks, washed well, and thinly angle sliced
1/2 cup Ginger liqueur
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup red wine vinegar
2 Tablespoons soy sauce, one dark, the other thin
1 teaspoon salt

Preparation:

1. Blanch the spare ribs for two minutes in boiling water, then quickly rinse them in cool water.
2. Heat the oil in a soup pot and deep-fry half the spare ribs until crisp, about four minutes, then drain them on paper towels and fry the second batch of ribs for the same amount of time. Then drain them the same way, reserving the oil.
3. Rinse the pot, add two tablespoons of the oil to it, an add all the ribs and stir-fry them for three minutes, then add the ginger and the leeks, and stir-fry this for two minutes before adding the liqueur, sugar, vinegar, soy sauce, and salt.
4. Stir over a ht burner until the sauce thickens and is like syrup, then put this in a pre-heated bowl and serve promptly.

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PORK RIBS WITH SCALLOPS

Ingredients:

5 dried scallops, boiled for one hour, then drained and cooled, then tear them into very thin strips
1 pound boneless pork ribs cut in one-inch pieces
1/2 pound daikon, peeled and diced or very thinly sliced
2 large carrots, peeled and diced
1 inch fresh ginger, peeled and sliced, then each slice smashed, and then diced
1 Tablespoon goji berries
5 scallions, angle sliced

Preparation:

1. Put pork ribs into one quart of boiling water and simmer for one hour, then remove and set them aside.
2. Strain the liquid of all solids, rinse the pot, and return the ribs and the strained liquid to it.
3. Add the rest of the solid ingredients but not the goji berries and the scallions adding half cup of water and bring this to the boil and reduce the heat and simmer for twenty minutes.
4. Now, add the goji berries and simmer for five minutes more.
5. Serve in individual pre-heated soup bowls tossing in half the scallions and then adding the rest of them as garnish.

SHALLOT-FLAVORED CORN AND CHICK PEAS

Ingredients:

6 shallots, peeled, minced, and deep-fried crisp
1/2 teaspoon ground Sichuan peppercorns
1/4 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 scallion top, green part only, minced
2 Tablespoons cornstarch
3 salted duck egg yolks, steamed for ten minutes, then mashed
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup canned corn kernels
1 cup canned chick peas
1 cup vegetable oil

Preparation:

1. Mix the shallots, ground Sichuan peppercorns, sugar, and scallion pieces, then add the cornstarch and the mashed duck egg yolks and salt and mix them into the corn and chick peas.
2. Add one tablespoon of cold water and mix well.
3. Heat wok or deep fry-pan, then add the corn and chick pea mixture and let this fry for one to two minutes watching it carefully as it will foam up. Then use a slotted spoon and remove all from the oil, draining it on paper towels. Now allow it to cool on a clean dry plate.
4. When cool, put this in a bowl and serve as a snack or put it in on paper-towel-lined container until ready to serve it. It can stay one or two days in the refrigerator or in a cool place.

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ONIONS: AND SOME RELATIVES

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CHICKEN, LEEK, SCALLIONS, AND NOODLES

Ingredients:

1 pound wide Chinese wheat or rice noodles, cooked in salted water until just tender, drained, rinsed, and chilled in cold water
3 Tablespoons sesame oil, divided
2 roasted chicken breasts, skin and bones removed, meat shredded in thin strips
½ onion, in small pieces
½ leek, white part only
10 scallions, sliced on an angle, long and thin
2 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and sliced
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1 bunch Chinese parsley, rinsed and chopped
2 chili peppers, seeded and chopped
1 pound snow peas, strings removed, and angle sliced one-half -inch wide
½ cup thin soy sauce
3 Tablespoons creamy peanut butter
3 Tablespoons cold tea
2 Tablespoons rice vinegar
2 Tablespoons granulated sugar

Preparation:

1. Rinse the noodles in hot water, then drain them and mix them with half the sesame oil.
2. Heat a wok or fry pan, add the vegetable oil and fry the onions, garlic, and scallions until all are soft.
3. Next add the shredded chicken pieces, the Chinese parsley, chili pepper and snow pea pieces, and stir-fry for one minute mixing this well.
4. Make a dressing mixing the thin soy sauce, peanut butter, cold tea, rice vinegar, sugar, and the other half of the sesame oil, and mix this into the vegetables in the wok.
5. Put the noodles and all the other ingredients including the vegetables in a large pre-heated serving bowl. Add the remaining sesame oil, and stir well. Serve hot or warm.

MANDARIN FISH STEW

Ingredients:

2 pounds firm white-fleshed fish, skinless and boneless, cut into two-inch pieces
2 Tablespoons brown sugar
2 teaspoons Siracha sauce
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
2 medium zucchini, angle-cut
2 stalks celery, angle-cut
1 large carrot, peeled and angle-cut
1 onion, cut in large wedges
8 cloves fresh garlic, peeled cut in halves, then smashed
1 knob fresh ginger, peeled, thick-sliced, then each slice smashed
4 shallots, peeled and angle-slivered
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil

Preparation:

1. Mix fish pieces with the brown sugar, *Siracha* sauce, and vegetable oil, and all other ingredients and set aside for ten minutes.
2. Next, heat a wok or fry pan, and fry the fish mixture until light brown, then add the vegetables and stir-fry three minutes before remove everything to a pre-heated bowl, and then serve it.

OVERALL, do enjoy the entire family and do make all the recipes below and those found in other places, too. We use any family member in any dish, be they stews or stir-fried ones. (JMN)

READER ARTICLES

REVIEWED AND OFTEN ACCEPTED

KAIFENG : A CHINESE-JEWISH HAVEN

This city, a busy stop on the Silk Road, was popular and used for centuries. It became even busier when folk from the Middle East used it to travel on from the eighth Century BCE and thereafter. A goodly numbers were Jewish. In 1163 CE, Rabbi Leiwei, one of those Jews, was in charge of their settling in Kaifeng.

With needed approvals, he built a synagogue for them. a ritual bath, kosher butchering facility, kosher kitchen, and a Sukkoth—the place for meals during this Jewish holiday. He oversaw and served this Jewish population for years. It was a popular community, so popular that Marco Polo came and visited them. To honor their contributions to the larger Chinese society, after 1421 these Jews were allowed to take civil service examinations. Those that passed could and did apply for and get government positions.



The Jews in Kaifeng practiced their religion there from before the Southern Song Dynasty (1129 - 1279 CE), until the late 19th century, and then most left because their synagogue was destroyed by overflowing Yellow River flooding. A few years before, a Jesuit priest had made contact with them; he reported they were still abstaining from pork, observing their holidays, and enjoying other aspects of their religion. They were doing what other Jews in Western and Eastern Europe were doing, during these years.

We also know of the Jews existence and practices here in other ways. One was seeing a stone memorial called a 'steele' from Kaifeng on display at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada. There are others and records showing their presence, and many practices of their religion there. During the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644 CE), an emperor did give seven Chinese family names to the Jewish people there including: Ai, Jin, Lao, Li, Shi, Zhang, and Zhao, Those of Shi and Jin are equivalents of Stone and Gold, both common Jewish family names in the west. There are other indications including that the Kaifeng torah scrolls found there are identical to Torah scrolls in Europe and elsewhere, all testaments to Jews living and practicing their religion in Kaifeng.

Before, during, and after 1900, more Jews, mostly from Europe, came to Kaifeng to escape antisemitism. Many moved on to Shanghai joining the larger Jewish population there.

Those interested in the plight of the Jews from the Kaifeng community tried to rescue those torah scrolls and help the fifty or so Jewish families of some two hundred and fifty folk relocated to Shanghai. The Jews in Shanghai did ask them not to sell these scrolls

and that they would help them regain them and rebuild their synagogue or build a new one for them. However, nothing came of that offer. Some wonder if that was because the scrolls had already been sold to Christian organizations. We did not learn if that was why nothing happened.

Some of the offspring of these and other Jews continue to write 'Youtai' on their government documents indicating they are Jews. Others do not even though they are descendants of the many Kaifeng Jews some of whom had come to Kaifeng from the Middle East or were born and raised in Kaifeng. They chose not to identify themselves as Jews as did the many from Iraq and Iran.

You may know of those from well-known families of Jewish immigrants that went to China. One such is the Sason family of couture fame. They came to Shanghai from a different direction, from Baghdad, and did go to Hong Kong, in 1902. Later, their patriarch, Sir Jacob Sason, dedicated the Ohel Leah Synagogue in his mother's memory. Others gave other items of appreciation.

Other Jews went directly to Hong Kong from Iraq as did the Kadoories along with waves of others who went there and elsewhere in China. Some went to Hong Kong before it was officially part of China. Others arrived long before the first or second world wars. There were some who had come to these cities at the beginning of the 1800s. Many invested in Hong Kong, even before it became part of China. These included those who

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KAIFENG: A CHINESE-JEWISH HAVEN

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purchased the Peninsula and the Furama Hotels. Now, there are more than three thousand Jews in Hong Kong in the community that began in the 1800s. Many are Baghdadi and Iraqi Jews who came from these cities in those early years; others have been coming since.

Today, many Jews in Hong Kong own businesses, keep kosher, and keep many of their other religious beliefs. Some went for business, some for pleasure, some out of necessity. Many Jews who now come to Hong Kong do visit the Furama Hotel or the Jewish Community Center near it. Some go to the *mikvah*, the Jewish ritual bath on Robinson Street, or they go to the Hong Kong Chabad for kosher dinners on the Sabbath or catered ones at one of the above-mentioned hotels. Local Chabad members help, many have kosher food stands at jewelry and other business fairs, some at the Canton Trade Fair.

Foods started by Kaifeng Jews in this city once the capital of China in the Henan Province, are still available there and elsewhere. Many Jews and non-Jews enjoy these Jewish culinary roots when visiting or living in China. These foods include small steamed buns called *Kaifeng xiao long bao* stuffed with many different meats and/or vegetables. Should you want to try them, visit the Di Yi Lou restaurant at the crossing of Zhingshan Road and Sheng Fu Qian Streets, or at The First Restaurant of Steamed Buns; or other places in Kaifeng, in Shanghai, or in other cities. We did and dipped ours in vinegar and soy sauce, a local custom. You can too.

Another Chinese food influenced by the Kaifeng Jews is 'Mayuxing Bucket-shaped Chicken' in Kaifeng or in Hong Kong, even elsewhere. Called *ma yu xing tong zi ji*, it is made with locally-raised hens served in a thick soup. The chicken is crisp and named after its developer, Mayuxin. You might try it at the Mayuxing Duck and Chicken Market or at the Snack Night Market, the Drum Tower Night Fair, or the Xisi Night Fair, and at other places, too.

Another food influenced by early Jews in China is Chrysanthemum Hot Pot. The Chinese call it *ju hua hou guo*, as it is named for the pot it is cooked and served in. Old ones were made of brass or steel. Newest ones are electric and no longer are heated by coals or charcoal. This dish is cooked at the table and can be loaded with fish in a chicken soup. Some restaurants make theirs with meat, fish, and chicken, and a special sauce. Years ago, we had some at the Drum Tower Night Fair; many other places probably still serve it, too.

Another Kaifeng influenced food with Jewish roots from these early settlers, is called Four Treasures. This dish has many flavors including those of chicken, duck, pigeon, and quail. Their thick soup, called *Kaifeng tao si bao*, is a savory delight. There are other main dishes and snacks including a local carp covered with noodles, pictured on page 22. It was featured in an earlier issue of *Flavor and Fortune*. Its recipe is below. Enjoy them in your kitchen or at a restaurant that serves them all. (JMN)

KAIFENG NOODLE-BLANKETED CARP

Ingredients:

2 to 3 pound fresh carp, fins and scales discarded
2 cups vegetable oil
1/3 pound very thin dry noodles, soaked until soft
1/2 cups chicken broth
2 teaspoons Chinese white vinegar
2 teaspoons granulated sugar
2 Teaspoons Shao Xing rice wine
1 teaspoon salt
3 slices fresh ginger, slivered
2 scallions, minced
1 Tablespoon cornstarch mixed with like amount of cold water

Preparation:

1. Rinse, then dry the fish with paper towels, and then cut five incisions across its back almost to the bone.
2. Heat oil in a wok or deep pan, then add the carp and pour the hot oil over the fish for two minutes, then remove it to a towel-lined preheated platter and let it rest one minute, then discard the paper towels.
3. Drain the noodles, increase the pan with the oil and deep fry them just until they look crisp and turn color. Then remove them to paper towels, drain well, and put them on top of the fish. Set the oil aside for another purpose.
4. Dry the wok or pan with paper towels, add the broth, vinegar, sugar, wine, salt, ginger, and the scallion pieces and bring to the boil, stir then put the fish back in and add the cornstarch mixture and stir until it starts to thicken, stir again, then remove the fish to a pre-heated platter. Put the fried noodles only on top of it. Then put a little of the sauce on the center of the noodles, the rest around the fish., then serve.

LI: AN ETHNIC MINORITY

This agrarian group of minority people live mostly on Hainan, Island, China's second largest island. It is between China and Taiwan, and more than two dozen other minorities live here, as well; and they participate or watch the Double Third Festival known as *Funianfu*. At it, the Li do their bamboo pole dance running and jumping over poles held in place on or close to the ground by others not dancing at this time. This dance is now classified as a National Heritage item, so honored in 2006.

The Li say that the Lark Girl saved their people from consequences of a terrible drought. A chieftain did order his servants to capture her, but she and Yayin flew over many mountains until exhausted and could not fly any more. The Lark Girl was moved by his sincerity and offered to help him. After she did, both soared into the sky and local people wished them well singing and dancing. This actually did help minimize their drought.

Most of the more than one and a half million Li people live in or near Tongze, the capital of the Li-Miao Autonomous Prefecture, or they live in Baoting, Baisha, Changjiang, Dingfang, Ladong, Lidong, or other nearby counties. A few do live elsewhere on Hainan. No matter where they do, they grow several crops of rice each year, and two other staples, sweet potatoes and corn. In addition, they grow most of China's coffee, cocoa, cassava, pineapple, banana, and mango crops.

The Li are monogamous. They select their own marriage partners, and have for many years. They maintain many pagan beliefs, keep some parts of other religions, live close to many Han and Hui people, and help produce and sell many minerals including iron, copper, phosphorous, quartz, and salts, the latter from the nearby China Sea.

They are one of the few ethnic groups in China that treat their own children the same kind way they treat any illegitimate children they have or help raise; and they think others should, too. Thus they have much tolerance. They celebrate the Double Third Festival doing that bamboo pole dance, and they believe in kindness and consideration for all. They respect their ancestors, like many tattoos, particularly on their faces, show kindness to all regardless of age or looks, and they are diligent, happy, and honest. The Li do dismiss selfishness as a behavior not to be indulged in, and they worship their own God called Paolongkou. They honor him on every holiday, honor all their elders, and treat all elders to lots of rice wine, pastries, and pickles on every holiday.

They honor him on every holiday, honor all their elders, and treat all elders to lots of rice wine, pastries, and pickles on every holiday.

This minority entertains their God and others on every special day by playing their nose flutes. These instruments play three octaves and are most unusual. On these holidays they tell their children the story of Yayin and the Lark Girl often. Why, because they believe it teaches them wisdom and selflessness, traits they believe in and do practice themselves.

Li people tell the world they were first known during the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907 CE), and are the earliest descendants of Yue and Longyue people who came

from Guangdong and Guangxi before the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE). They are a matriarchal society whose ancestors lived during the late Shang Dynasty, and that was before the 14th century BCE. They also tell others they started being Li people in the early Zhou Dynasty, which was circa 1045 BCE.

Many Li smoke heavily and drink heavily, too. This they mostly do before and after main meals at which they eat lots of roasted meats and many sour or pickled foods. They like their meat long-cooked and with many wild



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LI: AN ETHNIC MINORITY

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herbs. Li men do lots of cooking and roasting, their women often stay with her parents, particularly before she gives birth to their first child. The wife will stay there for three months after marriage before returning to what they call 'her husband's home' though it actually is their home.

The Li use a calendar based on twelve animals, not the same twelve months the Han use. Their months are based on twelve-day cycles. Their language does have many dialects because it depends upon where they live and who their neighbors are. That said, many Li do not understand other Li people as they have different dialects and different customs. Many of them include those related to the Buyi, Dai, Dong, or Bulang people as many live near these populations.

This minority had no written language of their own until the 1950s. Some could read their ancient religious scriptures, but most we spoke to could tell us what they said or meant. Now, thanks to compulsory education, almost all Li youth read and write Mandarin and can communicate with each other.

It is common for Li girls to move out of their parents homes at about age sixteen. They live nearby and can be and are visited by young men. If she likes one, she

often invites him to stay the night, and if he likes her, he can ask his parents to ask hers for her hand in marriage. Should he do so, and the parents approve, they bring gifts of betel nuts and clothes, and make her or her parents a marriage proposal

Li women like to chew these betel nuts; they consider them a tonic food. They also like to prepare lots of bamboo rice, Li style, so it tastes sour. Their women are masters of delicate embroidery, and most can bake a cake called *Dengye* to serve on special occasions. One Li elder lady told us they fry it which changes its flavor. When eating it, they sing to each other. They also bake and serve this cake at funerals, but then do not sing.

An interesting Li custom is to dress their deceased in traditional Li clothing so ancestors will recognize them when they meet in their afterlife and so will recognize each other. This they deem very important, and every Li we spoke to said to be sure to share this with our readers.

We found no Li recipes for that cake or any other food; and if you know someone who has such a recipe, please share it with us so we can share it widely. (JMN)

**WANTED:
AN EDITOR FOR
THIS MAGAZINE;
NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED
WE WILL TRAIN YOU**

TEA IS TEA-RRIFIC

All tea is not the same as all other tea. It was not the same when it first arrived in Europe in the 1600s, not the same when it came to the US brought by or shipped to the colonists two hundred years later. And, all tea sold in the US today is not the same as all other tea sold in the US today. It never was, and it never will be, though lots if it is terrific. No matter how you spell it. There are differences in its leaf preparation, production, and then its final preparation.

Some tea is dried and fired one way, some yet another, and these make differences in its taste when brewed one way or another. If it was dried in the sun, by some heat source, rolled by hand, or not rolled at all this will change this common beverage which is not common at all. Some leaves are packaged damp, others carefully dried; and how it is dried impacts its taste, too. These are some, but not all the reasons tea is not the same when it is purchased. Though all Chinese tea comes from the same plant botanically known as *Camellia sinensis*, how it is handled, and what if anything is added to it, changes this common tea-rrific most popularly consumed beverage world-wide

The English love their tea; but they did not love it when taxed, and that was seen in 1773 at the Boston Tea Party in the US. Americans, particularly those of English descent, did dump fifteen thousand pounds of tea leaves shipped into the Boston Harbor. They did so because added to its cost was a special tax. Therefore, they boycotted this tea, did not purchase any from England no matter kind or cost.

In the 1800s, clipper ships brought tea to the US much faster than in earlier times. This did make tea less expensive than when it was taxed or after the tax levy was removed. These speedier ships took some one hundred eighty days to make the crossing. They established speed

records for doing so. Because they came so quickly, tea was better priced and more plentiful than ever before; and it became an important and popular beverage in the US. It was less expensive and more loved in the US than ever before. Love for it was also growing world-wide, more than any other hot drink, that is until coffee became the American go-to beverage. In spite of this, it is still not the world's most popular nor the world's most consumed hot beverage. Tea still holds this position.



Aside from these speedier ships, what helped the popularity of tea rise were two chaps whose first names were Thomas. One was a New York wholesale distributor with that first name. He enabled sampling and learning about this beverage by giving away samples in small silk bags. The other chap was Sir Thomas. He was a sportsman who made his company, the Lipton Tea Company, very famous. That company did taste-test many teas they planned to sell using seven folk who tasted it fourteen times ranking quality and purity. They called this 'tea's good taste.

They ranked three thousand tea varieties that grew in India, Ceylon, or China. These were different grades, different quality levels. Some were different teas. Those

seven Lipton tea taste testers tried them all and then selected only some of them to be sold in bulk as plain tea, some as flavored tea, and some as tea they would sell in individual tea bags.

Drinking tea is an old Chinese custom. Elders we know use their finest, oldest, and thinnest tea cups and tea pots when entertaining important guests. They also make and serve the best tea they can afford. Bamboo slips have been found at Han Tomb #1 at the Ma Wang Tui in the Hunan Province; the ones on the second page of this article are a few of the dishes served in those

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TEA IS TEA-RRIFIC

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days. A few, but not these, name the teas they served then, too.

As early as the 5th century CE, tea drinkers in China were enjoying tea flavored with mint, orange, even onions, some sold with these ingredients in them. Flavoring was not new then just as it is not new now. Nor were herbal teas which were then usually made with all-natural ingredients, some with tea leaves added, or flowers, bark, seeds, stems, or roots with or without caffeine. But then they were known as a tisane or an infusion; and they were classified and sold as such.



One very specific tea became very popular and still is. Called Earl Gray tea, it was and is a blend of tea leaves with the oil of bergamot, a scented citrus fruit. It gives this tea a specific aroma and taste; and it came about thanks to a recipe given to the Chinese in 1830 by the then British Prime Minister, Earl Grey. Few then or now recognize its Chinese origins.

Another popular tea variety was gunpowder tea, made using green leaves that were rolled into tiny pellets looking like gunshot. Another early tea was not a specific tea nor a way to make any tea; it was called 'pekoe' or 'orange pekoe' tea, and only referred to the size of their tea leaves. Contrary to most knowledge, neither pekoe nor orange pekoe reflect a quality designation. They refer to the size of the tea leaves and are neither the smallest nor the largest.

TCM practitioners then and now tell us there are many reasons to drink tea. Some include that tea increases blood flow to all parts of the body including the brain, and that it helps speed excretion of alcohol and nicotine from the body. Tea also increases resistance to disease, enhances oxygen flow to every body organ in the body, prevents aging of the skin, combats anemia, preserves tooth enamel thereby decreasing cavity formation, improves lipid metabolism, increases longevity, and may negatively impact weight gain.

There is one tea plantation in China where worker stomachs have two-thirds fewer cancers than do others who do not work in this plantation and yet live nearby.

Also, in one county in Taiwan producing lots of tea, the occurrence of cancer is lower than cancer rates in nearby counties. In addition, there is research that shows hypertension, heart failure, and vascular sclerosis lower among those who drink tea compared to those who do not.

As to other facts about tea, one hundred tea bags contain about a half pound of loose tea and they brew about one hundred cups of tea if brewed three to five minutes as their manufacturers recommend. They can brew more for those using these tea bags for a second cup of tea. By comparison, more than two pounds of coffee are needed to make that many cups of coffee, so tea can be less expensive than coffee when costing the same price per pound, which it never does.

You need to do the math and figure costs per cup of these two beverage for yourself and/or your family, depending upon which one you or they drink. And you need to know that some teas are known by more than one name before comparing their per cup costs. One tea with more than one name is Dragon Well Tea, also called Lung Jing Tea. Other teas also have more than one name so do this calculation including all considerations.

There are many ways to brew tea, fewer ways to brew coffee. As this article is about tea, readers need to know that squeezing the tea bag of excess liquid releases up to seven times its weight in water, a task omitted if not wrapping the string of the tea bag around the spoon when removing it.

People need to carefully monitor the temperature of the water when brewing their tea and take into account which kind of tea they really prefer as there are many different teas with many different tastes. White tea, for example, is very delicate and should not be made with boiling water. Its tea does absorb a different amount of water than black teas; so measure that before and after brewing it your way. White or yellow teas, even light green teas should be brewed with water no hotter than one hundred and seventy to one hundred and eighty degrees F. That and white, yellow, and green tea drinkers should use only one and a half tablespoons of tea leaves for the best cup of tea while oolong, black, and pu-er tea drinkers usually need hotter temperatures and less tea, depending on the kind of tea and the strength they prefer. All these impact the cost per cup of tea and the amount of tea leaves used.

Water and its temperature makes for differences in different kinds of tea and the strength of the brew. Tea

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TEA IS TEA-RRIFIC

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experts recommend bottled water and brewing tea by the clock not the color of the liquid. They say rinsing the teacup with boiling water from the kettle is one first step, discarding it the second step. They say to pour water at the correct temperature and covering the cup with a lid follows. They remind all tea drinkers that a saucer works well.

For most Chinese people, tea is more than a beverage. It is a remedy they believe prolongs life. For the Chinese this is not a new idea; but one written in a volume from the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644 CE) titled in Chinese as *Houren Xinfa* where they recommend that tea be the beverage of choice among diabetics.

As to various forms of tea and ways to serve them, in 1904 and sweltering at the St. Louis World's Fair, a merchant selling Indian tea poured some over ice and served it creating an instant sensation. Earlier, chefs did smoke tea leaves and mix them with brown sugar to marinate poultry, meat, or fish making these proteins more pungent; tastier, too.

The Chinese like their tea, when they have guests, served in the most classic tea pots and tea cups they own. The one on page one of this article can be such a pot. We do have one such, made with exceptionally thin clay, so thin we can read a printed page through it.

The tea pot on this page is made of what is called 'purple clay.' That is the color of the clay before it was fired or glazed. Only the black handles and black decor on this teapot are glazed. The inside surface of 'purple' pots, the Chinese believe, should never be glazed. They take pride in the older the better, and in using an unglazed teapot on its interior. They tell me the taste of the tea improves with each pot of tea made in such an unglazed purple teapot.

We thank the chefs who provided the special tea recipes, and hope you will make and enjoy many if not all of them using the best tea cups you have. Make different kinds of tea using white, yellow, green, blue, red, black tea, or pu-er tea, then decide which makes the best for you. Many tea colors and tea names have been used since the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644 CE). Those called white, yellow, or green have little to no oxidation, the white tea less than eight percent oxidized, oolong teas from twenty to eighty percent oxidized, black and pu-er teas one hundred percent oxidized. Pu-er tea is always fermented first and not always oxidized. One more

item, the color is of the liquid brewed not the color of the leaves; is only true for the Chinese, in the US these colors refer to those of the dried tea leaves.

The story of tea, the Chinese say, began when Emperor Shen Nung knelt before a fire boiling water for his tea. It is said that leaves from a nearby tea tree were blown into his drinking cup before he drank its hot water. This we learn happened in 2737 BCE and his enjoyment was from the color, fragrance, and flavor of that hot water.

The Chinese believe the best tea is made from new tea leaves called 'tea flushes, preferably from the two thin tender young leaves at the tip of a branch with the small unopened bud before them. So these tea leaves are not only the best, but also the most expensive. And brewing tea is, for the Chinese, an indispensable part of their life.

They make and use special tea pots made of what they call 'purple clay,' use special tea filters, tea bowls, tea pincers, tea cups, tea caddies, tea spoons, and similar items exclusively when they make their tea.

During the mid-Tang Dynasty (618 - 907 CE), Lu Yu, a young monk in a Buddhist monastery did summarize tea making and tea drinking. He wrote *Cha Ching*, which in English

we call *The Tea Classic*. He understood that emperors, ministers, street hawkers, soldiers, and all Chinese people should drink their tea for enjoyment, and he instructed all on the way to boil the water, brew the tea, and serve it. And most Chinese do just that enhancing its aroma, and flavor.

Tea has vitamins, minerals, essential oils, fluorides, and more, and TCM practitioners say it improves eyesight and alertness, is a diuretic, improves bone density, increases survival of long-term tea drinkers, and those who drink tea after a heart attack. They know and tell us it increases the life span and is why all should drink it; and we do and credit our eighty-five year life to doing so.

Many Chinese drink tea and use its leaves in many of their dishes. More than seven thousand tons of tea leaves were sold on the Tea Horse Road years ago. Many more tons are sold these days. Do you know the kind and where your tea comes from? Do you know this old art has new practices?

Bubble or 'boba' tea is a one new way to enjoy tea. First made and enjoyed in Taiwan in the 1980s, these tapioca bubbles are actually made of cassava (which some call manioc, yucca, or arrowroot), and they drink it with or

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TEA IS TEA-RRIFIC

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without condensed milk, syrup, or honey. It is so popular that McDonald's began selling it first in Germany and Austria, now in China, Taiwan, and elsewhere. Mango is the most popular flavor world-wide, hot or cold. If you know it not, do visit a Ten Ren Tea Company facility or another tea company selling it and do try it. We are mango bubble tea fans and do wonder; what flavor you prefer? We like to drink ours when eating any of the recipes below. We drink it alone or with any western snack, and any main dish. Do you have a favorite way to enjoy any tea, bubble or otherwise? Try it with any of the chef-inspired dishes below and tell us your favorite tea and dish, alone or together (JMN)

SAUTEED COD WITH TEA

Ingredients:

1 cup uncooked rice, soaked for two or more hours, then covered and steamed for forty minutes
1 pound or so (about four pieces) skinless and boneless cod fillets
3 tea bags
1 teaspoon brown sugar
3 Tablespoons each, thin and dark soy sauce
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
½ cup green tea leaves, soaked for twenty minutes in cheese cloth or the same amount in tea bags
½ cup slivered scallions
3 slices fresh ginger, slivered
3 Tablespoons coarsely chopped pecans
2 Tablespoons dried cherries, each cut in four
1 large lotus leaf soaked for half an hour, cut in half, the center coarse stem removed and discarded.

Preparation:

1. Mix the cooked and cooled rice, the packaged soaked tea leaves, nuts, and dried fruit, and put some of this mixture between two similar size fish filets. Put a mixture of the other ingredients but not the lotus leaf pieces, and tie the stuffed fish pieces loosely with coarse twine. Repeat until all four or whatever even-numbered fish pieces and stuffing are used.
2. Wrap each stuffed cod packet in the half piece of lotus leaf and re-tie or skewer this packet shut.
3. Steam over boiling water for twenty-five minutes, then remove to a platter, cut inside and outside twine and discard them, the lotus leaves, and/or skewers and set these packets on a platter. Then serve.

OOLONG-SMOKED DUCK BREASTS

Ingredients:

6 duck breasts (or one per person) skin left on is optional
1 heaping teaspoon coarse salt
½ cup *tie guan yin* tea leaves
1 Tablespoon Sichuan peppercorns
¼ teaspoon broken cinnamon pieces
½ star anise per duck breast, broken into pieces
¼ cup brown sugar

Preparation:

1. Sprinkle each duck breast with some of the salt and let rest ten minutes.
2. Grind tea leaves, peppercorns, cinnamon, and star anise pieces and sprinkle on both sides of each duck breast.
3. Line a wok with aluminum foil, put spice mixture on the foil, raise the rack up so the duck breasts are above the spices.
4. Turn heat to high and when it smokes (about three minutes) reduce the heat and then put foil-enclosed duck breasts on the rack. If needed, cover them with more aluminum foil sealing the top and bottom pieces of foil by twisting them together, and smoke these packets for one hour. The duck breasts should be golden brown on their outside and dark pink inside. Check that the meat temperature is 160 degrees F.
5. Now let them rest five minutes covered, and then remove the foil, and put the duck breast packets on a cutting board. Slice them into one-inch thick pieces, and serve.

TEA-SAUCE SCALLOPS

Ingredients:

2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 large clove garlic, peeled and smashed
1 pound sea scallops, cut in half keeping them as circles
juice of 1 orange (or half cup of OJ)
1½ Tablespoons Keemun or another black tea leaves
2 teaspoons thin soy sauce
1 Tablespoon honey
2 cups hot and cooked wide noodles
few sprigs cilantro, coarsely minced for garnish

Preparation:

1. Heat wok or fry-pan, add oil, and when hot add garlic and cut scallops and fry on each side for two minutes, then add orange juice and stir for one more minute.
2. Add tea leaves and soy sauce, then the honey, and cook for two minutes; the sauce should thicken somewhat.
3. Put cooked hot noodles on a platter, pour scallop sauce over them, and garnish with the cilantro. Then serve.

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TEA IS TEA-RRIFIC

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PORK WITH TEA LEAVES

Ingredients:

1 whole three-pound crucian or another whole fish, scaled, interiors but not the cheeks removed and discarded

1 cup green tea leaves

½ cup sliced scallions

3 slices fresh ginger, slivered

2 Tablespoons oolong tea leaves brewed in two cups boiling water, leaves taken out and set aside, the liquid reserved

1 cup uncooked long-grain rice, soaked overnight, then steamed covered for thirty-five minutes

3 Tablespoons coarsely chopped pecans

2 Tablespoons dried cranberries, each cut in halves

1 bunch Chinese chives, coarsely minced

Preparation:

1. Dry the prepared whole fish with paper towels.

2. Mix soaked tea leaves with scallion and ginger pieces, then mix in the nuts, dried fruit, and cooked rice, stuffing this into the cavity of the fish. Tie or skewer it closed.

3. Steam on a heat-proof platter over the boiling brewed tea for twenty-five minutes (do check after fifteen minutes and replenish with boiling water if needed). Remove and slide the fish onto a clean pre-heated platter, remove the twine or skewers and discard. Serve being sure to advise those at the table, the fish still has its bones.

SAUTEED PORK AND TEA LEAVES

Ingredients:

1 pound boneless pork bell with skin left on

3 Tablespoons Jasmine ball tea leaves, brewed, water used as part of liquid needed

1 Tablespoon vegetable oil

1 scallion, minced

3 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine

1 Tablespoon thin soy sauce

1 teaspoon granulated sugar

1 Tablespoon chili oil

Preparation:

1. Boil pork belly for ten minutes, then discard that water, cool it, and cut into one-inch squares.

2. Add tea leaves and liquid tea and cover the pork with added water, if needed.

3. Add the rest of the ingredients, and simmer for one hour, then serve.

SHRIMP IN LUNG JING TEA

Ingredients:

2 or 3 Lung Jing tea bags

1 pound whole peeled shrimp, veins removed and discarded

1 teaspoon coarse salt

1 Tablespoon sesame oil

3 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and smashed

2 slices fresh ginger, slivered

1 pound fresh spinach, large stems discarded

2 Tablespoons lightly toasted sesame seeds

Preparation:

1. Boil two cups of water, add the tea bags and boil for two minutes, then add the shrimp and salt and simmer for two minutes. Discard the tea bags and remove the shrimp with a slotted spoon to a small bowl, cover them, and refrigerate until cool.

2. Heat a wok or fry-pan, add the sesame oil, garlic, and ginger, and stir-fry for half a minute, then add the spinach and stir-fry for one minute and put around the outside of a pre-heated platter.

3. Add the shrimp and the sesame seeds to the wok, and stir-fry for one to two minutes until they are hot but not over-cooked. Then place them in the center of the platter, and serve.

SPARE RIBS IN TEA

Ingredients:

1 pound pork ribs cut into one-inch individual rib pieces

3 Tablespoons green tea leaves, brewed in one cup water for five minutes, liquid discarded

3 slices fresh ginger, minced

3 scallions, minced

3 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine

3 Tablespoons chili oil

Preparation:

1. Boil ribs in three cups water for ten minutes, then drain and rinse them.

2. Dry-fry ginger and scallion pieces for one minute, then add the rest of the ingredients and one cup of water and simmer for half an hour, then drain and serve the ribs.

EARLY CHINESE FOOD IN THE U.S.

On an early computerized hunt for early Chinese English-language recipes published in the US, we did turn up an article in *The Universal Receipt Book* dated 1814, but never the actual article. Years later, actually found a hard copy for sale in someone's collection. Did get to peruse it but it did not have a single Chinese recipe. One recipe was titled Ginger Drops, but even that was not a Chinese candy. Another was for orange peel, sugar, and ginger powder saying "take some for a 'cold stomach." Is that why the index thought it Chinese?

The next earliest Chinese recipe listed is in a 1830 Boston book titled *The Practice of Cookery*. It was written by Mrs. Dalgairns and includes a recipe for 'China Chilo' in a chapter about mutton. Though the recipe title says 'China' and its ingredients tilt Asian, it is not for a Chinese dish. We felt it an Indian food. Its words were: "chop the meat finely.... also part of the fat of a loin of mutton.....season it with a large spoonful of salt and a tea-spoonful of ground pepper, two large onions shredded, half a pint of green peas, one lettuce cut small..... and a quarter pound of clarified butter." It went on saying "serve it in the middle of a pound of rice boiled dry." The clarified butter is not part of any Chinese food we are familiar with.

An 1832 recipes also has Asian Indian notions even though its title is 'Couchon, A China Dish.' And 'Couchon' is more Indian than Chinese. Its instructions say to "cut into small bits, veal or the meat of fowl, and pickled pork, and with slices of onion, fasten them alternately upon small skewers, three or four inches long.....pound a couple of onions, a small apple, a head of garlic, and a large tablespoonful of currie powder, with some gravy; press it through a sieve.....fry in butter a finely minced onion; dust..... with turmeric.....add the strained liquor, with two bay leaves, a little salt and pepper.....stew till the liquor be

neatly wasted, and the flavour be very rich.....before serving, squeeze in the juice of half a lemon, and take out the bay leaves."

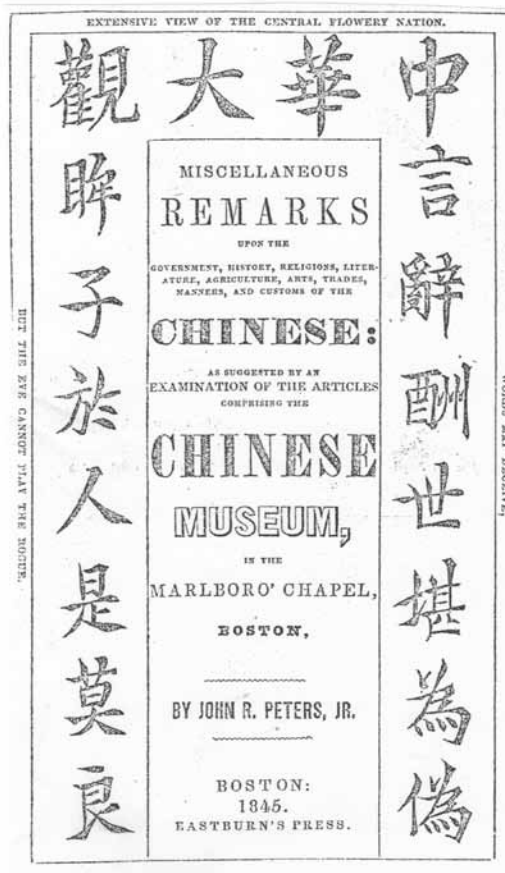
An 1814 book turned up in that same search in Miss. A.S. Provost of New York's volume titled *Choice Collection of Family*. That search is for Beer Powder and in an 1815 volume by Philomelia Hardin of Cleveland, Ohio. In a book titled: *Everybody's Cook and Receipt Book*. The problem is that its recipe is titled 'Ginger Nuts' and maybe Asian, but not Chinese. Maybe the word 'ginger' triggered the computer search to pick it out.

A New York 1846 book titled *Manual of Homeopathic Cooking* does have an interesting sentence, but not a Chinese recipe. It says: "No people in the world eat so little meat and so much fish and vegetables as the Chinese." Clearly the last word could be why the search brought it to our attention.

On the shelf next to it, we spot an 1845 item by John R. Peters whose cover says the 'Chinese Museum in the Marlboro Chapel in Massachusetts....' Within it is Case 41 with 'a description of melon seeds used by a Chinese.....of lien-tan water lily from Fokien.....(a) root sliced and eaten as fruit....white and black sesamum cultivated..... for .oil.....sometimes boiled and eat(en) like rice " Here again, no Chinese recipe, but at least words about actual Chinese foods. See its cover to the left.

We also found a book titled: *Midshipman in China: A Recollection of the Chinese*. This was published in London by the 'Religious Tract Society and also in Philadelphia by their American Sunday-School Union. In it are thirteen chapters, a few sentences in this book about 'bird's nests,' 'tea,' 'catching chickens and fish,' and one sentence about 'Chinese people's lack of religion.' It, too, has no Chinese recipes.

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EARLY CHINESE FOOD IN THE U.S.

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We are amazed at what the above computer searches turned up including a New York book titled: *Breakfast, Dinner, and Tea*. Its three hundred pages have 'receipts' in a five-page section titled 'Chinese Dishes.' These recipes have no amounts and not every one lists all ingredients mentioned in its text. One for soup says the "the natives call it *chou-chou*. It is..a composition of pork, fowls, yams, sweet potatoes, ducks, fish, onions, garlic, mint, pepper, salt, and cloves; and bird's nests all with no amounts. Another lists boiled rice, mango pickles, and *balichung*; no amount for any of those three items, either. There were some paragraphs about sea slugs, live crabs, rat soup, rice wine, seaweed, fish maw, sea cucumbers, shark's fins, antelope leg, preserved fruits and vegetables, seeds, dried fruits, bamboo, and water lilies; and none of these ingredients has an amount for any of them.

An 1886 book by Mrs. S. M. Scott called *Everyday Cookery for Every Family*, includes sentences about making tea, boiling rice, and making ginger-brandy. Some have amounts, but not all of them. In 1870 and thereafter, many books tell how to cook rice, purchase tea, and cook foods one might recognize as Chinese today. One page of an 1871 volume of *The Household Treasure* we found reprinted as *The Young Housewife's Companion* that was published in Philadelphia by J. Thomas Huey & Co. does advertise Chinese ingredients; but this book does not have a single Chinese recipe, either.

Finally in 1899, the United States government publishes a forty-eight page stapled pamphlet by Walter C. Blasdale titled: *A Description of Some Chinese Food Materials*. It has no recipes but does tell how to use many Chinese vegetables, seeds, grains, fruits, flowers, fungi, and algae; and it has a few b/w photographs or line drawings, and the nutritive and economic value of many Chinese ingredients.

The earliest cookbook published in the US with all Chinese recipes was published in Detroit in 1911. It was written by Jesse Louise Nolton, and has thirty-six recipes. It also discusses thirteen ingredients, and does have a few suggested Chinese menus. The recipes are for Chop Sooy, Egg Fo Yong, and several Chinese rice and noodle dishes.

In 1914, two Chinese cookbooks were published, one with sixty-two Chinese recipes and a few Japanese ones. It is by Sara Bosse and Onoto Watannabe. Ms. Watanabe is not Japanese but is an American assuming a Japanese name. The other book includes ten Chinese recipes, is by William Edward Garner, and it

titled *Reliable Recipes for Many Chinese Dishes*. It includes recipes for chop suey, noodle, rice, and other Chinese dishes.

Two other Chinese recipe books were published in 1917, one an eight-page pamphlet with an illustration on its cover and twenty-seven recipes within. Some of them are titled chop suey, chow mein, fo young, and variations thereof. There are also rice and noodle dishes and variations of the other recipes. The other book, a hardbound, has one hundred fifty-one recipes and includes Chinese food history, mail order sources, noodles shops, prices and names of sixty-two foods, and the needed calories and hours to digest them. Two have b/w photographs, another is of most common Chinese ingredients. The others are for Chinese dishes.

The following decade, the 1920s, have ten more Chinese cookbooks published. There are also Chinese recipes in books of several other cultures. In the years thereafter, two extensive Chinese cookbooks are published. Each has a thousand recipes, one with more than nine hundred pages. Completed in 1966, it is authored by Glorai Bley Miller. The other one has more than five hundred pages and written by Wonona Chang, Irving Beilin Chang, and the Kutschers. That book was published in 1970; and both are hard bound.

Many, many more Chinese cookbooks have been published in English since. There are more than five thousand Chinese cookbooks published in English or in English and another language; not all published in the US. Copies of every one of them donated to Stony Brook University can be found and looked at in that Long Island town at the State University there. They are in their Special Collections area in the Jacqueline M. Newman Chinese Cookbook Collection at Stony Brook University. Citations and annotations of each one can also be found and accessed in their Special Collections and the "Stars University's Computer Catalogue on their web site.

For additional information about them and how to access this site, do contact Kristan Knytray, the Special Collections librarian by phone at (631) 632-7119. (JMN)

SNAILS, SNAKES, AND TURTLES



SNAILS live in many countries on land or in the sea. In the family *Mollusca*, their skin usually feels slippery their flesh does not. Almost all are in the class Gastropoda. One often finds land snails in woodlands, those from the sea in cold or warm water. For the most part, land snails like fresh water and are most often found near rivers, ponds, lakes, and other waters.

The snail sizes vary considerably, small ones can be as tiny as a periwinkle or as large as some African varieties measuring a foot or more on their flat bottoms that creep along a variety of surfaces. Most snails eat plants, a very small number enjoy some animal flesh, and eat plants, too.

Snails have been people food at least since 50 BCE. The largest among them are probably the whelk and large conch, both endangered, scientists monitoring them as their numbers are dwindling.

On this side of the world they are popular along the East Coast, Gulf Coast, and the Caribbean. They are also popular in high-end restaurants. Most of these are farmed. In many countries harvesting snails from the wild is illegal. In Japan, where they are most popular, about ten thousand tons are harvested annually, most raised and farmed. The French annually eat four times more snails than other population, clearly many imported.

Most snails sold in restaurants come from cold waters, have a long shelf life in the refrigerator, some ten days to two weeks after harvest. Those from warm waters live less than that, some say about half as long.

When purchased, no snail should have an odor, not even a slight trace of ammonia, the most common one as they deteriorate. Their flesh should be white with orange or black flecks if any, and they should pull themselves into their shell when touched on any part of their exposed flesh. Most restaurants purchase theirs frozen from Honduras or Nicaragua, and most are cleaned before they freeze them.

If served in their shells, most shells are not from the snail they are housed in. Those commercially farmed have the shells they come in actually from other snails. They purchase the shells dry with no snail in them. We

wonder how, when, and where they crawl into their new homes. One dealer we spoke to said that many of these new snail-homes are probably not real shells at all. Can any reader help us learn more than this, we have not been successful doing so?



SNAKES, twice detailed before in this magazine, do find these articles in 2000, and in this year's Volumes 1 and 2. Check them out on this magazine's web site; we recommend reading them before finishing this article to learn about these Cantonese delicacies. Not new, they have been loved by these Southern Chinese for more than two thousand years, they eat lots of them and love them in soups and main courses often thickened with water chestnut flour or another starch. They adore snake soup at weddings and other honorific events, and believe all snakes are warming, good for the heart, blood, and energy; and enrich one's *qi*.

The Chinese eat all parts of every snake and do not waste a drop of their bile. They skin them as they do eels, and often use the skin after they remove it for ladies shoes and purses. To learn how to do that, check out the picture in Volume 5(4) on page 10. They have a long love-hate relationship with these slithering creatures they call *she*, and consider them one of five noxious animals as are centipedes, scorpions, lizards, and toads.

I recall events in both Hong Kong and Taiwan when merchants would not sell me a drop of snake bile. I wanted to taste it and learn if it really is as bitter as I had read. Even after I bluffed and told them I was buying it for my husband, they would not sell snake bile to me. To date, I have not managed to purchase any, not even a drop to taste. Not a single vendor would even sell me their meat after these incidents. They were angry, too, because women should not consume snake bile.

Popular in dishes such as Chicken with Five Snakes, Snake and Rainbow Vegetables, Snake Soup, and in other snake dishes, I have since bought snake meat frozen in Chinese supermarkets, but not a single one had its gall bladder, also no bile.

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SNAILS, SNAKES AND TURTLES

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TURTLES AND TORTOISES,

are popular foods for special occasions. The Chinese believe they are the prototypes of all animals, rulers of the north, animals

found in the everyday world that are symbolic of harmony, prosperity, strength, endurance, longevity, and immortality. Their likeness is seen on or near many burial mounds, and they are revered.

Snakes are symbols of family continuation and many memorial burial places of high-ranking officials have carvings of snakes on them. A few are found honoring less lordly folk, and we assume their families did esteem them. In addition, they are seen at festivals, on the icing of sweets baked with lots of sugar as their likeness honors patron deities and represents prosperity, security, and harmony.

Much early Chinese literature writes about eating and loving these animals, particularly giant soft-shelled ones such as the *Pelochelys bibroni* that live in deep rivers along China's south coast. They make a lordly gift and are prized when used in turtle soup. Not new to Chinese cuisine, they have been used as such at least since the seventh century BCE.

Their eggs are loved, too, often round and about the same size as are duck eggs. Some are oval and egg-shaped, and after boiling them, we note their whites do not congeal well. When we eat them we also note they are more delicious than most other eggs as they are rich and savory.

Written about in *Chu Tzu*, a collection of poems in a pharmacopoeia of the 5th century CE, turtle broth is recommended as a tonic. They suggest cooking it with mutton, onions, rice, relish, ginger, and wine. Turtle eggs are considered delicious when pickled in salt, or eaten with pork, melon, wild rice, or pokeweed.

We once read and still have a torn piece of paper saying that in Dongting Lake, a rare turtle known as the 'Golden One' was born with a snake-like head, a long neck, a hunch-back, and with golden stripes on its neck and a golden rim on its shell, and with mobile plates on its back. These plates, it said, were capable of crushing insects and snakes, its eggs were said to be more delicious than any other egg. That same torn paper says turtles have incredible stamina, and can go without food for up to

five years. We do not know where that scrap came from and do not know if this is true; do you?

One TCM practitioner we queried did say he never saw that particular one and he did not deny the existence of such an animal. He advises that its shell plates, bile, and meat are known by many TCM doctors, they often talk of these things, and these components are used often in traditional Chinese medicinal decoctions. He said their meat is used to treat rheumatism, and noting my scepticism, added, "they surely can do all these things."

Surprisingly, some turtles have a negative image in some parts of China. Called *wang po* in Chinese, one chap translated their name as "forget eight" and he said they are related to the eight rules of propriety, three of which relate to faithfulness, uprightness, and modesty. He did say he does not know why not everyone likes them. By the way, we never learned what the other five are, and wonder if any reader knows and has more information about these animals? If they do, hope they will advise us. Someone else told us their negative image could be because they have intercourse with snakes. We do wonder where and when this notion came about?

Some Chinese classify all the creatures in this article with the mythical unicorn, the phoenix, and the dragon. We did wonder why, and then learned they think they are super intelligent creatures. A few told us they are associated with the points of the compass and do govern them. However, when we did ask which one is for which compass point, two folk changed the subject. We also asked which animal is for the fourth compass point as we only mentioned three of them, we got different answers from each chap we spoke to. Anyone out there who can clarify this?

In the meantime, enjoy the recipes, they are from a couple of culinary experts, and we are pleased to share them with you. If you know the answers to the above questions, please share. The three recipes below are the only ones these chefs told me. (JMN)

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SNAILS, SNAKES AND TURTLES

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SNAILS IN HOT SAUCE

Ingredients:

1 pound frozen snails without their shells
1 Tablespoon coarse salt
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
3 shallots, peeled and minced
1 Tablespoon finely minced fresh ginger
2 cloves peeled fresh garlic, finely minced
1 red chili pepper, seeded and finely minced
1 teaspoon ground white pepper
2 teaspoons chili paste
2 teaspoons granulated sugar
2 teaspoons fish sauce
½ cup Chinese rice wine
1 Tablespoon minced green scallion tops

Preparation:

1. Put snails in three cups of water with the salt, bring to the boil and blanch for a minute, then put them in cold water and drain. If in their shells, remove and freeze them for another use.
2. Heat a wok, add the oil, then the shallots, ginger, garlic, and chili pepper pieces and stir-fry for two minutes.
3. Next add the ground pepper, bean sauce, and the wine, and stir-fry another two minutes. Add the snails then everything else and stir fry two more minutes then put everything a pre-heated platter. Garnish with the green scallion pieces, and serve.

SNAKE STIR-FRY

Ingredients:

1 snake, skin and bones removed and discarded
1 Tablespoon thick soy
3 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1 pound can of whole tomatoes, blended
1 green pepper, pith and seeds discarded, cut in thin strips
1 small can water chestnuts, cut in thin strips
5 mushrooms, soaked, stems removed, and slithered
3 cups hot rice

Preparation:

1. Cut snake meat into thin two-inch long strips, and mix them with the thick soy.
2. Heat wok, add the oil, then the snake meat mixture and stir-fry for three minutes.
3. Next add tomatoes and green pepper pieces and the water chestnuts and mushrooms, and stir-fry for two minutes more.
4. Put this over the hot rice, and serve.

TURTLE SOUP WITH PRESERVED VEGETABLES

Ingredients:

½ pound preserved vegetables, cut in half-inch pieces
1 turtle, blood, bones, and shell discarded
3 shallots, peeled and cut in quarters
3 slices fresh ginger, slivered
2 scallions, angle-sliced
3 red dates, pitted and minced
1 Tablespoon oyster sauce
2 teaspoons each, thin and dark soy sauce
½ teaspoon coarse salt
1 Tablespoon cornstarch
8 cups chicken broth

Preparation:

1. Soak vegetables in two changes of cold water, each for ten minutes. Discard each water.
2. Gut the turtle. Remove bones, if desired, and rinse it well. Then cut its meat into small pieces, and dry each piece with paper towels.
3. Mix shallot, ginger, scallion, and the date pieces with the three sauces, salt, and cornstarch, and set aside.
4. Heat chicken broth to a simmer, add the turtle meat and simmer it for fifteen minutes, then add the vegetables, and simmer five more minutes.
5. Now add the sauce mixture and bring to a boil. When thick, serve in pre-heated soup bowls or in a large tureen.

**IF YOU HAVE
OTHER RECIPES FOR
THESE THREE ANIMALS
DO SHARE THEM**

ON MANY MENUS

**FIRST CHINESE B-B-Q; 10901 N LAMAR BLVD;
AUSTIN TX 75753; phone: (512) 835-8889**

Texas has dozens of barbecue joints and fancy BBQ restaurants. On a recent visit, we did hope to find some with Chinese persuasion, and only with BBQ in its name in several telephone directories. Therefore, we did go to check it out and also see how it differs from the many other local ones. This was not an easy task because every one over stuffs their diners with a protein overload, and little else.

We learned that Texas BBQ has no sauce, no or little flatware, and almost no Chinese barbecue. Actually, there are many places to pig out on wonderful meat marinated and waiting indulgence, but few with Chinese marinades, soy sauce, or even rice to go with these meats.

One huge place, the Kunz Market in Lockhart Texas did have early Texan origins; theirs since 1900. However, it had no Chinese overtones. It and all others visited had nothing Chinese, not even soy sauce to flavor it or rice to accompany it. Not one had a single Chinese influence even though many Chinese did come to Texas long before the 1900s.

We did locate a place called: First Chinese BBQ in Austin. Its sign out front was in Chinese as it was on every menu in the place. Menus were in Chinese, English, and Vietnamese, and we noted a large crowd eating there with not one empty table. Later, a small table was empty after we took a walk to the end of this mall, so we did grab it. But before doing so, we noticed an M. T. Market with many Asian foods so we popped in there while waiting for a table.

We went to that supermarket planning to gawk for a few minutes, but actually stayed for half an hour wishing such a big place was near us. Yes, you did read correctly, it was huge, more than twice as large as any supermarket in Flushing Queens which is itself a huge Asian enclave.

Exceptionally well stocked, it also had twenty check-out counters, each with some ten or more customers waiting their turn. We noticed their carts loaded with luscious fresh, frozen, dried, and packaged Asian foods. A thirty-year-old grandson who lives alone in Austin was with us, He adores Chinese and Japanese food and lived in Japan for a year yet he had never been there before.

While there, he did a big shopping, and we did a big gawking while he vowed to return there again and very soon. I would shop there every week if I lived nearby. We noted more Asian foods than any market in Flushing, he said more than he knew existed. This market and the BBQ eatery, both near Lake Travis, had many wonderful Asian aromas. Bet those visiting the nearby huge Chinese/Buddhist Temple with parking for more cars than any other we saw should be told to meander there.

Our hunger and those aromas got to us. We headed back to the restaurant where one small table was vacant. We saw lots of Chinese barbecued meats hanging in both places, fish swimming or on ice in the supermarket, and huge stacks of fresh fruits and vegetables piled high, dry goods, as well; and all did increase our appetites.

We did manage to squeeze in to that table and did need many minutes to look at their huge menu. It had more than two hundred fifty items, one sounding better than the next. Those BBQ meats hanging, at the entrance, did increase our appetites even more. We knew we needed to order several of them and several items on the menu, too.

Other tables were heavily laden with fired rice items, soft noodle ones, seafood, pork, beef, poultry, vegetables, and more; some even had silken tofu dishes, whole fish, roasted duck, beef tendon and stomach appetizers, and so much more. Several had hot pots, many had marinated meats galore. We did order two

FIRST CHINESE B-B-Q

第一燒臘麵家

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AUSTIN, TX 75753
TEL: (512) 835-8889
MONDAY - SUNDAY
11:00 AM - 9:30 PM

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ON MANY MENUS

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silken *doufu* dishes, roast duck, barbecued pork, a noodle dish with seafood and vegetables, and lots of white rice which came in a large maroon container of plastic, Vietnamese style. On every table was several hot sauces, different soy sauces, and toothpicks, of course, ground black pepper, as well. We used lots for their stir-fried Cantonese-tasting dishes, and loved them all placating our imaginations after the time in that nearby market. We had ordered more than usual, and were glad we did.

Being in Texas, we were ready for lots of meat, and enjoyed every one. We also had no trouble polishing off everything ordered which including Dry Bean Curd with Pork, House Crispy Noodles loaded with shrimp and squid, and lots of perfectly cooked Water Spinach with Garlic Sauce. The Snow Pea Leaves were scrumptious, too, as was every dish we had. We had a wonderful meal, all cooked to a turn!



**GUAN FU SICHUAN;
39 PRINCE STREET;
FLUSHING NY 11354;
phone: (347) 610-6999**

Hard to find the entrance, but well worth looking for, this new place is in the Fulton Square complex under the Hyatt Hotel. Seek out the lions guarding its front door one block west of Roosevelt Avenue.

The table tops are gorgeous, the food is, too. Every dish arrives on a specific dish, chopstick users, take note, the dark wooden part goes into a gold-encased end, the small white part belongs on the other end. Your meal comes after a

six-sectioned wooden hospitality tray of nuts.

We were seven adults and a baby and they could not seat us in the main dining area even with our reservation as every tables seats only six so they graciously escorted us to a private dining room and waived the fifty dollar a person minimum for it. The menu is forty pages long with lots of gorgeous color pictures; difficult choices

indeed for beauties begging to be devoured, and we did our part.

We began with Fish in Chili Sauce, it swam in its large white shallow dish screaming eat me quickly. A three-inch unattached jaw bone unseen under the sauce did get in our way. To that I say "shame on the chef" even though it was buried and with no fish left on it. This good-size swimmer was tender and yummy, loaded with dozens of all too many tiny bones, and was difficult to deal with. The manager came by and said that because I spoke a few Chinese words including 'please' and 'thank you' he thought not to suggest a more western-friendly fish his Chinese guests never order.

After that, some other dishes were dumbed down with fewer spices than Chinese would like, some hardly seasoned at all. We did clearly express liking 'real Chinese Sichuan dishes and after they understood what we meant, they did arrive, so do order accordingly.

As to the bones, never in any Chinese restaurant did we have so many bones in a fish dish, literally hundreds of tiny ones. Did they wonder what I would write? The tiny tike with us did taste all their piquant sauces and loved them; we did, too.

The two appetizers ordered sounded similar but were not; one was Chicken in House Chili Sauce, the other Rabbit in Chili Sauce. Both were delicious, different, and had different accompaniments. The chicken had big pieces of boneless meat and hot peppers, and we all loved it. The rabbit had small bones, little bits of meat and lots of other items including small pieces of hot pepper; loved it, too.

Eggplant Iron Plate was toque-topped on aluminum foil, its meat-stuffed slices big and well-seasoned, its meat hand-chopped within. Every one loved it, too. The Fried Pork Belly with Leek had fewer fans as the meat was barely fried and mostly dry. It was the only dish that overly disappointed as it had western sting beans not Chinese long beans.

About half the dishes on their menu are priced S.P, so do as we did and ask about their costs; we did and learned most were outrageously priced. When this kitchen gets more practice, we plan to return and explain how we like real Chinese food, bones minimized. Our enthusiasm did bring us there too early in their shake-down. We hope to explain what we want and we know they can do a better job providing what they surely can provide. Clearly reducing the seasoning and selecting the fish needs better attention. (JMN)

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