

FLAVOR & FORTUNE

DEDICATED TO THE ART AND SCIENCE OF CHINESE CUISINE

EARLY CHINESE FOOD HISTORY;
SCALLOPS, IF REAL, ARE DELICIOUS BIVALVES;



EGGPLANT; HERBAL MEDICINES;
INNER MONGOLIA; CHINESE VEGETABLES:
BOOK AND RESTAURANT REVIEWS, AND MUCH MORE.

WINTER 2019

中國烹飪

VOLUME 26(4)

\$6.95 US/\$9.95 ELSEWHERE

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

About the Publisher

THE INSTITUTE
FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT
OF THE
SCIENCE & ART OF CHINESE CUISINE

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 about Chinese and related cuisines.

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FLAVOR & FORTUNE

Volume 26, Number 4

Winter 2019

FOOD FOR THOUGHT	2
About the Publisher; Table of Contents; Dear Reader	
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.....	5
Chongking food; Bohai Kingdom; Stuffed Papaya; Foods near Yangtzi River	
ULANQAB FOODS ARE IN INNER MONGOLIA	7
by Wang Si, Flavor and Fortune China Correspondent	
SCALLOPS ARE BIVALVES	9
TAIWAN AND A POPULAR RECIPE	12
ON MENUS: LONG ISLAND NY	15
Jianghu in East Setauket NY F.A.N. in Deer Park NY	
MORSELS OF DIETARY ADVICE.....	17
CHINA'S EARLY FOOD CULTURE	19
Cooking, Wok's, and During the Xia Dynasty	
EGGPLANT: HATED IS NOW LOVED	21
CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINIES	24
PORK PREPARED IN MANY WAYS	25
MORE CHINESE FOOD HISTORY	28
SAUCES, CONDIMENTS, AND PASTES	30
CHINESE MEDICINE CAN BE TCM	32
RECIPES: PAST AND PRESENT.....	34
THANKS TO OUR DONORS, SPONSORS, AND SUPPORTERS	38
RENEWAL FORM	39
RECIPE INDEX AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION.....	40

The cover is of a real scallop, not one fake and cut in circles a firm white fish.
Pictures are by the editor or the authors of their individual articles.
Those ending with (JMN) were written by the editor.

FLAVOR & FORTUNE

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Flavor & Fortune is published quarterly by the Institute for the Advancement of the Science and Art of Chinese Cuisine: dba: ISACC, and holds the copyright thereto; all rights reserved.

Their ISSN is: 1078-5361

subscription, membership information, and forms, can be found on page 39

Subscriptions are for four issues and are postpaid as: \$25.00 in the US, \$45.00 in Canada, and \$60.00 in all other countries

INDIVIDUAL ISSUES also postpaid are \$12.00 each in US, \$15.00 each in Canada, \$20.00 each everywhere else.

Payment only accepted as:

- 1) US dollar bank checks
or
- 2) US dollar traveler checks,
or
- 3) Canadian postal money orders

with all checks made payable to: ISACC,
mailed to:
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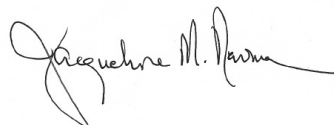
This fourth issue of our twenty-sixth year of this quarterly Chinese food magazine is still the only Chinese food magazine published in English in the US. With many Chinese restaurants in virtually every town, more than one in every city, we wonder why only one English-language magazine about this cuisine. Wish there were more competitors so English-speakers could learn more about it. If you have ideas or articles to educate them, do submit them for our consideration.

This very issue has articles about scallops, Taiwan, China's early Chinese food history, their dietary advice, and so much more. Past issues brought subscriber comments that deserve our thanks for the many they sent us about belly pork. We do wonder how many bought and tried it?

In this issue are our thoughts about Woks and Chinese Cookware; the Xia Dynasty; Herbal Medical information, two new Chinese restaurants and other items. Seems readers never tire of trying all the eating places we write about. We hope they make and enjoy the recipes, too.

An additional thanks are due to those sending kind words about using the complete web site at: www.flavorandfortune.com. And, one last thank you for kind kudos subscribers and press send us on assorted issues; we appreciate them, suggestions, too.

As we look forward to the next issue, our one hundred and fifth, all we can say is: WOW. We still need a replacement for this editor. As far no offers in that arena, yet we are aging into the end of our editorial rope; so it is: Help! Help! Help!



*Jacqueline M. Newman, editor-in-chief
is still looking for an editorial replacement*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM LEE ANNE:

Heard about a new eatery serving Chongking food near you; have you been there yet?

LEE ANNE: Yes, a few times; also, the other newer one reviewed in this issue on see pages 15 and 16.

DR. NEWMAN:

Read about a Bohai Kingdom, but little information, can you enlighten us?

LARNIE IN TOLEDO

OH: The people in this ancient kingdom were a minority population known as the Mohe. They took over in 698 CE. In the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907 CE) were joined and ruled by others, and were still in existence during the Yuan Dynasty (1279 - 1368 CE), then taken over by the Manchu close to 1644 CE when they overthrew the Ming Dynasty. Before that, they conquered others who ruled the Kingdom of Zhen, were over thrown in 926 CE, became the Liao Dynasty with fifteen kings ruling in five major cities, fifteen prefectures, and one-hundred thirty-seven counties; sent ambassadors to the Tang capital of Chang'an (now known as Xian), and were famous for weaving silk and smelting iron, the latter done outside the capital of Shangjiang. More than one hundred fifty years later, they were taken over by Qitan people; and during the Liao Dynasty were ruled by others (916 CE - 1125).

Their palace surrounded by a stone and earthen wall fifty-two feet long and more than six feet high, had ten city gates, also an inner wall eight-feet long with its own gate. Around their palace were royal gardens. An excavation in the 1980s found heated beds and a Buddhist lamp (shown here) from Bohai Kingdom times on a stone lotus flower with a pole holding another flower that held a small Buddhist building with open windows and a roof. Now reconstructed, a picture of it, the first in the May 1988 *China Reconstructs* with a low metal fence around it; this was the first time we ever saw it, and now you can, too.

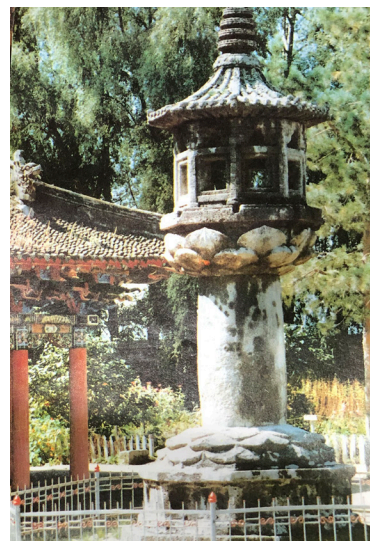
FROM JOHN IN BOULDER: *Disappointed not to see the Salem Witch Museum. We enjoy seeing many places you write about. They help us find them when visiting later on. We are off to Salem next Spring, so can we have an early look?*

JOHN: Thanks for your appreciation. You are not the first to request exterior shots of places we tout. Did have some but forgot to include them. Here are the Salem Witch Museum is on this page, the Peabody Essex Museum on page 6, and a map of Salem below.

EDITOR:

Know the Chinese use papayas and we do see them in their markets. What about a recipe?

HENRIETTA IN NY: Yours is the first request for a picture and recipe of this fruit. We once stuffed one with shrimp; a fancier one follows.



continued on page 6

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

continued from page 5

SHARK'S FIN STUFFED PAPAYA

Ingredients:

1 1/4 pound shark's fin, cooked and diced
3 slices fresh ginger, peeled
1 scallion, knotted
3 Tablespoons skinless chicken thigh meat, diced
3 Tablespoons skinless duck breast, diced
1 1/2 to 2 pounds of papaya, keeping stem end
1 large dried Chinese mushrooms, stem discarded
2 cups chicken broth, divided
cheese cloth and three toothpicks

Preparation:

1. Prepare shark's fin, soaked in cold water over night, then in morning, drain and discard water, rinse it with fresh water, and divide shark's fin and tie it in two pieces of cheese cloth.
2. Cut one-inch off the top of the papaya, save it, discard its seeds, and rinse again with cold water. Wrap shark's fin pieces in two pieces of cheese cloth, then put them and half the broth, the ginger and scallion knot, and place the papaya stem end up, in a Chinese soup bowl holding it upright.
3. Put this bowl in a deep pot with two cups of cold water around it, cover the pot and bring its water to the boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for one hour; then discard ginger and scallion, discard the water, and open the shark's fin bundles into the papaya.
4. In that heat-proof bowl, add one cup of water there or on the bottom of the pot, add rest of the broth into the papaya with chicken, duck, and mushroom pieces into and around it and cover the papaya with toothpicks, then cover the pot and bring it to the boil, reduce heat, and simmer for half an hour, then take papaya out carefully, remove and discard top and toothpicks.
5. Cut papaya into one-inch pieces, mix it with the shark's fin, duck, chicken, and mushroom pieces and put them into individual-pre-heated soup bowls, and serve.

DEAR NEWMAN:

Read that foods from around the Yangtzi River are unique; what makes them so?

CHARLIE FROM BEIJING:

More than any other part of China, here are many vegetarian followers of Mahayana and others Buddhists from Fujian, Huai Yang, Jiangsu, Shanghai, or Zhejiang. They make and use lots of red wine lees, use it to season pounded pork shank called 'swallow skin' the Chinese call *yanpi*, and pound it paper-thin and cut it into wafer-like pieces. One recipe we read calls it Drunken Scarlet Eels, and marinates the skinless eel pieces in this red wine lees with five-spice and curry powders, drains them, dips them in batter, and fries them until they are light tan, then eats them.



ULANQAB FOODS IN INNER MONGOLIA

by Wang Si, China Correspondent

In summer, I attended a food festival in Ulanqab called the 'China-Mongolia-Russian Food Culture Festival.' This eighth annual event had more than two million locals, others too, wanting to see it in this central area of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. It borders on Mongolia, has many connections with them and with Russia. Now, more than ninety-five percent are Han moved here with help from the Chinese government. They encouraged them to do so, and now they love it. Mainly settled in places known as the Chayouqi or Siziwanqi Banners; Banners are typical names of places here, so-named when the Qing Dynasty's army controlled this area.

Huns swept south and took this area in the third century BCE. They were a nomadic tribe most likely from somewhere between the Eastern edge of the Altai Mountains and the Caspian Sea. Today this is about where modern Kazakhstan is.

Before the Qing Dynasty, there were many ethnic groups occupying the area here including the Toba, Xianbei, Tujue, Qidan, Nuzhen, Tatar, Waci, and Mongolians. All were Northern nomadic folk who have since either disappeared or ceased to exist after other groups took over, often one by one. Considered 'people on the horse' and not 'people in the fields,' they did make their living by grazing and hunting. As described by Sima Qian (145 - 86 BCE) in his *Records of the Grand Historian*, they kept moving around seeking water and grass for themselves and their animals and using them to make meat and dairy products.

In their language, the word *chaganyide* is their word for dairy products, literally meaning 'white foods.' It symbolizes 'pure and holy foods' while *wulanyide* means 'red foods' and refers to all meat items. Typical Mongolian white foods are milk tea, yogurt, fermented milk curds which are similar to cheeses, milk skin foods, and horse milk wine called *kumis*. Their favorite red foods are mutton and beef; they make and love them different ways.

Of course, urbanization and immigration have impacted their culture. Ulanqab had and still has many nomadic food behaviors. The tourism and catering industries have changed some of them. In the Yellow Flower Valley, also known as Huitengxile, gorgeous gowns, boots, and dance horse riding are now somewhat different. Many of their current 'local products' now relate to health, caring, and exotica. And during this food festival, roasted whole sheep and other whole roasted animals were served free for all to taste and enjoy. Locals got theirs to share, too.

Mr. Lang, chairing the Inner Mongolian Association for Catering and Hospitality, has planned this for eighteen years; and he invited me to the dinner in the most popular Mongolian restaurant called Muma Ren in the central square of the city. It was decorated with many Mongolian items including a *ger* which is a Mongolian tent-like home they usually live in. He and Mr. Yun, a senior officer, told us their lives have been improved, their incomes, too, thanks to this corporation and its annual festival.

Last year, Mr. Lang and his association edited a book about their cuisine. It is titled: *Mongolian Meal: The Ninth Cuisine in China*, and was published by Standards Press of China, its ISBN is 9787506687089. It includes Mongolian dishes and meals. They proudly showed us several potatoes and white soup, all pictured below.



continued on page 8

ULANQAB FOODS IN INNER MONGOLIA

continued from page 7

You might ask what is Mongolian cuisine, let me advise this book defines it as inheriting and innovating traditional foodways, and integrating food customs from all ethnic groups in Inner Mongolia. They include beef, mutton, dairy products, and edible plants from the grasslands. Its cooking techniques include the ways they grill, roast, steam, boil, simmer, and pan-fry. It uses ingredients and methods from other areas of China, all made and served Mongolian style. Despite the geographic environment and nomadic foods of their history, this book has collected and created many recipes since the Period of Reform and Opening of China.

At Mongolian meals, a tradition is to boil a two-year-old sheep with no salt or seasonings, then add lots of dried noodles at the meal's end. The original book was written by Husi Hui and called *Essentials of Dietetics (Yinshan Zhengyao, 1330)*, Mongolians still enjoy high protein food including milk tea served in a wooden bowl with small pieces of milk skin, milk curd, and crispy millet. Milk skin is a thick layer of solid cream. Milk curd is a kind of cheese.

In recent years, they were ruled by the Han, and since the Qing Dynasty, locals have added grains and vegetables, most often potatoes and oats to their foods. At our Mongolian meal, we learned that this city has a China Potato Museum and an Oat Museum, and that both show how these and other foods supplement Mongolian foods. They have increased people's health and the local ecology, been added to Mongolian foods and they now include dim sum made with potatoes in them and in their wrappers. Potatoes and/or oats are also in local pies, local breads, and other local foods. Boiled lamb is served with soy sauce and chili sauce as dips and they season their loved local meat with them.

**DO SEE
THIS
MAGAZINE'S
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INDEX
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COM**

SCALLOPS ARE BIVALVES

There are three types of scallops, and all are bivalves. They are sea scallops, bay scallops, and Calico scallops. All have thin shells, thinner than those of clams or oysters, and their shapes are easily recognizable. They resemble those seen on Shell Oil gas station illustrations.

These sea creatures have about fifty blue or turquoise eyes found on their inner shells near the front edges. These creatures do not dig in the sand beneath them as clams do, they just swim about and jump, too, in their habitats near the bottom where they live.

In the US, most are harvested in three locations in or near Bedford MA, Cape May NJ, and Norfolk VA. Most can be purchased at or near these places or other places where fish and seafood are sold. We must advise that not all are scallops, some are simply circles cut out of white-colored fish flesh.

It is illegal to sell them so labeled, but there are unscrupulous merchants who do cut them and sell them mislabeled as such. They make lots of money so doing, and it is difficult to tell when they are raw, easier when they are cooked, and when not attached to the bottom half of their shell. The texture is very different as to how they break apart. Real scallops do so straight up and down, fake ones do so as fish flakes, on an angle. If you are suspicious, ask the merchant to use a spoon and see how they come apart.

Real scallops break apart mostly straight up and down, not on a slope as fish does when cooked. If suspicious, when buying yours, ask the merchant to break one apart gently, and look closely as he or she does that. Scallops swim freely but are anchored, that is their muscle. That is what the flesh is called, attached to the bottom half of the shell. If just sitting on it, be very suspicious!

The FDA advises these shellfish should not be soaked in any liquid at their point of sale. But what cannot be tested is their weight, usually three and a half ounces or ninety calories, and that they usually have seventeen grams of protein, are low in sodium, and have just one percent fat.

In the US, Calico scallops are only harvested in the Virginia location. They and bay scallops are small,

their diameter usually less than an inch but can be twice that. Sea scallops are about two inches in diameter but can be three times that size. Calico scallops are the smallest, can be the darkest, and are best dry-packed. They are lowest in moisture, and can have annual rings, though most are young and do not when they are sold. Bay and Calico scallops can have male and female organs, but at the age most are harvested, they do not, or they have been removed.

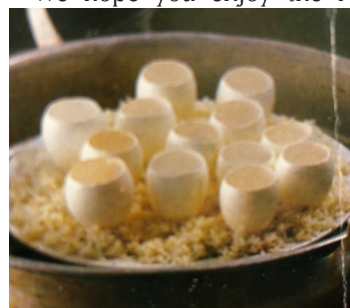


Sea scallops, are *Plactopecten magellanicus* most others are *Argopectin irradians*. The former can live up to thirty years, but more commonly are a year or two before being harvested. All are best dry-packed, but rarely are when sold fresh. Most people do not know that bay scallops are the official shell fish of New York State; we did not until doing research for this article.

There are many recipes for scallops, almost all adored by the Chinese. They say they are delicious. Our favorite is to cook them empty shells as seen on this page. Bay and Calico scallops made in pigeon egg shells make a phenomenal presentation, but effort to do so using the recipe we love to look at does take lots of time. Truth be told, we only did so once and with a friend who had more patience than we did to empty the shells of their raw content and then fill them as the recipe required.

One other comment, love to use dried scallops called conpoy, and shred them into very thin sticks vertical to where they sit and use these to flavor other foods.

We hope you enjoy the recipes that follow. You can use any scallop variety, but do need to adjust the cooking time accordingly. (JMN)



continued on page 10

SCALLOPS ARE BIVALVES

continued from page 9

SCALLOPS, FRUIT, AND VEGETABLES

Ingredients:

- 3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- ½ pound fresh sea scallops, each cut horizontally in half making two thin circles
- 5 asparagus, each cut in one-inch pieces, and on an angle
- 3 thin carrots, peeled and cut in strips similar as the asparagus
- 5 slices fresh ginger, peeled and cut in thin strips
- 1 cup drained canned lychees, each cut in half
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 Tablespoon coarsely chopped fresh coriander

Preparation:

1. Heat a wok or fry pan, add the scallops and stir-fry them then remove and set them aside after just one minute. Discard any oil and add and stir-fry the carrots, for one minute, then add the asparagus and stir-fry one minute more.
2. Mix cornstarch with three Tablespoons cold water, stir and bring to the boil, and when the sauce thickens, add the lychees.
3. Put all in a pre-heated bowl, toss the coriander garnish on top, and serve.

CONPOY WITH VEGETABLES

Ingredients:

- 3 conpoy soaked overnight
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 cup string beans, simmered for two minutes in the broth or water, then angle cut in one-inch lengths, the ends discarded if not young
- 5 water chestnuts, cut in thin sliced circles
- 1 stalk celery, angle-cut in half-inch pieces, each cut in half the long way
- ¼ red pepper, seeded, then angle-cut in half-inch strips
- 3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 clove fresh garlic, peeled and mashed
- 3 slices fresh ginger, peeled and slivered
- 1 Tablespoon sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Prepare conpoy simmering it in chicken broth for half an hour, then pull it apart into thin strips.
2. Heat a wok or fry-pan, add the oil, they stir-fry the four vegetables for one minute, then stir in half the conpoy stir for two minutes, and put in a pre-heated bowl.
3. Sprinkle the rest of the conpoy on top, and serve.

STUFFED SCALLOPS

Ingredients:

- ¼ pound scallops, each cut in half as two circles
- 5 slices fresh peeled ginger
- 2 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
- 1 teaspoon water chestnut powder
- 1 Tablespoon sesame oil
- dash ground white pepper
- ¼ pound shrimp, shells and veins discarded, then the shrimp minced
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch, divided
- ½ teaspoon coarse salt
- ½ teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 Tablespoon rendered chicken fat
- 1 egg white
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 2 sprigs fresh coriander, coarsely minced

Preparation:

1. Marinate scallop halves in mixture of ginger, rice wine, water chestnut powder, sesame oil, and ground white pepper for half an hour.
2. Mix minced shrimp with half the cornstarch, all the salt and sugar, and all the chicken fat, and egg white. Stuff this mixture between two scallop halves and gently press them together.
3. Dust with the rest of the cornstarch and set aside for half an hour or until starch seems wet.
4. Heat a wok or fry-pan, add oil, and fry the scallop sandwich until lightly colored on both sides, then drain them on paper towels.
5. Put these sandwiches on a pre-heated platter, and serve.



continued on page 11

SCALLOPS ARE BIVALVES

continued from page 10

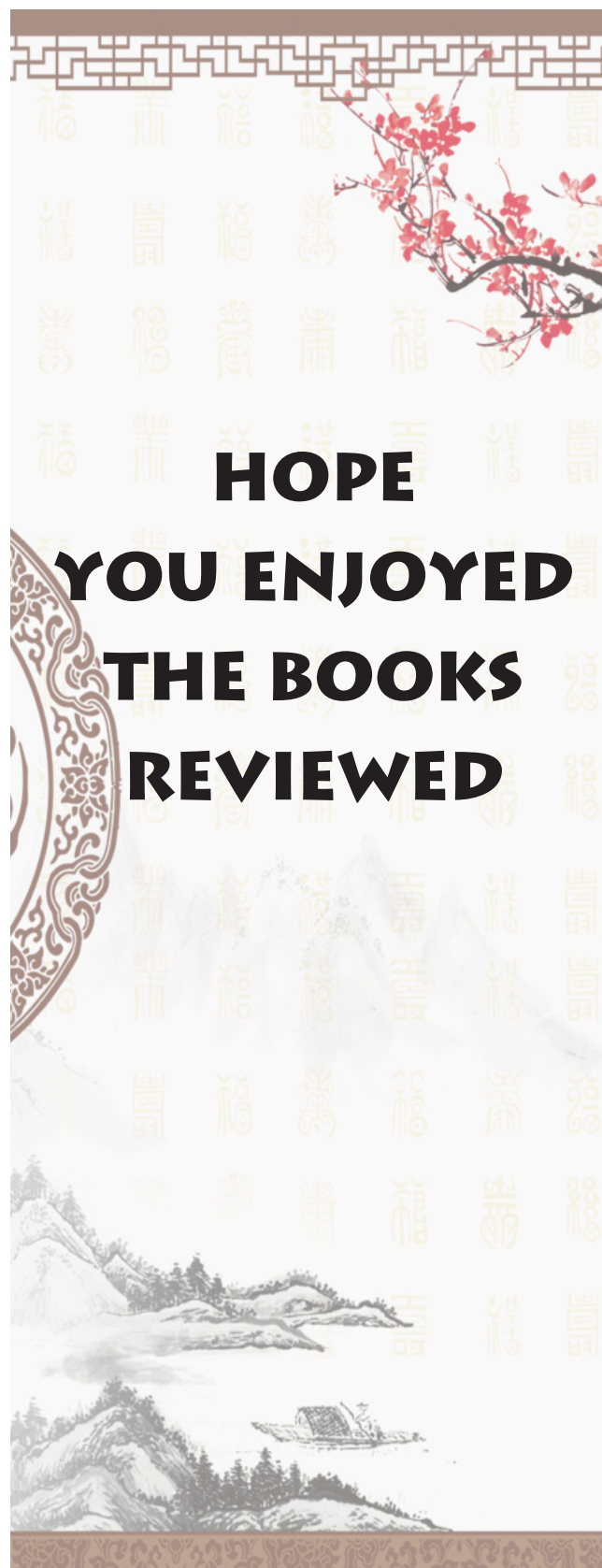
SCALLOPS AND EGGS

Ingredients:

- 10 egg shells their tops cut off so they look like cups, the eggs separated into two bowls
- 1 cup chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- 3 Tablespoons fresh spinach, stems discarded, leaves blanched half minute, then minced, excess water squeezed out and discarded
- 3 fresh sea scallops, steamed for three minutes, cut into thin strips, then minced
- 1 conpoy, soaked for an hour in warm water, then torn into thin strips, then minced
- 3 medium shrimp, shells and veins discarded, then minced
- 3 Tablespoons minced cooked chicken breast
- 1 large shiitake mushroom, stem discarded, cap finely minced
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon rendered chicken fat
- 1 cup raw rice set in a bowl to hold uncooked egg shells, and set them in it
- ½ cup cooked bean thread noodles

Preparation:

1. Carefully rinse and drain egg shells and trim them evenly around their tops.
2. Strain and discard chalaza (the thick white part of the eggs) and mix with the salt.
3. Lightly beat egg yolks and set them aside.
4. Mix minced scallops and conpoy, the shrimp, chicken breast, and the mushrooms, and set this aside.
5. Mix pepper, rendered chicken fat, and cornstarch mixture and the scallop mixture and fill empty egg shells halfway, then steam them over boiling water for fifteen minutes, then cool them.
6. Mix egg yolks, drained spinach, and put into the halfway filled egg shells and steam five more minutes.
7. Boil cornstarch mixture, then peel and discard egg shells, and put them on a platter, the bean threads around them.
8. Next mix ground pepper, chicken fat, and cornstarch and pour this over the eggs, then serve.



TAIWAN AND A POPULAR RECIPE

This island nation, a constitutional democracy since 1912, is officially known as the Republic of China or ROC. In 2018, it had some twenty-four million people and was the fiftieth most populous country in the world. It also had people of twenty-five different religions, About twenty percent were Buddhist, five percent Christian, two percent Muslim, and one percent Jewish. Many did not answer the question about religion so perhaps they practice none. As to the question about language, ten percent said they speak Hakka, seven times that number said Hokkienese, the rest reported speaking many Chinese dialects.

People in Taiwan love food, eat it often at home, at a street-stall, an elegant dining place, or elsewhere. They eat it as meals or snacks, consume one or the other many times a day, discuss it often, have two or more soups at most main meals, three or more at a banquet, and they devour birds roasted or as Peking Duck at most of them. They enjoy other fowl often, too, gorge on dumplings, meats, vegetables, and staple foods, and love their local popular dish, a 'three-cup' something or other, Three-cup Chicken is a favorite. Seems the history of this country, many Taiwanese told us, revolves around food; they speak of it often, eat some many times a day, know their country has many types and qualities, and say they even can enjoy them all.

Taiwan's main island has one hundred square miles, two hundred forty miles long and eighty-six miles wide. It includes the Penghu Islands, Lyndae Island, Lanyu Inlet, and other solid ground such as the Diaoyutai Archipelago. Taiwan's main island includes a large mountain range, some volcanic land, many foothills, lots of coastline, several basins, and many small islands. The capital city is Taipei and it, too, is food-centered. Everywhere people enjoy Fujianese, Minnan, Minxi, and other cuisines, many closely related to those available in the Fujian Province; others can be from anywhere in China, even in the world. Some say their foods are one and the same, but those with a fine palate and knowledge of history know better than that.



They see, taste, and adore all their complexities, and they know a large number were impacted by the many migrations, particularly the large one after the 1940s. They do enjoy China's finest culinary from all over that country, and those from other countries, too.

Most loved are from China's three styles, Western, Southern, and Eastern, next, from their Northern style. They know that classic Taiwanese food is mainly Min style and made with fresh ingredients, split-second timing, fastidious temperature control, and other attentions to detail. They use lots of seafood, do much stir-frying and quick-frying, wok many dishes, consume more soups than almost everywhere else in China except the

Fujian Province, and they love lots of sour and pickled vegetables.

After the Dutch left this island in 1895, Taiwan was incorporated into China sharing Han cultural, culinary, dietary, other habits and customs until 1945. Then they were occupied by the Japanese so sushi and other Japanese foods began to have impact. Breakfasts included congee and many pickled vegetables, lunch had steamed rice with some different Chinese main dishes and soups, and dinners were often leftovers that is unless they ate in a restaurant where many ordered Guangdong, Beijing, Shanghai, or Taiwanese specialties. Eastern Chinese chow was made with lots of oil, vinegar, sugar, sweet bean paste, and fermented rice, and it was served with a plethora of soups, one of which was often a *guobian*, a batter poured at the wok bottom, simmered soup on or inside its soft crust. Others soups often included firepot with many raw foods cooked in broth or stock, and/or a many-meat Mongolian barbecue. Its contents can include raw meat, root and other vegetables, herbs, sauces, and *shaobing* breads topped with sesame seeds.

continued on page 13

TAIWAN AND A POPULAR RECIPE

continued from page 12

Fruits will be mentioned in a future issue, most of them were eaten between or after meals. These foods from this island are known as the world's finest, hundreds available including citrus, mango, papaya, pear, pineapple, watermelon, cantaloupe and others. Taiwanese firepot includes a multitude of vegetables such as pea pods, pea shoots, leafy ones, broccoli and others in the *Brassica* family, carrots, eggplants, and others, too; and often includes noodles, too; and an egg cooked in the liquid ending this meal.

Taiwanese eat many different fish at their meals including cuttlefish, jellyfish, squid, and other swimmers, and they enjoy them with their chopsticks and curved ceramic spoons, never have a knife in sight. They like their fish in soups and dips, with green or herbal tea or beer, soda, *gaoling* or any rocket-fueled alcoholic beverage to wash down their food; and when drinking adore finger games with 'bottoms up' when losing a round.

Black tea is popular but here called 'red tea' and liked local and of high quality, often an oolong if *longjing* or *tieguanyin* as their Iron Goddess of Mercy tea served stronger and better than elsewhere, and almost always in tiny cups. Other beverages also in these tiny cups, are served at their own best temperature.



On this island and in most of China, medicine and food are related, and can include ginseng, bird's nests, other items for energy, strength, *qi*, another life-force, *yin* or *yang* if needed or wanted, or get one they read or heard about that very day. They know many sea foods from books written generations ago that tell them things such as their hot food can be pepper, ginger, chilies, or sugary ones, or fats good for their *yin* conditions, or cabbage, carrots, cress, or green beans for their *yang* ones.

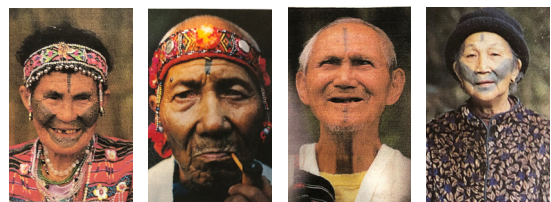
They know these illnesses can be fever, rash, burn, chronic constipation, or another *yang* condition they just heard about.

For these and other conditions, they prefer taking a food of the opposite type, or ingest a *bu* food that is easily digested to strengthen, supplement, or repair a particular tissue or condition such as those that are fowl, sea cucumber, ginseng, abalone, white tree-fungus, pangolin, or another low-fat, low calorie, non-irritating food that will not upset their stomach.

After eating, many do play a mouth or nose organ or a lute-like string instrument, some did have their faces tattooed, most were done at maturity if they are from one of the two indigenous tribes that do them for beauty, health, or to show they belong to these two, or they wanted or believe they need it to be married; though that is not always true. However, tattoos have been illegal since the 1990s, since then not always appreciated or followed by these two Taiwanese minority people from this island.



Most men and women with them are elders who got theirs at maturity believing or were told that 'no Atayal person can marry without one' or that 'no Saisiyat will get a suitor if no tattoo is seen on their face.' There are a few who do want a tattoo, perhaps their parents have one or to show it off or show they belong to one of these two indigenous populations. We saw many of them at the Taipei Culinary Exhibition or when they came to town perhaps to visit a skyscraper there.



Those on this page are mostly from these tribal groups and done at maturity. Some of them told us to get one was painful; one fellow said some girls and young women run away not to get theirs, and that his male friends got theirs on a head-hunting trip with their fathers as then, they were unable to run away. One fellow said his father refused to let him be tortured when a few of his friends on a trip got theirs. They did say they felt unhappy with their tattoos.

Some girls told us got theirs when showing they could weave or do another womanly thing. Others said they were brain-washed into believing they needed one to find a beau and eventually get married. One fellow said his sister got hers after showing she could cook, then she was fifteen, now she is married, has two children, and pregnant with a third. All queried did say they adored their father, even the ones who had them do this painful rite of passage under duress.

continued on page 14

TAIWAN AND A POPULAR RECIPE

continued from page 13

Dates when they got theirs seem to be determined after a parental dream interpretation or bird divination. One chap had his when a tattoo artist showed up at his home and pressed ashes into patterns drawn on his face. He told us it took a few hours for a boy, an entire day for a girl; and now everyone knows he officially belongs to that tribe.

Another guy told us about eating in Taiwanese restaurants in China, the US, and elsewhere. He said he loved Three-cup Chicken, Slack Season Noodles, Pig's Knuckles, and other Hakka foods he recognizes. Others spoke about those had at Taiwanese eateries such as the Tu Hsiao Yueh Hsiang, or Jen Dow branches in Taiwan and in China.

We did see recipes in Chinese and Taiwanese cookbooks, and on their web sites, but our space curtails including them in this magazine. You can seek them out and make them should you locate them; and we hope you do see and use them. (JMN)

THREE-CUP CHICKEN

Ingredients:

- 3 Tablespoons sesame oil
- 3 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
- 3 Tablespoons thin soy sauce
- 1 to 2 teaspoons granulated sugar
- 8 cloves of fresh garlic, peeled and sliced
- 8 slices of fresh ginger
- 1 fresh chili pepper, seeded and minced
- 4 chicken legs, each cut into four pieces
- 1 bunch of fresh basil leaves, stems discarded

Preparation:

1. Heat the oil, then add the wine, the soy sauce, and sugar, and add and stir-fry the garlic and ginger in this for one minute, then add the chili pepper pieces and stir-fry another minute.
2. Now add the chicken-leg pieces, garlic, and ginger and stir-fry for eight minutes, turning often, then add the pieces of chili pepper and the basil leaves and stir-fry one more minute, then remove this to a pre-heated platter.
3. Serve on the pre-heated platter.



ON MENUS: LONG ISLAND NY

JIANG HU; 30 ROUTE 25A; EAST SETAUKET NY; PHONE (631) 346-9811.

A Chongking Restaurant recently opened a few miles from us, the first from this province in Suffolk County. It was once a small pizza parlor, now with blackened pizza oven doors, is a very small eatery with less than a handful of tables seating five at the few tables there.

Before our first visit, we checked it out on the web, saw their driving instructions with many turns so we opted for getting there using the GPS in our car. We then tried to outsmart it and failed. So we stopped to ask a chap standing on nearby a corner. He claimed he knew the place, so we followed his directions; but they had many flaws. The first was the name of a gas station we should turn at; it was not the Texaco he said, but a Gulf.

We paid the price of following his instructions. Learned later, we were half mile from its front door, but his instructions needed many miles, a U-turn, and learning he did not know left from right; so we needed many more minutes to get there. It was my fault, left my cell phone at home because it is too large for my pants pocket.

Now know it is on the corner of Jersey Avenue, and next door to the Cupee place. The many turns suggested was probably better, should have taken them listed at: www.jianghu.us/menu. Once we did get there, the food that night was outstanding. Not so on a subsequent visit, but much improved after a second mediocre meal there. On most future visits we did learn to love many dishes we had there. Their Housemade Doufu was always super, so were their Frogs Legs in Chili Sauce. These became our 'go-to dishes' on all future visits as did one of their two soups, neither so labeled.

We were amazed the first time we ordered one; it and its partner had lots of fish. Both came in huge tureen, each with a different broth and loads of tender fish, each feeding more than four adults with leftovers taken home for four more. Future visits, we toted most of them home, learned the fish and broth actually better the next day as their flavors melded in marvelous liquid.

Folks without wheels need knowing the county 'S-60' bus stops at the corner of their property, so its schedule for when your car is in the shop or you need to tote more folk than yours can hold is a wise move; and with its small size, reservations will be, too. (JMN)



continued on page 16

ON MENUS: LONG ISLAND NY

continued from page 15

**F.A.N.; 534 COMMACK ROAD;
DEER PARK NY 11729; PHONE
(631) 586-6888.**

Chef Zhang Yue and his crew, all from China, man the woks here. Their customers tell us they like their timid tastes that have the right amount of piquancy, not too much, not too little. Many dishes are beautiful, quite a few sporting a fresh orchid. When we want them spicier, they prepare them as requested.

The menu is a two-sided plastic place mat, one with pictures and tiny type, the other with lovely color photographs and larger size printing. Selections are few, but when one wants something not there, they often graciously made it for us.

On a first visit, we began as we often do, with Sliced Beef and Ox Tendon in Chili Sauce. Crunchy and topped with lots of sesame seeds and chopped nuts, sometimes peanuts, it was tender and with a touch of sweetness. We all liked it. Ditto for the Snow Mountain Spare Ribs, and the Yam with Blueberry Sauce.

Soft-shelled Crabs were a mountain, big pieces on oodles of crisp noodles or under them. Delicious, they were tender and terrific. So was the Stir-fried Lamb with Scallions and Red Onions. The Pea Sprouts in House Special Soup was a new dish for all of us. We loved its large pieces of preserved hundred year duck yolks, all soft and enriching, and a perfect match for the luscious pea shoots and red *goji* berries in it. Their color and texture enticed us to eat lots of it; and return for more on other visits.

Many fans of this F.A.N. keep this place hopping with their fewer piquant peppers than other Sichuan eateries. One waiter told us "they are perfect for Westerners which are our larger customer base."

At the next table sat a family with five boys under nine. They devoured every dish and told us they are F.A.N. (s) of this place. One said he also devours not one but two delicious desserts on every visit, the Chilled Mango Sago Cream with Pomelo, and the Mixed Fruits with Coconut Cream. He also loves their four Bubble Tea drinks, too, but is not allowed but one each visit as a switch for one of his other favorite desserts. His parents

chimed in that they prefer the Taro and Jasmine teas, and their boys like them, too.

The eldest said, after showing him a copy of this magazine, we should tell readers that Grandma Stewed Pork Cubes are wonderful, so is their Shredded Pepper and Potatoes, and their Steamed Ginger and Scallion Fish Fillets. The next in size said to tell folks all foods are fantastic here, adding we come once a week, and devour all they feed us.

Staff here does know the clientele, serves them well, and this may explain why they are in the top ten Chinese places listed in *Newsday*. Satisfying many palates, tell them what spiciness you want, and they will arrive as requested. We asked for one dish very, very spicy, others not at all but with lots of scallions.



MORSELS OF DIETARY ADVISE

Food, the Chinese believe, is important as therapy and as energy. The body needs both to survive and stay healthy, and in order to do so, people need to know what to eat, when, even how to prepare it. These are frequent topics of discussion at many main meals for Chinese people. They discuss these in terms of what, when, where, even why. So in your homes and at work, do start these conversations and get to know about the foods you eat or want to eat.

These conversations probably began during the Zhou Dynasty (1122 - 249 BCE), if not earlier. Rulers and their families did have officials who planned their diets, made sure they had adequate nourishment, paid attention to their seasonal needs, planned no clashing foods at any meal, never had foods that would make them ill, and saw to it that they ate no spoiled foods.

Since the *Huang Di Ni Jing Su Wen*, a book written by the Yellow Emperor, these experts had sources to advise rulers and the elite, to help them watch what they ate and drank. They did this for them or taught them how to pay attention to these things. They explained why and it was important to do so; and did this considering atmospheric influences such as cold, dry, heat, humidity, and wind; the five flavors of bitter, pungent, salty, sour, and sweet; and the Chinese nature of each food they ate or were going to eat.

The purpose of these efforts was to prevent major illnesses, cure minor ones, positively impact bone, brain, marrow, and saliva, and for men, their semen. They did for them or spoke to them about how to stay healthy, what they should eat, supervised their chefs, and spoke about if they developed a condition, something we would call an illness, then what foods, herbs, and/or medicines they needed to consume to get better.

We know they read or were told about health issues as discussed in what we now call the nutrition literature. Unfortunately, most were lost. However, we know about them and their contents as they were referred to in later volumes. One such was the *Shi Jing*. These and others told them many things such as two items of equal importance; they were not to eat in excess, and were to rest before and after all large meals.

Folks giving this important information are now called nutritionists or dietitians, the later have rigorous education and tests to show they know what is important, health-wise and how apply it. The former may or may not have this knowledge.

Advice discussed could be not to eat too many stimulating foods as they might impact their health. Another was not to eat too many fats as they stayed in the stomach for too long. Positive ones were to eat soup at most meals, and to eat a little of everything at every meal, not just to eat what they liked as these might not be the best foods for them. They were also told not to smoke too much, not to consume too many alcoholic beverages, and not to eat the same foods all the time, but to vary their intake. As to meats, recommended was not eat them in larger quantities than all their other foods combined, rather, to eat less of them at their meals than the amount of all their other foods together.

Other information in those days, today too, was they eat their heaviest meal in the middles of the day, eat less before going to sleep, and that should not be near actually going to sleep. Evening meals were best for eating leftovers, and not too much of them. Breakfasts were the time for porridge, pickled vegetables, soy milk, and maybe a donut or another sweet if very hungry.

During summers, the advice was to eat foods cold or cool by nature, not by temperature. In winter, the best was to eat those hot by nature, not by temperature. Another thing was not to eat too much meat in the evenings, not too much fried or grilled foods then, too, because these were hard for their stomach to get rid of; these days described as their being difficult to digest. Meat, they were reminded should be no more than equal to the volume of all their other foods together by volume at any meal. Also to avoid too many stimulating foods and bitter foods if they were very active.

Many were told or shown how to prepare these foods, one good way was to boil or simmer them, not fry most of them, not to drink too many that were very hot or very cold, and to judge all foods not by their temperature, but by their Chinese nature.

The Book of Rites, written about 25 BCE did summarize many of these things known by then. It discussed how to maintain good health, and one example, was not eating raw meat as it often made stomach problems, to consider *yin* and *yang* and include both at all meals. Also, if ill with a condition then consider eating more of the opposite food category to return to good health.

MORSELS OF CHINESE DIETARY ADVISE

continued from page 17

Beside this balance of meals and conditions, two other important items were discussed. They were knowing about and using the therapeutic techniques of acupuncture and moxibustion. The former was the use of thin needles at various points on the body. They were called *pien shih* or *chen chiu*, these points places to stimulate nearby nerve endings. The second, was moxibustion which was smoldering *artemisia* in cones or moss-like sticks above these same points to provide adequate stimulation there. This latter way was considered more valuable for chronic diseases than the needles were. Acupuncture was said to be good for prophylactic purposes.

Not everyone agrees with all health suggestions or conditions, nor ways to make them better. Some differences vary by location. For people to know those best to use these days, they should search the web, ask TCM professionals, read books that discuss them, and check many other sources. Making a list is a good idea to avoid errors of memory. There are neutral foods and using them can reduce incorrect pairing of foods and conditions; and they are noodles, rice, and other staple foods.

Therefore, read lots of articles, make lists of *yin* and *yang* foods and conditions, too. Read Chinese health books to increase knowledge which can lead to good health and having a long life. (JMN)



ANY IDEAS FOR FUTURE ISSUES?

CHINA'S EARLY FOOD CULTURE

COOKING and the food culture of this country is known in considerable detail. For those who wonder how, be advised that in the 1970s, an excavation of a Han Dynasty tomb uncovered it well-stocked with bamboo cooking utensils, metal woks, ceramic steamers, and more than three hundred recipes for dishes made with chicken, duck, pheasant, quail, dog, pig, lamb, and other foods telling how they were prepared and how served.

These and other finds included murals showing bakers, cooks, and winemakers and their dishes. There were written explanations about how to make many of the foods, what beverages they consumed with them, and the pastries they loved with them, too. Some told about the intricacies of making them and other foods consumed then, too.

We know from this and past excavations, they were growing rice at least eight thousand years earlier than first thought. There are those who dispute this, but only because they say it was one and a half times before the above dates. They used soy beans at least five thousand years earlier than most thought, bred pigs a thousand years less than that, and likewise for cows, sheep, and goats.

Then and now, some few percent of their land was arable, and it took more than half of their people laboring on it and still they had to import food from the Middle East, Malaysia, and India to adequately feed themselves. More recently, with imports from North and South America, and thanks to Europeans, Americans, and Arabs, many transported it to many places in China by land and sea, and nowadays, also by air.

From earliest times, Chinese cooked foods coming into their country boiling, steaming, and more recently using metal woks and pans. They ate them with chopsticks and spoons, and drank some of them. Some of these foods came from other lands, rivers, lakes, ponds, and seas, and came into their country through the four thousand miles of their coastline. They incorporated foods from the cradles of other cultures including some from Manchuria, Mongolia, Russia, Korea, the 'Stan' republics, Tibet, India, Nepal, and Burma which is now known as Myanmar, from Laos and Vietnam and from places further afield.

China's early beginnings did include foods of the Yangshao culture more than five thousand years before the Christian era when they raised rice, millet, and barley, imported then grew wheat, netted or caught fish by line or net, and captured then domesticated small

animals. Later, they imported and then grew grapes, pomegranates, squash, figs, peaches and other foods from the Middle East, learned to mill their own and imported grains, grew or imported vegetables, brought in almonds from Turkestan, cardamon from India, oranges from Indonesia, snow peas from Holland, and potatoes and taro from Europe. Much later and much closer to these days, they imported and then grew their own chilies and corn that originally came from the Americas.

The Chinese do love all foods made well. They have eaten many kinds over the centuries, adopted and adapted others from all over the world, and as their proverb indicates, first one eats with the eyes, then takes food in aromatically, then ingests it through their mouth, and finally learns how to grow it themselves.

This magazine discusses many of these foods from early times to date in articles such as but not limited to: Food Facts on the Silk Road; Hangzhou and Ancestor Tables; Early Chinese Cookbooks and Restaurants; Chinese Food Perceptions in the US; Chinese Adventures in the Global kitchen; Chinese Food in History, and still others. They are in this magazines complete Index at www.flavorandfortune.com.

WOKS have many wonderings when they were first used in China. While Chinese food may be ancient, we never did see consistent dates for the use of their metal cooking pot, the wok. We once read a few were found in early excavations of places at the beginning of the Han Dynasty (in 202 BCE). And, in a 1998 Oxford Symposium article titled 'On Food and Cookery' by Anne and Gerald Nicholls they said "few would deny the art of Chinese cooking is one of the oldest in the world."

They mention the sand pot and advise it can be strengthened with wire around its outsides, that it might have been used during the Chou Dynasty (12th century BCE - 221 BCE) a thousand years earlier than many have said. They said it was used for frying, roasting, and braising, was made of clay or pottery, even a few of bronze. Then they go on to say that in the Tang Dynasty (618- 907 CE) they used a wide metal pan, a *kuo*, but never said where, when, even how. We know the word 'wok' is Mandarin but we never saw their earliest date of use, did you?

continued on page 20

CHINA'S EARLY FOOD CULTURE

continued from page 19

There were two main metal cooking pots called 'wok,' one with small metal handles on both sides, the other called a *pau* with one long handle which was often of wood, a few short ones of metal. Both, made of metal, had handles of wood or metal, both used to fry or stir-fry foods, and those with wooden handles did keep cooks further away from the heat sources, but when they were first used offers various dates, no consistency.

Another typical Chinese metal pot, some divided in the center or with a single bowl sat on a funnel-shaped center to heat and cook foods using charcoal or alcohol at their base to heat the foods. Some were called 'Mongolian Firepots,' and they had moat-shaped rings suspended around their chimneys for the liquids to heat the foods in; and the foods were put in these moats. The heat came up the center, the moat sat around it, and the moat's liquid cooked the food thanks to its heat source at its base. Newer ones now use electricity as their heat source.

Popular early pots were not made of metal but of sand and called sand pots. Later ones had wires around to strengthen them, as they went directly on their heat source. Some were thin and fragile, wires strengthening them, some easier to clean as they had glazed interiors, glazed interior covers, too.

We once had a sand pot with no exterior wires. It did crack and scald us. We replaced it with one with wires around the outside and never had that scary experience again. Nowadays, many Chinese pots are heated by electricity, often a safer method of heating them. Most were in use before the Xia Dynasty which some did not believe was real.

THE XIA DYNASTY about a dozen years ago Chinese experts did question if this Dynasty was imaginary or legendary. Now, we know it actually did exist because archeologists in the Henan Province did find one of its important cities, namely Yangcheng.

They learned that in the Xia Dynasty was some time from the 21st to 16th centuries BCE, it was there and Gaocheng was its capital. It was west of Zhengzhou, in Dengfeng County, and may have been about forty miles away. There, archeologists found more than a thousand pottery pieces, basins, stemmed cups, wine goblets, and many things made of stone, bone, and shells carbon-dated thanks to Professor An Jinhui of the Henan Institute of Archeology. He directed the excavation and is also credited with seeing their porcelain making some time in Shang Dynasty times (16th-14th centuries BCE). He said Xia people were active there, in what today are the West Henan and South Shanxi Provinces in the Yellow River Basin. This area is now called 'the cradle of Chinese civilization.'

The Book of Mencius records King Yu as founding this Dynasty, and he lived there making Yangcheng its capital. Experts point out the term then used was 'king' and note it predates the word 'emperor' in most Chinese historical tomes.

Sima- Qian of the Western Han Dynasty, said that King Yu lived in Yangcheng and it was about forty miles from Zhengzhou, the Songshan Mountains in pictures are in its background, the Yinghe River can be seen in its foreground. It is on a high earthen mound, a wall believed to be its Western Wall very near. Some say the Eastern section of this city was probably washed away by flood waters of the Wudu River. They do believe the city was the same size as the mound above it, and skeletons in groups of two to seven that were found in pits below were in its many residences in postures looking like their deaths were unnatural. Maybe they were slaves offered as sacrifices.

Designs on the pottery found there had small checks and vertical lines, probably fragments from cooking utensils and wine and steaming vessels. The latter were recognized by the holes in their bottoms. They also found arrowheads, a pottery spinning wheel, knife, hairpin, and more.

Professor An believes this was a Xia city and knows that the shards, carbon-dated as more than four thousand years old, were even mentioned in some historical records. Those digging there also found a rock-cut water supply system and ceramics marked 'Yangcheng, and they are why he and others believed King Yu lived here.

Some forty sites of Xia culture were nearby, most to be explored in the future. This delayed exploration behavior is the protocol China now uses to reserve places and excavate them later when techniques yet to be discovered will determine more than if they are investigated now. A small cooking vessel was found nearby and may have been a child's toy. It was photographed in a museum and dated from Xia Dynasty times. (JMN)



EGGPLANT: HATED IS NOW LOVED

This vegetable's nature, the Chinese say is cooling and sweet. Many believe it came to China from Southeast Asia, specifically where, seems people do not agree.

Overall, Chinese prefer long thin ones and seen on page 23 they call them 'Japanese eggplants'. They eat them often, still ask many questions about them, and the most frequent is: "Is it really a fruit?" The answer is yes.

Some say it came to China during the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907 CE), but Sui Tang Yi, a prominent writer, called it *kun lun tzu kua* meaning 'Malayan purple melon.' Did he believe it came from Malaysia? There are those who say it came from Cambodia, Thailand, or somewhere else in Southeast Asia; few believe it came from China or Japan.

In most of Asia, they call the long thin ones 'Asian' or an 'Oriental' eggplant. Not so China, they call the one they like best and grow most often as the 'Japanese eggplant.' Neither round nor fat as the one shown on this page is called an Italian eggplant. The Chinese call them Japanese eggplants. They have the same purple/black exteriors, and they also grow ones with green or white exteriors. We have never seen a fat one growing in China in any of our seventeen trips there. That amazes me as they grow so many other varieties from those small as cherries to the thin ones they call 'Japanese.' The Italian type can weigh about up to three-pounds each. In China and most of Asia, eggplants are cooked as vegetables, never eaten raw as most fruits are.

Some believe the Chinese spread this variety to many Asian countries including Japan and Korea. They call it '*chia*' which is close to the Cantonese pronunciation of *ch'ieh*, and close to the Thai name of *khia*. In one source, we read it came to China by way of India, then went on to North and South America, but we do and did not believe that. We also read that in Sanskrit and modern Indian languages, it is better known as *vatingana* meaning 'belonging to the windy class.' That idea is associated with madness, and may be why some say eating one can make you mad.

We also read that in the seventh century when it reached Iran, they called it *badinjan* and did not always love it. Was it because it was black and bitter, the color like a scorpion's belly, the taste like its sting? However, in Southeast Asia, many like bitter flavors so why did that bother them?

When the eggplant got to Balkan countries, it was called the 'lord of vegetables' and was better appreciated there. Maybe they shared their eggplant thoughts with Russians who called it *baklazhan*? Did they wonder if there was a connection with the Italians whose name was closer to theirs and is *melanzana*? Did they think it sounded like 'crazy' or *mela insana* meaning 'crazy apple'?

In its many travels, many people thought this fruit not healthy because one Pope's doctor wrote "they are hard to digest, generate headaches and melancholy, even cancer or leprosy. These notions did not help their image nor their acceptance. Maybe this is why they were never sold well in Paris after a French doctor to the Pope said what he said. However, that fear did not last long nor was it accurate. When the Spanish and Portuguese brought its seeds to the Americas, they quickly became popular there. Was this because there were many Italians already living there?

In the US, few knew that Thomas Jefferson had them growing in Monticello. His African slaves gave him their seeds and planted them for him as they did okra, watermelon, black-eyed peas, and other vegetables. Did you know his people called them 'guinea squash?' That was published in *The Carolina Housewife* in 1847 with several recipes for them. Earlier, in 1770, they had that name in a book written by a cousin of Harriet Horry who liked them and as the first American to write about them, said they were good food.

These days, many cook the thin ones as K.C. Chang does mention them a couple of hundred years later in his 1977 book, *Food in Chinese Culture*. So does Elizabeth David, but not that way. Her article, in 1987 titled "Mad, Bad, Despised, and Dangerous" in *Petits Propos Culinaire* touts them negatively and did not help, maybe hindered their popularity. Maybe the Italian variety already had a positive image in the US by then. Nowadays, importers tell us the skinnier ones are gaining in popularity, and appreciated more as they are less bitter. Which ones do you like better?



continued on page 22

EGGPLANT: HATED IS NOW LOVED

continued from page 21

Chinese and other Asians appreciate all eggplants because they say they clear stagnant blood, positively impact tumors, reduce bleeding, and are a good source of bioflavonoids, also renew people's arteries, prevent strokes, reduce hemorrhages, and lessen dysentery, diarrhea, canker sores, and other mouth irritations if used as their charred powder. They also ease poisons from snake and scorpion bites, cure frostbite, and are great used as a poultice and in tea. Chinese tell their pregnant women to eat them sparingly; Japanese pregnant women are told not to eat any because they can cause a miscarriage. Below are several recipes Chinese do eat and love; you might, too. (JMN)

SESAME-SAUCED EGGPLANT

Ingredients:

- 3 thin Asian eggplants, cut in thin strips one to two inches long
- 2 Tablespoons thin soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons sesame paste
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 scallion, minced
- 2 teaspoons sesame seeds, half toasted

Preparation:

1. Steam eggplant strips over boiling water for ten minutes, then drain and cool.
2. Mix the rest of the ingredients and stir into a bowl with the cooled eggplant strips. Set aside in the refrigerator overnight.
3. Drain, then serve in a chilled bowl.



PORK WITH EGGPLANT

Ingredients:

- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 5 thin Asian eggplants, angle-cut into one-inch pieces
- 1-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and minced
- 3 shallots, peeled and thin-slices
- 1 Tablespoon *sacha* sauce
- ½ pound cooked roast pork, cut in very thin strips
- 2 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons thin soy sauce
- 1 scallion, thinly angle-cut

Preparation:

1. Heat a wok or fry-pan, add the oil, and stir-fry eggplant pieces for three minutes, then drain, set them aside on paper towels, and remove all but two Tablespoons of the oil from their pan.
2. Reheat this remaining oil and stir-fry the ginger, garlic, and shallot pieces for one minute, then add the *sacha* sauce and the roast pork and stir-fry for one minute, then add egg plant pieces, rice wine, sugar, and thin soy sauce, and stir-fry for one minute.
3. Put in a pre-heated serving bowl, toss in half the scallion pieces, and sprinkle the other half on top; then serve.

DONGBEI VEGETABLES

Ingredients:

- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 potato, peeled, angle-cut in one-inch cubes
- 3 thin Asian eggplants, angle-cut in one-inch cubes
- ½ red bell pepper, seeded and angle-cut into one-inch pieces
- 3 slivers shredded fresh ginger
- 3 cloves peeled and shredded fresh garlic
- 1 teaspoon thin soy sauce
- 1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 cup cooked hot rice

Preparation:

1. Heat wok or fry-pan, add the oil, then stir-fry the potato for two minutes.
2. Add eggplant pieces and stir-fry for one more minute, then add green and red pepper pieces and stir-fry a minute more.
3. Drain the vegetables on paper towels, discard all but a Tablespoonful of the oil.
4. Now add ginger and garlic, stir-fry for one minute, then add soy sauce, rice wine, sugar, and cornstarch and stir well.
5. Serve in a pre-heated bowl on top of the thermally hot rice.

continued on page 23

EGGPLANT: HATED IS NOW LOVED
continued from page 22

**EGGPLANT IN
HOT AND SOUR SAUCE**

Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- dash coarse salt
- ½ teaspoon sesame oil
- 3 thin Asian eggplants, roll cut into half inch pieces
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 Tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 Tablespoon Chinese black vinegar

Preparation:

1. Make batter of flour, cornstarch, baking soda, salt, and sesame oil, stir well, and set this aside.
2. Heat wok or fry-pan, add vegetable oil, then the roll-cut eggplant pieces dipped in the batter and drained of any excess, and fry them for two minutes, then drain on paper towels, and put them in a preheated serving bowl.
3. Heat brown sugar and Chinese black vinegar in a small pot until sugar is completely dissolved, and then pour this over the deep-fried-battered eggplant pieces, and serve.

EGGPLANT AND NOODLES

Ingredients:

- ½ pound wide wheat noodles
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 3 thin Asian eggplants, cut into half-inch cubes
- ½ pound ground pork or lamb
- ½ yellow onion, cubed
- 3 Tablespoons fresh ginger, minced
- 3 peeled garlic cloves, minced
- 5 Tablespoons sesame oil
- 1 Tablespoons dark soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons mushroom soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 thin cucumber, cut in thin strips

Preparation:

1. Boil the wide noodles until almost soft then drain and toss with one Table spoon of the oil, and set them aside.
2. Heat wok or fry-pan, deep-fry the eggplant cubes and toss with noodles and set aside.
3. In one Tablespoon of oil, fry the pork or lamb until just before it is no longer pink, then add ginger and garlic and stir-fry one more minute, then mix in noodle mixture.
4. Now stir in the sesame oil and both soy sauces, and the granulated sugar and put all into a large serving bowl.
5. Next add the cucumber pieces, the noodle mixture, and serve.

MOLTEN EGGS AND EGGPLANT

Ingredients:

- 5 large eggs
- 2 thin eggplants, angle-cut
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 5 dried pitted dates
- 5 slices fresh ginger, minced
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1 teaspoon ground white peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 cup Chinese rice wine

Preparation:

1. Make a small hole in the shell of the narrow end of each egg, and put them in a sauce pot of cold water, and bring it slowly to a simmer, stir every minute or two for three minutes to keep the yolks centered, then remove the eggs from the hot water; and fill the pot with cold water, and crack the shells by gently rolling them, but do not take them out of the pot.
2. In another pot, add oil and deep-fry the eggplant for three minutes, then drain it on paper towels, and set oil a side for another purpose.
3. Now add all the other ingredients including the fried eggplant pieces, and bring to the boil with the eggs and drained eggplant pieces, and refrigerate these covered adding cold boiled water to cover, if needed.
4. The next day or before planning to eat them, discard liquid, peel the eggs and discard their shells, and cut them in half.
5. Serve these egg halves, cut side up, mixed with the eggplant pieces on a chilled serving platter, or put them on greens or cold noodles and serve them.



This is a thin or 'Japanese' eggplant

CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINES

With no end to what one can learn, the Chinese believe herbals are great in tonic soups. Loved and prescribed frequently, TCM practitioners prescribe them for specific reasons while ordinary folk just like them to feel better. Touted by some as cures, they are popular, well-known, mentioned by the Chinese for their general nature, know by name in Chinese, some know them botanically too, and many know what they are commonly prescribed for.



To help you do likewise, below we list the more popular ones by their botanical names, their names in Chinese, the natures Chinese ascribe to them, and the health reasons TCM practitioners recommend them for. Do enjoy reading and learning about them!

CHEN PI is tangerine peel, and the Chinese believe it warm in nature and tasting bittersweet. They say it improves digestion, regulates *qi*, improves the lungs, and helps those with a low white blood count.

CODONOPSIS PILOSULA, in Chinese is called *dang shen*, and said to be warm in nature and bittersweet. This perennial has lots of protein, glucose, and B vitamins, regulates the stomach and spleen, replenishes *qi*, improves lungs, and helps those with leukopenia, their numbers white blood cell counts.

FOLIUM MORI are leaves from mulberry trees. Known as *sang ye* in Chinese, the white ones are botanically known as *Morum alba*. They reduce flu symptoms and fevers, bleeding too, cool blood, clear swollen eyes and brighten eyesight, and they cleanse the liver.

GANODERMA LUCIDUM, in Chinese is *ling zhi*. They are often sold dried and reddish-brown. These mushrooms are neutral in nature and taste bittersweet, are mostly seen big and hard, and are said to be parasitic and in the *Polyporaceae* family. They grow at the roots of oak or broad-leaf trees, are rich in water-soluble proteins, and Chinese believe them nourishing, able to help digestion, cure insomnia, warm the stomach, relieve pain, prevent cancer, and help the elderly in many ways.

GINGKO BILOBA has many glycosides that assist reducing food poisoning and decomposing many toxins. However, to eat too many can lead to other poisonings, so do consume only a few at a time, and under the direction of a TCM professional when taking them.

GOJI, also their name in Chinese, are small red berries in the *Solanaceae* family. The Chinese say are neutral in nature, and when dry can brown. Fresh or dry, they are known for their very high Vitamin C content, perhaps the highest among fruits, and once were called wolfberries or medlar. TCM practitioners tell us they reduce high blood sugar, improve eyesight, and positively impact ones hemoglobin.

GROSVENER SIRITIA is neutral in nature, tastes sweet, yet said to be bittersweet. Called *lou han* in Chinese, painfully thin people know they help them by adding weight, and they are good for children who need that, too. They also help reduce excess phlegm no matter ones size.

NIGHT-BLOOMING CEREUS, Chinese call *ba wang hua*. They say their nature is cool, their taste bitter sweet, and that they expel dampness. They also reduce effects of excess alcohol and tobacco intake, relieve bad breath, ease constipation, reduce red eyes, and alleviate dry throats.

LIGUSTICUM CHUANXIONG in English is known as Sichuan lovage root. The Chinese call it *chuan xiong*. They say its nature is warm and tastes savory. In the *Umbelliferae* family, it roots underground and they say it revitalizes blood, stops joint pain, expands blood vessels, and relieves headaches and muscle soreness.

RADIX ACHYRANTHIS is called *nui xi* in Chinese. They believe it neutral in nature and tastes bitter and sour. They say it expels heat, strengthens muscles and bones, revitalizes blood, cures knee and lumbar pain, and pain in the waist, too.

RADIX POLYGONI MULTIFLORA is warm in nature and tastes bittersweet. Chinese call it *he shou wu*, and say it is rich in fat, starch, oil, and sugar, and enhances liver and kidneys, improves cholesterol and arteriosclerosis, and can darken the color of their hair.

YU JIAO is fish maw the Chinese say is warm in nature and tastes bittersweet. The best, they say, are from large croakers as they are rich in proteins and vitamins, and they replenish blood.

ZIZIPHUS JUJUBAI is the botanical name for all dates. The Chinese call them *zao*, the red ones are *hong zao*, black ones *nan zao*. They say their nature is warm, somewhat bittersweet, and a mite sour, too. Both are used to strengthen the spleen and stomach, replenish blood, and reduce hemorrhoids. (JMN)

PORK PREPARED IN MANY WAYS

Thanks to those who offered appreciation about the article and information about belly pork. Quite a few were amazed at how ubiquitous is its usage in China and by Chinese folk worldwide. Quite a few kudos came with requests asking for ground or minced pork suggestions and recipes. We found that amazing considering how popular is the use of ground pork. Anyway, that is our rationale of sharing these ordinary ways requested by many readers. Those that follow should please those that asked for same and many others, too. We begin with a most popular one, then some of the dozens that did pop into our head. We offer them for your enjoyment! (JMN)

LION'S HEAD MEATBALLS

Ingredients:

- 6 Tablespoons glutinous rice soaked in 1½ cups cold water for three hours, then drained
- 5 dried Chinese black mushrooms, simmered in one cup water for fifteen minutes, stems and liquid then discarded or minced for soup or stew
- 1 pound ground boneless pork
- 5 canned water chestnuts, coarsely chopped
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 Tablespoons dark soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon coarse salt
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 3 slices fresh ginger, minced
- 3 scallions, minced

Preparation:

1. Gently mix prepared mushrooms, water chestnuts, pork, egg, soy sauce, salt, sugar, ginger, and scallions and make into one to one-and a half-inch balls, then roll them lightly in the rice until well-covered and rice is stuck on
2. Put a sheet greaseproof paper at the bottom of a metal steamer and place the meatballs on that paper one and a half inches apart. Steam them over boiling water for thirty minutes, and do add extra water, if and as needed.
3. Serve with stir-fried or any vegetables, if and as desired.

PORK FLOSS IN OMELETTE

Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 4 Tablespoons pork floss
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil

Preparation:

1. Mix cornstarch with two Tablespoons water, then add in the eggs, and divide in half.
2. Heat a wok or fry pan, add the oil, and pour in one half of the above egg mixture and fry until almost set. Then add half the pork floss, and spread that on the egg before they set, and set this aside.
3. Repeat with the rest of the ingredients, angle slice the omelette, then serve it.

SPICY PORK AND DOUFU

Ingredients:

- 2 or 3 pounds soft doufu, cut in half-inch slices
- ½ pound ground pork
- 1 teaspoon chili paste
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 2 Tablespoons minced garlic
- 2 Tablespoons minced fresh ginger
- ½ cup chicken stock
- 1 teaspoon ground Sichuan peppercorns
- ¼ cup minced scallions
- 2 Tablespoons cornstarch mixed with four Tablespoons of cold water
- 1 Tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 sprigs fresh coriander, coarsely chopped

Preparation:

1. Mix doufu slices with pork, chili paste, sugar, minced garlic, and chicken stock, add garlic, ginger, chicken stock, Sichuan peppercorns, cornstarch water, and sesame oil, and set this aside.
2. Heat a wok or fry-pan, add the vegetable oil and simmer the pork mixture in this for about three minutes, then transfer it to a pre-heated serving bowl.
3. Mix in half the coriander and sprinkle the rest on top, then serve.

continued on page 26

PORK PREPARED IN MANY WAYS

continued from page 25

PORK ROLLS IN BEAN CURD SHEETS

Ingredients:

- 10 dried bean curd sheets
- 2/3 pound ground pork
- 2 scallions, coarsely chopped
- 2 pounds ground pork
- 2 teaspoons Chinese rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoons dark soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 6 ounces cellophane noodles
- 3 slices fresh ginger, coarsely chopped
- 2 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 bitter melons, seeded, blanched, cut in four the long way, each fourth angle-cut in one-inch pieces
- 2 Tablespoons oyster sauce
- ½ Tablespoon granulated sugar
- dash sesame oil
- ½ Tablespoon cornstarch mixed with one Tablespoon cold water

Preparation:

1. Soak bean curd sheets in one cup of boiling water until soft, then rinse them in cold water, drain, and set them aside.
2. Mix pork with scallions, ginger, Chinese rice wine, oyster sauce, and sugar, and roll about one-tenth of the pork mixture into each bean curd sheet having it look like a spring roll, and put them in a cold rice cooker.
3. Pour one cup of cold water on them, cover the rice cooker, and steam until rice cooker clicks off.
4. Put the pork rolls on a small pre-heated platter.
5. Heat the sugar, sesame oil, and cornstarch mixture until it boils, then pour it over the pork rolls, and serve them cut or not, as preferred.



ROAST PORK, BLACK BEANS, AND BITTER MELON

Ingredients:

- ½ pound roast pork, coarsely diced
- 1 teaspoon fermented black beans, lightly mashed
- 2 medium bitter melon, cut the long ways, seed and angle-cut them, then blanch them in boiling water
- 2 teaspoons oyster sauce
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch

Preparation:

1. Heat wok or small fry-pan, add the oil, then the garlic, mashed black beans, and roasted pork and stir-fry for two minutes.
2. Then add the pieces of bitter melon, the oyster sauce, sugar, and cornstarch, and stir-fry one minute.
3. Serve in a small pre-heated bowl.

PORK AND CELLOPHANE NOODLES

Ingredients:

- ¼ pound ground pork
- 2 teaspoons Chinese clear rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoons thin soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 5 ounces dry cellophane noodles soaked fifteen minutes in vinegar, soy sauce, and sesame oil, then cut into three-inch pieces
- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 5 cups one-quarter-inch scallion pieces
- 3 large cloves fresh garlic, minced
- 2 Tablespoons fresh ginger, minced
- 2 teaspoons chili paste with garlic
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 2 Tablespoons dark soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons Chinese rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 3 sprigs fresh coriander, very coarsely chopped

Preparation:

1. Mix pork with the vinegar, soy sauce, and sesame oil and set aside for fifteen minutes.
2. Heat oil in a wok or fry-pan and stir-fry scallions, garlic, ginger for one minute, then add pork and chili paste and cook until the meat is no longer pink.
3. Now add the noodles, broth, soy sauce, vinegar, and the sugar and stir-fry two minutes before putting in a pre-heated bowl sprinkling coriander on top, and then serve.

continued on page 27

PORK PREPARED IN MANY WAYS
continued from page 26

ROASTED SPARERIBS

Ingredients:

- ½ cup hoisin sauce
- 2 Tablespoons yellow bean paste
- 1 Tablespoon dark soy sauce
- 1 Tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 Teaspoons chopped fresh ginger

Preparation:

1. Mix hoisin sauce, yellow bean sauce, soy sauce, and sugar and rub onto both sides of the rib and set aside for two hours.
2. Now line roasting or baking pan with aluminum foil, and roast the rib for one hour in a 325-degree oven, turning them once in the middle of the roasting.
3. Cut the ribs into individual ones and put them on a pre-heated platter, and serve.

SICHUAN BABY BACK RIBS

Ingredients:

- 3 pounds baby back ribs
- 1-inch fresh ginger, cut in a few pieces
- ½ bunch fresh parsley
- 3 fresh cloves garlic, peeled
- ½ bunch fresh cilantro
- ½ cup hoisin sauce
- 1 Tablespoon minced fresh garlic
- 3 Tablespoons dry sherry
- 2 Tablespoons dark soy sauce
- 1 Tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 Tablespoon chili paste with garlic

Preparation:

1. Put ginger, parsley, garlic, and cilantro into a food processor, add the stock and the ribs and simmer together for fifteen minutes, then drain them and refrigerate and reserve the liquid.
2. Now put the ribs on a baking sheet and grill them until brown, then cut them into individual ribs, and brush them on both sides with the reserved liquid, and set any of its leftovers covered and the refrigerator.
3. Now, reheat the grill, brush them once more with the reserved drippings and grill for three minutes per side, then serve them.

PORK IN WINE LEES

Ingredients:

- 1 pound pork fillet cut into two thinner pieces
- 1 cucumber, seeds removed, angle-cut into fat strips
- 2 egg whites, beaten until no longer liquid
- 3 Tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon coarse salt
- 3 Tablespoons red fermented wine lees
- 3 Tablespoons lard
- ½ cup stock
- 2 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
- 1 teaspoon each. of sugar and salt
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch

Preparation:

1. Mix pork with the egg whites and put them in a plastic bag, add the cornstarch and shake until well coated.
2. Now mash red wine lees on a flat plate, and coat the meat on all sides of each pork piece.
3. Heat lard in a wok or fry-pan, and fry the pork over high heat for two minutes per side, then them to an empty plate and set them aside.
4. Add the cucumber pieces to the pan and stir fry for one minute, then set them aside and discard any lard or oil.
5. Next, mix the stock, rice wine, sugar, salt, and the cornstarch, add the pork and stir-fry it for one minute, then put it in a small pre-heated bowl, and serve.

**PORK, WINE LEES,
AND PICKLED CABBAGE**

Ingredients:

- ½ pound pickled napa cabbage
- ¼ pound ground or minced pork
- 1 chili pepper, seeded, then minced
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and minced
- 1 slice fresh ginger, minced
- 1 scallion, minced
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon red or white wine lees, mashed
- 1 teaspoon thin soy sauce

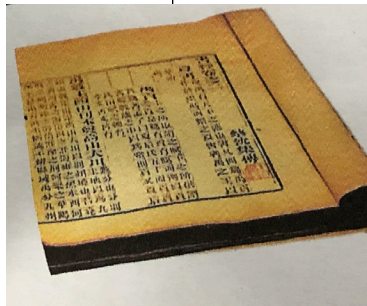
Preparation:

1. Drain pickled cabbage and chop it coarsely.
2. Heat oil in a wok or fry-pan and stir-fry the pork and chili pepper for one minute.
3. Then, add the garlic, ginger, pickled cabbage, and minced scallion pieces and stir-fry one more minute, then serve in a pre-heated bowl.

MORE CHINESE FOOD HISTORY

During the earliest of times, excavations such as the Han one mentioned on page 19 and elsewhere, used boiled and steamed most foods. To:

used boiled and steamed lots of foods. Culinary schools now teach these and other methods including roasting, red cooking, smoking, deep-frying, simmering, salting, cold mixing, stir-frying, clear sizzling, etc. Many use woks and other pans that did not exist then. Some they designed themselves, others were ideas borrowed from other people and places.



The Chinese still eat with chopsticks and spoons, and drink some of their foods. Exactly how or when new ones arrived in China, is not really known. When metals were first used and where they came from is an unknown. Where most of their newer foods came from is also not known. We assume most foods are those they grew or caught, or they reached China from the four thousand miles of coastline.

China's early food history began when people grew and processed their own food, some even shared it. This they did since they began hunting for things to eat. Now, the Chinese are one-fifth of the world's population, and since early times did write about what they ate in volumes such as *The Book of Songs*. They were probably one of the earliest countries to do this, certainly to write down what they did and believed.

They also absorbed behaviors and food ways of others, grew and ate foods they learned watching others, and thanks to open minds and intermarriages, did learn from many others. This education from their forebears during Qin and Han Dynasties (221 - 206 BCE and 202 BCE -220 CE, respectively), kept them learning and expanding their knowledge. We know much about them, thanks to these written words.

What they practiced and wrote down is better known now because of folks such as Xai Nai, an Egyptian archeologist with a London University doctorate, who himself wrote about much in more than two hundred papers he wrote during the fifty years he shared his knowledge via the written word. One such was thanks to a 1970 excavation he reported about that was a large Han Dynasty tomb. There were others before and since.

That mentioned tomb was well-stocked with bamboo cooking utensils, metal woks, ceramic steamers, and more. It was a treasure trove of more than three hundred recipes for chicken, duck, pheasant, quail, dog, pig, lamb, and others, and many of them were how these different dishes were prepared and served, probably by the upper class folk that were written about. He also found visuals, not always distinct, on many murals in this tomb that showed details of bakers, cooks, and wine makers preparing their specialties. They showed their beverages and pastries,

all local Chinese products. Not all steps in every process was clear, but many were clear enough to figure out what they did to prepare them.

There have been dozens of excavations before and since, fortunately not all at the same time. More was learned at each of them, and with these past experiences, we believe more will be learned as time goes on to enable additional information. Had they all been excavated at the same time, this would not be great, because before and since, techniques have improved, knowledge gleaned, and later digs and explanations better after each previous one.

Methods continue to improve. We now know that rice was grown in China more than eight thousand years ago. Yes, there are some who dispute this, but only because newer techniques tell us it actually grew one and a half times earlier than that. We also know they grew and used soybeans five thousand years ago, bred pigs a thousand years less than that, and raised cows, sheep, and goats a thousand years after that. So, with each new excavation, we learn more about the earlier ones.

During the Han Dynasty, only a small percent of the land was arable. We now know that it took more than half of their population laboring to produce enough food for the people. They barely had enough to eat, grew a lot of it, and imported foods from the Middle East, Malaysia, India, the 'Stan' countries, Korea, and further a-field. They are still importing foods, even more now than they did then; and these newer ones come from North and South America; corn and chilies good examples of this. Many imported earlier were thanks to Europeans and Arabs who did help transport them to many places in China and throughout Asia. Now, they come from further away and do stay fresh thanks to arriving by air.

continued on page 29

MORE CHINESE FOOD HISTORY

continued from page 28

But this is an assumption, not yet a fact. Which foods came from where and when is still being explored.

Many foods came to China from countries including Manchuria, Mongolia, Russia, Korea, Japan, the many 'Stan' republics, Tibet, India, Nepal, Burma (now known as Myanmar), Laos, Vietnam, and/or elsewhere, but exactly when and from where, we know not.

China's early culinary beginnings we know were from the Yangshao stone-age culture more than five thousand years ago. We now know they did raise rice and millet, and ate imported barley and wheat they later grew themselves. How much came overland, what arrived by sea or was netted from nearby rivers is another unknown. Which animals were captured and later domesticated, which imported then raised in China is yet to be detailed.

China is the most populous country now has about one and a half billion people. They live on the almost four million square miles of their land, are the second largest country in the world, have vast diverse forests, deserts, rivers, plains, seas, and other territories. They are one of the earliest civilizations, began with a heredity dynastic monarchy that was fractured and reunified many times, the last time well past the middle of the nineteen hundreds, and was then taken over by the communists. The Chinese are known for their own high quality and quantity, their diverse food supply and many ways to cook each item in it. Many consider their cuisine the best and most diverse in the world; and it is a cuisine eaten by more people at any one meal and on any one day anywhere in the world with some of the best and most varied dishes also anywhere in the world.

They used to eat a small amount of meat, lots of vegetables, and some fruit, and drink lots of good wines, a luxury now many enjoy. They have known famine and malnutrition, they cook most of their food quickly as their fuel supply is limited, their culinary variety not in short supply.

About ninety-three percent of the Chinese people are Han, the remaining called ethnic minorities, fifty-five ethnic groups recognized by their government, many of whom have their own language and culinary traditions. Those living in the North eat various grains making them into breads and other baked goods. Those living in the South prefer and eat rice, their staple.

That is if they originated near or south of the Yangtzi River. It is their main caloric staple, one they eat at almost every meal they consume.



They love all varieties of and consume many Brassica vegetables, eat many soy and other beans whole and/or as flour, consume many leafy vegetables, also fruits such as tomatoes, cucumbers, daikon, other radishes, other vegetables, and more vegetables than most other people. Their main meat was pork, probably still is, and lamb replaces it in the west and northwest for those for whom beef is forbidden. Fish dominates the diets of Chinese living along the coastlines, and soup was and is their main beverage.

Dumplings are a universal snack in all eighteen provinces, each of which has its own unique cuisine, tastes too. Some are more sophisticated and innovative than others, some dishes and diets more varied and vitamin-rich than ever, but now also higher in fats, sugars, and milled grains, their overall lives richer and better than ever before. These days, they are probably more Chinese millionaires than among people of other countries in the entire world, and this feeds their continuing to be among the world's best fed, though they do have pockets of famine and disease impacting them. (JMN)



SAUCES, CONDIMENTS, AND PASTES

In several letters, readers have asked about our favorite Chinese sauces and requested recipes for them. No easy query thinking about our daughter's complaint that we keep too many in our refrigerator and may not use them often. Yes, I do cook less than I did years back. After her comment, I took every one out of our refrigerator and no longer keep any on a cabinet shelf, not even any soy sauce. It was time to take a look at them all, the seventeen there to open and check the surface to make sure there was no mold. What I learned was that all were fine, probably because most were fermented, each had been used, their jars carefully cleaned before returning them to this cold home.

We get twenty main meals here at this life-care community each month, the least we can pay for. As I looked at each jar, and did wonder about the condition I would find, what I saw was everyone was really in good shape, not moldy, bubbly, nor needing to be tossed in the garbage.

Several letters over the years had asked if we made our own would we share their recipes. We used to make them all, but must confess we never do now because most are easy to find. When I did so, it was an exercise in economy, we now no longer need to make them.

I began this investigation using a freshly dish-washer washed spoon, hot and just removed from a big load of freshly washed dishes and flatware, and ready to check out the sauces, pastes, and condiments in our refrigerator. Worried about what I would find, I did think of the reader who kept kosher wanting a home-made recipe for Hoisin sauce provided some fifty years ago. I could hardly remember the recipe or the results, so I looked for the pages I had scribbled on then. Found the paper yellow, the writing faded, so was my memory. My notes said I needed fermented beans, sugar, vinegar, salt, chili sauce, garlic, and sesame oil. Those day, I did purchase kosher fermented black beans to help her. Now I have a yellow cardboard non-kosher container in the refrigerator that looks fine; no need to make them kosher for that exercise. Also checked the plum sauce, it is winter as I write this, knew I could not make it from scratch as they are out of season. It was fine, too, and we would need a specialty grocer if I had to make it. My notes said I had bought plums, chili sauce, salt spices, and more those many years ago.

What I liked best about this task this day was the aroma of each item I peered into. No need to ferment or age any today. Just would need to purchase the ingredients, if I needed or wanted to make them. In Flushing there are kosher vendors, and one page in my folder said "cannot make fermented red bean curd." Wondered how I responded to that subscriber; I do not recall and must have pitched those notes. However, my notes said making duck sauce was a snap. Used kosher mango chutney, kosher apricot preserves, kosher seasonings, water, and time.

The few recipes on the next page are simple, the ingredients easy to find if not needing kosher ones. My memory and notes say all was easy except for the shopping.

That was because I had contacted a kosher vender called Mikee, but dummy me, I did not keep their phone number. If I lived near Flushing I could wander in orthodox neighborhoods and provide today's readers with sources, but that is not my chore, just checking for mold is, and I am taking the easy way out as today, it is not about kashrut. If it were, I would buy a bottle of 'Soy Veh' or figure out how to call for help.

What I learned is that all Chinese sauces I had keep for months in well-closed glass jars with edges wiped clean with boiling water before re-refrigerating them using a paper towel with that boiling water poured on it had stayed perfectly. There was no mold, no problem, except for one, a dried out edge that I did put in the garbage. I am always careful to clean the edges of containers this way, and clearly it is the right thing to do.

So readers, be sure the edges of your jars, the inside of the covers, too, are very clean before putting any jar back in your refrigerator for what can be days, weeks, or even months. I always use a wet paper towel with boiling water when wiping a jar and putting it back in cold storage, and that has paid off. Do wipe yours very clean as I have been doing and still do. Now for a few recipes for you to make your own, should you want to. do so (JMN).

continued on page 31

HOMEMADE HOISIN SAUCE

Ingredients:

- 1 cup red azuki beans
- 2 Tablespoons any vegetable or corn oil
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and minced
- 4 dry chili peppers
- ½ cup unsweetened red bean paste (optional) or any canned light-colored beans
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- 2 Tablespoons dark soy sauce
- 3 Tablespoons distilled white vinegar

Preparation:

1. Discard all broken or discolored beans, then rinse the others, and simmer in four cups of cold water for two hours. Then allow them to cool.
2. Next, put them in a food processor and process them until all are fine, then transfer them to a clean glass jar and refrigerate or freeze until needed.
3. If needed, defrost the cooked adzuki beans and have them ready for use. Put the garlic and peppers in a small saucepan and stir-fry for two minutes until the garlic browns slightly, then remove and discard the peppers and stir in the bean paste or its substitute.
4. Next, add the salt, soy sauce, and three tablespoons of water. Stir well, and simmer on low heat for half an hour. Then again put the contents into a food processor and blend until smooth, wipe the tops of the jars and covers clean, and seal them.
5. Now put the jars in a boiling water bath for ten minutes, let them then cool to room temperature, then refrigerate.

HOMEMADE DUCK SAUCE AKA PLUM SAUCE

Ingredients:

- 1 cup dried apricots
- 1 cup any fruit jam or jelly (optional)
- 3 Tablespoons minced crystalized ginger
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 cup cider vinegar
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar

Preparation:

1. In a small saucepan, mix apricots, jam or jelly, half cup of cold water, ginger, garlic, and salt, stir, then simmer over medium heat until all is soft, then stir in the vinegar and sugar and simmer another fifteen minutes.
2. Put this in a food processor and process until it is smooth, then pour into hot sterilized glass jars, wipe their rims and inside of the tops clean, seal, and put them in a boiling water bath for fifteen minutes, then cool at room temperature, and then refrigerate them.

HOMEMADE OYSTER SAUCE

Ingredients:

- ½ pound fish or shucked oysters and their liquid
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- 2 Tablespoon this soy sauce
- ½ Tablespoon dark soy sauce

Preparation:

1. Drain the fish or oysters, reserve the liquid into a fine strainer over a bowl.
2. Mince or mash them and put them and the reserved liquid in a saucepan, add one tablespoon cold water, and simmer for eight minutes, then add soy sauces, bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for eight minutes, add salt, and cool.
3. Put contents into a food processor and blend until smooth.
4. Wipe the tops of the jars and the covers, close tightly, and put jars in a boiling water bath for ten minutes.
5. Then remove and cool them to room temperature, then refrigerate.

HOMEMADE VEGETARIAN OYSTER SAUCE

Ingredients:

- ½ cup soybeans soaked overnight
- 1 cup diced water chestnuts
- 1 cup shredded cauliflower
- 1 potato with the
- 1 cob of corn, sliced
- 2 one-foot stalks sugar cane, peeled and sliced
- 6 pitted red dates
- 5 Chinese black mushrooms, soaked in one cup warm water, liquid retained, stems discarded or used chopped and in a soup
- 20 canned water chestnuts
- 1 Tablespoon dark soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar.

Preparation:

- Follow instructions of the steps in the recipe above as to time and techniques, also cleaning the jars and storing them in the refrigerator.

CHINESE MEDICINE CAN BE TCM

Medical literature in China is old in age, rich in content, and can be speculative. There are items that were lost though later ones speak about them. Some were rich in content, all were valuable for health. The forefather of ancient Chinese philosophy is probably Fu Xi who mentions *taiji* as the 'supreme ultimate' who did figure things out including *yin* and *yang* as basic opposites. They are the basis of traditional Chinese medicine most often abbreviated as TCM. Its beliefs were and still are powered by relationships between these two forces; they guide traditional medical theory and its practices; and are still followed today.

People believe that Fu Xi accumulated enough knowledge about people, their organs and their relationships, understood medical differences between night and day, the four seasons, the sun and moon, how and where they travel, and much more. After him, additional Chinese medical advances give credit to Shen Nong who uncovered values of doses of different medicinal, most naming many of them, what they did to the body, and how he felt when he took specific herbs, animal, and mineral cures, and tried them on himself. We once read, and assume it true, that he died from the poisonous ones he tried on himself.

Many of these medicinal and some of their doses are recorded in his *Shen Nong Herbal Classic*, a three volume tome that includes two hundred fifty-two plant items, sixty-seven animal ones, and forty-six minerals in this first Chinese pharmacologic treatise researched and published in China. It includes his body's reactions to them. Our notes tell us most were done during the Qin and Han Dynasties specifically from 221 - 27 BCE; however, we have no record of where we gleaned that; and if our memory is correct, these notions may have started in Neolithic times.

Acupuncture was of great interest then, and still is. It began using stone tools inserted at specific body points, and now uses fine needles at these very same places that follow the body's meridians. They can be at different depths to unclog the flow of body fluids and ease their essences called 'vital energies.' They were and are referred to as *jing*, *qi*, or *shen*, and were mentioned in *the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*.

More recently, we read and you can, too, in an 1984 article by Linda Koo in *Social Science and Medicines* Volume 18(9) on pages 757-766 that *jing* was 'sexual' energy, *qi* was physical' energy, and *shen* was 'spiritual' energy. All three were keys to good health and a person's longevity. She says the *Shen Nong* was China's first classic medical tome about disease prevention,

well-being, the laws of nature, and the relationships between internal organs and external body parts. She said they were connected by meridians, also called collaterals, and cleared to improve the flows and did cure diseases associated with what were called the 'four seasons.'

Moxi or moxibustion was another ancient therapeutic technique; it was and is the burning of *Artemisia*. This herbal was burned in or on incense-like cones or cigar-shaped sticks held just above the identical place where acupuncture needles were inserted. This was more popular many years ago, some though still is. It does depend on the degree of heat used, less for mild stimuli, more for more concentrated ones.

During Neolithic times and since, the Chinese spoke of metal, wood, water, fire, and air to explain how the universe came into being and how to manage it. These parts of their medical theories and practices are part of the *Han Jing* and often translated as *The Classic on Medical Problems* It was written before Eastern Han Dynasty times (25 - 220 CE) and does describe things a physician should know and do when consulting with his or her patients. They include observing, listening, smelling, asking, pulse feeling, and palpitation information. They deem these of importance when diagnosing a patient's specific problem(s).

Other early publications of importance include the *Classic of Mountains and Rivers* published sometime between 475 - 221 BCE; it is about pharmacology, and discusses fifty-two herbal medicines, sixty-three of animal sources, and a few that are mineral ones. Much later, the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* was written; that was during Tang Dynasty times (618 - 907 CE) and included much text and many illustrations copied from earlier pharmacopeias. Later, before the 16th century CE, a *Compendium of Materia Medica* included all Chinese medicinal information, corrected past erroneous ones, and summarized knowledge including *yin* and *yang* and their relationships to bipolar forces.

It also contrasted, determined, complemented, and expanded on them and did detail *yin* as feminine, dark, cold, and passive, *yang* as masculine, light, and warm, and both energy the body needed to survive. It pointed out that if *yang* was damaged, there could be a lack of *qi* and a reduction of energy. If there was too much energy, then there could be an excess of the other force. And, if *yin* was impaired, the lack of enough blood could have a negative influence on quality, quantity, and other functions of the body and bodily fluids, specifically they could be reduced. Furthermore, it there was an abundance of *yin*, that might mean too much mucus, water, and/or fat accumulating in the body.

continued on page 33

CHINESE MEDICINE IS OFTEN TCM

continued from page 32

Heath foods and tonics were intricately woven into these Chinese philosophies including that soybean's milk the Chinese made depended upon when the beans were soaked, ground, and/or strained, the skin of these beans having concentrated flavor and high amounts of protein, and more than the beans or curd was if they had or did not have skins included, an important item.

Overall, things were updated, health, food, and tonic properties advised and they needed observation and were to be followed. For example, they discussed yellow day lily needles as the dried flowers of *Hemerocallis fulva* that when wrinkled and twisted, were good food and good medicine. Now we know their iron content as ten times more than the same amount of spinach, that bitter melon botanically known as *Momordica charantia*, has lots of Vitamins A and B and can strengthen, cool, and help digesting proteins and fatty foods, and much more.

We know that lotus leaves, their stalks and fatty centers of the *Nelumbo nucifera* plant are mistakenly called roots and though not roots still are good nourishment preserving health and strength, promoting circulation and virility. We know that longan which is also known as dragon eyes are botanically called *Nephelium longana* and are effective as body and blood tonics to reduce fatigue, and shorten convalescence and anemia. Their iron content is higher than that of spinach, and can induce stamina and sleep, peripheral circulation, and also warm hands and feet.

There are other things the Chinese knew about purple laver that we botanically call *Porphyra lacinata*, and other sea vegetables. They knew how to use them to repair several bodily functions. We now know they are a rich source of phosphorus and calcium, that hair vegetable is *Nostoc commune vauch* and it has more calcium and iron than other seaweeds, and that sweet tangle or *Laminaria Japonica* can repair problems from goiter, high blood pressure, edema, and menstrual disorders.

They knew, and now we do that *mo-er*, more commonly known as wood or cloud ear fungi and botanically known as *Auricularia judas* grow on elm and willow trees and resemble gelatinous ears and are a fine tonic as they are high in protein, their white relatives high in calcium with less protein and iron than the black ones.

We also now know that black and white sesame seeds are rich in calcium, protein, iron, phosphorus, and magnesium and help keep a person healthy. They knew the universal tonic, *Panax ginseng*, was a fatigue reducer improving weakness, poor appetite, and weak metabolism that it tasted bitter but quickly turned sweet.

It does so because it has lots of starch, and can lower blood sugar, impact hypoglycemia, and heart activity, and has a positive effect on the liver and kidneys.

Early Chinese ingested all of these for health as they did boxthorn, botanically known as *Lycium chinense* thanks to its high Vitamin C. They also consumed *Polygonum multiflorum* for their livers, kidneys, bone marrow, tendons, and bones, as it helped maintain good health and their youthfulness, too.

The Chinese used Sika deer antlers to regulate and accelerate cell metabolism, also heart and brain functions, and as a remedy for impotence. They used it to keep their hearts from failing and to reduce memory loss. These and other foods were used as medicines to help them feel and get better. Many of these medical beliefs are now validated by scientific studies that the Chinese figured out without them. (JMN)



RECIPES: PAST AND PRESENT

Early Chinese staples were foxtail and panic millets everywhere, rice in the south, and wheat and barley as imports that came to the north. In the *Book of Songs* there were many recipes, but we have not seen translations of any them. Some herbs were used in quite a few dishes, vegetables included the bottle gourd and others in the squash and *Allium* families including garlic, onions, and bunching onions. So were many medicinal plants and lore about them a couple of thousand years ago; and they still are. Frequent requests these days are for recipes using black bean sauce and oxtail dishes. Both and others follow. (JMN)

BLACK BEAN SAUCE

Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 Tablespoon fermented black beans, mashed
- 1 pound spinach, thick stems discarded
- 1 red chili pepper, seeded and slivered

Preparation:

1. Heat a wok or fry-pan, add the oil, then stir-fry both garlic and black beans for one minute.
2. Add spinach and chili pepper slivers and stir-fry another minute, then add the spinach and stir for another minute. Serve in a pre-heated bowl.

WATER SPINACH WITH FERMENATED DOUFU

Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and slivered
- 1½ Tablespoons mashed fermented *doufu* known as *furu*
- 1 bunch water spinach, washed well and cut into two-inch pieces

Preparation:

1. Heat a wok or fry-pan, add the oil, and just before it smokes, add the garlic and stir-fry for one minute, stir in the pieces of *furu*, add water spinach and stir-fry for two minutes.
2. Then transfer it to a pre-heated platter and add vegetable pieces and serve or let them cool to serve them tepid or at room temperature.

OXTAILS, CECELIA STYLE

Ingredients:

- 2 to 3 pounds oxtails, chopped in small pieces
- 3 stalks celery, angle-cut into one-inch pieces
- 1 three-inch piece fresh ginger, sliced thinly
- ½ cup dark soy sauce
- 3 Tablespoons mushroom soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons *Shao Xing* wine
- 3 carrots, peeled and angle-cut in inch pieces
- 1 Tablespoon granulated sugar
- salt and pepper, to taste

Preparation:

1. Put oxtails in boiling water for two minutes, then drain and rinse discarding this water.
2. Put oxtails in a clean pot, add celery and ginger, cover with cold water and bring it to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer for two hours or until the meat shrinks from the bone.
3. Then, add soy sauces, wine, and carrots and simmer twenty minutes, then stir in sugar, salt, and pepper, and serve in a pre-heated bowl.

WILD AND REGULAR RICE, AND SNOW PEAS

Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- ½ pound plain or fermented *doufu*
- ½ cup each of several vegetables cut in one-inch pieces such as celery, scallions, mushrooms, snow peas, water chestnuts, etc.
- 1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
- 1 Tablespoon each, light and dark soy sauces
- 1 cup cooked wild rice
- ½ cup cooked white rice
- 1 Tablespoon oyster sauce
- ¼ cup toasted sunflower seeds

Preparation:

1. Heat wok or fry-pan, add the oil, and before it smokes stir-fry fermented *doufu* one minute.
2. Next, add the vegetables and stir fry for one minute, then add cooked wild rice and stir well, then do the same with the white rice.
3. Add soy and oyster sauces and stir, then top with sunflower seeds; and serve on a pre-heated platter.

continued on page 35

RECIPES: PAST AND PRESENT

continued from page 34

ROYAL CONCUBINE CHICKEN

Ingredients:

- 1 three-pound chicken, cut in serving pieces
- 2 slices fresh ginger, minced, then divided
- 1 onion, chopped coarsely, divided
- 2 Tablespoons thin soy sauce
- ground white pepper, to taste
- 2 scallions, cut in one-inch pieces
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 Tablespoon coarse salt
- 3 cups Chinese white wine

Preparation:

1. Rub chicken pieces with a mixture of the ginger, onion, soy sauce, ground pepper, and scallion pieces and set covered in the refrigerator for four to six hours.
2. Heat oil and deep-fry drained chicken pieces for six minutes, then put them in boiling water for one minute, and then in a casserole dish.
3. Pour stock, salt, and wine over the chicken, and bake it half an hour, uncovered, in a hot oven (375 degrees F), then turn the pieces over and bake them for ten to fifteen more minutes; then serve on pre-heated platter.

SHEEP TAIL WITH RABBIT

Ingredients:

- 1 skinned sheep-tail, cut in two-inch pieces
- 3 Tablespoons corn or potato starch, divided
- 1 pound rabbit meat, diced into one-inch pieces
- 3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- ½ pound turnip, peeled and chopped
- 3 scallions, cut in half-inch pieces
- ½ cup black vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon whole Sichuan peppercorns tied into a piece of cheesecloth
- ½ pound dry thin noodles, cooked and drained

Preparation:

1. Toss half the starch with the sheep tail pieces, the other half with the rabbit meat; and set each aside separately to wet the starch.
2. Heat the oil and fry them separately until light tan and crisp, about eight minutes each.
3. Next, put sheep tail pieces, turnip, and scallion pieces with the vinegar and one cup of cold water, and the cheesecloth packet in a large saucepan and simmer for one hour, then add the rabbit pieces and simmer another hour before discarding cheesecloth packet.
4. Add the spicy sauce and a half cup of water and simmer until the meats are tender.
5. Stir for two minutes, then add one tablespoon water cornstarch, stir for one minute, then when thick, serve on the cooked noodles.

PORK SOUP, 1900's STYLE

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds boneless pork, fat discarded, meat cut in half-inch squares
- 1 large or 2 small pork bones
- 2 cups raw sea scallops, each scallop cut in eighths
- 1 cups dried iceberg lettuce leaves, cut in two-inch strips
- salt and pepper, to taste

Preparation:

1. Put bones and pork in two cups of cold water, bring to the boil, then discard this water and add the same amount of cold water and boil again and reduce the heat simmering this until the meat is tender, then discard or serve the bones.
2. Skim the fat from the broth, as needed, add salt and pepper and set the meat aside until needed.
3. Three minutes before serving, add two cups cold water, the scallops and the lettuce, and simmer. Then transfer to a pre-heated serving bowl, and serve.

JELLIED PORK

Ingredients:

- 3 pounds pork belly
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 scallions
- 2 slices fresh ginger
- 2 Tablespoons dark soy sauce
- 4 Tablespoons Chinese rice wine
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar

Preparation:

1. Cut pork belly through skin into one-inch pieces, then rub them with salt and refrigerate covered for three or four hours.
2. Put them in boiling water for ten minutes, then drain them and discard the water.
3. Now put pork, skin side down, in heat-proof casserole, add salt, scallions and shredded ginger on them, and pour soy sauce and wine over them and cover the casserole putting it in a 300-degree F oven for two hours.
4. Remove from the oven and carefully uncover the casserole, and transfer the pork, skin-side up into a clean heat-proof serving bowl adding two cups of boiling water, and cover it tightly with foil, steam it over boiling water for one hour. Then discard the foil and any melted fat.
5. Serve in preheated individual or a large bowl.

continued on page 36

OXTAILS WITH GREENS

Ingredients:

- ½ pound baby *bok cai*, each cut the long way
- 1 large oxtail, cut in two-inch pieces
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 large onion, halved then thinly sliced
- 3 Tablespoons mushroom soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons *sa cha* sauce
- 5 large cloves fresh garlic, peeled and smashed
- 5 slices fresh ginger, minced
- 5 whole star anise
- 3 Tablespoons dark brown sugar
- 1 Tablespoon Chinese brown bean sauce
- 3 scallions, each cut in one-inch pieces

Preparation:

1. Cut *bok cai* in two or four pieces, then blanch them for half a minute, then dip in ice water another minute, drain well, and set aside
2. Put oxtails in a large pot, cover them with water, boil for three minutes, then discard the water, and add the broth, onion slices, soy sauce, garlic and ginger, star anise, and brown sugar, and simmer for two hours or until they are tender, and add more water as needed.
3. Refrigerate overnight, then discarding solid fat in the morning.
4. When ready to serve, reheat the *bok cai* for one minute in broth or water, then drain, and put them around a pre-heated platter.
5. Reheat oxtails, and put them in platter's center, then scatter them around, and serve.



PEPPERY NOODLES WITH VEGETABLES

Ingredients:

- 1 large carrot, peeled
- 1 medium-size *daikon*
- ½ pound dried thick egg noodles, soaked for five minutes, then cooked until soft, and rinsed
- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 large cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 large red onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- ½ cup vegetable stock
- 2 Tablespoons chili bean paste
- 2 Tablespoons Chinese sesame paste
- 1 Tablespoon dry ground Sichuan peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon thin soy sauce
- 3 *bok cai*, each cut into four pieces the long way

Preparation:

1. Peel the carrot and daikon, and then cut them into very, very thin strips, and mix them together.
2. Heat a wok or fry-pan, add the oil, and stir-fry the garlic and onion in it for one minute.
3. Now add the stock, chili bean and sesame pastes and the ground Sichuan pepper and the carrot and daikon pieces, and the soy sauce and stir-fry this mixture for two minutes.
4. Next, add the *bok cai* and stir everything three or four times, then add the noodles and toss everything together. When the noodles are hot, transfer everything to a pre-heated bowl, and serve.

HAPPINESS GLUTEN

Ingredients:

- 3 Tablespoons sesame oil
- 4 dried wood ear mushrooms, soaked until soft, water discarded
- 5 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked in half cup warm water, stems discarded, caps cut in four pieces each
- 1 pound frozen, then defrosted wheat gluten (it will be spongy), cut it into one-inch cubes
- 3 Tablespoons mushroom soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons granulated sugar
- 3 sprigs fresh cilantro, cut into one-inch pieces

Preparation:

1. Heat a wok or fry-pan, then add the oil, and when hot, add both mushrooms and stir-fry for five minutes, and set aside.
2. Now, stir in wheat gluten and stir-fry five minutes, then return mushrooms, and add soy sauce and sugar and stir-fry two minutes more.
3. Put everything in a pre-heated bowl, put cilantro pieces on top, and serve.

continued on page 37

RECIPES: PAST AND PRESENT

continued from page 36

HOLIDAY PUDDING

Ingredients:

- 1 cup each, white and brown sugar
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 1 cup glutinous rice flour
- a pinch of salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vegetable oil

Preparation:

1. Heat one cup water in a medium-size pot, then add both sugars and stir until dissolved, then cool this for an hour.
2. Mix cornstarch, rice flour, and salt, and pour into the sugar mixture and stir.
3. Grease a metal pan, add sugar mixture to it and cover with foil. Steam for one hour until a metal skewer comes out clean.
4. Then cool and cut in varied shapes,
5. Put on a clean platter and serve.

BUDDHA'S DELIGHT

Ingredients:

- 1 Tablespoon sunflower oil
- 10 dried soaked shiitake mushrooms, liquid set aside, stems discarded, and caps sliced thin
- 2 Tablespoons dried lily buds, soaked until soft then drained, each cut in four
- 3 Tablespoons dried cloud ear fungi, soaked until soft, drained, and chopped coarsely
- 2 folded over dried bean curd sticks, soaked until soft, cut into half-inch pieces
- 2 Tablespoons sesame oil
- 1/2 cup half-inch angle-cut cooked carrot wedges
- 10 canned water chestnuts, each cut into quarters
- 1 cup vegetable stock
- 2 red fermented red bean curd cubes, mashed
- 1 Tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 Tablespoons cornstarch

Preparation:

1. Heat a wok or fry-pan, then add the oil and stir-fry the shiitake mushrooms, lily buds, cloud-ear fungi, and the bean curd stick pieces for two or three minutes.
2. Now add the sesame oil and the carrot pieces and stir-fry this for five minutes.
3. Next, add the stock and then stir in the mashed red bean curd and sugar stirring this for two minutes.
4. Mix cornstarch with one tablespoon cold water, and boil until thickened, then transfer all to a pre-heated bowl, and serve.

EGGPLANT IN CHILI BEAN SAUCE

Ingredients:

- 2 eggplants sliced lengthwise, then angle-cut in chunks; boil three minutes, then drain them
- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and smashed
- 2 Tablespoons chili bean paste
- 2 Tablespoons sesame oil

Preparation:

1. Heat oil in a wok or fry-pan, then stir-fry garlic for two minutes and then add the chili bean paste and stir-fry another minute.
2. Add eggplant pieces, stir-fry two more minutes, then add half cup cold water and simmer for two or three minutes until the sauce thickens.
3. Then stir in sesame oil and serve.

STUFFED EGGPLANT

Ingredients:

- 2 Chinese eggplants
- 1/2 pound ground breadcrumbs, divided in half
- 3 scallions, chopped
- 3 slices fresh ginger, chopped
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- 1 egg, beaten
- 3 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 Tablespoons cornstarch mixed with cold water
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 Tablespoon white Chinese vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon fermented black beans, mashed
- 1 chili pepper, seeded and minced
- 1 Tablespoon Chinese rice wine
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 Tablespoon dark soy sauce

Preparation:

1. Cut both eggplants in half, scoop the centers out and discard, then steam for eight minutes.
2. Mix half the bread crumbs with the scallions, garlic, egg, flour, cornstarch and water, sugar, vinegar, fermented black beans, chili pepper pieces, rice wine, sesame oil, and soy sauce, and stuff the eggplant halves. Then top them with the rest of the bread crumbs,
3. Mix the rest of the bread crumbs with the oil and pat this on top of the halves, and bake in a 300 degree oven for twenty minutes.
4. Remove from the oven and cut each half in half on an angle and put them on a pre-heated platter, some up ended, some not, and serve.

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FLAVOR & FORTUNE

DEDICATED TO THE ART AND SCIENCE OF CHINESE CUISINE

促進中國烹飪科學與藝術研究所

is a quarterly magazine published by
The Institute for the Advancement of the Science and Art of Chinese Cuisine

3 Jefferson Ferry Drive; S. Setauket, NY 11720

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A magazine of the

Institute of the Science and Art of Chinese Cuisine (ISACC)



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RECIPES IN THIS ISSUE

RATES

Black Bean Sauce	34	Pork in Wine Lees.....	27
Buddha's Delight	37	Pork with Eggplant.....	22
Conpoy with Vegetables.....	10	Pork Rolls in Bean Curd Sheets.....	26
Dongbei Vegetables.....	22	Pork Soup, 1900s Style.....	35
Eggplant and Noodles.....	23	Pork, Wine Lees, and Pickled Cabbage	27
Eggplant in Chili Bean Sauce.....	37	Roast Pork, Black Beans, and Bitter Melon...	26
Eggplant in Hot and Sour Sauce	23	Roasted Spare Ribs.....	27
Happiness Gluten.....	36	Royal Concubine Chicken.....	35
Holiday Pudding	37	Scallops and Eggs.....	11
Homemade Duck Sauce (aka Plum Sauce) ..	31	Scallops, Fruit, and Vegetables	10
Homemade Hoisin Sauce.....	31	Sesame-sauced Eggplant.....	22
Homemade Oyster Sauce.....	31	Shark's Fin Stuffed Papaya	6
Homemade Vegetarian Oyster Sauce.....	31	Sheep Tail with Rabbit	35
Jellied Pork.....	35	Sichuan Baby Back Ribs.....	27
Lion's Head Meatballs.....	25	Spicy Pork and Doufu.....	25
Molten Eggs and Eggplant.....	23	Stuffed Eggplant	37
Oxtails, Cecilia Style.....	34	Stuffed Scallops.....	10
Oxtails with Greens.....	36	Three-cup Chicken	14
Peppery Noodles with Vegetables.....	36	Wild and Regular Rice and Snow Peas.....	34
Pork and Cellophane Noodles.....	26	Water Spinach with Fermented Doufu	34
Pork Floss in Omelette.....	25		

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* see page 39