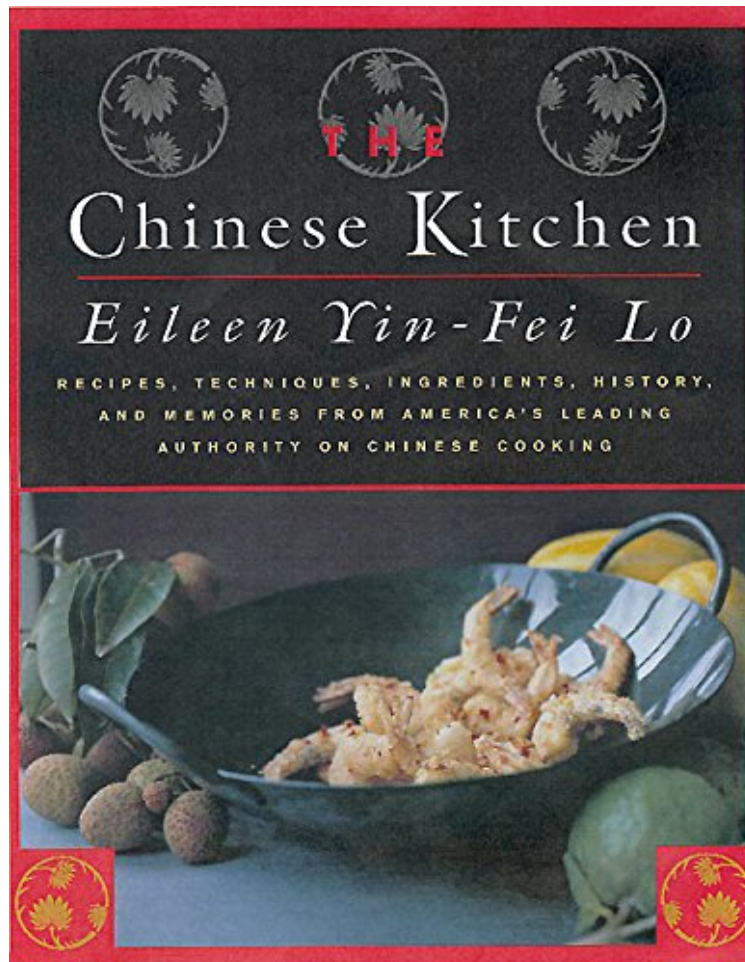


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The Chinese Kitchen: Recipes, Techniques, Ingredients, History, And Memories From America's Leading Authority On Chinese Cooking

Eileen Yin-Fei Lo

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Eileen Yin-Fei Lo : The Chinese Kitchen: Recipes, Techniques, Ingredients, History, And Memories From America's Leading Authority On Chinese Cooking before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Chinese Kitchen: Recipes, Techniques, Ingredients, History, And Memories From America's Leading Authority On Chinese Cooking:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The book that broke the barrier for me...I can now cook delicious Chinese food!By EJI love Chinese food, but cooking it has always been an exercise in frustration. Nothing I made ever tasted right. This book broke the barrier for me. While it hasn't been easy, I now can now make General Tso's chicken,

Orange Flavor chicken, egg-drop soup, peking duck and a wide variety of meat and vegetable stir fries. The results are so delicious I've sworn off takeout entirely. No heavy cornstarch, food dyes, MSG or gooey overly sweet sauces in this book--just beautifully balanced flavors with just the right amount of sugar and spice. Some recipes call for cornstarch or tapioca powder, but just enough to create perfect texture without making the dish too heavy. This book is a cooking bible in my house, along with Paula Wolfert's *The Food of Morocco*. I love it. But for full disclosure, it is both brilliant and flawed. The brilliance comes from the perfection of the ingredients, proportions and flavors. The flaw is that how to achieve the final result isn't always perfectly explained and sometimes hasn't been adequately tested. For example, several recipes say to place pork to be grilled four inches under a broiler. When I do this the meal ends up a charred mess in just moments! Perhaps these recipes were never tested, or the test oven had a weak broiler, or I have a super strong broiler. I don't know, but it is annoying to never know for sure if a recipe will have an unexpected hiccup! Another issue I had today in making pork buns was that the method for shaping the dumplings in the text of the recipe--make a ball with the dough and make a well for the filling--- didn't work at all for me as I couldn't make a well big enough to put in the 1.5 Tablespoons of filling she suggests. However, thankfully the color pictures in the middle of the book had a step-by-step tutorial showing a completely different method, starting with a flat pancake and pinching it around the filling; that worked great for me. But why did the books proofreaders not notice the pictures showed a different method from the recipe? Thankfully the pictured method was much more accessible. And shortcuts are not Eileen Yin-Fe Lo's forte. She gives you only one version: The long complicated and most delicious one. If you're looking for a book to teach you how to make a quick Chinese dinner ready for 7 p.m. when you get home from work at 6 p.m., this is not it. Many of the recipes can, in fact, be done quickly once you learn them. But (unless you are already an expert, which I'm not) the first time you do them you need lots of time to read the recipe and reread it, prep the ingredients and frankly, fumble around a bit. The orange flavor chicken recipe, for example, was somewhat stressful and took a couple hours total the first time I did it and the result was just okay. I was new to deep frying and the process of heating peanut oil to 400 degrees, dipping chicken, turning over chicken, removing chicken, draining chicken, then putting it back for another round was new to me. By the third time, it was absolutely PERFECT and it took me exactly 30 minutes once I had the ingredients prepped in little bowls. I now make it regularly and including prep, it takes 45-60 minutes total. Yes, it would be nice--as several reviewers note--to have pictures of every item; there is a color centerfold with pictures of several dishes and some of the cooking techniques but when you are browsing the recipes you have no idea the pictures are there! The publishers should have put an icon or reference on the recipe page to alert you that there are pictures of the finished product or technique in the centerfold. And then there's the ingredient hunt. Yes. As several reviewers note, this book requires many ingredients per recipe, often hard to find and in trace amounts. I spent weeks tracking down red fermented bean curd to make the barbecue pork filling for the pork buns. Was it worth it? I have to say yes, but it would be helpful if she offered alternatives or listed minor ingredients as optional, as Wolfert does in her Moroccan book. It's hard for me as a novice to know which ingredients can be skipped in a pinch and which are essential. I do very much appreciate this book's 25-page section, entitled the Chinese Larder, which details ingredients from hairy melon to hoisin sauce, and tells you what they are, alternate names for them and how to find them. Still, even with help, tracking down ingredients can be a pain. Tianjin Bok Choi apparently has two kinds--one that looks like napa cabbage and one that sort of looks like regular bok choy. I have been researching on the 'Net and I think I found one of the types, but gosh, Eileen, a picture would have been helpful. And I still haven't made the scrumptious sounding Eggplant Stuffed with Shrimp recipe because I have no idea where to find fresh, not canned, water chestnuts and even what they would look like if I did find them. Even more than pics of the completed food I would like pics of some of these ingredients! I'm tempted her to relay my amusing experience hunting for Mei Kuei Lui Chiew, a type of white rice wine. I wrote it down carefully on a scrap of paper and brought it to my local Asian grocer. I didn't see it on the shelf so I walked up to one of the employees, and since he didn't speak English, I showed him the paper and pointed to the words with a pleading smile. He scrutinized it, then his face lit up and he took me to the soy sauce aisle and showed me a soy sauce with one of the words on it, and pointed triumphantly to that word--showing me it was the same as one of the words in my wine. But no, I looked at him in surprise...this is supposed to be a wine, not a soy sauce! I tried to explain and he continued to look puzzled. I was like what's the matter, don't you speak Chinese? And then I realized OH, actually he doesn't speak Chinese. He is Vietnamese and the words are as much of a mystery to him as to me. We had a good laugh, but I left empty-handed and ended up buying it on , though as of now it's not listed so I'm not linking. So, if you find a bit of a challenge fun, and traipsing through Asian groceries looking for obscure ingredients doesn't phase you, then yes, absolutely buy this book! And for those of you who do, here is my list of my favorite recipes and my thoughts on them:***Orange Flavor Chicken*** My very very favorite! Unlike Chinese restaurants that use orange juice for the orange flavor, this recipe uses orange peel and the flavor difference is phenomenal. This recipe was difficult at first but now takes me 15-20 minutes of prep and 30 minutes of cooking time, including making rice and an improvised bok choy garlic stir fry I like to serve with it. The flavor profile in this is very authentic aka hot and only slightly sweet. I reduce the hot peppers by a little more than half and increase the sugar to 2 tablespoons from 4.5 teaspoons. I also increase the scallions since they taste great in this recipe and skip the bell peppers since I don't like them. My version

is halfway between the very authentic hot hot one and Chinese restaurant syrupy sweet version.***General Tso's Chicken *** This leaves goopy stale-tasting restaurant chicken in the DUST. First the coating is delectable but softer and lighter than restaurant versions and of course you can use great quality chicken rather than budget stuff restaurants need to use to make a profit. Recipe is a little easier than the orange chicken as it requires only one frying step-- and calls for dark meat instead of white.. Wonderful and juicy and perfectly flavored! I reduced the hot peppers by about half and left the sugar the same and it was delicious--a good bit spicier than restaurant chicken but still not so much it sent me flying. I also tried it with white meat and it was mediocre....only do this if you have dark meat otherwise make the orange one above!***Chicken Stock*** I've made Julia Child's and I've made this and Eileen has the best chicken stock recipe out there. You fry up some scallions and put them in there, plus onions and garlic, ginger and cilantro and goji berries. The result is wow. Just wow. Many of the dishes call for a little bit of it, so make and freeze in small tupperwares.***Superior Stock*** Okay if you have a spare \$100 or so and a rainy afternoon, no better way to spend it than making a superior stock. This is the best tasting stock I've ever had--a mix of pork and chicken. Several of the recipes in the book call for this, but mostly we just eat it with some greens or noodles in it. I go in financially with a friend to make a giant amount at once--we split the costs and hang out while it's cooking. It never lasts long though.***Egg Drop soup*** Wow. Just Wow. Not only is this way better than restaurants it's easy once you have the chicken stock. Just boil the stock, drizzle in beaten eggs and whisk with a fork. Top with scallions.***Steamed Barbecue Pork Buns*** If you like those wonderful doughy orbs filled with barbecue pork, look no further. This is a fairly long project: First you have to make the barbecue pork, which has a four hour to overnight marinating step before you can broil it. Then you cut up the pork and stir fry it with a special sauce to make the filling, which has to be refrigerated for four hours at least before using. then you make the dough, which is a goeey mess that must be kneaded at least 12 minutes and then rested an hour before you get to shape and stuff the dumplings. Which is kind of fun but which definitely was a learning experience. Then you steam them in a bamboo steamer, like this one: Joyce Chen 26-0012, 3-Piece Bamboo Steamer, 12-Inch. My first efforts were imperfect visually but absolutely scrumptious!That's all...if you would enjoy the challenge and the process this book will provide many hours of enjoyment and many delicious meals. If not, buy it for someone you think would like it and get yourself invited to dinner.52 of 52 people found the following review helpful. Truly authentic recipes, but what kind of people are they for...By J. LeeThis book has authentic recipes. But they may be 'authentic' in a way that I suspect most normal Americans (and many Chinese in China to some extent) will be unable to really embrace. What I mean by this is that these are authentic Cantonese aristocratic recipes; i.e. food for the kind of people that can afford servants, or at least have a stay at home mother or father who has enough time to devote multiple hours to cooking dinner each day. Even when the recipes venture into other areas of Chinese cuisine, it holds that same kind overly epicurean complexity.I grew up with my grandparents cooking Cantonese food for me, and though preparations can get quite complex in the Chinese kitchen, dinner rarely feels like a burden. This book simply calls for too many ingredients, oftentimes obscure ones, oftentimes in trifling amounts. Currently I live in Beijing and the agricultural market is right down the street, but generally speaking I can hardly motivate myself to go gather all the many ingredients in these epic recipes. I feel in many ways that Ms. Lo neglects an important, but certainly not all encompassing, concept in Chinese cooking, which is straightforwardness and letting good ingredients speak for themselves.To compare, Ms. Lo's recipe for Mah Paw Daufu (not a Cantonese dish) has 22 ingredients listed. Whereas in the "Land of Plenty" cookbook the Ma Po Doufu calls for 12 ingredients. Both recipes create a wonderful dish, but as the recipe in "Land of Plenty" is much less complex I use it 95% of the time. Having grown up with Chinese food and having lived in China for 3 years I would say that "Land of Plenty" is more 'authentic' in that its the home style cooking that most Chinese people do.Notice I did give this book 3 stars which means I think it is good, just not great. I have tried a good number of the recipes and all of them resulted in very nice dishes. Ms. Lo understands Chinese cooking, Chinese food, and Chinese culture, so the essays about food in this book are extremely informative. I also appreciate that she tries to cover the many regions of Chinese cuisine. Yet in the end, if you are like me, work full time, don't have enough money for an in-house chef, or don't have a stay at home spouse, I would recommend looking for other Chinese cookbooks.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. One of my best cookbook purchases everBy LoplopI love to cook and very much enjoy learning new types of cuisine; although the recipes in this book are a little lengthy to use for quick weeknight meals, and the writing can at times be a little heavy-handed, the author does a wonderful job introducing an outsider to the many facets of Chinese cooking. This book formed a base for me, which I've since branched out from over the years, but I still come back to this one on occasion, always enjoy the recipes, and find the "colorful commentary" to be a useful addition to the book. It really does get you somewhat down the road to thinking like a Chinese cook; I know this as I've had Chinese cooks over to my home, and they are always surprised at my development as a westerner cooking eastern foods.If you want a sampling of what Chinese food really tastes like, and need a primer on ingredients and philosophy, this is as good of a book as I've found. Recommended.

Eileen Yin-Fei Lo, author of award-winning cookbooks, menu developer for top Asian restaurants, and cooking teacher, presents her life's work. Reflecting on her life in food, including her childhood in Canton, China, where she

learned to cook at her grandmother's side, Eileen has created an exhaustive cookbook of extensive scope. Everything about Chinese cooking has cultural significance, and much of what Eileen talks about in this book has never appeared in print before in the English language. There are more than 250 recipes in all, including many classic banquet-style recipes, quite a number presented for the first time in the traditional manner, from Peking Duck to Beggar's Chicken. Dozens of the techniques for preparing these elaborate recipes are shown in full-color photographs in the color insert as well. Eileen also includes many of her own creations, such as infused oils and rich, flavorful stocks, essential for cooks who are serious about mastering the ancient art of Chinese cooking. Everything is here: dim sum, congees, stir-fries, rice dishes, noodles, bean curd, meat dishes, and more. For anyone who loves Asian cuisines, this is the ultimate cookbook, and for cookbook lovers and aspiring food professionals, this is required reading.

.com In this unique book, Eileen Yin-Fei Lo delves richly into Chinese cuisine, reflecting in its complexity the nation's culture, history, geographic diversity, and philosophies of health and living. Regardless of how many Chinese cookbooks you already own, *The Chinese Kitchen* is sure to bring you new information and recipes. And no one else can offer the intriguing family recipes she includes, such as her mother's lean, steamed loin of pork marinated in ginger juice and oyster sauce. Lo grew up in Canton (now Guangzhou). Her stories about her visits with Ah Paw, her maternal grandmother, become lessons she shares with us. Lo learned about cooking and received much wisdom from this sparrow of a woman, whose feet were bound, in the old way, when she was a child, to keep them four inches long, but who fiercely brought her daughter and granddaughter into modern times. She also taught Lo about Confucius and the ancient traditions such as the Seven Necessities of rice, tea, oil, salt, soy sauce, vinegar, and firewood. When Lo talks about ingredients in the "Chinese Larder" chapter, she provides Chinese characters in the margin that can be photocopied so you can show them at stores to be sure you get the right ingredients. Familiar recipes in *The Chinese Kitchen*, from Orange Beef to Moo Shu Pork, are followed by more exotic choices such as Shrimp Stir-Fried with Garlic Cloves and Hakka Bean Curd, stuffed with dried shrimp and lightly fried. An entire chapter is devoted to Buddha Jump over the Wall, a kind of a Chinese Babette's Feast. This special recipe from the Fuzhou region requires two days to make and calls for 28 ingredients, mercifully not including the fish lips, duck gizzards and other items used in the true Fuzhou version but which Westerners generally shun. This robust, country dish, combining chicken, duck, ham, and lamb in a kind of pot-au-feu, is so alluring that supposedly the Buddha himself, a vegetarian, could not resist it. It provides insight into Chinese cooking at its most complex. Fans of Chinese tea will delight in the chapter devoted to this revered beverage. For everyone, simply reading *The Chinese Kitchen* will enhance enormously the pleasure of dining out in Chinese restaurants. --Dana Jacobi From Publishers Weekly

In her newest Chinese cookbook, Canton native Yin-Fei Lo (*The Chinese Banquet Cookbook*) meticulously explains the history of the Chinese table from 5000 B.C. to the 20th century, documenting the influence of various imperial dynasties on China's cuisine. Seventeen chapters explore the Chinese larder, teas, wines, cooking equipment and techniques, classic Chinese dishes, rice and noodles, food-as-medicine, meats and vegetables, dim sum and the evolution of Chinese-American restaurant dishes. Yin-Fei Lo emphasizes the principles of the Chinese kitchen: selecting the freshest ingredients, eating foods in season and eating foods in harmony with their yin (cooling) versus yang (warming) properties. Anecdotes and recipe prefaces detail regional and dynastic origins of dishes, including relevant folklore, superstition and symbolism associated with them. An accessible repertoire of recipes ranges from popular regional classics, like Peking Duck and spicy Sichuan Mah Paw Dau Fu to "Western Chinese restaurant clichés" like Egg Drop Soup and Chow Mein. Integrating her own food memories growing up in Sun Tak, China, Yin-Fei Lo conveys her culinary heritage with precision and passion, delivering a richly layered resource on Chinese cookery. (Dec.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal

With impressive thoroughness, Lo's wide-ranging new book goes beyond "recipes, techniques, and ingredients," exploring as well the cultural and culinary history of Chinese food, the importance of symbolism in Chinese cooking, food as medicine, and a variety of other topics; it's a personal history, too, with wisdom and dishes passed down from her maternal grandmother and other family members. Lo is the author of other good cookbooks, including *The Chinese Way*, but this is by far her most ambitious work. There's a long and detailed glossary ("The Chinese Larder"), a good technique section, and chapters on the teas and wines of China, as well as on non-Chinese wines to serve with her dishes. Recipes are both classic and contemporary, with special sections on regional specialties, dishes from the author's childhood in Sun Tak (known for its discerning cooks), and authentic, i.e., good versions, of the recipes that have become clichés in so many Chinese-American restaurants. An essential purchase. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.