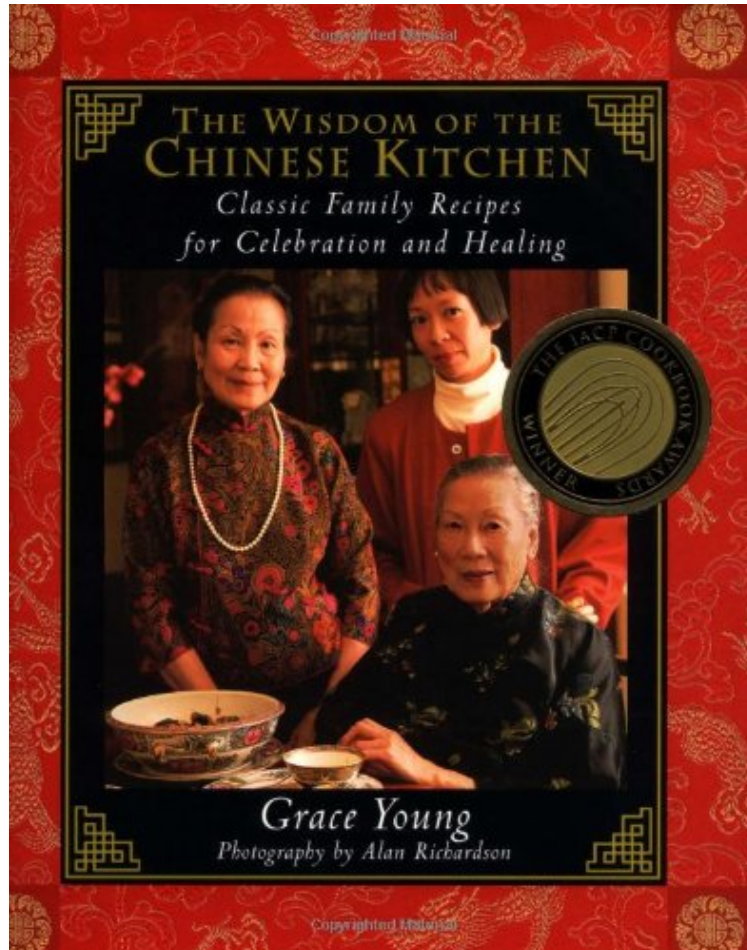


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## The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen

Grace Young

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#183641 in Books 1999-05-05 1999-05-05 Format: Unabridged Original language: English PDF # 1 9.13 x 1.20 x 7.371, 1.71 #File Name: 0684847396304 pages First Edition | File size: 72.Mb

**Grace Young : The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen:

35 of 36 people found the following review helpful. Best cookbook of the year By A Customer I own over 300 cookbooks and this one has vaulted into my "top 10 of all time" due to Ms. Young's lovely balance of well-written memoir, in-depth cultural, technique ingredient information, and wonderful, no-compromise recipes. \_The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen\_ ranks with the best works by Wolfert, Field, Kaspar, Thorne, etc. - books that are more than mere "cookbooks" but reveal some of the soul of the cuisine/culture in question. And did I mention that the recipes actually \*work\*? ;-) Thank you Ms. Young! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I am amazed that I have found this cook book is an ... By Bear Creek I am amazed that I have found this cook book is an excellent cook book of Cantonese cooking. Simple method such as growing bean sprout and making a cake in the steamer are delightful and delicious. Though not too many photos of the dishes but the description is simple but clear and easy to follow. I

specially enjoy the many dishes using steamer. The recipes include every day family cooking and banquet style cooking. This cook book written include introducing author family member on each chapter. Each share their wisdom with the reader but one can easily skip over and goto the recipe directly. This book is well done and great for people who want a real taste of Chinese family meal. 12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Read and Reference book on Chinese Recipes By Tony Ukena Grace Young's writing style is very thoughtful and a testament to her ability to embrace her Chinese Heritage and prescribe its finer aspects in cooking to a reader who has only a basic familiarity of that culture. Her writing is reflective, beautiful, nostalgic, concise, thoughtful, and with an elusiveness that only a true philosopher could have that motivates the spirit in wanting to learn more not only about cooking, but about how everything in life is balanced together. I've been reading this book while I've had a very bad flu and her sections on the medicinal values of ingredients in Chinese cooking has been a blessing to me. The book is well organized with a vivid introduction of her life growing up in San Francisco Chinatown; her observations thru family anecdotes. Then she breaks down recipes with wonderful introductions in categories from rice, wok cooking, steam cooking, and two broader sections related to cooking and "The Art of Celebration" and "Achieving Ying Yang Harmony." There are excellent instructions, pictures, and descriptions of key ingredients written in Chinese with a photo so that while in a Chinese supermarket, you can find the ingredients. There's also an excellent reference section in the back on the ingredients. Little things such as eating congee (jook) when ill to aid the body in releasing toxins had an immediate effect on my health. Also, her recipe for "Dried Fig Apple Almond" soup immediately cured me of my coughing problems. Her instructions on the recipe are very concise. If you follow her instructions academically, you will achieve the intent of the dish. After reading this book, I look at eating more than just as a pleasure, but as a means of sustaining a longer and healthier life. I only had one problem and that relates to the phonetics used in the pronunciation of some of the terms in Chinese. People at the stores seldom understood what I was asking for, but fortunately, there were pictures. Great read and a book that is a permanent reference guide.

The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen, with its 150 recipes culled from a lifetime of family meals and culinary instruction, is much more than a cookbook. The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen is a daughter's tribute—a collection of personal memories of the philosophy and superstitions behind culinary traditions that have been passed down through her Cantonese family, in which each ingredient has its own singular importance, the preparation of a meal is part of the joy of life, and the proper creation of a dish can have a favorable influence on health and good fortune. Each chapter begins with its own engaging story, offering insight into the Chinese beliefs that surround life-enhancing and spiritually calming meals. In addition, personal family photographs illustrate these stories and capture the spirit of China before the Revolution, when Young's family lived in Canton, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. The first part, "Mastering the Fundamentals," provides instruction on the arts of steaming and stir-frying; the preparation of rice, panfried, and braised dishes; the proper selection of produce; and the fine arts of chopping and slicing. Part Two, "The Art of Celebration," concentrates on the more elaborate, complex, and meaningful dishes—such as Shark's Fin Soup and West Lake Duck—that are usually made with rare ingredients, and sweets such as Water Chestnut Cake and Sesame Balls. The final part, "Achieving Yin-Yang Harmony," explores the many Chinese beliefs about the healing properties of ginseng, ginkgo nuts, soybeans, dong quai, and the many vegetable and fruit soup preparations that balance and nourish the body. The stories and recipes combine to demonstrate the range of Cantonese cooking, from rich flavors and honored combinations to an overall appreciation of health, well-being, and prosperity. In addition to the recipes, Young provides a complete glossary of dried herbs, spices, and fresh produce, accompanied by identifying photos and tips on where to purchase them. Unique traditional dishes, such as Savory Rice Tamales and Shrimp Dumplings, are also illustrated step by step, making the book easy to use. The central full-color photo section captures details of New Year's dishes and the Chinese home decorated in celebration, reminding one that these time-honored traditions live on, and the meals and their creation are connections to the past.

.com Grace Young is a culinary sister to novelist Amy Tan. In *The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen*, along with sharing recipes from her family, Young immerses the reader in Chinese culture and the Chinese American experience of San Francisco's Chinatown, where she grew up. This personal book began with Young's wish to preserve the Cantonese dishes prepared by her parents and extended family. Since they cooked by instinct, the only way to record their recipes was by observing her mother, father, and aunts while they cooked, and by asking endless questions. These kitchen conversations also became a way to elicit untold family history from her deeply traditional and reticent parents. Each chapter opens with an essay intertwining biographical stories with information about Chinese food and healing. The blending of culinary information and cultural observations is powerfully realized, perhaps because Young shows old-fashioned respect along with a contemporary perspective. The result is both affectionate and enthralling. You can vividly picture the meticulous choreography as her parents make dinner in their tiny kitchen, reaching over steaming pots and rushing the steaming food to the table. Young delves into the hows and whys of Cantonese home cooking, with particular attention to technique and ingredients: Chinese broccoli with flowers should be avoided because the bright yellow blossoms indicate the stalks are too old. Steaming is valued because it draws out the intense

flavors near the bone in chicken, fish, and meat, leaving them tender and moist. Many dishes are elementally simple. Hot-and-Sour Soup is fired solely by aromatic white pepper. White Chicken is perfumed just with ginger and garlic. Some choices are quick and easy, as in stir-fried Bean Sprouts, while others require long and elaborate preparation, like savory Rice Tamales stuffed with pork, Chinese sausage, and duck egg yolks and wrapped in bamboo leaves. Anyone who enjoys eating Chinese food or has experienced the generational differences in immigrant families will get lost in *The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen*. --Dana Jacobi

From Publishers Weekly  
San Francisco native and recipe developer Young (*The Best of China*; *The Best of Thailand*) recalls the classic Cantonese meals of her youth, sharing family anecdotes and the basic tenets of Chinese cooking. In Part I, "Mastering the Fundamentals," she introduces essential techniques of the Chinese kitchen: selecting produce, chopping, slicing, steaming, stir-frying, even correctly preparing rice. Aiming to preserve the integrity of traditional dishes, Young instructs with Cantonese *de rigueur*, eschewing substitutes for such exotic ingredients and shortcuts as food processors. Although labor-intensive steps often precede the cooking process, this 140-recipe collection provides clear, straightforward instruction largely accessible to home cooks. Recognizable favorites such as Eggplant in Garlic Sauce and Pepper and Salt Shrimp, as well as less familiar preparations such as Rock Sugar Ginger Chicken, offer broad palate appeal. Part II, "The Art of Celebration," explores the symbolism of special occasion and Chinese New Year dishes, including Turnip Cake, the glutinous rice flour New Year's Cake, and fried Sesame Balls, all considered harbingers of prosperity for the New Year. Young ends her collection on a holistic note; the last section, "Achieving Yin-Yang Harmony," elaborates the Chinese belief of the yin (cooling) and yang (warming) characteristics of foods as well as their purported remedial and restorative properties. "Tonic soups" include Almond Soup for moistening the lungs and clearing the skin. Probing her rich culinary heritage with passion and fortitude, Young expertly reveals ancient secrets encouraging readers to experience the joy of authentic Chinese cooking. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal  
Although Young, a food writer, grew up in a traditional Chinese American home in San Francisco, until quite recently, she says, she took her culinary heritage for granted. She realized she knew more about other cuisines than the Cantonese cooking of her own background, and so she decided to set down her family's recipes. In the process, she learned much more about her parents, her ancestors, and her extended family than she'd expected, and the result is this lovely, very personal book. The first part includes recipes for the everyday dishes prepared for the family by both her mother and father, introduced by reminiscences such as "Going to Market with Mama" or mini-essays on topics like "The Meaning of Rice." The next section focuses on celebration, specifically the traditions and dishes of the Chinese New Year. The final part is devoted to "Cooking as a Healing Art," with recipes for tonics and soups. (This is the shortest section; Nina Simond's recent *A Spoonful of Ginger*, LJ 4/15/99, has more on Chinese holistic healing.) Some of Young's recipes are elaborate or require unusual ingredients, but she was interested in the authentic versions, not Americanized Cantonese food, and her instructions are clear and thorough. Well written and absorbing, Young's cookbook/memoir is highly recommended. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.