

Foreword

When Sam asked me to write the foreword to this cookbook, I was only too glad to say yes. I have known Sam for more than 10 years and seen him grow from a young, earnest chef into today’s celebrity masterchef. Yet in that time, one thing has never changed. He has always remained totally committed to his profession, challenging himself to continually come up with new ideas and standards.

Yet, as his professional stature rises, he has remained humble and affable. So this cookbook featuring recipes for everyday Chinese dishes best represents the Sam Leong I know: a man who is firmly rooted to his simple beginnings even though he now stands tall as one of Singapore’s top chefs.

Unlike many celebrity chef cookbooks that serve better as trophies on a bookshelf because the recipes are too impractical for the home chef, this book is definitely one that will be well-thumbed. Dishes featured are designed for the home dinner table and can be whipped up easily in a home kitchen. And yet, they bear the imprint of a top-class chef.

The recipes speak from the heart, they speak of warmth and sincerity. This is a cookbook that anyone would be proud to have his name attached to. And one that everyone will be happy to keep.

Wong Ah Yoke
Straits Times restaurant critic

Introduction

I have been a chef for many years, but it was only when my wife, Forest, a chef by profession as well, started teaching cooking at cooking schools and community centres, that I gained an interest in doing the same.

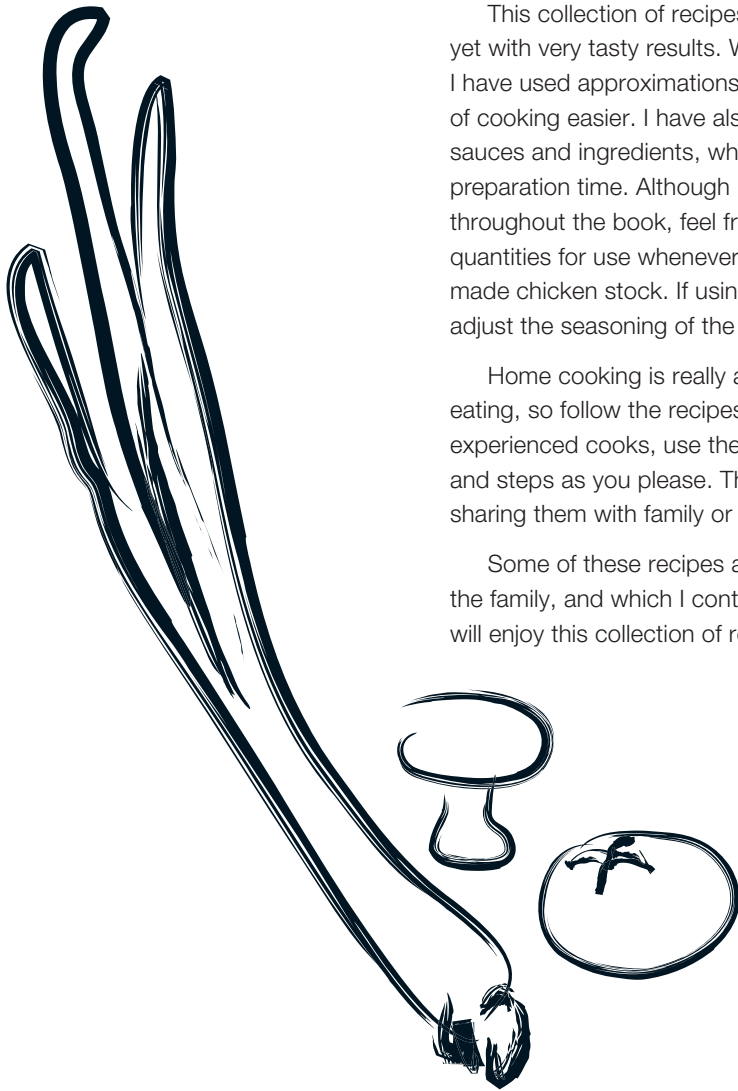
Those who attended my cooking classes included working professionals and homemakers who wanted to learn more about Chinese cooking and more specifically, how they could whip up tasty and wholesome meals in a short time. It was the invaluable feedback I received from them that spurred me on to write this book on home-style Chinese cooking.

This collection of recipes is made up of dishes that can be prepared without fuss, yet with very tasty results. Where it does not make a noticeable difference to the final dish, I have used approximations instead of weights for the ingredients, to make the process of cooking easier. I have also taken shortcuts where applicable, such as using bottled sauces and ingredients, which can be found in most markets and supermarkets, to save on preparation time. Although I have included a recipe for chicken stock and used it frequently throughout the book, feel free either to prepare a larger batch and then freezing it in small quantities for use whenever you need it, or forgo the step altogether and purchase ready-made chicken stock. If using ready-made chicken stock, use unseasoned stock, or taste and adjust the seasoning of the dish accordingly.

Home cooking is really about cooking what you are comfortable with and what you like eating, so follow the recipes closely only if you are new to cooking. For those who are already experienced cooks, use these recipes merely as a guide and omit or substitute ingredients and steps as you please. The important thing is to enjoy the process of cooking and then sharing them with family or friends.

Some of these recipes are dishes which my grandmother and mother used to prepare for the family, and which I continue to treasure as my personal comfort foods today. I hope you will enjoy this collection of recipes and make them a part of your daily cooking routine!


Sam Leong





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Pork Ball Soup with Seaweed

Serves 4

Cooking oil 2 *Tbsp*

White bait *a small handful*

Ginger 5 *thin slices*

Spring onion (scallion) 1, *chopped*

Chicken stock (page 159) 1 *litre*
(32 fl oz / 4 cups)

Salt ½ *tsp*

Sugar ½ *tsp*

Ground white pepper *a pinch*

Dried Chinese seaweed *a small handful*

Coriander leaves (cilantro) 1 *sprig*

PORK BALLS

Minced pork shoulder 400 g
(14⅓ oz)

Minced pork fat 1 *Tbsp*

Minced coriander stems (cilantro)
1 *Tbsp*

Water chestnuts 3, *peeled and minced*

Salt 1 *tsp*

Sugar 1 *tsp*

Egg white 1

Ground white pepper *a pinch*

Sesame oil *a dash*

1. Start by preparing pork balls. Mix pork, pork fat, coriander stems and water chestnuts together in a mixing bowl. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Scoop up a rounded teaspoonful of mixture and form into a ball. Repeat until mixture is used up.
2. Put pork balls on an oiled steaming tray and steam for about 5 minutes, or until pork balls are cooked.
3. Heat oil in a wok and add white bait, ginger and spring onion. Stir-fry until fragrant. Add chicken stock and bring to the boil. Season with salt, sugar and pepper.
4. Put pork balls and seaweed into a large bowl or individual serving bowls. Ladle soup over and garnish with coriander leaves. Serve hot.

NOTE Adding pork fat to the pork balls makes them flavourful and juicy. You can omit the pork fat for a healthier option, but the pork balls will not be as moist and tasty.



Double-boiled Black Chicken Soup with American Ginseng Serves 4

Black chicken 1, *about 450 g (1 lb), cleaned*

American ginseng 1 *piece, soaked in water for 10 minutes*

Chinese wolfberries 1 *tsp*

Water 1 *litre (32 fl oz / 4 cups)*

Salt $\frac{1}{2}$ *tsp*

Sugar $\frac{1}{2}$ *tsp*

Chinese cooking wine (*hua diao*)
a *dash*

1. Put all the ingredients into the inner pot of a double-boiler, then put into the double-boiler and steam for 4 hours. If you do not have a double-boiler, put the ingredients into a heatproof pot, cover and steam for 4 hours.
2. Use a spoon to skim off the layer of fat from the soup. Transfer to a serving bowl and serve hot.



White Bait & Clam Soup Serves 4

White bait 300 g (11 oz)

Clams 300 g (11 oz)

Cooking oil 2 Tbsp

Ginger 2 slices, shredded

Chicken stock (page 159) 500 ml
(16 fl oz / 2 cups)

SEASONING

White miso paste 1 Tbsp

Yellow bean sauce 1 Tbsp

Light soy sauce 1/4 tsp

Sugar 1/2 tsp

Chinese cooking wine (*hua diao*)
a dash

1. Bring a pot of water to the boil and poach white bait and clams briefly for about 5 seconds. Drain and set aside.
2. Heat oil in a wok. Add ginger and stir-fry until fragrant. Add chicken stock and ingredients for seasoning. Bring to the boil.
3. Add white bait and clams and return to the boil.
4. Ladle soup into bowls and serve hot.

