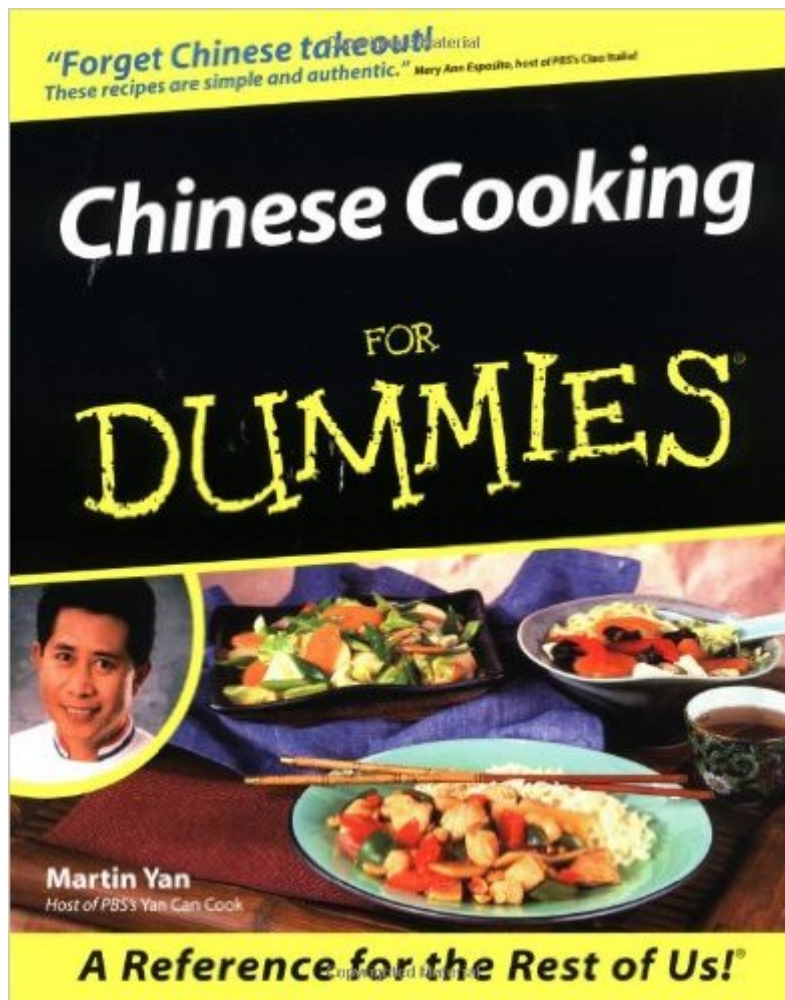


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# Chinese Cooking For Dummies



## Synopsis

Have you ever had a craving for fried dumplings or hot and sour soup at midnight? Ever wonder how your local Chinese takeout makes their food taste so goodâ”and look so easy to make? Still donâ”t know the difference between Sichuan, Cantonese, and Mandarin cooking? Discovering how to cook the Chinese way will leave you steaming, stir-frying, and food-styling like crazy! The indescribably delicious cuisine of a fascinating country can finally be yours. And in *Chinese Cooking For Dummies*, your guide to the wonders and magic of the Chinese kitchen is none other than Martin Yan, host of the award-winning TV show *Yan Can Cook*. In no time at all, youâ”ll be up to speed on what cooking tools to use, how to stock your pantry and fridge, and the methods, centuries old, that have made dim sum, Egg Fu Young, Kung Pao Chicken, and fried rice universal favorites. Youâ”ll also be able to: Think like a Chinese chefâ”t using the Three Tenets of Chinese Cooking Choose and season a wok, select a chefâ”s knife, plus other basic tools of the trade Find the essential ingredientsâ”t and ask for them in Chinese with a Chinese language (phonetic) version of black bean sauce, hoisin sauce, plum sauce, bamboo shoots, and more Cook using a variety of methodsâ”t including stir frying, steaming, blanching, braising, and deep frying And with over 100 recipes, arranged conveniently like a Chinese menu, *Chinese Cooking For Dummies* lets you select from any column in the comfort of your own kitchen...which is when the fun really begins. Imagine putting together your ideal meal from the bookâ”s rich offering of recipes: Delectable morselsâ”t including Baked Pork Buns, Spring Rolls, Potstickers, Steamed Dumplings, and Shrimp Toast Seafood dishesâ”t including Sweet and Sour Shrimp, and Oysters in Black Bean Sauce Poultry dishesâ”t including Moo Goo Gai Pan, Kung Pao Chicken, and Honey Garlic Chicken Pork, beef, and lamb dishesâ”t including Sichuan Spareribs, Tangerine Beef, and Mongolian Lamb *Chinese Cooking For Dummies* gives you all of the basics youâ”ll need, letting you experience the rich culinary landscape of China, one delicious dish at a timeâ”t and all, without leaving a tip!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Martin Yan...funny guy, and king of PBS cooking shows, is a definite draw for getting this book. Who better to write and explain what is one of the world's most complex and rich cuisines for those of us who have never even touched a wok? This book helps shatter the image that Asian/Oriental cuisine is one huge homogenous mass of countries wound together. For people first learning about Chinese cooking, and the food culture, this book helps to get you into the sea and your feet wet. As mentioned before, the advanced chef would likely find this repetitive. There is lots of useful, practical advice as well. The sections on shopping in Chinese or Asian grocery stores is helpful, as is the history lesson in the beginning. One of the things which I loved, was that for his common ingredients list, he said how long things will last in your home under storage. Since some of them to the every-day American cook border upon the mystical and arcane and likely won't be used up quickly, this is invaluable for the person wishing to experiment once a week or less infrequently and doesn't want to waste money on food and spices that won't be used. This is to say, nothing of Martin Yan's personality, which was also mentioned before, is great! He makes the book worth reading even if you're never going to cook with it. Out of his 20+ cookbooks, this is one I'm glad I picked up first.

Four main things to comment on: 1) You definitely feel Martin Yan's personality in these pages. Great broad yet brief background on regional influences on Chinese cooking. 2) Equally good broad yet brief explanation of basic ingredients and also the prep and cooking techniques. 3) Recipes are pretty easy and you are welcome to buy most of the basic sauces rather than make them from scratch. 4) Only wish there were pictures with each recipe. On to the details. On the first point, if you like his PBS shows, you'll enjoy reading this book. It has his wit and it's easy to imagine him speaking to you, cleaver in hand. The background info about different regions is brief yet insightful. For example, you will not learn the history of each region, but you will have some insight about the differences between menus at The Canton Cafe versus Larry's Peking Palace. On the second point, if you're a complete novice to cooking (let alone Chinese cooking), there's enough info about equipment, technique, and ingredients to get you going. He also provides lots of pragmatic advice - substitute ingredients and make-shift cooking supplies when you have limited options. On the third

point, recipes are easy AS LONG AS YOU'RE PATIENT. Unlike some other cuisines, most of this book involves stir frying and that means you MUST have your ingredients prepped before you start throwing things into the wok. There's no time to measure and chop once you start because the "cooking" stage only takes 2-3 minutes :) I found cooking, in general, to be much easier if I have everything premeasured and ready-to-go in little dishes, just like on the TV shows. On the fourth point, like most "Dummies" books, this one is printed with very few color pictures. And the ones that are provided are bunched together in an insert in the middle of the book - several glossy pages showing finished dishes. Where some areas, such as explanation of techniques, are adequately accompanied by illustrations, I really prefer to have pictures with each recipe. And if not step-by-step, then at least one showing the finished dish. Alas, that is the one area I found lacking. In summary, great book and more pictures would've made it even better. Also, one bit of advice - don't expect to get stir-frying right the first few times. It does get a lot easier after a few tries though.

This isn't the most extensive Chinese cooking book. And if you are an experienced Asian cook this will not be helpful. But it has been very useful to me in getting me started. There are lists of things to buy, and advice on ingredients and utensils. There is not a lot in the way of illustration. The recipes are items that I have eaten in a lot of Chinese restaurants, which is why it is so useful. I already know how the dish is supposed to taste, so I can judge the outcome against a taste I already know. It also helps to familiarize myself with what the various ingredients bring to a dish so that I can modify it to make it more pungent or spicy or bland depending on what I feel like eating. That's what makes it such a good beginning book. It gives you a base to expand from. The book is written in a light-hearted manner, Martin Yan likes puns and makes a lot of them. I like this book and will probably use it for a while to come until I am ready for more exotic recipes.

This book was easy to follow with step by step directions and the recipes have turned out great. Just like we find in our favorite Chinese restaurants. Many of the ingredients are found in my local grocery store, so it doesn't even take a trip to a Chinese market. Don't skip the introductory pages. The introduction gives valuable background on cooking utensils, how to cut vegetables, and how to stock your pantry with all the right ingredients. There are many colorful pictures, but I would have preferred them after each recipe rather than grouped together towards the end of the book.

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