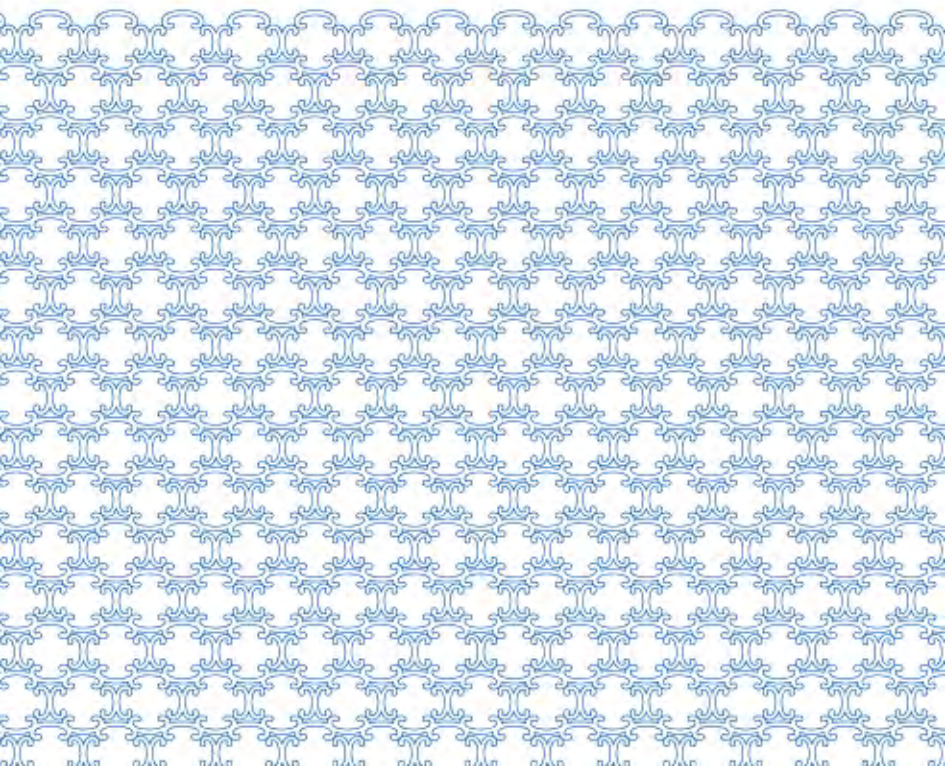




uncle lau's  
teochew recipes



uncle lau's  
teochew  
recipes



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## uncle lau's teochew recipes



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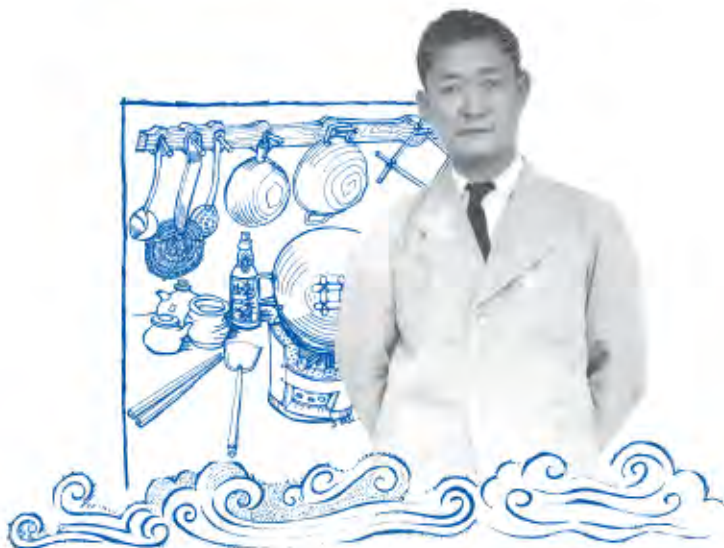
# my father the quintessential cook

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**“For a good and complete Teochew meal, a diversity of flavours—sweet, salty, sour, pungent and bitter—must be present on the dinner table.”**

He always emphasised the importance of having a complete meal.



My father, the natural cook  
**lau chiap khai**

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MY FAMILY CAME FROM A VILLAGE called *Teng-Tang-Lau*, which is a three-hour bus ride from the port of Shantou (also known as Swatow).

My father, Lau Chiap Khai, was born in Singapore. My grandfather was a businessman who had established a charcoal business in Singapore and Johor. When his China wife passed away, he married my grandmother who was a Singapore Teochew-nyonya less than half his age. When my father was old enough to start school, my grandfather decided to take him back to Shantou so that he could have a good Chinese education. There, my father attended a college set up by an American Baptist Missionary Society in Jiao-shi (Kak Chiok), an island off Shantou.

There was civil unrest while they lived in Shantou. The weak Qing Dynasty faced a rebellion led by Sun Yat Sen and the presence of the Communists and the warlords added to the political chaos. My grandfather cut off his queue but that did not save him from trouble. He was accused of being pro-Communist and put in jail for a couple of years. My grandmother had no choice but to follow him as he was moved from one jail to another so that she could look after him. Eventually, she managed to bribe some officials and he was released. My grandparents then moved the whole family back to Singapore.

My father arranged for my mother, whom he had met while studying in the same Baptist College in China, to join him in Singapore, where they got married. He learned American English at college, and this helped to land him a job at the Cold Storage located at Orchard Road. In the few years that he worked there, he learned much about the food retail business. He subsequently quit the job and set up his own grocery shop, at 196 Orchard Road, which mainly catered to foreigners.

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My family

My father's natural talent for cooking became obvious when he gradually took over the cooking at our family gatherings, at birthdays and Chinese New Year celebrations. A self-taught cook, he was not formally trained in the art of Chinese cuisine. His recipes came from various sources—some he learned from family or relatives in China, but most of the time, he picked up cooking techniques and recipes from the long discussions he had with his Teochew friends.

In the early 1950s, he would often meet his Teochew friends at Edinburgh Road where Chinese grocery shops, eateries and restaurants abound. As a child, he would take me there and let me wander around the market at Edinburgh Road while he drank kung-fu tea with his friends. They would reminisce about life in Shantou, spin tales of old China and invariably discuss about food.

Inspired by these long discussions on food, he would attempt to prepare the dishes at home. With the guidance of my grandmother, he would explore on his own and tried to improve and perfect each dish through trial and error. That set him off on his own cooking adventure.



Over time, he amassed a repertoire of authentic and perfected Teochew recipes. I grew up enjoying these wonderful dishes and attribute my discerning palate to my father's cooking. Consolidating all of my father's recipes was no easy task—all of his dishes were never formally documented as nothing was measured and ingredients were added based on experience. Nevertheless, I hope to share my family's culinary heirloom, so current and future generations will also be able to enjoy authentic Teochew choice cuisine.

**Lau Lee Leng**



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## uncle lau's teochew recipes

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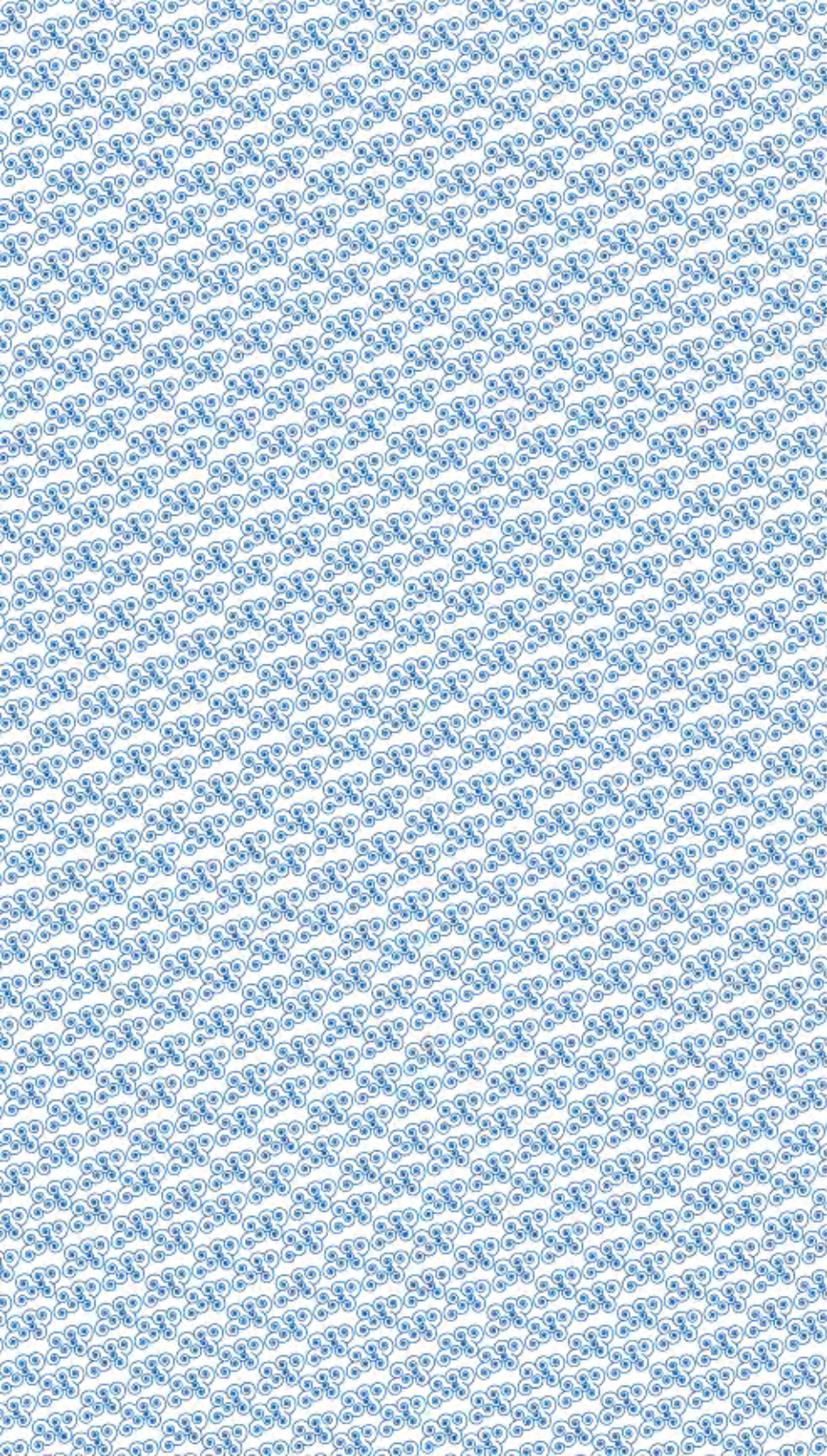
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Soups

MRS D.B.





## EVERYDAY CHICKEN STOCK

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This is a clear stock and should never be boiled because it will become cloudy and the fat will melt and combine with the soup. A good chicken stock requires not only bones but also meat to give it a rich flavour.

- 1 kg chicken bones (including body parts like feet, wing, neck and legs)
- 2-3 l water
- 1 cup root vegetables (mixture of coriander stalk and roots, celery and carrot)
- 2 slices ginger
- 2 scallions
- pinch of salt
- pinch of pepper

Put the chicken bones into a heavy pot with the water. Bring to a boil then simmer gently for 1 hour. Skim off any scum that rises to the surface.

Add in the root vegetables, ginger, scallions and salt and pepper. Continue to simmer for 30 minutes. Allow stock to cool before straining through a fine mesh. Store the stock in the refrigerator.

You may remove some of the fats that will rise to the surface when the stock is cold.

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### Tip

*Do not remove all the fat as it gives much flavour to the stock.*

## PORK AND CHICKEN STOCK

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- 2-3 l chicken stock
- 500-700 g pork bones
- 2 slices ginger
- 2 scallions
- pinch of salt
- pinch of pepper
- 1 piece Chinese jin hua ham bone (optional)

Put the pork and Chinese jin hua ham bones into a heavy pot and boil it together with the chicken stock. Allow the stock to simmer for 1½ hour. Skim off any scum that rises to the surface.

Add the ginger, scallions, salt and pepper. Continue to simmer over low heat for another hour before draining the stock through a fine mesh. Allow stock to cool before storing in the refrigerator. You may remove some of the fats that will rise to the surface when the stock is cold.

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### Tips

*Pork bones are boiled with chicken stock to make a richer, tastier and sweeter soup. It is often used as a soup base, for stir-frying dishes and preparing sauces. Chinese jin hua ham bones can be added to enhance the flavour of the stock.*

*Do not remove all the fat as it gives much flavour to the stock.*



*P4/* Soups

## FISH STOCK

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Fish stock is made from boiling fish bones with chicken or pork bones, which are added to enhance the flavour of the stock.

- 750 g chicken bones or a mixture of chicken and pork bones
- 400 g fish bones
- 2–3 ℓ water
  - 1 cup root vegetables (mixture of celery, coriander roots and carrot)
- 10 slices ginger
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp pepper

Put the fish and chicken bones into a heavy pot. Fill up the pot with water and bring it to a boil. Simmer for at least 2 hours or till liquid is reduced to half the quantity. Add the root vegetables, ginger and pepper. Continue to simmer for 30 minutes then strain the stock through a fine mesh.

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### Tip

*Boil the stock vigorously to obtain a milky stock.*

*P5/*

## SUPERIOR STOCK

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- 1 large chicken (about 2½ kg)
- 1 large Chinese jin hua ham bone (or 40g Yunnan ham, cut into 1cm cubes, if available)
- 6 slices ginger
- 3 scallions
- 3 coriander roots
- 2–3 ℓ water
  - pinch of salt

Put the chicken and ham bones in a heavy pot with the water and bring to a boil. Simmer gently for 1½–2 hours. Add ginger, scallions, coriander roots and salt and simmer for further 1½ hour. Skim off any scum that rises to the surface. Allow stock to cool before straining through a fine mesh.

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### Tips

*Do not remove all the fat as it gives much flavour to the stock.*

★ ★ ★ Shopping list

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## BRAISED CHICKEN WINGS

- 20 chicken wings (middle section only)
- 1 tsp five-spice powder (see tip)
- 2 tsp dark soy sauce
- ½ tbsp corn flour
- 3–4 tbsp peanut oil (for frying)
- ½ cup bamboo shoot (canned), cut into triangular pieces
- 5 small dried Chinese mushrooms, soaked in hot water to soften and stems removed; keep the water
- 4 stalks spring onions, cut into 4cm lengths
- dash of sesame oil

### Sauce:

- 1 tbsp dark soy sauce
- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 2 cup stock or water

Marinate chicken wings with five-spice powder, dark soy sauce and corn flour.

Heat wok with 2 tablespoons oil and fry the chicken wings till lightly brown, dish out onto a plate. Add another spoon of oil into wok. When hot, add in the mushrooms and bamboo shoots and fry for a minute. Return the chicken wings into wok.

Add in the sauce ingredients and mushroom liquid, then simmer for about 30 minutes till chicken wings are soft. Add some stock if the sauce dries out. There should be about half a cup of sauce left when done.

Adjust seasoning, and add a dash of sesame oil before serving.

### Tip

*To prepare five-spice powder, fry 1 star anise, 1 stick cinnamon, 1 teaspoon fennel seed or aniseed and 1 teaspoon Szechuan peppercorns in a wok then grind to powder.*

## STIR-FRIED CHICKEN WITH DRIED LILY FLOWER

- 4–6 chicken thighs (450g), cut into bite-sized pieces
- ½ tbsp dark soy sauce
- ½ tbsp light soy sauce
- 3 tbsp peanut oil
- 2 slices ginger
- ½ cup bamboo shoot (canned), thinly sliced
- 60 g kim chiam (dried lily flower), each knotted at the centre, soaked in hot water for 10 mins to soften, squeezed dry then hard ends cut off
- 2 tsp sesame oil

### Sauce:

- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1½ cups chicken stock
- 3 tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- 1 tsp corn flour
- salt
- pepper

Marinate chicken pieces in dark and light soy sauce.

Heat oil in wok and add ginger and chicken pieces. Stir-fry until chicken pieces are lightly brown. Add in the lily flower and bamboo shoot, then stir-fry for a minute. Add in all the sauce ingredients except the corn flour. Bring sauce to a boil, cover and simmer gently for 25 minutes.

Mix corn flour with a little cold water, then add to wok to thicken sauce. Adjust the seasoning. Add the sesame oil before dishing out onto a serving plate.

Garnish with coriander and serve.



P36/Poultry

## CHICKEN WITH PINEAPPLE

- 2 chicken legs with the thighs attached, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into small wedges
- 1½ tbsp lard or peanut oil
- 1 small onion, cut into wedges
- 2 slices ginger
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- ½ tsp sugar
- 1 tbsp dark soy sauce
- ½ cup chicken stock
- ½ tsp corn flour
- 1 tbsp water

Marinate chicken pieces with salt for an hour.

Heat half the lard or oil in a wok and fry the onions and the pineapples for 3 minutes. Remove and set aside. Wipe the wok and heat remaining oil in it. Add the ginger and chicken pieces stir-fry for 3 minutes.

Add vinegar, sugar, dark soy sauce and chicken stock and bring to a boil. Return pineapple and onions to the wok. Mix corn flour with a little cold water, then add to wok to thicken sauce. Reduce sauce by boiling to the consistency you desire.

Adjust seasoning and serve.

P37/

## BRAISED DUCK WITH CHESTNUTS

- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 duck with head (1.5–2kg)
- 1½ tsp salt
- oil (for deep-frying)
- 300 g fresh chestnuts, shelled and boiled in water for 20 mins then skins peeled
- 2 slices ginger
- 2 stalks spring onions
- 3–4 dried Chinese mushrooms, soaked in hot water to soften and stems removed; keep the water
- pork stock or water
- 1 tbsp dark soy sauce
- 1 sprig coriander (to garnish)

Smear the duck with the light soy sauce. Rub the salt all over the inside of the duck.

Heat oil in a wok for deep fat frying. Lower the duck into the very hot oil to lightly brown the duck. Add in the chestnuts and fry for 5 minutes.

Remove the duck and the chestnuts from the wok. Discard most of the oil, leaving behind 2 tablespoons in the wok. Stir-fry the ginger and the spring onions for a few seconds. Return the duck and chestnuts into the wok. Add in the mushrooms, mushroom liquid and dark soy sauce, then add enough stock or water to cover the duck. After half an hour, turn the duck over. Braise for another 30 minutes over low heat. When done, remove duck from the wok and set aside.

Reduce the gravy to a syrupy consistency and adjust seasoning.

Remove as much fat as possible. When the duck is at room temperature, chop into pieces and place onto serving plate together with the chestnuts and mushrooms.

Garnish with coriander and serve.



## TEOCHEW BRAISED DUCK

### TEOCHEW LOR ARP

- 1 duck with head (1.5–2kg), washed and dried with kitchen paper
- 1½ tbsp salt
- 300 g lengkuas (galangal), sliced and slightly mashed
- 3 tbsp sugar
- 150 ml dark soy sauce
- 1 sprig coriander (to garnish)
- 1 cucumber, sliced (to garnish)

#### Dipping sauce:

- ½ cup red chillies, seeded
- 4–5 cloves garlic
- 2 tsp sugar
- 2 tbsp vinegar

Salt the duck cavity and leave it aside for about an hour. Cut a piece of kitchen string 30cm in length. Tie the ends together and loop under the wings so that it will be easy to lift duck out of wok later. Place half of the lengkuas into the duck and seal the opening with toothpicks.

Prepare a casserole pot or wok that is large enough to hold the duck. Heat the casserole pot or wok and when hot, put the sugar in and cook on low heat until sugar is golden brown in colour but not burnt. Pour in the soy sauce and stir to mix. Add 100ml of hot water together with the rest of the lengkuas. When sauce is boiling, lower the duck into the wok. Continuously spoon the sauce over the duck until it has taken on a light brown colour. Add water to cover half way up the duck then cover and simmer on low heat.

After 30 minutes, turn the duck over. Cook for another half hour over low heat. Continue spooning the sauce over the duck every 20 minutes throughout the cooking time to obtain a rich golden brown colour.

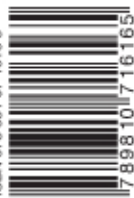
Lift the duck out of the wok and set aside. Turn up the heat and reduce sauce to a syrupy consistency, adjust seasoning, and spoon off the oil. When duck is at room temperature, chop it into pieces. Discard the lengkuas pieces. Place some sliced cucumber at the bottom of the serving plate, and arrange duck pieces on it. Spoon 3 tablespoons of sauce over the duck. Garnish with coriander leaves and serve. Serve the remaining sauce separately.

**To prepare the dipping sauce:** Pound the chillies with the garlic, then stir and mix with the sugar and the vinegar.

#### Tip

*To make sure that duck does not stick to the bottom of the wok, tie 4–6 wooden chopsticks with strings to make a mat to be placed at the bottom of wok, then sit duck over before stewing.*

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