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—Dr Leslie Tay, food blogger (ieatishootipost.sg) and author of *Only the Best!*



HOW TO COOK EVERYTHING SINGAPOREAN

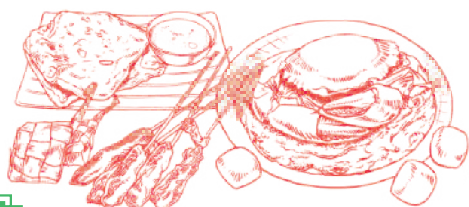
MAKANAN SINGAPURA

சிங்கப்பூர் உணவு

新加坡菜肴

• DENISE FLETCHER •

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**HOW TO COOK
EVERYTHING
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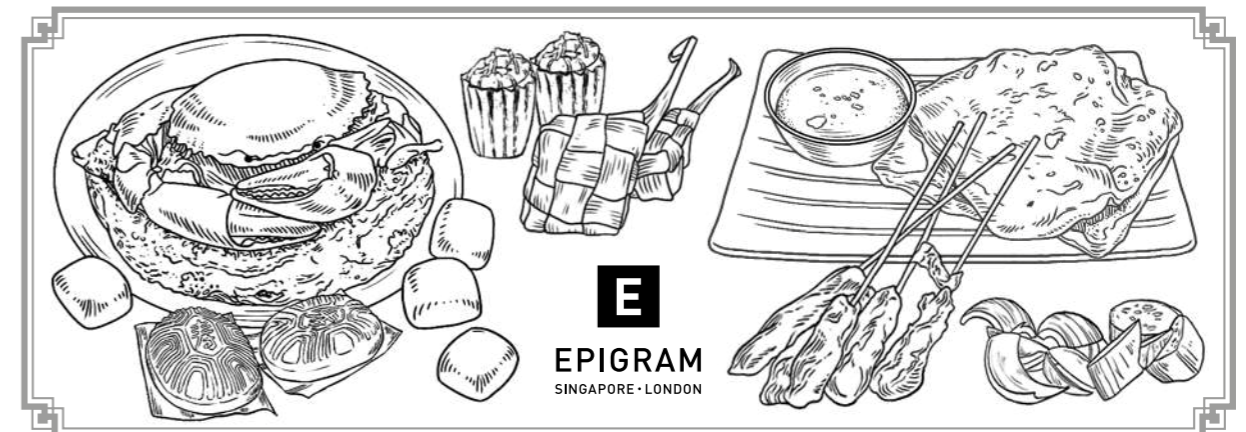
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Recipe notes

All recipes use metrics, but conversions are provided for liquids, flour and sugar, with the cup measurement based on a standard tea cup found in most kitchens. See page 653 for conversion tables.



To my grandmother, Charlotte Pereira, for inspiring three generations to cook with love and joy.

To my mother, Susan Pereira, for everything I know, and everything I love about food and cooking.

To my children, for frowning each time they hear, “let’s eat out”.

To my husband, Sofjan Sukman, for bearing with the craziness of putting together a book like this.

To my rojak family and relatives, for making my plate so tantalisingly colourful and delicious.

To my fellow Singaporeans, for making any time “makan time”!

To the Epigram team, especially Edmund, Cynthia, Eldes and Jael, for believing I could pull this off and giving me the chance to prove it. This would have remained a dream without you all.

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INTRODUCTION



When my publisher suggested I write a comprehensive cookbook on Singaporean food, featuring every known dish in Singapore, I thought he was joking. If you know my publisher, you won't be surprised. His enthusiasm, easy humour and open demeanour put you instantly at ease but can leave you wondering if he's being serious or pulling your leg.

The more I thought about it, the more the idea appealed to me. From that seed of an idea, grew an obsession. I resolved to seek out, cook, taste and catalogue every "Singaporean" dish I knew. Any dish that had ever landed on our fair shores from lands beyond and imprinted itself on our national consciousness would be fair game. Dishes that had evolved out of the magnificent cultural melting pot, and historical and geographical crossroads that was and is Singapore would be celebrated. There really is nowhere else like Singapore and our food tastes like nothing else on earth!

Anyone with the slightest interest in Singapore's history will know of its role in the infamous spice trade and the epic power struggle the peppercorn and the nutmeg inspired in the region. Because of its proximity to the Indonesian Spice Islands and India, the hot spots of the spice trade, as well as its location as the gateway to both the East and the West, Singapore was recognised by the British for its massive potential as a vital entrepot hub. With the sheer volume of spices that have plied around and through Singapore for centuries, it's no wonder that we love our spices and can barely conceive of a meal without any.

In 1819, the British came and soon after, the much-needed immigrant labourers, mainly from China and India, merchants from the Arab world (Yemen in particular), Baghdadi Jews (the Iraqi Jews of India) and Armenian entrepreneurs, all seeking better opportunities. Between the two world wars, a second wave of Armenians and Iraqi Jews fleeing political persecution arrived and further enriched our simmering ethnic cauldron. Add to the equation the proximity and influence of the Portuguese in Goa and Malacca, the Dutch in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, and the French in Vietnam—who along with the British, all vied feverishly for control of the insanely profitable spice trade—and the stew really started to bubble!

It's no wonder that we have such a wealth of ethnic cuisine and are as food-obsessed as we have become. Because of this rich history and heady mix of cultural influences, Singapore may well be one of the earliest birth places of genuine "fusion cuisine".

I'd like to think that having lived here all my life, I would've eaten all there is to eat in Singapore, but as I started my journey of seeking, eating and recording everything that crossed my plate, I realised there were still things to learn and discover; it has so far been the most delicious and memorable lesson of my life.



I am fortunate to have many resources through my culinary inheritance: my maternal Chinese Peranakan great-grandmother, my Portuguese-Eurasian grandmother and mother, my paternal French-Eurasian Penang-born great-grandmother, my Indonesian mother-in-law, and my extended family and relatives—they all make Christmas, Hari Raya and Deepavali gatherings like joyously unruly conferences at the United Nations (always with a fantastic meal guaranteed—the UN reps never have it so good!). And last but definitely not least, good friends of all races, who have always wholeheartedly shared their food and recipes with me.

I've included every dish I know, from the Malay, Chinese, Chinese Peranakan, Indian, Sri Lankan, Kristang (Portuguese Eurasian), Jewish, Armenian and Arab communities, as well as our culinary inheritances from our former colonial masters—the British—our Dutch-influenced neighbour Indonesia and well-known dishes from Thailand, which are so familiar and so dearly loved by Singaporeans that to exclude them would be unthinkable.

What awaits you in these pages are familiar hawker, zi char restaurant and home-cooked favourites as well as unexpected and now rare, traditional culinary gems. Because the face of Singaporean cuisine continues to evolve, even as I write, you will also find innovative and imaginative new recipes that might have been unheard of even five or ten years ago, but are now firm local favourites and well on their way to becoming classics.

While globalisation may energise our culinary landscape and innovation is always thrilling, our food is our soul and our heartbeat and the tie that binds us all as Singaporeans, despite our differences. For this reason, our cuisine should never be forgotten, especially as global culinary influences continue to bombard our shores and the younger generations are lured away from our traditional foods by the novelty of all that is shimmering and new. I hope recording and sharing these recipes will keep the extinction of our traditional culinary treasures further at bay.

It has been challenging, intriguing, educational and most of all, immensely satisfying and pleasurable putting this book together. I hope you enjoy cooking from it as much as I have relished researching it and expanding both my culinary horizon and my waistline in the process. I have held nothing back and every kitchen secret I know is here; I want this book to be a reliable resource and my legacy to my children, as well as my ode to the glorious food of Singapore and its food-fixated people, for whom I have the warmest affection.

If you never need to buy another book on Singapore food and cooking again, it would have been worth having to buy myself an entirely new wardrobe.

Denise Fletcher



PANTRY BASICS



Homemade Paneer

Fresh Indian Curd Cheese

You can't buy paneer as easily as tofu or curry powder at shops here, so you might be getting your paneer fix at a pricey restaurant or crossing your fingers hoping to be invited to an Indian friend's home. As paneer is ridiculously easy to make, there's no reason not to grab the reins and learn to cook paneer from scratch. No more restaurant splurges or fishing for invitations.

PREP 2–3 hours
COOK 5 minutes
MAKES 500g

50ml (¼ cup) freshly squeezed lemon juice
2 tbsp hot water
1.6l (8 cups) whole milk

1. Combine the lemon juice and the hot water, and set aside.
2. Bring the milk to the boil in a heavy-based pot and immediately stir in the lemon juice and water mixture.
3. Gently stir the milk back and forth, and when curds begin to form, turn off the heat.
4. Keep stirring gently to separate the curds from the liquid whey. Line a strainer with two layers of muslin, and pour in the curds and whey.
5. Rinse the curds under cold water to remove the tartness of the lemon. Gather up the muslin cloth and squeeze the curds as dry as you can.
6. Knead the curds until they are no longer crumbly and you have a cohesive doughy mass. If you are making desserts like rasgulla or rasmalai, use the paneer at this stage.
7. If you are making savoury dishes like palak paneer or mattar paneer, wrap the paneer tightly in two layers of muslin and press under a heavy (preferably cast-iron) pot or pan for 1–2 hours. Unwrap and cut into cubes.
8. To store in the fridge, place the cubes in fresh water in a container and cover. Use within 5 days. Paneer cubes are also delicious pan-fried until browned and crusty, and eaten as a snack with your favourite dip or chutney.

Homemade Yoghurt

For a richer, thicker and fuller-flavoured yoghurt, use full-fat liquid milk and milk powder. You can use low-fat milk if you prefer a low-fat yoghurt, though I don't recommend skim milk as the result will not be rich and creamy at all. The longer the setting time, the tangier and thicker your yoghurt will be. I usually let mine set for 12 hours.

PREP 6–18 hours
COOK 2 minutes

FOR EVERY 1l (5 CUPS) LIQUID MILK ADD

25g (¼ cup) milk powder
2 tbsp yoghurt starter (plain, unsweetened yoghurt with live cultures)

1. Heat the liquid milk in a heavy-based pot until it's just warm.
2. Remove the pot from the heat and whisk in the milk powder until completely dissolved.
3. Bring the milk to the boil and immediately turn off the heat before the milk has a chance to scorch the bottom of the pot.
4. Cool down the milk to 40–45°C (104–113°F). Use a kitchen thermometer to confirm the temperature. This is important; don't guess, unless you are an expert yoghurt maker. The yoghurt cultures are live organisms and can be killed by too high temperatures or lulled into inactivity by too low temperatures.
5. Add the yoghurt starter and gently stir through the milk.
6. Cover the pot and wrap with 2 or 3 clean thick towels to insulate.
7. Leave the pot in a warm, draft-free area for 6–18 hours.
8. When the yoghurt is of a desired flavour and consistency, remove the towels, leave to cool to room temperature, then refrigerate to stop the cultures from further souring your yoghurt.
9. Use as desired but remember to keep enough yoghurt as a starter to make your next batch!

Kerisik

Toasted and Pounded Coconut Meat

Use kerisik to thicken and flavour curries, sambals and gravies, in place of or with candlenuts and coconut milk.

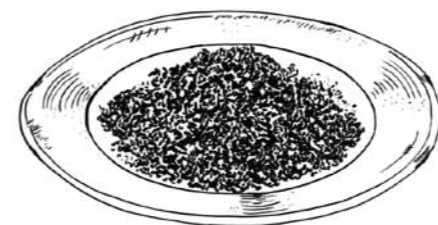
PREP 20 minutes
COOK 15 minutes
MAKES 120g

1 coconut, skinned and grated (about 450g)
1 tsp salt
1 tsp sugar

1. Heat a wok or large pan until moderately hot. Add the coconut, salt and sugar and fry over low heat, stirring and turning constantly, until the coconut is evenly light brown, dry, fluffy and smells sweet and nutty.
2. Turn off the heat and keep stirring until the pan is no longer hot.
3. Let the coconut cool completely.
4. In batches, place the coconut in a mortar and pound with a pestle until smooth. The mixture will turn slightly oily.



5. Scrape out the pounded coconut and keep in a clean, dry lidded jar or container.
6. Store in the fridge and use as required.



Tahi Minyak

Coconut Milk Crumbs

These rich, mildly sweet and toasty-flavoured crumbs are used to enrich various sambals, gulais (Malay curries made without any Indian curry spices) and rendang. They are also the essential topping for a delightful cake called Kueh Kole Kole (page 551). In the absence of other dishes, the crumbs can be eaten with rice and nibbled as an indulgence when feeling peckish. Making it is easy, but requires patience.

PREP 5 minutes
COOK 40 minutes
MAKES 180g

600ml (3 cups) coconut cream or thick coconut milk

1. Bring the coconut milk to the boil in a wok or deep pan. Continue boiling over moderate heat until the milk thickens and begins to darken.
2. Reduce the heat and continue to simmer. Oil will begin to separate from what appears to be a light brown, muddy sediment. The sediment is what we're after.
3. Stir as the sediment darkens, until it becomes a deep golden brown and begins to look like crumbs. Turn off the heat and keep stirring gently until the mixture cools.
4. Line a wide strainer with muslin and place over a large bowl. Pour the mixture into the strainer and let the oil drip into the bowl. When the dripping stops, gather up the muslin and squeeze out the excess oil from the crumbs into the bowl.
5. Store the crumbs in a clean, dry airtight container and refrigerate. Use within 2 weeks.

Note: The oil can be used for cooking or for a beauty regimen. It is excellent as a massage oil or as a hot-oil hair treatment before you shampoo. You will not need hair conditioner for a week after such a treatment.



Singapore-Style Indian Mango Pickle

PREP 2 hours

COOK 15 minutes

MAKES 600–700g

10 young green mangoes (with thin pale green skin)

10 long, thin green chillies, slit down the middle but not cut through

75g coarse salt (reserve 2 tsp)

SPICE PASTE

25 dried chillies, soaked and drained

5cm fresh turmeric, peeled

1 medium onion, peeled and cut

8 garlic cloves, peeled

5cm ginger, peeled and cut

1 tsp asafoetida

1 tsp cumin powder

150ml (¾ cup) oil

2 tbsp mustard seeds, lightly crushed

1 tsp fenugreek seeds, lightly crushed

3–4 tbsp white vinegar

2 tsp sugar

1. Wash and thoroughly drain the mangoes. Halve them lengthwise then widthwise into quarters and discard the seeds. Put the mango pieces, green chillies and most of the salt, except for the reserved amount, into a large bowl and mix well. Set aside for 2 hours, mixing every 20 minutes or so.
2. Discard all the liquid from the mangoes and chillies. Rinse several times, until no longer salty. Squeeze as dry as you can, wringing in a clean, thin cloth, if necessary. Leave in an airy place to dry for 1 hour.
3. Combine the spice paste ingredients and pound or process to a smooth paste.
4. Heat the oil in a deep pan or pot. When hot, fry the mustard and fenugreek seeds until the mustard seeds begin to pop. Add the spice paste and fry until fragrant and oil seeps out. Add the vinegar and sugar, stir well and turn off the heat.
5. Add the mangoes and green chillies and stir thoroughly in the hot spice mixture until the mangoes and chillies wilt.

6. Taste and add all or some of the reserved salt. How much you add will depend on how salty the mango pieces and chillies were when added to the spice mixture.
7. Cool the pickle completely before storing in clean, dry lidded jars. Refrigerate for at least 5 days before eating. Serve with rice, Chapati (page 482) or Thosai (page 483) and Indian dishes.



North Indian-Style Mango Pickle

PREP 6 hours

MAKES 600–700g

10 young green mangoes (with thin pale green skin)

100g coarse salt (reserve 2 tsp)

3 tbsp chilli powder

2 tbsp mustard seeds, toasted and lightly crushed

2 tsp fenugreek seeds, toasted and lightly crushed

2 tsp turmeric powder

2 tsp fennel powder

1½ tsp asafoetida

1 tsp nigella seeds, toasted and lightly crushed

150 ml (¾ cup) oil

1. Wash and thoroughly drain the mangoes. Halve them lengthwise then widthwise into quarters, with the seed left in. Put mango pieces and most of the salt, except for the reserved amount, into a large bowl and mix well. Set aside for 3 hours, mixing every 20 minutes or so.

2. Discard all the mango liquid. Rinse the mango pieces several times, until no longer salty. Squeeze as dry as you can, wringing in a clean, thin cloth, if necessary. Dry on a rack, covered with a thin, clean cloth, in a sunny and airy place for 3 hours.
3. Thoroughly combine all the remaining ingredients (except for the remaining 2 teaspoons of salt), in a large clean and dry mixing bowl. Add the dry mango pieces to the spice mixture and stir thoroughly. Cover and set aside for 1 hour.
4. Taste and add all or some of the remaining salt. Stir well and transfer to a clean, dry jar. Cover the mouth of the jar with a cloth and secure with a rubber band. Place the jar in direct sunlight for 5 days.
5. When the sun goes down, cover the jar with the lid to protect from pests and give the jar a thorough shaking. Each day remove the lid and sun again until sundown for 5 continuous days. Dish out and serve with rice or Chapati (page 482) and Indian dishes.

Note: As this pickle is raw, take extra care when handling and preparing to prevent contamination and prolong shelf life. When squeezing mango pieces and drying on the rack in step 2, wearing clean thin rubber gloves is recommended. From step 3 onwards, always use a clean, dry metal spoon when handling or mixing the mango and spices. Using your bare hands may introduce bacteria and possible contaminants to the pickle. Ensure that the mixing bowl and jar you use are really clean and completely dry.



South Indian-Style Mango Pickle

PREP 2 hours

COOK 15 minutes

MAKES 600–700g

10 young green mangoes (with thin pale green skin)

75g coarse salt (reserve 2 tsp)

4 tbsp chilli powder

1 tbsp turmeric powder

1½ tsp asafoetida

1 tsp cumin powder

150ml (¾ cup) oil

2 tbsp mustard seeds

1 tsp fenugreek seeds, lightly crushed

1. Wash and thoroughly drain the mangoes. Halve them lengthwise then widthwise into quarters, with the seed left in. Put the mango pieces and most of the salt, except for the reserved amount, into a large bowl and mix well. Set aside for 2 hours, mixing every 20 minutes or so.
2. Discard all the mango liquid. Rinse the mango pieces several times, until no longer salty. Squeeze as dry as you can, wringing in a clean, thin cloth, if necessary, and set aside.
3. Combine the chilli powder, turmeric powder, asafoetida and cumin powder to a paste with 3 tablespoons of water.
4. Heat the oil in a deep pan or pot. When hot, fry the mustard and fenugreek seeds until the mustard seeds begin to pop. Add the spice paste and fry until fragrant and oil seeps out. Turn off the heat.
5. Add the mango pieces and stir thoroughly in the hot spice mixture until the mangoes wilt. Taste and add all or some of the reserved salt. How much you add will depend on how salty the mango pieces were when added to the spice mixture.
6. Cool the pickle completely before storing in clean, dry lidded jars. Refrigerate for at least 5 days before eating. Serve with rice, Chapati (page 482) or Thosai (page 483) and Indian dishes.

ABC Soup

Chinese Pork Rib Soup with Vegetables

I know of three theories regarding the name of this soup. The first states that preparing it is as easy as A-B-C. The second claims that it contains generous amounts of vitamins A, B and C. My personal favourite says this soup is beloved amongst the American-Born Chinese. Its popularity in Singapore went through the roof when a certain celebrity famous for her flawless porcelain skin attributed her complexion to drinking this soup daily. If only.

PREP 15 minutes

COOK 1 hour 15 minutes

SERVES 4

500g pork ribs
1½l (7½ cups) water
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into small chunks
2 ears of corn, each cut into 6 chunks
2 white onions, cut into cubes
2 tomatoes, cut into large chunks
Salt to taste
1 tsp sugar
Spring onions or coriander (to garnish)
White pepper to taste

1. Bring a large pot of water to the boil and blanch the pork ribs for about 5 minutes. Remove them from the pot and rinse them in cold water to remove impurities. Drain.
2. Combine the blanched ribs, water and all the vegetables in another clean pot and bring to the boil. Lower the heat and simmer gently for 1¼ hours or until the ribs are tender.
3. Keep skimming off any froth or scum that rises to the top as the soup simmers. Do not stir the soup.
4. When the ribs are tender, remove the soup from the heat. Season to taste, ladle out into bowls, and garnish with spring onions or coriander leaves and a dash of white pepper.
5. Serve with rice. This soup goes well with sliced red chillies in dark soy sauce.

Hokkien-Style Bak Kut Teh

Pork Rib Tea

This is the darker, more herbal and sweeter Hokkien version of bak kut teh that most Singaporeans seem to prefer. The version below is quite basic, and common additions to it are whole small mushrooms, fried bean curd skin (fu chuk) and torn lettuce leaves.

PREP 45 minutes

COOK 2 hours

SERVES 4–6

1kg pork spare ribs
1kg pork loin ribs
2 garlic heads (about 20 cloves)
4 thick, peeled ginger slices
3 thick, peeled galangal slices
6 angelica root slices (tang kwei)
6 astragalus root slices (huang qi)
4 pieces poor man's ginseng (dang shen)
4 rehmannia slices (di huang or Chinese foxglove)
2 star anise
2 x 5cm cinnamon sticks
1 tsp black peppercorns
70ml (⅓ cup) dark soy sauce
50ml (¼ cup) light soy sauce
50ml (¼ cup) oyster sauce
1 tsp sugar
Salt to taste
Spring onions or coriander (to garnish)

1. Bring a large pot of water to the boil, add the ribs and blanch for about 5 minutes. Remove the ribs and rinse them well with cold water to get rid of any impurities. Discard the water.
2. Place the ribs in a clean pot and add all the remaining ingredients, except the salt and garnish. Bring to the boil then lower the heat and simmer gently for 2 hours or until the meat is tender but not falling off the bone.
3. To keep the soup clear as it simmers, keep skimming off any froth or scum that rises. Ensure the ribs are always submerged by adding hot water as needed.
4. Season to taste with salt, and turn off the heat.
5. Garnish the soup with spring onions or coriander, and serve with rice and sliced red chillies in dark soy sauce.

Note: If you have any difficulty finding the individual herbs for this soup, buy a packet of ready-mixed bak kut teh spices. These mixes are available at supermarkets, neighbourhood grocery shops and traditional Chinese medical halls. Most brands give good results.



Teochew-Style Bak Kut Teh

Pork Rib Tea

While the darker, more herbal Hokkien version of bak kut teh may be more well-known in Singapore, it seems the original version is the lighter Teochew version, primarily flavoured with garlic and pepper. It was created by a Teochew hawker, way back in the day. Having tried both, I must say I prefer the light and peppery note of the Teochew style. There's another story which claims that the birthplace of bak kut teh is Klang, Malaysia, but I don't want to start a war, so whoever the creator is, I just want to say, "Thank you!"

PREP 45 minutes

COOK 2 hours

SERVES 4–6

1½–2 tbsp black peppercorns, coarsely crushed
1½ tbsp white peppercorns, coarsely crushed
1kg pork spare ribs
1kg pork loin ribs
2 garlic heads (about 20 cloves)
4 thick, peeled ginger slices
5cm cinnamon stick
2 star anise
2 tsp sugar
1 tbsp salt (or to taste)
Spring onions or coriander (to garnish)

1. Combine the black and white peppercorns in a piece of clean muslin and knot into a secure bundle.
2. Bring a large pot of water to the boil, add the ribs and blanch for about 5 minutes. Remove the ribs and rinse them well with cold water to get rid of any impurities. Discard the water.



3. Place the ribs in a clean pot and add the garlic, ginger, cinnamon, star anise, sugar and the peppercorns. Bring to the boil then lower the heat and simmer gently for 2 hours or until the meat is tender but not falling off the bone.
4. To keep the soup clear as it simmers, keep skimming off any froth or scum that rises. Ensure the ribs are always submerged in liquid by adding hot water as needed.
5. Season to taste, and turn off the heat.
6. Garnish the soup with spring onions or coriander, and serve with rice and sliced red chillies in dark soy sauce.



VIOLET OON

Chef, food writer, food ambassador and restaurateur. Honoured in 2019 by the Singapore Tourism Board for Lifetime Achievement for Outstanding Contribution to Tourism

Teatime on Sundays were always special when I was growing up in the 1950s. It was a time for families and friends to get together. While the adults occupied themselves with mahjong or cheki, we children played hide-and-seek or board games like Scrabble and looked forward to teatime, for the savoury and sweet snacks and kuehs. One of our favourites was bakwan udang, a deep-fried mixture of prawns and bean sprouts in a crispy batter, eaten dipped in chilli sauce. It was most probably a dish learnt from our Indonesian Peranakan counterparts in Java.



Bakwan Udang by Violet Oon

PREP 20 minutes

COOK 15–25 minutes

SERVES 4–6

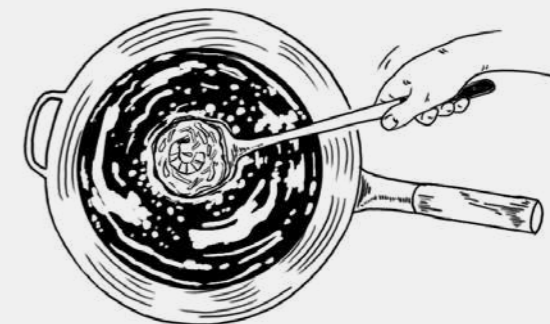
250g (2 cups) plain flour
1 tsp salt
1 tsp baking powder
150–170ml (¾–1 cup) hot water
150ml (¾ cup) thick coconut milk
½ tsp white pepper powder
3 garlic cloves, pounded
10 shallots, sliced thinly
3 spring onions, green tops sliced thinly (optional)
100–200g bean sprouts, roots removed
200g small prawns, peeled but tails left on
1l (5 cups) vegetable oil

1. Sift the flour, salt and baking powder together.
2. Add the hot water and coconut milk to the flour mixture and stir well to mix. Add the pepper powder, garlic, shallots and spring onions if using. Mix well. Keep aside for 1 hour for the baking powder to expand the batter.



3. Finally, add the bean sprouts and prawns and mix. Set aside.
4. Heat the oil over high heat in a large nonstick frying pan. Use a frying pan because of its wide, flat surface area. You do not need to use too much oil and you can fry many fritters at a time because of the wide surface area. Alternatively you can use a wok if you want.
5. When the oil is hot, submerge a wide and shallow ladle into the oil and heat it for about 30 seconds.

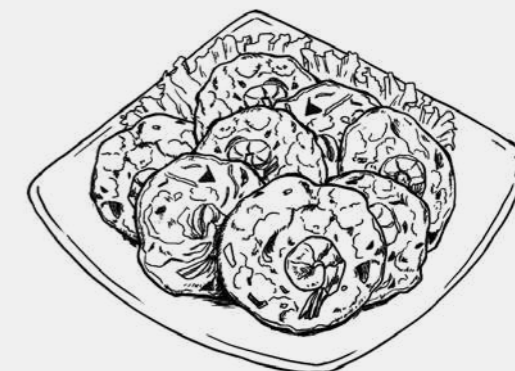
6. Remove from the heat, making sure you pour out the oil. Fill the ladle with the flour mixture, making sure you have one prawn in the centre.
7. Submerge the ladle into the oil completely and move the ladle from side to side. When the bottom of the fritter is browned, it will detach from the ladle and float in the oil. With a pair of chopsticks, flick the fritter over to brown the other side. Remove from the oil and drain over a sieve to remove all the oil. Then place on kitchen paper to remove excess oil.



8. Quickly fill the ladle with another portion of batter, and repeat till all the prawn and bean sprout mixture is used up.
9. Serve as a snack or as part of a main meal.

Note: For an easy method of frying, do not bother putting the batter on a ladle. Just scoop out spoonfuls of the mixture and gently put into the frying pan. Because of the flat surface, the batter will spread out into a circular shape. If you want the prawns to be on top, add one prawn to the top of the batter after you have put it into the oil.

For other versions of bakwan, you can use a combination of bean sprouts, carrot strips and shredded cabbage. Or you can dice the prawns, which can, alternatively, be replaced with minced chicken or beef.



Homemade Bouncy Meatballs

You could do this by hand, with a cleaver, but I wholeheartedly recommend that you use a food processor for this, and if you do not have one, buy one or buy ready-made meatballs. The same process is used for beef, pork or chicken meatballs and the cut of meat does not matter so much as the manipulation of the meat and the way it is cooked. So, any cut of meat you happen to have on hand is fine.

PREP 1 hour (includes freezing)

COOK 15 minutes

MAKES 45–50 meatballs

500g meat (beef, chicken or pork), thinly sliced

140ml (⅔ cup) iced water, divided

3 tbsp cornflour

1 tbsp fish sauce

1 tbsp Shallot Oil (page 4)

1½ tsp baking powder

1 tsp sugar

1 tsp white pepper powder

⅔ tsp salt

1. Place the meat in the bowl of the meat processor and start chopping on slow speed. Gradually increase the speed to the maximum. When the meat is finely minced, start adding half of the frigidly cold, iced water, 1 tablespoon at a time.

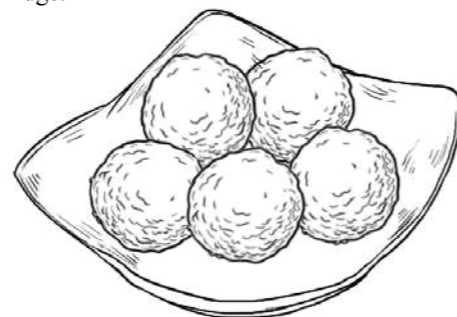


2. Mix the remaining cold water and the rest of the ingredients into a smooth paste. Turn down the machine speed to a minimum and pour the paste into the feeding tube. Keep processing the meat until everything is well incorporated. Turn off the machine.

3. Transfer the meat paste to a bowl, cover with cling film and freeze for 45 minutes.
4. Bring a pot of lightly salted water to the boil and turn the heat down to the minimum.
5. Remove the meat paste from the freezer. Wet your hands and scoop up a portion of the meat paste. Squeeze out a ball through the opening between your thumb and index finger (as when making Fish Balls, page 302) and scoop up the ball of paste with a wet tablespoon.



6. Drop the ball into the pot of gently simmering water. Do not let the water boil. The balls should poach rather than boil in the liquid. If they boil, they will not be bouncy. Continue to make balls and to drop them into the simmering water until they all float to the top and the pot is full.
7. Take a ball and cut in half. The centre should be cooked and no longer pink.
8. Prepare a large bowl or basin of water and ice, and transfer the cooked balls into the iced water. Leave the balls in the iced water until they are completely cold.
9. Use the balls as required or store in the freezer or fridge.



Eurasian Meatballs

These tasty and easy-to-make meatballs are addictive with drinks, squashed into sandwiches, simmered in an onion and soy sauce gravy or added to stews (pages 51–52) and pie fillings (pages 290–291). You may shallow-fry them on the stove but I find that baking them close together in trays renders them much less greasy and much more juicy inside. Simple perfection!

PREP 25 minutes

COOK 25 minutes

MAKES About 60 walnut-size meatballs

1 large onion, chopped

500g minced beef

500g minced pork

2 slices white bread, softened in water and squeezed dry

1½ tsp salt

1½ tsp Eurasian Spice Mix (page 12)

1½ tsp black pepper

1 tsp English mustard (Colman's)

1 tsp sugar

1. Heat about 3 tablespoons of oil in a pan and when hot, fry the onion until soft and just beginning to brown. Remove from the pan and drain off as much oil as possible. Transfer the onion to a large mixing bowl.
2. Add all the remaining ingredients to the onions and combine thoroughly but with a light hand, ensuring that the bread is well distributed through the meat mixture.
3. Preheat the oven at 180°C (360°F). Lightly grease a large baking tray or use an ungreased nonstick tray.
4. Form the mixture into 60 or so even balls, rolling the balls between your palms but not compressing them too much or they will be heavy textured.
5. Place the meatballs close together in tray and bake for 25 minutes or until the meatballs are no longer pink in the middle. If the tops appear to be browning too quickly or drying out, cover with foil and continue to bake.
6. Remove from the oven and cool before serving with ketchup, mustard, chilli or horseradish sauce, or adding to other recipes as suggested above.

Note: If using a dark-coloured nonstick tray, check the largest meatball after baking for 20 minutes. If done, remove from the oven. Dark metal absorbs and distributes heat faster and more efficiently, thereby reducing cooking or baking times.

Eurasian Meatballs in Onion and Soy Sauce Gravy

PREP 35 minutes

COOK 35 minutes

SERVES 4

2 onions, sliced into thick rings

3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 large celery stalk, sliced thinly across

1 carrot, peeled, halved lengthwise and sliced as for celery

8 fresh brown mushrooms, thickly sliced

1½ tbsp plain or all-purpose flour

4 tbsp dark soy sauce

½ tbsp Worcestershire sauce (Lea & Perrins)

1½ tsp black pepper

½ tsp sugar

40 cooked Eurasian Meatballs

Chinese celery leaves (to garnish)

1. Heat 4 tablespoons of oil in a pan and when very hot, fry the onions until fragrant and just beginning to colour. Add the garlic and stir for 1 minute then lower the heat.
2. Add the celery, carrot and mushrooms and stir over moderate heat for 1 minute.
3. Sprinkle over the flour and stir for 3 minutes or until the flour and oil mixture turns a light beige. Add the soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, pepper and sugar and stir.
4. Pour in 300ml (1½ cups) of water and stir well. Bring to the boil, stirring until the gravy thickens. Add the meatballs and stir through. Simmer for 2–3 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning, if necessary.
5. Turn off the heat and dish out. Garnish with celery leaves and serve with rice or mashed potatoes.

Traditional Homemade Fish Paste and Fish Balls

Fish paste is not difficult to make. My mother always used only three types of fish: mackerel, wolf herring or yellowtail. Mackerel is meaty but it must be absolutely fresh or the fish balls will be fishy. (You want to avoid scraping too closely to the brown meat or skin for the same reason.) Wolf herring makes fantastically sweet fish balls but have many bones, so it may not be for those with failing eyesight. Yellowtail is my personal favourite—choose the larger and meatier specimens.

PREP 1 hour

COOK 10 minutes

SERVES 6

700g fresh fish fillet (mackerel or yellowtail)

1 tsp salt, divided

½–1 tsp white pepper powder

100ml (½ cup) cold water

1 tbsp cornflour

1. Holding the fish fillet by the tail end, scrape off the meat with a tablespoon. Avoid scraping too close to the skin or the strip of brown meat in the middle of the fillet. Throw out the skin as it makes an unpleasantly fishy stock. Discard the bones.
2. Add about ⅔ teaspoon of the salt to the fish meat along with all the pepper and mix in well. Dissolve the rest of the salt in the cold water.
3. Chop the fish meat using the blunt edge of a cleaver (parang), mixing, turning and bashing the fish with the side of the blade as you chop. Keep a look out for bones and discard them.
4. As you chop, sprinkle the fish with the salted water when you find the paste turning sticky. Stop adding the salted water when you've reached the texture you want. I like soft fish balls so I usually use up all the water. Sometimes I add a little more, depending on the type of fish. With practice, you will know how much water to use for each type of fish.
5. When the fish is finely chopped and smooth, transfer to a large mixing bowl or a small clean basin and start gathering and throwing the fish against the side of the bowl. Do this repeatedly until the fish firms up, becomes springy and stops being sticky.

6. Add the cornflour and a little water, if necessary, to help dissolve the cornflour. Knead the cornflour thoroughly into the fish paste until it is no longer visible. By now the fish paste should be smooth and springy.
7. Use the paste to make fish balls, yong tau foo stuffing, fish egg rolls and fish cakes.
8. To make fish balls, take a handful of the paste and massage it a little, then squeeze the paste out between the index finger and thumb. When the paste reaches an appropriate size, scoop off a fish ball with a tablespoon and drop it gently into a bowl of cold, salted water. Soak the fish balls in the water for 30–60 minutes, then cook as you wish.

Foo Chow Fish Balls

Tender Fish Balls Stuffed with Minced Pork

PREP 2 hours 30 minutes (includes chilling)

COOK 15 minutes

MAKES 25–30 fish balls

FILLING

150g minced pork

3 tbsp Chinese cooking wine

3 tsp cornflour, divided

½ tsp white pepper

¼ tsp dried ginger powder

1 tbsp sesame oil

3 garlic cloves, minced

4 shallots, minced

1 small Chinese celery stalk, thinly sliced

1 tbsp low-sodium light soy sauce

½ tsp salt (or to taste)

½ tsp sugar

FISH PASTE

800g large, fresh mackerel fillet

2 tbsp plain or all-purpose flour

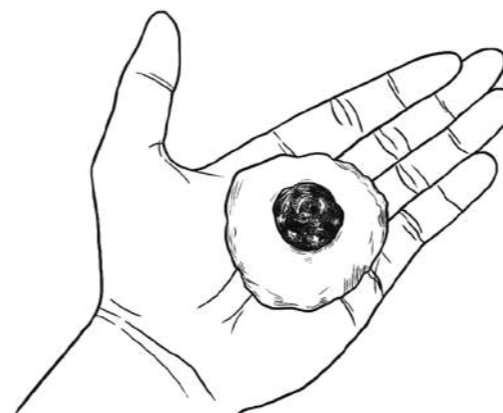
1 tsp white pepper

⅔ tsp salt (or to taste)

½ tsp sugar

1. To make the filling, combine the pork with wine, 1 teaspoon of cornflour, the white pepper, dried ginger powder and sesame oil. Mix well and set aside.

2. Heat 3 tablespoons of cooking oil and fry the garlic and shallots over moderate heat until fragrant and translucent.
3. Add the celery and stir for 1 minute. Next, add the marinated pork and stir for another minute, till half cooked. Break up any lumps.
4. Add the soy sauce, salt and sugar, stir and turn off the heat. Cool completely. When cold, stir in the remaining 2 teaspoons of cornflour and set aside.
5. To prepare the fish paste, place the fish fillets skin side down on a board set atop a folded kitchen towel. Scrape off the flesh. Don't scrape too close to the skin as its strong smell may taint the meat.
6. Transfer the meat to a large mixing bowl and add the rest of the ingredients. Mix thoroughly until well combined and the fish is no longer sticky. Cover and chill for 1 hour.
7. To make the fish balls, take about a tablespoon of the fish paste and flatten. Put a generous teaspoon of filling in the middle and enclose with the fish paste completely.



8. Pinch the seam to seal securely then roll the fish ball between your palms to smoothen the surface. Cover the balls and chill for 30 minutes.
9. Bring a medium pot of water to boil and add a teaspoon of salt. When the water boils, gently lower in the fish balls and turn down the heat. Poach the fish balls until they float to the top.
10. Drain the fish balls and use as desired, or cool and freeze for later use. (Fish balls can be used in soups, braised in sauce or eaten as a deep-fried snack, dipped in your favourite chilli sauce.)

Fish Paste Egg Roll

PREP 25 minutes

COOK 30 minutes

SERVES 4

4 eggs

½ tsp salt

¼ tsp ground white pepper

1 quantity Fish Paste (page 302) (or ready-made)

Coriander leaves (to garnish)

1. Prepare a steamer and bring to the boil.
2. In a bowl, whisk the eggs with the salt and pepper until well combined.
3. Heat 1–2 tablespoons of oil in a pan and make 4 thin omelettes. Cool the omelettes.
4. Spread each omelette evenly with a quarter of the fish paste right to the edges and roll up tightly.
5. Lay the rolls on a plate and steam over high heat for about 20 minutes.
6. Remove the rolls from the steamer and cool. Cut into .5cm slices and lay decoratively on a plate.
7. Garnish with coriander leaves and serve with chilli sauce of your choice.



Pak Tong Koh

Steamed White Cake

As plain as this cake may sound and look, it is addictive. This is the regular version, but I like to replace the water with coconut water, in which case I would reduce the sugar to 120g (¾ cup). A big part of this cake's charm is the intriguing honeycomb structure, and my children (being as they are) love to pour the bright orange sugar (gula tanjung), eaten with Putu Mayam (page 481) and Huat Kueh, into the “tunnels” before eating it. I have to agree that it adds a delicious crunch and visual punch to the experience.

PREP 5 hours

COOK 30 minutes

SERVES 6

150g (1 cup) sugar

4 pandan leaves, knotted

150g (1½ cups) rice flour

75g (¼ cup) wheat starch or tapioca flour

¼ tsp salt

1½ tsp instant yeast

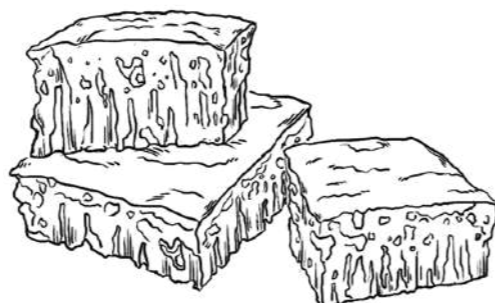
1 tbsp oil

YOU WILL ALSO NEED

Cake tin (26cm round)

1. Combine 200ml (1 cup) of water with the sugar and pandan leaves in a pot and bring to the boil. Stir to dissolve the sugar. Turn off the heat and let the syrup cool down slightly.
2. Combine both the flours and the salt in a large mixing bowl and whisk. Pour in 200ml (1 cup) of water. Whisk to a smooth batter.
3. Discard the pandan leaves and pour the hot syrup into the batter while whisking, until well combined. The batter will thicken slightly. Strain the batter to remove any lumps and cook on the stove while whisking, until it bubbles vigorously and thickens. Turn off the heat and leave the batter to cool.
4. When the batter is much cooler, sprinkle the yeast over 2 tablespoons of water at room temperature in a small bowl or cup and leave for 3 minutes. Dissolve the yeast into the water and leave until it becomes frothy.

5. When the batter is just slightly warm, pour in the yeast solution and whisk until thoroughly combined.
6. Cover the batter and leave to rise for about 4 hours or until it has doubled in volume and is bubbly.
7. Stir the oil thoroughly into the batter. Prepare the steamer and bring to the boil. Oil the cake tin.
8. Pour the batter into the cake tin and leave to rise for 30 minutes. Steam over high heat for 30 minutes.
9. Remove from the steamer and allow to cool completely before slicing.



Ma Lai Koh

Steamed Malay Cake

PREP 20 minutes

COOK 30 minutes

SERVES 8

150g (1½ cups) cake flour

1½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp baking soda

4 eggs

150g (1 cup) sugar

3 tsp vanilla extract

1 tbsp dark soy sauce

75ml (⅓ cup) milk

75ml (⅓ cup) vegetable oil

YOU WILL ALSO NEED

Cake tin (20cm round)

1. Prepare a steamer and bring to the boil. Line the cake tin with parchment paper.

2. Combine the flour, baking powder and baking soda, and whisk until well mixed.
3. Separately, combine the eggs, sugar, vanilla and soy sauce in a deep mixing bowl and whisk on high speed until light and fluffy.
4. Fold the flour mixture into the egg mixture gently but thoroughly. Add the milk and vegetable oil and fold into the batter.
5. Transfer the batter to the cake tin and steam over high heat for 30 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean.
6. Remove from the steamer and cool completely before cutting.

Note: The addition of soy sauce is mainly for colour and imparts little flavour, if any.

Huat Kueh

Steamed Rice Flour Cake

The most outstanding feature of these simple and rather plain-looking cakes is their intoxicating aroma as they cook in the steamer. The combination of sweet pandan and tangy yeast is just short of mesmerising. The clincher, though, is when you get a mouthful of soft, moist and fragrant sponge covered in coconut shreds and red sugar. Then you understand why those who grew up eating this continue to love it well into adulthood.

PREP Overnight (includes fermentation)

COOK 30 minutes

MAKES 10

8 pandan leaves (extra for serving)

250g (2½ cups) rice flour

2½ tsp instant yeast

120g (¾ cup) sugar

1 tsp clear pandan essence

2 tsp unflavoured Eno powder

Grated skinless coconut as desired

Pinch of salt

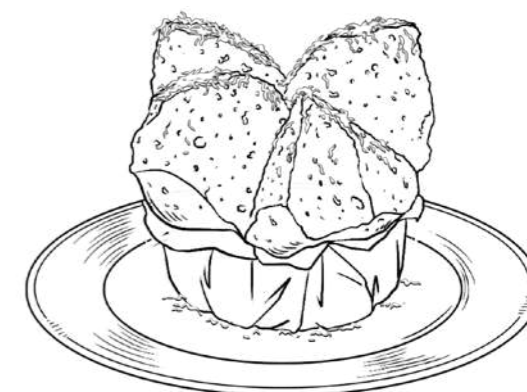
Red sugar (gula merah) as desired

YOU WILL ALSO NEED

10 huat kueh moulds

1. Wash and cut the pandan into small pieces. Combine with 300ml (1½ cups) of water in a blender and process to a fine pulp. Strain the mixture and squeeze all the juice from the pandan pulp. Discard the pulp. You should have 300ml of liquid. Strain the juice again through a clean piece of cotton or muslin and squeeze out all the juice. Discard the residue.
2. Combine the rice flour, yeast, sugar and pandan water in a large mixing bowl. Stir well. Wrap in cling film and ferment overnight at room temperature.
3. Prepare a steamer and bring to the boil. Line 10 huat kueh moulds with paper cases.
4. Stir the pandan essence in the batter then sprinkle over with Eno powder and mix thoroughly but gently.
5. Fill the paper cases ¾ full with the batter.
6. With a spatula or blunt-tip knife, mark a cross on the top of each kueh (to help the batter crack and rise high) and steam over high heat for 30 minutes.
7. Remove from the steamer and cool slightly. Mix the grated coconut with a pinch of salt and steam with the extra pandan leaves. Serve the huat kueh with the coconut and red sugar.

Note: If you don't like pandan-flavoured huat kueh, omit the pandan leaves and pandan essence and use vanilla essence instead. And if you do not want the kueh to be plain white, you can add a few drops of food colouring, or replace the white sugar in the batter with brown sugar or grated palm sugar.



ESSENTIALS OF THE SINGAPORE KITCHEN

HERBS

Asian basil (selasih)

Bird's-eye chillies (chilli padi)

Bunga telang (butterfly pea flower, blue pea flower)

Cekur leaves (lesser galangal leaves, daun kencur)

Chinese parsley

Coriander leaves (cilantro, ketumbar)

Curry leaves (daun kari, karuveppilai, kari patta)

Daun kaduk (pointed pepper, wild betel leaves)

Daun kemangi (lemon basil)

Daun mengkudu (noni leaves)

Daun pegagan (pennywort, gotu kola)

Daun sirih (betel leaf)

Indian bay leaves (tej patta)

Indonesian bay leaves (daun salam)

Laksa leaves (daun kesum, Vietnamese mint, polygonum leaves)

Lemongrass (serai)

Lemongrass is almost always used whole and bruised. The term “bruised” means hit until flattened, usually with the flat side of a broad knife or cleaver, until the root end splays out and looks somewhat like a small paintbrush. This enables the volatile oils to subtly permeate the dish.

Limau purut leaves (kaffir lime leaves, makrut lime leaves, leprous lime leaves, daun limau purut)

Pandan (screwpine)

Torch ginger flower (bunga kantan)

Bunga kantan is a fragrant and attractive edible flower of the ginger family. Its bud is used extensively in Nyonya cooking and prized for its wonderful and unique fragrance. The tender inner petals of the pink bud are finely shredded and usually sprinkled over cooked foods before serving. It is rarely cooked as this would diminish most, if not all, of its gorgeous fragrance. There is no acceptable substitute. If not available, just omit.

Turmeric leaves (daun kunyit)



SPICES

Asafoetida (hing, heeng, perungayam)

Asafoetida is the dried resin of a plant that is used as flavouring in Indian cooking. It has a very pungent smell and distinctive taste somewhat like garlic, only “funkier”. In fact its very name is derived from the Latin word for fetid. If you can't get it, dry roast a large peeled clove of garlic until browned and blistered and put into the blender with the rest of the ingredients to be ground.

Anise seeds (jintan manis)

Anise seeds are often confused with fennel seeds but generally do not feature prominently in Southeast Asian cuisines. They have a similar but much stronger flavour and aroma than fennel seeds. In India, fennel and anise are easily available and often considered interchangeable. Further feeding the confusion is the fact that both are called “jintan manis” in the Malay language. For local recipes, when anise seeds are specified, substitute with an equal amount of fennel.

Cardamom pods (buah pelaga)

Cinnamon (pattai)

Cloves (bunga cengkih)

Coriander seeds (ketumbar)

Cumin seeds (jintan halus, jintan putih)

Green chillies

Fennel seeds (jintan kasar, jintan manis)

Fennel seeds are often mistaken for anise seeds and vice versa. Both are closely related, and look and share a similar liquorice-like flavour, though fennel seeds are the milder, sweeter, larger and lighter coloured of the two. Fennel is usually (but not exclusively) used with cumin in the proportion of two parts fennel to one part cumin, in South Indian-style curries and some Malay, Nyonya and local Eurasian dishes.

Fenugreek (alba, methi)

Mustard seeds (biji sawi)

Nigella seeds (kalonji)

Red chillies

Star anise pods

Turmeric

CONDIMENTS AND SEASONINGS

Amchur (dried green mango powder)

Belacan (fermented shrimp paste)

When cooking with belacan, too little is better than too much. Never put raw belacan into your spice mix. Either toast it first or crumble the raw belacan into hot oil and fry until the smell dissipates, before adding the spice mix.

Black rice vinegar

Chinese cooking wine

Cincalok (fermented krill, toh hay)

Coconut

“White coconut” refers to skinned coconut, or coconut meat without the dark brown skin, used mainly for desserts or where a nicer appearance and softer texture is preferred. For other kitchen uses, unskinned coconut is fine.

Dried krill (gragok)

Dried lily buds (kim chiam)

Dried shrimp (hay bee)

Fermented black prawn paste (petis udang, hay ko)

Ikan bilis (dried anchovies)

Kokum (kodampuli)

Limau kasturi (calamansi lime)

Limau nipis (key lime)

MSG, Vetsin (monosodium glutamate)

Rock salt

Rosewater

Tamarind paste (asam jawa)

Tamarind slice (asam keping)

Toddy

White rice vinegar

White synthetic vinegar

SAUCES

Chinese sweet dark soy sauce

Dark soy sauce

Fish sauce

Hoisin sauce

Kicap manis (sweet dark soy sauce)

Light soy sauce

Mushroom soy sauce

Oyster sauce

Worcestershire sauce

Yellow bean sauce

SUGAR

Black sugar

Brown slab sugar

Brown sugar

Demerara sugar

Golden honeycombed sugar

Golden rock sugar

Honey

Maltose (sold in small plastic tubs in neighbourhood Chinese grocery shops)

Muscovado sugar

Palm sugar (gula melaka, gula jawa)

Red sugar (gula merah)

White rock sugar

White sugar

NOODLES

Ban mian (handmade noodle)

Bee hoon (rice vermicelli)

Bee tai bak (short rice noodle)

Chor bee hoon (coarse rice vermicelli, laksa noodle)

Ipoh kway teow (flat rice noodle)

Kway teow (flat rice noodle)

Mee hoon kuay (hand-torn noodle)

Mee kia (fine egg noodle)

Mee pok (flat egg noodle)

Mee sua (wheat vermicelli)

Tung hoon (mung bean vermicelli, glass noodles)

Yellow noodles (Hokkien mee)

RICE, LENTILS, NUTS, BEANS AND GRAINS

Almonds

Basmati rice

Black glutinous rice (pulut hitam)

Black soybean (or tow)

Broken rice

Brown rice

Candlenut (buah keras, kemiri)

Cashew nuts

Channa dal (dried split chickpeas)

Chestnuts

Chickpeas

Fermented black beans

Fu chuk (fried bean curd skin)

Fu pei (dried bean curd skin)

Green beans

Jasmine rice

Kidney beans

Masoor dal (red lentil)

Red fermented bean curd (nam yue)

Red yeast rice (ang kek bee, ang kak)

Soybean

Tau kwa (firm bean curd)

Tau pok (deep fried tofu squares)

Taucheo (fermented soybean paste)

Moong dal (split mung bean)

Peanuts

Red beans

Terigu (wheat)

Toovar dal (toor dal, split yellow oily lentil)

Urad dal (black gram, black lentil)

White glutinous rice



FLOURS, STARCHES AND RELATED PRODUCTS

Atta flour

Besan flour (chickpea flour, gram flour)

Black glutinous rice flour

Cornflour

Glutinous rice flour

Green bean flour (hoon kway, mung bean flour)

Green pea flour

Potato flour

Rice flour

Sago

Sweet potato flour

Tapioca flour

Wheat flour

Wheat starch (tung mien fun)

FRUITS

Guava

Jackfruit

Jambu air (water apple, rose apple)

Mango

Papaya

Pineapple

Pisang berangan (red-fleshed bananas)

Pisang keling

Pisang mas (lady finger bananas)

Pisang nipah

Pisang raja udang (red banana)

Pisang raja

Pisang tanduk

Young papaya (betik mengkal)

VEGETABLES

Bamboo shoots

Bayam (Chinese spinach)

Bok choy

Brinjal (eggplant, terong, aubergine)

When buying eggplant, choose ones with tight, shiny and plump skins that have no hard or soft spots. Avoid those with holes or blemishes, no matter how tiny the holes are. Holes indicate that pests have bored into the eggplant and have laid their eggs inside.

Chai poh (preserved radish)

Chinese celery (daun sup, daun seledri)

Chrysanthemum leaf (tang oh)

Chye sim

Daun pucuk paku (fiddleheads)

Drumstick (murunga, moringa)

Jantung pisang (banana flower)

Kai lan

Kang kong (water spinach, water convolvulus)

Kiam chai (salted mustard greens)

Koo chai (Chinese chives)

Koo chai huay (garlic flowers, flowering chives)

Lady's fingers (bendi, okra)

Mui choy (preserved mustard greens)

Mustard greens (mustard cabbage, tua chye, kai choy)

Napa cabbage

Pah bo chai (Chinese endives)

Shallots (bawang merah, bawang kecil)

Spring onions

Sweet potato leaves (daun keledak)

Tapioca leaves (pucuk ubi)

Taugeh (bean sprouts)

Tung chai (Tientsin preserved cabbage)

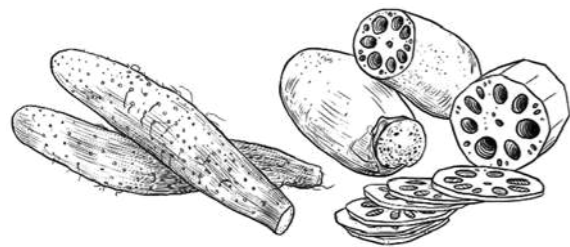
Winged bean (kacang botol)

Xiao bai chai (sio pek chye)



TUBERS AND ROOTS

Bangkwang (Chinese turnip, yam bean, jicama)
Galangal (lengkuas, blue ginger)
Ginger
Lesser galangal (cekur root, sar keong, sand ginger)
Lotus root
Sweet potatoes
Tapioca (cassava)
Turmeric (kunyit)
Water chestnuts
White radish (daikon, mooli, lobak putih)
Wild yam (shan yao, mountain yam, Chinese yam)
Yam



MISCELLANEOUS

Air abu (alkaline water, gan sui)
Bamboo leaves
Banana leaves
To prepare banana leaves, clean then soften by ironing, or by blanching or scalding in hot water and wipe dry.
Coconut leaves
Ghee (clarified butter)
Lotus leaves
Slaked lime (kapor)



EQUIPMENT

Ang ku kueh mould
Bangkit mould
Batu giling (stone grinder)
Batu lesung (mortar and pestle)
Idli steamer
Love letter mould
Mooncake mould
Muruku mould
Muslin
Peng kueh mould
Piping bag for decorating
Well-seasoned pot or pan

A well-seasoned pot or pan that has been so often used that its internal surface has been smoothed down and attained a patina that renders it virtually non-stick. Relatively little oil is needed to cook in a well-seasoned pan. Another way to achieve a seasoned pan is to heat a new pan on high heat, after brushing it with a coat of oil. Repeat 3–4 times, cooling the pan down completely between heatings. Wash it gently with dish soap and water then wipe it completely dry. The pan is now seasoned and ready for use.



Conversion Tables

Amounts are approximate and rounded up or down for convenience. For best results, stick to one system of measurement, either completely metric, imperial or American. Do not mix measurements systems, especially when baking, or you may not get the desired results.

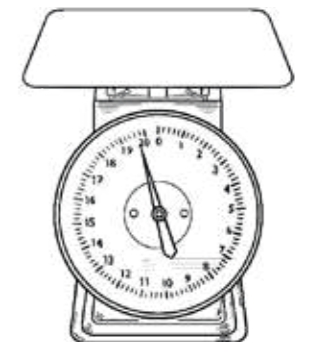
Temperature

OVEN DESCRIPTION	GAS MARK	TEMP. °C	TEMP. °F
Cool	1	140°C	280°F
	2	150°C	300°F
Warm	3	160°C	320°F
Moderate	4	180°C	360°F
Moderately hot	5	190°C	375°F
	6	200°C	390°F
Hot	7	210°C	410°F
	8	220°C	425°F
Very hot	9	230°C	445°F
		240°C	460°F
		250°C	480°F



Weights and Measures

AMOUNT	GRAMS	MILLILITRES	OUNCES	POUNDS	SPOONS
1 teaspoon	6g	5ml			
1 tablespoon	18g	15ml			3 tsp
1 cup	100g	200ml	3.5oz		13 tbs
			7fl oz		
1 kilogram	1000g			2lb 4oz	
1 pound	454g		16oz		
1 ounce	28g	25ml			1½ tbs
1 litre		1000ml	36fl oz		



About the Author

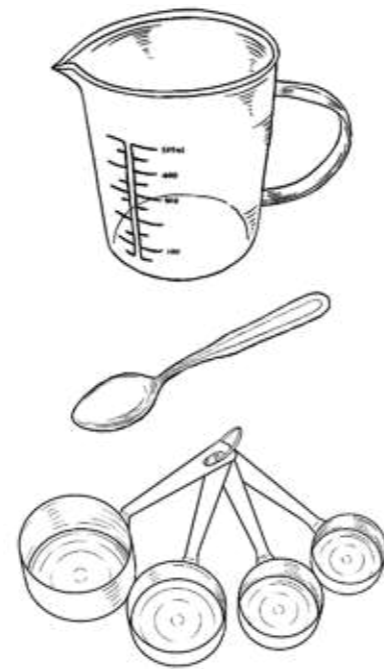
DENISE FLETCHER

Denise Fletcher received formal culinary training at Shatec Institutes in Singapore. She was previously a chef in SATS Catering, the owner of a restaurant specialising in Eurasian and other Singaporean dishes, and ran the food blog *Singapore Shiok!*, where she published recipes she has been writing for over a decade. True to the cultural mix reflected in Singaporean cuisine, her own family comes from the heritages of Chinese Peranakans, and Portuguese and French Eurasians; she is married to an Indonesian of Padang origin, and they have three children. Denise is the author of two cookbooks, *Quickies: Morning, Noon and Night* (2009) and *Mum's Not Cooking: Favourite Singaporean Recipes for the Near Clueless or Plain Lazy* (2012).



Cup Measurement

1 STANDARD TEA CUP	1 STANDARD CUP	MILLILITRES	OUNCES
Flour	100g		3.5oz
Butter	150g		5.3oz
White sugar	150g		5.3oz
Brown sugar	120g		4.2oz
Icing (confectioner's) sugar	90g		3.2oz
Cocoa powder	90g		3.2oz
Liquids and oils	100g (usually)	200ml	3.5oz 7fl oz
Desiccated coconut	60g		2.1oz
Chopped nuts	120g		4.2oz
Finely ground nuts (nut meal)	100g		3.5oz
Mini chocolate chips	120g		4.2oz
Uncooked rice	150g		5.3oz
Light cereals and grains (oats, wheat, etc.)	100g		3.5oz



g gram • **kg** kilogram • **ml** millilitre • **l** litre • **oz** ounce • **fl oz** fluid ounce
lb pound • **tsp** teaspoon • **tbsp** tablespoon



This illustrated cookbook of Singapore cuisine features over 1,000 recipes of home-cooked, restaurant and hawker favourites— from a melting pot of communities. Written in an approachable style, with easy-to-follow steps, the authentic recipes are essential to any kitchen.



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