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Vietnamese Home Cooking



Synopsis

In his eagerly awaited first cookbook, award-winning chef Charles Phan from San Francisco's Slanted Door restaurant introduces traditional Vietnamese cooking to home cooks by focusing on fundamental techniques and ingredients. When Charles Phan opened his now-legendary restaurant, The Slanted Door, in 1995, he introduced American diners to a new world of Vietnamese food: robustly flavored, subtly nuanced, authentic yet influenced by local ingredients, and, ultimately, entirely approachable. In this same spirit of tradition and innovation, Phan presents a landmark collection based on the premise that with an understanding of its central techniques and fundamental ingredients, Vietnamese home cooking can be as attainable and understandable as American, French, or Italian. With solid instruction and encouraging guidance, perfectly crispy imperial rolls, tender steamed dumplings, delicately flavored whole fish, and meaty lemongrass beef stew are all deliciously close at hand. Abundant photography detailing techniques and equipment, and vibrant shots taken on location in Vietnam, make for equal parts elucidation and inspiration. And with master recipes for stocks and sauces, a photographic guide to ingredients, and tips on choosing a wok and seasoning a clay pot, this definitive reference will finally secure Vietnamese food in the home cook's repertoire. Infused with the author's stories and experiences, from his early days as a refugee to his current culinary success, Vietnamese Home Cooking is a personal and accessible guide to real Vietnamese cuisine from one of its leading voices.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Featured Recipe: Sichuan Cucumber Pickles These quick pickles need to sit in vinegar for only a few hours before you can eat them. They're great with fried items, since the vinegar acts as a sort of palate cleanser. But the ginger, Sichuan peppercorns, and sambal oelek — a prepared red chile paste that is readily available at most grocery stores — make them different than the standard cucumber pickle.

Ingredients: 1 pound English cucumbers, halved lengthwise and cut on the diagonal into 1/2-inch-thick slices
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 (1-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely julienned
1 to 2 fresh Thai chiles, stemmed, seeded, and julienned
4 cups rice vinegar
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons sambal chile paste, also known as sambal oelek
1/2 cup toasted sesame oil
1 tablespoon Sichuan peppercorns
1/2 cup whole dried red chiles, such as Ancho or Arbol

Instructions: In a bowl, toss together the cucumber slices and 1 teaspoon of the salt. Transfer the cucumbers to a colander and let drain in the sink for 2 hours. Rinse the cucumbers briefly under cold running water and drain well. Transfer to a bowl, add the ginger and fresh Thai chiles, and toss to mix. In a separate bowl, stir together the vinegar, sugar, sambal, and the remaining 2 tablespoons salt until the sugar and salt have dissolved. Set aside. In a small frying pan, heat the sesame oil over medium heat. Add the Sichuan peppercorns and toast for 10 seconds. Add the dried chiles and toast for 10 seconds longer, until the chiles darken slightly. Pour the contents of the frying pan over the cucumbers, then add the vinegar solution and toss well. Let cool to room temperature, then cover and refrigerate. The pickles are ready to eat in 2 hours. They will keep, refrigerated, for up to 1 week.

Winner, IACP Awards 2013-Chefs and Restaurants — Charles Phan — Vietnamese Home Cooking captures the very heart of Vietnamese food: fresh, pure, full of life, and vibrant with flavor. His beautiful pictures, stories, and recipes make it completely irresistible.

Alice Waters, chef, author, and proprietor of Chez Panisse — The great appeal of Charles Phan's cooking at The Slanted Door has always been its vivid purity of flavor. It isn't necessarily simple food, but there's not a soupful of trickery or gratuitous filigree involved. In his long-awaited, warmly written first cookbook, Phan reveals the secrets of his approach to the great and varied food of his native Vietnam.

Colman Andrews, editorial director of TheDailyMeal.com — A truly magical and illuminating journey into the cooking of Vietnam, with recipes so thoroughly brilliant they will not only allow you to better understand the cuisine of that country, but they will also make you a better cook, Asian or otherwise.

James Oseland, editor-in-chief of Saveur — Like the best cooking is, Charles Phan's food is deceptively complex. With this book, Charles shows you how to unravel that

code and make delicious Vietnamese food at home. —David Chang, chef/owner of Momofuku

I very rarely leave 5-star reviews. I can tell that this one is going to get thumb-eared very quickly. This is the food that I gravitate towards, explained better and in more detail than any of the 50-odd other Asian cookbooks I own. The book goes deep, very deep, which delights me (I made rice paper!), but it also clearly explains utterly basic things, with photographs, so it's great for basic or even just aspiring cooks. A quick example: the recipe for caramel sauce lists exactly two ingredients (palm sugar and fish sauce). Any competent 8 year-old could make it, it keeps for months, and the combination might well stun you: toss it with some shrimp and scallions, and dinner is READY. Can't find palm sugar? Substitute light brown and barely notice the difference. (But it's easier to melt any sugar in a 280F oven rather than on a stove burner.) A slower example - Pork with Young Coconut Juice - is a recipe that takes second place to nothing on Earth. If you take the time to make the utterly porkalicious stock first, and find really fresh coconuts, jaws will drop. Same goes for the Lemongrass Beef Stew. Uniquely for an Asian cookbook, it specifies good-quality, sustainable (pastured, grass-fed, etc) ingredients, even when making stock, and clearly explains why. If you are interested, and just starting, you could spend YEARS with this book before you absorb it all. If you are Vietnamese-American, and looking for a cookbook to give your kids, this one is a very strong candidate. I recommend the hardcover rather than the softcover, or you might have to eventually replace it and lose years of hastily-scrawled notes, like my sugar/oven one, above. That kind of cookbook.

Interesting book....recipes are easy to follow but cooking Vietnamese food can be complicated. Delicious but definitely not something that you can make at the last minute. Even having a really stocked Asian cabinet of food, these recipes do require pre-planning. Always fun to try something new! Worth trying!

great book particularly if you are a novice when it comes to Vietnamese cooking

This is the first cookbook that I've purchased in a while and it's quite nice. The build quality is good, solid and doesn't seem like it would fall apart. The photos are wonderful and engaging. The recipes are good and easy to follow. He doesn't use a lot of hard-to-find ingredients. I wish he would list the Vietnamese names along with the English names, but that's a minor problem.

I love that the author shares that he makes his chicken broth for his wife and family and love that he shares about his family. The recipes are delicious and the images are beautiful. He makes it clear that he had to alter authentic recipes due to what's available in the area. I'm glad the food industry has really expanded and this book made for a great addition to my collection.

Charles Phan has written a much needed book on Vietnam and its history, food, and customs. His recipes read like a dream. They will be easy to follow but should be read all the way through before beginning. Some can be made in steps over days. Look before you leap. He made me feel the streets of Vietnam, its rhythms, its soul .I have been reading this like a novel, a history, a love story. I can't wait to cook and learn from him.

I ordered this book for the pho broth recipes, which came out delicious! I tried other recipes in this book and it came out too salty or wasn't quite right. So it could be my fault; I will try again and perfect it.

We started out on the first page and have been cooking 2 recipes a week. I made the rice soup for a soup Party and it was selected the best tasting soup of the evening. The pictures are not only the food but of Vietnam cities and country side. These recipes are east but not quick.....

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