

IN THIS COLLECTION OF MORE THAN 50 ORIGINAL RECIPES, CHINESE HERBAL CUISINE SPECIALIST JOANNA WONG INTRODUCES READERS TO A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO COOKING WITH CHINESE HERBS. In collaboration with a team of garlanded chefs from around the world, Joanna brings together a unique and ambitious collection of recipes that prove that Chinese herbs are far more flexible ingredients than you could ever have thought.

Herbalicious features a diversity of international recipes, from east to west; and for all occasions, including salads and soups, main courses, desserts and drinks. Complete with a comprehensive illustrated guide to Chinese herbs, and complemented with Joanna's insights into the properties, health benefits and taste profiles of the herbs used in each recipe, *Herbalicious* charts a new path to contemporary cooking with Chinese herbs for the modern table.

“Joanna was my colleague at Eu Yan Sang for more than 15 years. She has a keen interest in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and she has accumulated an extensive knowledge of Chinese herbs over the years. Given her passion for food and cooking, it is no surprise that she embarked on this journey to put her knowledge of herbs and herbal cuisine into this lovely cookbook. In this book, Joanna simplifies the concept of Chinese Food Therapy, so more people can enjoy the benefits of Chinese herbs in these healthy and tasty dishes.”

Phy. Xia Rong
Senior TCM Physician
Eu Yan Sang Clinic

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Cuisine



Joanna Wong

HERBALICIOUS
Contemporary Cooking
with Chinese Herbs

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Chef Martin Foo • Chef Ku Keung • Chef Forest Leong •
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For Review Only

HERBAL CIOUS

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DEDICATION

For my beloved Granny Chong
and my mom, Chong Siew Nyuk alias Yong Kiak Fah,
whom I lost far too soon,
and the next generation in my family,
my loving bunch of two nieces and three nephews.



For Review Only

CONTENTS



Foreword 9

Acknowledgements 11

Joanna, the Chinese Herbal Cuisine Specialist 13

Cooking with Chinese Herbs 16

An Illustrated Guide to Chinese Herbs 18

Salads and Soups 31

Meat and Poultry 51

Fish and Seafood 75

Party Foods and Small Bites 99

Desserts and Drinks 127

The Chefs Behind the Dishes 153

Weights and Measures 164

For Review Only

FOREWORD



In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), there is a belief that food is medicine and medicine is food. At Eu Yan Sang, we have in recent years, promoted this idea of staying healthy through proper nutrition and eating the right foods to complement both internal and external factors.

I'm very pleased that Joanna Wong, my colleague for many years at Eu Yan Sang, has decided to compile this book of recipes utilising TCM herbs. Joanna was instrumental in starting up a long collaboration between Eu Yan Sang and the World Gourmet Summit, which enabled us to showcase our herbs in many different ways, across cuisines and styles.

When we started on the journey to present TCM herbs in a new light, Joanna had always pushed our chef partners to innovate ways in which traditional herbs could be used. The perception that using such herbs would result in dishes that smelt and tasted like medicine was a challenge that had to be overcome. It's now a matter of record that this new way of cooking with herbs has received very positive response over the years.

I'm delighted that Joanna has been able to persuade many of our chef partners to contribute their recipes that make use of TCM herbs, and I'm sure that it will be a journey of discovery for anyone trying out the culinary ideas in this book.

Joanna has aptly coined the term which sums up the approach to this new way of using traditional ingredients as "herbalicious"; I'm sure readers will agree that's a good description!

Richard Eu
Group CEO
Eu Yan Sang International Ltd



For Review Only

JOANNA

The Chinese Herbal Cuisine Specialist

I learnt the basics of cooking from my mother and maternal grandmother (Granny Chong), including how to pick the freshest ingredients, the different cooking methods of steaming, stir-frying, deep-frying, stewing, simmering, double-boiling, poaching, blanching, and even setting the table and what type of crockery to use to help food retain heat better.

This early culinary training was also thanks to my paternal grandfather who was a gourmet. He led a family business and believed that he had a responsibility to feed his family members and workers well. So he observed five meals a day, starting with breakfast at 8 am of home-made buns or rice cakes prepared the night before; lunch at 11 am of steamed rice with three accompanying dishes; tea at 3 pm of fried rice vermicelli; dinner at 5 pm of steamed rice, soup and three accompanying dishes; and supper at 9 pm of his favourite fish head rice vermicelli soup.

As a result, there was much to do in the kitchen from early morning till late at night. And even though I was just six, I was roped in to help in the kitchen with chores such as picking vegetables, peeling onions and chopping garlic. Granny Chong believed that girls should know how to manage kitchen chores, yet also be able to handle and take care of other matters outside the kitchen. She made sure that she impressed this upon me, and this is something I have always kept close to my heart.

Ever since I could remember, Granny Chong would discipline me and teach me good table manners: how to hold my bowl of rice; not to bite my chopsticks; to use common chopsticks and spoons when picking food from the serving plate; to keep my hands close to my chest at the dining table, only stretching them out when I needed to pick food from the serving plate; never to rest my elbows on the dining table; and to always respect my elders and the men in the family by letting them pick the choice pieces first.

The maternal side of my family ran a Chinese medical hall in Perak, Malaysia, and although I was not taught about herbs, I certainly knew what was good for me. At the tender age of seven or eight, while my friends were eating sweets and chocolates, I chewed on *hua qi shen* (American ginseng). I was also accustomed to Chinese herbal dishes such as pig's heart and *ren shen* (ginseng) soup, herbal mutton soup and my mother's signature red yeast braised pork belly.

For Review Only

THE CONCEPT OF CHINESE HERBAL CUISINE

It was only when I joined Eu Yan Sang International that I learnt all about Chinese herbs and their medicinal properties and benefits.

Given my passion for food and cooking, I initiated the concept of using Chinese herbs in fine dining and presented the idea to the CEO, Richard Eu. I wanted to debunk the myth that Chinese herbs could only be used as medicine when one is ill, and spread the knowledge that Chinese herbs can be incorporated into the daily diet as a way of life for the maintenance of good health. My concept was well received and there was no turning back.

The concept of herbal cuisine was first showcased at the World Gourmet Summit (WGS) in 2004. Since then, I have collaborated with many renowned celebrity chefs in Singapore and abroad to create numerous original and unique herbal dishes. I also constantly experiment with Chinese herbs on my own and prepare herbal foods for my family and friends. By thinking out of the box, I have come up with many interesting dishes using Chinese herbs, such as replacing rice grains with *yi ren* (coix barley), using *bai mu er* (white fungus) which is typically featured in sweet soups as a food ingredient, using herbal brews as sauces and dips, and using such brews and teas as cocktails. There is really no limit to what can be done!

A BRIEF LOOK AT TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE (TCM)

During my tenure at Eu Yan Sang, I received training from qualified physicians on the philosophy of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as well as Chinese Food Therapy (食疗). It was then that I realised that medicine and food came from the same source. Although there is a huge collection of a few thousand types of medicinal herbs such as seeds, bulbs, fruits, flowers, leaves, bark, and even minerals, insects, marine and animal sources recorded in the Chinese materia medica,* only about 500–600 types are commonly used. Among these, some can be cooked with foods to support health maintenance.

In TCM, balance in the human body is achieved through consuming moderate amounts of different foods. For example, consuming too much salty food can cause kidney imbalance leading to high blood pressure and water retention. Consuming too much sweet food can cause dampness in the spleen and may enhance phlegm accumulation and lead to poor digestion. In a nutshell, TCM uses food as medicine, particularly medicinal herbs that help to balance the organ systems, and in turn help to

*Materia medica refers to the body of collected knowledge on the therapeutic properties of any substance used for healing. In TCM, there are several well-known books, namely *Huang Di Nei Jing (Yellow Emperor's Medicine Classic)*, *Sheng Nong Ben Cao Jing (Classic of Herbal Medicine)*, and the most important, the *Compendium of Materia Medica (Ben Cao Gang Mu)* which was compiled during the Ming dynasty by Li Shizhen, and is still in use today for consultation and reference.

strengthen, rejuvenate and support the body, and prevent ailments. This is also known as Food Therapy.

However, to treat symptoms and ailments using Food Therapy, there needs to be a full understanding of the yin-yang balance in the diet; the body constitution — whether one is heaty (generally one would feel hot, is easily irritable and gets sore throats often) or cooling (usually one has cold hands and feet and often feels lethargic); and the energetic properties of food and its movements and flavour. Other external conditions such as the weather must also be taken into consideration to create a customised blend of herbs for the individual.

For example, after a stressful day at work, a busy executive with a heaty body constitution should be consuming yin foods prepared with gentle cooking methods like steaming, simmering or light stir-frying to balance the yang elements in his system. If he chooses to consume deep-fried, oily and spicy foods, his spleen health will be affected in the long run, and this may give rise to digestion issues.

The concepts of TCM and food therapy are complex, especially to those unfamiliar with them, but this should not discourage you from seeking the myriad benefits of Chinese herbs. Hence in *Herbalicious*, I have used my knowledge of Food Therapy and simple yin-yang balance to focus on using these herbs as delicious and nutritious food ingredients in dishes that you can prepare for your daily enjoyment, while reaping the countless health benefits. To this end, I also enlisted the help of five renowned chefs specialising in different cuisines to create more than 50 scrumptious and healthy dishes, so that the use of Chinese herbs is not limited to traditional dishes.

The recipes in this book are much about nourishing yin, the body fluid found inside our bodies that help to lubricate our organs. This is important, especially for those of us living in hot and humid climates.

I hope this introduction gives you a basic understanding of Chinese herbs and how they may be applied in cooking to add texture and flavour naturally to your dishes, while at the same time contributing to the overall maintenance of your health.



AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO CHINESE HERBS For Review Only

Chinese herbs are vital ingredients to creating nourishing meals and can be incorporated into the daily diet to help support and/or maintain health. The following pages provide an insight into the wondrous world of Chinese herbs.

In addition to Chinese herbs, ingredients such as *bak kut teh*, apple vinegar and honey rock sugar are also used in this collection of recipes for their health benefits.

Bak kut teh is commonly used as a soup stock, and is prepared using various Chinese herbs including *dang gui* (Chinese angelica), *shou di huang* (rehmannia root), *chuan xiong* (cnidium), *ba qiao* (star anise), *gan cao* (licorice) and *yu zhu* (polygonatum root). It has warming properties and serves to increase blood circulation, and is an effective pick-me-up soup that can be consumed in the morning to kick-start the day.

Apple vinegar contains healthy enzymes and can help to improve metabolic rate, dissolve fat cells and flush toxins from the body.

Honey rock sugar is crystallised raw sugar with honey and is a healthier option to pure white sugar.

USING HERBS

Tip 1: Rinse all dried herbs before use. Some herbs require soaking and depending on how it is to be used, the soaking time will vary.

Tip 2: Generally, after cooking, most herbs are discarded because the nutrients would have been extracted in the process of cooking. Herbs that are edible after cooking can help provide roughage and add visual appeal to the dish.

Tip 3: Store herbs in airtight containers in a cool, dry place or the refrigerator, if it is humid. With proper storage, herbs will retain their freshness for years.

Note: The herb information contained herein is extracted from Eu Yan Sang's source library. It is not intended for self diagnosis to treat ailments nor is it intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of a physician or other qualified healthcare provider regarding any symptoms, medical condition, treatment or medications.

Ba Qiao 八角 (Star Anise)

Warm. Influences the lung and stomach channels. Promotes circulation of blood, expels cold and prevents cold stagnation in the middle *jiao* (the body area comprising the mid-section, including the spleen, stomach, gall bladder and liver). Commonly used as a spice, it is effective to aid common colds and flu, painful menstruation, colic and rheumatism.



Bai He 百合 (Lily Bulb)

Cool. Influences the heart and lung channels. Stops coughs, settles the heart and calms the spirit. Commonly used to improve dry coughs, sore throats, low-grade fevers, restlessness and heart palpitation.

Bai Mu Er 白木耳 (White Fungus)

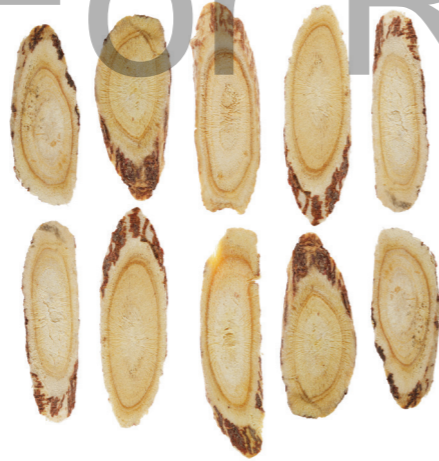
Neutral. Influences the lung and stomach channels. Nourishes the nutritive fluids in the body and improves appetite. Commonly used to cool body heat, improve heat sensation in the palms and soles of feet, dry coughs and phlegm with blood.



For Review Only

Gan Cao 甘草 (Licorice)

Neutral. Influences all the major channels. Improves digestion, prevents dryness, clears heat toxins, settles spasms, reduces pain and harmonises the properties of harsh herbs, hence it is often used in many herbal prescriptions. Commonly used to improve shortness of breath, fatigue, cough, red sores, skin problems and leg cramps. Sold in pre-cut slices.



Hashima 雪蛤 (Snow Jelly)

Cool. Influences the lung and kidney channels. Replenishes and nourishes the nutritive fluids. Commonly used to support respiratory symptoms and to enhance skin health.



Gou Qi 枸杞 (Chinese Wolfberries)

Neutral. Influences the liver, lung and kidney channels. Brightens eyes, enriches yin and moistens the lungs. Also known to be effective in detoxifying the liver. Commonly used to aid anaemia, sore lower backs, vision problems and long-term coughs.

Hei Mu Er 黑木耳 (Black Fungus)

Neutral. Influences the stomach and large intestine channels. Commonly used to cool the blood, stop bleeding, moisten dryness and improve constipation.



Gui Zhi 桂枝 (Cinnamon Twigs)

Warm. Influences the heart, lung and bladder channels. Disperses deep-seated colds, activates blood and qi circulation. Promotes qi movement to the chest. Commonly used to aid cold sweats, painful joints and menstrual problems due to cold. Sold in pre-cut slices.



Hei Zhi Ma 黑芝麻 (Black Sesame Seed)

Neutral. Influences the liver and kidney channels. Tonifies liver and kidneys, nourishes blood, extinguishes wind and relieves dryness. Commonly used to aid dizziness, headaches and constipation. Also good to strengthen hair roots and hair growth.

For Review Only



Shan Zha 山楂
(Hawthorn Berries)

Warm. Influences the liver, spleen and stomach channels. Removes food stagnation, resolves clumps and transforms blood stasis. Commonly used to support abdominal distension, hypertension and indigestion. Sold in pre-cut slices (pictured).



Yan Wo 燕窝 (Bird's Nest)

Neutral. Influences the lung, stomach and kidney channels. Nourishes the body's nutritive fluids, resolves phlegm, relieves cough, improves appetite, aids recovery, clears the complexion and promotes skin cells rejuvenation. Commonly used to aid recuperation after prolonged illnesses, internal dryness and boost immunity.

Xia Ku Cao 夏枯草 (Prunella Spike)

Cool. Influences the gall bladder and liver channels. Brightens the eyes and dissipates lumps. Commonly used to aid red, swollen and painful eyes, headaches, dizziness due to excess heat and swollen glands.



Xing Ren 杏仁 (Apricot Seeds)

Warm. Influences the lungs and large intestine channels. Stops coughs and moistens the intestines. Commonly used to aid dry coughs and constipation. *Nan xing* originates from southern China and is sweet in taste. *Bei Xing* originates from the northern states and is bitter in taste. Both types of *xing ren* have similar properties.



Yi Ren 薏仁 (Coix Barley)

Cool. Influences the spleen, lung and kidney channels. Leaches out dampness in the body, strengthens spleen, clears heat and expels pus. Commonly used to aid diarrhoea, urinary difficulty and joint pains.



Yu Zhu 玉竹 (Polygonatum Root)

Cool. Influences the lung and stomach channels. Nourishes yin (the nutritive fluids in the body), prevents internal dryness, expels wind and softens tendon. Commonly used to aid thirst, intense hunger, sensation of heat in bones, cramped and hard muscles. Sold in pre-cut slices.

For Review Only



SALADS AND
SOUPS

PRAWN YUM WITH BAI MU ER AND HEI ZHI MA

Serves 4-5

HERBS

Bai mu er (white fungus) 30 g

Hei zhi ma (black sesame seeds) 5 g

INGREDIENTS

Red onion 50 g, peeled and sliced

Carrot 30 g, peeled and shredded

Spring onion 20 g, cut into short lengths

Chinese celery 20 g, cut into short lengths

Prawns 10, small, peeled and deveined

DRESSING

Red chillies 30 g, sliced

Lime juice 3 Tbsp

Fish sauce 1½ Tbsp

Sugar ¼ tsp

1. Soak *bai mu er* in water until softened. Trim away any tough bits and cut into smaller pieces. Boil a pot of water and cook *bai mu er* for about 5 minutes, then drain and set aside to cool.
2. Boil a fresh pot of water and lightly cook prawns. Drain and peel when prawns are cool enough to handle.
3. Combine all ingredients for dressing in a salad bowl.
4. Add *bai mu er*, onion, carrot, spring onion, Chinese celery and prawns to dressing and toss well. Top with *hei zhi ma* and serve.

The Thai word "yum" means mixed together.

Thai salads are typically a mix of sour, salty and spicy flavours.

*Those concerned that consuming too much spiciness may lead to acne breakouts, will be happy to know that *bai mu er* is cooling and will help maintain the balance.*

~♥~ JW



For Review Only



MEAT AND
POULTRY

BRAISED CHICKEN THIGH WITH APPLE VINEGAR AND SHAN ZHA

Serves 4-5

HERBS

Shan zha (hawthorn berries) 10 g, rinsed and drained

INGREDIENTS

Vegetable oil 125 ml
Ginger 80 g, sliced
Chicken thighs 5, cut into smaller pieces
Store-bought chicken stock 1 litre
Garlic 6 cloves

SEASONING

Apple vinegar 125 ml
Dark soy sauce 3 Tbsp
Light soy sauce 4 Tbsp
Rock sugar 80 g

1. Heat oil in a wok over medium heat. Add ginger and stir-fry until lightly browned.
2. Add chicken and sear until lightly browned, but not cooked.
3. Add chicken stock, garlic, *shan zha* and all seasoning ingredients. Stir to mix and lower heat. Simmer for 30 minutes until liquid is reduced and chicken is tender.
4. Dish out, garnish as desired and serve.

For Review Only

This dish is traditionally prepared with white vinegar, but we have used apple vinegar and shan zha to give the dish a fuller flavour. It is not only appetising, but easy to digest and supports abdominal distension. Ideally consumed during the hot season.

~JW



For Review Only



FISH AND
SEAFOOD

ORANGE CARPACCIO WITH POACHED PRAWNS, GOU QI AND VINAIGRETTE

Serves 4

HERBS

Gou qi (Chinese wolfberries) 8 g, rinsed and drained

INGREDIENTS

Fennel bulb 150 g
Oranges 2
Prawns 24, medium
Rosemary 1 sprig

VINAIGRETTE

Extra virgin olive oil 2 Tbsp
Apple vinegar 2 Tbsp
Honey 1 tsp
Salt to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

1. Slice fennel very thinly and soak in iced water while preparing other ingredients.
2. Peel oranges and cut into 0.5-cm thick slices. Arrange on a large serving plate.
3. Boil a pot of water and blanch prawns to cook lightly. Drain and plunge into iced water. Peel prawns, leaving tail intact. Arrange on serving plate over oranges.
4. Prepare vinaigrette. Mix oil and apple vinegar with honey. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
5. Drain fennel and arrange over prawns. Drizzle with vinaigrette and sprinkle with *gou qi*.
6. Garnish with rosemary or as desired and serve chilled.

TIP As a variation to this dish, the fennel can be replaced with black olives. To retain the fresh flavour of the *gou qi*, simply rinse the berries and allow to soften before serving.

For Review Only

The myriad of flavours in this dish serves not only to refresh the taste buds, but also the mind and the spirit. Gou qi is known to have beneficial effects on vision, and it can also help detoxify the liver. Apple vinegar is full of healthy enzymes to aid digestion and boost metabolism.

WJW

