



MEATMEN COOKING CHANNEL ZI CHAR AT HOME

# MEATMEN

COOKING CHANNEL

## ZI CHAR AT HOME



HEARTY HOME-STYLE SINGAPOREAN DISHES

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#### ZI CHAR AT HOME

*Zi char* (a Hokkien term, literally meaning “cook fry”) is recognised in Singapore to refer to a variety of dishes that one can order from any Chinese cooked food (*zi char*) stall in coffee shops across the island. Dishes range from one-dish rice or noodle meals to seafood, meat and vegetable dishes to go with steaming hot white rice. *Zi char* dishes are very much a part of the Singaporean food culture, and *zi char* stalls that dish out the most flavoursome fare will attract an endless flow of diners.

To inspire others to have fun whipping up their own meals, the MeatMen share 30 popular *zi char* dishes including *crab bee hoon*, *san lou hor fun*, *cereal prawns*, *har cheong gai* and *sambal kangkong* in this second cookbook. All dishes are prepared in their usual effortless style and come with the promise that anyone with a passion for good food and cooking can be a *zi char* expert at home!

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## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the pioneers of Asian food culture — the *zi char* chefs who work tirelessly every day to refine their craft. It is from their passion that our cooking channel is given life.

We would also like to dedicate this book to our fans on social media and beyond, for their support and encouragement all these years.

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## CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	7	Vegetables, Eggs and Tofu	54
Introduction	9	Egg Trio with Spinach in Superior Stock	56
About The MeatMen Cooking Channel	11	Egg Foo Yong	58
Meat and Poultry	14	Hotplate Tofu	60
Pork Rib King	16	Clay Pot Tofu	62
Coffee Pork Ribs	18	Chye Poh Tofu	64
Pork Ribs with Stout	20	Sambal Kangkong	66
Butter Pork Chops	22	Eggplant with Minced Pork and Salted Fish	68
Har Cheong Gai	24	Stir-fried Baby Kai Lan with Mushrooms	70
Salted Egg Yolk Chicken	26	French Beans with Dried Prawns	72
Kung Pao Chicken	28	One-dish Meals	74
Lemon Chicken Chop	30	Crab Bee Hoon	76
Fish and Seafood	32	San Lou Hor Fun	78
Fish Maw Soup	34	Bonus Recipes	80
Steamed Fish, Cantonese-style	36	Orh Ni	82
Cereal Prawn	38	Chilli Crab	84
Steamed Garlic Prawns	40	Black Pepper Crab	86
Scallop and Broccoli with Abalone Sauce	42	Weights and Measures	88
Sambal Sotong	46		
Braised Abalone with Mushroom	48		
Stir-fried Clams	50		
Deep-fried Stuffed You Tiao	52		

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## INTRODUCTION

*Zi char* (煮炒) is a term used to refer to Chinese food stalls that offer on their menus a plethora of home-styled dishes that can be made-to-order based on the taste requirements of diners.

Just as hawker food is something that we have grown up with in Singapore, *zi char* food is also close to our hearts and forms a large part of our food heritage. *Zi char* dishes are hearty, delicious and affordable, and we have worked hard to capture the goodness of these dishes in our recipes, to encourage people all over to enjoy *zi char* cuisine the way we do.

It is our hope that you will enjoy the process of preparing and cooking these dishes at home to share with your families and loved ones.

Enjoy!

# For Review Only

## **ABOUT THE MEATMEN COOKING CHANNEL**

We are simply a bunch of greedy guys in the creative trade who love their food, be it eating, cooking, growing or even capturing it on film.

It all started with the obsession to record the whole process of food creation through the lens. That passion soon spread and before long, we were infected with the food-frenzy craze.

We are about being simple. Our vision is simple, to prove that cooking at home is not difficult. We hope to simplify it for everyone to make cooking easy and fun for all.

The MeatMen Cooking Channel symbolises a vision we have to bring awesome local dish dishes from hawker centres and coffee shops to the comfort of our own homes.

# For Review Only



Chris Lim

Kiat Yingda

Tan Junjie

Jonathan Tan

For Review Only

## MEAT AND POULTRY

Pork Rib King	16
Coffee Pork Ribs	18
Pork Ribs with Stout	20
Butter Pork Chops	22
Har Cheong Gai	24
Salted Egg Yolk Chicken	26
Kung Pao Chicken	28
Lemon Chicken Chop	30



The local name of this dish, *pai gu wang*, translates literally to pork rib KING. When a dish is so named, it can only mean that it is that good! And our recipe is definitely worthy of that title. Most *zi char* stalls use pork chops when preparing this dish. We use a meaty cut of pork ribs known as pork loin back ribs.

## PORK RIB KING

Serves 4

700 g (1½ lb) pork loin back ribs  
1 Tbsp sesame oil  
2 tsp salt  
½ tsp ground white pepper  
1 Tbsp ginger paste (made by blending ginger with water)  
1 Tbsp rice wine  
1 Tbsp oyster sauce  
½ tsp baking soda  
1 egg, beaten  
2 Tbsp custard powder  
2 Tbsp potato starch  
Cooking oil for deep-frying  
2 Tbsp white sesame seeds, toasted  
1 sprig coriander leaves (cilantro)

### SAUCE

3 Tbsp sugar  
3 Tbsp brown sugar  
2 Tbsp rice vinegar  
100 ml (3½ fl oz) water  
2 Tbsp tomato ketchup  
1 Tbsp plum sauce  
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce  
1 Tbsp brown sauce  
1 Tbsp steak sauce  
1 Tbsp cornflour, mixed with 2 Tbsp water  
1 tsp dark soy sauce

1. Cut ribs into individual pieces and tenderise with a meat tenderiser.
2. Place ribs in a large bowl and add sesame oil, salt, pepper, ginger paste, rice wine, oyster sauce and baking soda. Mix well.
3. Add egg, custard powder and potato starch and mix again. Cover bowl and set aside to marinate for 1 hour.
4. Combine all ingredients for sauce in another bowl and mix well. Set aside.
5. Heat sufficient oil for deep-frying in a wok over medium heat. Gently lower marinated ribs into hot oil and deep-fry until golden brown. Drain well and set aside.
6. Drain oil from wok and reheat wok over medium heat. Add sauce to wok and let cook until sauce starts to thicken.
7. Return fried ribs to wok and mix to coat ribs well with sauce.
8. Dish out and garnish with toasted sesame seeds and coriander leaves. Serve.



A close-up photograph of several fresh fish, including salmon and sea bream, resting on a bed of crushed white ice. The fish are arranged in a slightly overlapping manner, with their heads and scales clearly visible. The lighting is bright, highlighting the freshness of the seafood.

# For Review Only

## **FISH AND SEAFOOD**

Fish Maw Soup	34
Steamed Fish, Cantonese-style	36
Cereal Prawn	38
Steamed Garlic Prawns	40
Scallop and Broccoli with Abalone Sauce	42
Sambal Sotong	46
Braised Abalone with Mushroom	48
Stir-fried Clams	50
Deep-fried Stuffed You Tiao	52

This is a delicious, thick soup that we have all grown up loving. To start off, soak and cut the fish maw, then bring to a boil. The mushrooms and sauces give the soup a wonderful flavour, while the cornflour helps to thicken it and gives it the texture that makes it so satisfying.

## FISH MAW SOUP

Serves 4

40 g (1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> oz) fish maw  
3 dried shiitake mushrooms  
250 ml (8 fl oz / 1 cup) water  
250 ml (8 fl oz / 1 cup) chicken stock  
200 g (7 oz) crabmeat  
2 Tbsp oyster sauce, or to taste  
2 Tbsp abalone sauce, or to taste  
1 tsp sesame oil  
1/2 tsp salt, or to taste  
1/4 tsp ground white pepper  
1 tsp light soy sauce  
1 Tbsp Chinese rice wine (*hua tiao jiu*)  
3–4 Tbsp cornflour mixture (made using a ratio of 1 Tbsp cornflour to 2 Tbsp water)  
2 Tbsp Chinese black vinegar (optional)  
1 sprig coriander leaves (cilantro)

1. Soak fish maw and mushrooms separately in hot water until softened. Squeeze water from fish maw and cut into 2.5-cm (1-in) pieces. Trim stems from mushrooms and discard. Slice caps into strips. Set aside.
2. Combine water and chicken stock in a wok and bring to a boil. Add fish maw and simmer over low heat for 10 minutes.
3. Add mushrooms and crabmeat, then season with oyster sauce, abalone sauce, sesame oil, salt, pepper, light soy sauce and Chinese rice wine. Bring to a boil and let cook for 5 minutes.
4. Add 3–4 Tbsp cornflour mixture and stir until soup thickens slightly.
5. Dish out into individual serving bowls. Drizzle with black vinegar, if desired, and garnish with coriander leaves. Serve.





## VEGETABLES, EGGS AND TOFU

Egg Trio with Spinach in Superior Stock	56
Egg Foo Yong	58
Hotplate Tofu	60
Clay Pot Tofu	62
Chye Poh Tofu	64
Sambal Kangkong	66
Eggplant with Minced Pork and Salted Fish	68
Stir-fried Baby Kai Lan with Mushrooms	70
French Beans with Dried Prawns	72

This dish combines not two, but THREE types of eggs with chicken stock for that ultimate umami taste. The spinach acts as the base that brings all these flavours together, and it is nothing short of fantastic! The final dish is colourful and moreish. It's not hard to understand why it is one of the more popular dishes on *zi char* menus. If you've never tried this, we know you'll love it too.

## EGG TRIO WITH SPINACH IN SUPERIOR STOCK

Serves 4

250 g (9 oz) spinach  
500 ml (16 fl oz / 2 cups)  
unsalted chicken stock  
2 Tbsp Chinese wolfberries  
2 cloves garlic, peeled  
and thinly sliced  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp sugar  
2 century eggs, cleaned,  
peeled and cut into wedges  
2 salted eggs, hard-boiled,  
peeled and cut into wedges  
1 egg, beaten  
1/2 tsp sesame oil  
1/2 tsp Chinese rice wine  
(*hua tiao jiu*) (optional)

1. Remove fibrous layer from stalks of spinach. Rinse and trim into 5-cm (2-in) lengths. Separate stalks and leaves.
2. Bring chicken stock to a boil in a deep pan. Add wolfberries and garlic and boil for 1 minute.
3. Add stalks of spinach, salt and sugar. Cover and let boil for 2 minutes.
4. Add century eggs and salted eggs. Cover and let boil for 1 minute.
5. Add leaves of spinach. Cover and let boil for 2 minutes.
6. Add beaten egg and transfer to a serving plate.
7. Drizzle with sesame oil and Chinese rice wine, if desired. Serve.

