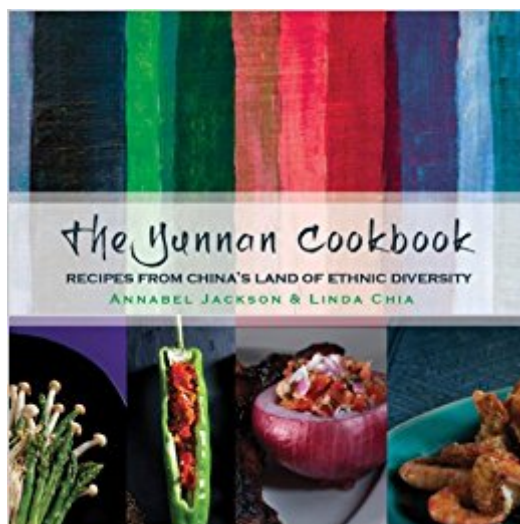


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The Yunnan Cookbook: Recipes From China's Land Of Ethnic Diversity



Synopsis

Yunnan, an exotic, mountainous land of former kingdoms which borders Tibet, Sichuan, Burma, Vietnam and Laos, is the most bio-diverse province in China. It is quite possibly the most beautiful part of the country, and also the most culturally rich. Each ethnic minority has its own distinct cooking ingredients, spices, aromas and flavors – all brought together for the first time in this unique cookbook.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

These days it's easier to sample the cooking of the Dai and Naxi as they've opened restaurants in Jinghong and Lijiang, but if you want to try their dishes at home then this book is the key. ... It's beautifully illustrated with location photographs by San Lin and, as you turn the pages, you really get a sense of the region. Recipes are interspersed with snatches of travelogue and it brought back fond memories of my time in Lijiang, Kunming, Dali Lake and Xishuangbanna. ... The recipes are clear, with many dishes illustrated with mouth-watering pictures and, best of all, they work. It's good to see ethnic food traditions of China being championed and this is a valuable contribution to the Chinese culinary scene. (Rupert Parker Huffington Post, Jan 12, 2015) The customs and traditions of some of China's minorities based in southwest Yunnan are under threat, as modernization and tourism creep in. A new cookbook spotlighting cuisine from this diverse southwestern province aims to help preserve their culinary traditions. The Yunnan Cookbook: Recipes from China's Land of Ethnic Diversity mixes recipes with colorful descriptions of the many ethnic minorities and styles of cooking that make up China's most diverse region.

... In addition to recipes, the book offers vignettes from daily life – from a breakfast in a Tibetan village to a flower festival to profiles of local chefs. (Debra Bruno The Wall Street Journal, Nov 14, 2014) If you mention Yunnan to the average food lover, the chances are they'll know the province is famous for three things: ham, mushrooms and crossing-the-bridge noodles. In their book, Annabel Jackson and Linda Chia aim to show us that Yunnan cuisine is much broader than we think. Some of the more unusual dishes include potato rice; pumpkin pancakes; fried Yunnan goat cheese with tomato salsa; Naxi stir-fried potatoes with pickled vegetables; steamed taro and broccoli with grated carrot; mint and pomelo salad; sour-spicy fish and tomato soup in clay pot; aromatic lemon honey chicken; roasted bell peppers stuffed with pork and tofu; and twice-cooked pork belly with kumquats. (Susan Jung South China Morning Post, Oct 5, 2014)

Journalist Annabel Jackson is the author of 11 books including *Vietnam on a Plate*. She lives in Brighton, England. Australian chef Linda Chia works on organic agricultural projects in Yunnan and lives in Beijing, China.

After preordering this book in June 2013, I received *The Yunnan Cookbook* today, and I'm a little annoyed that there's no index and almost none of the pages have page numbers, so the table of contents is nearly useless. The page numbering issue was a terrible design choice, and this is the first cookbook I've owned without an index. I'm not begrudging the book these errors in my star ratings, but I do hope any future reprints fix these problems. That said, I really miss Yunnan food from my time in China, and I'm excited to have the recipes. I spent a lot of time in Kunming and a bit in Jinghong, and it was nice to see some familiar dishes in the table of contents. The recipes have, for the most part, a home-cooking feel: uncomplicated, easy to execute if you've had some exposure to Chinese knife skills and Chinese cooking's typical order of operations (if you haven't, try Fuchsia Dunlop's *Land of Plenty*, aka *Sichuan Cookery* in the UK. It has great info in that regard.) The recipes are sparsely worded, perhaps geared toward someone who has cooked Chinese food before. Thankfully, I have. I was happy to see some uniquely Yunnan ingredients as far as Chinese cooking is concerned: lots of raw and cooked tomato, fresh herbs, potatoes, and an almost over-use of pickled vegetables. In that often humid and hot climate, in a place where refrigeration hasn't made as many inroads, vegetables don't last long and are pickled for preservation, and these show up in many dishes. Roasting and grilling, which features less prominently in the Chinese food of other regions but quite prominently in Yunnanese food, appears often in the book. I made the eggplant with dried chilies dish, which was quite tasty. One issue,

though, is that for this dish and a few others I've browsed, the picture of the recipe contains ingredients not listed in the recipe (in this instance, the picture shows fresh chilies instead of dried, unpeeled eggplant instead of peeled, apparently a little soy sauce for color and green onions, neither of which appear in the recipe). I added the green onion to good effect, peeled the eggplant as instructed, and didn't add in any uncalled-for soy. Another example from the next page: tofu with Chinese cabbage, whose picture shows slices of mushroom and fresh red sweet pepper (ingredients not in the recipe) and remarkably little cabbage. The "tomato and egg bake" dish came out cakey, not spicy enough, and overwhelmed by garlic chives and Sichuan pepper. If I do it again, the ingredient ratios will need reworking, and I'll make it using a frittata base, with less or entirely without flour. The egg texture in the recipe was like dry quick bread or cornbread. The Yunnan ham with eggplant and capsicum came out great using bacon as a substitute for Yunnan ham. It's a new everyday recipe for me, given my bounty of eggplants and peppers from the garden. The spicy pork with egg was a real winner, another home-style dish that was easy to make and heartily satisfying. I'll continue to update this review as I try more recipes and thus get a better feel for the book.

I am of two minds about this review. The book itself is fantastic. However, it is a second. The first was so badly damaged that I returned it. This one is still wrong, but fixable. I used to make books, so I know how to fix, but if you don't know how it would be a major hassle. Why is sending out seconds and charging for first quality products is a mystery. It has happened several times in the past year. It is too the point I am thinking of only ordering Kindle books. I would suggest that you buy this wonderful book from a book store so you can be assured of the quality. I also say shame on .

I received this cookbook as a birthday present. I have never tried Yunnan cuisine. I have traveled extensively along the eastern coast of China, but not much further west or south. Bordering Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, Yunnan is highly diverse ethnically, with the second highest number of ethnic groups among the provinces and autonomous regions in China, trailing only after Xinjiang. The geography and cultural makeup of the region contributes richly to its cuisine. This Yunnan cookbook covers a broad range of recipes, comprising of: preserves, appetisers, salads, soups, eggs, mushrooms, vegetables, vegan, meat and poultry, Yunnan ham, fish and seafood, rice and, noodles, snacks and street food, cheese, and, finally, desserts. A dish for all seasons. Ethnic Chinese cuisine is all the rage now. Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York City now boast a few

restaurants specializing in Yunnan dishes. I do not live in a major city, so there is no Yunnan restaurant within 1000-radius from where I live. I asked my husband to cook a few dishes from this cookbook for my birthday. I asked him to make a dinner out of three recipes from Yunnan Cookbook: Asparagus Stems & [Chinese] Broccoli Stalks with Spicy Pork Loin; Eight Treasure Chicken; and Spicy Dai Tomato Soup. This menu was fit for an emperor. When we visited Beijing in 2005, I wanted to patronize one of those restaurants featuring imperial cuisine, but each dish was US\$25, which was not really expensive for Americans, but we were not traveling like kings and queens and had to restrain ourselves fiscally. I love Chinese broccoli and was very happy to see a dish featuring this dark, leafy green vegetable. Dark green vegetables are a source of many nutritious ingredients for good health: fiber, protein, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and plant-based substances that may help protect against heart disease, diabetes, and perhaps even cancer. Yes, some foods taste good AND are good for you! This traditional Yunnan dish uses only the stalks of asparagus rather than the tips, and the thick stalk of Chinese broccoli rather than the leaves and flowers. The photo accompanying the recipe, however, does show the leaves and flowers of the Chinese broccoli. Perhaps the authors of the book liked those parts of the plant and improvised, which is what I would have done, as I love the leaves and flowers of Chinese broccoli. In fact, those are my favorite parts! I probably would have used the tips of the asparagus, too. Napoleon Bonaparte was once asked why he only ate the tips of asparagus, and he responded, "That is the best part!" I agree wholeheartedly. I think it is fine to deviate from recipes and improvise and be creative. If you like parts of vegetables not called for, why discard them? The Eight Treasure Chicken is an autumn dish (it is winter here, but that doesn't deter me from eating autumn food), symbolized by the chestnuts, a favorite for celebrating good health and fortune. Optional ingredients include smoked dried oyster, and on occasions would feature duck instead of chicken. Since I was going to be crowned Queen on my birthday, I gently asked my husband to substitute duck for chicken. We only eat duck once a year, on Christmas Day. I like to think my birthday is just as special as Christmas! This dish calls for a handful of traditional Chinese ingredients which lend aromatic flavor to the broth: black cardamom, dried chillies, shitake mushrooms, dried bak Choi, wood fungus, goji berries, dried longans, and red dates. This dish is as close to Chinese Imperial food as I have relished. I bet it would put those imperial dishes in Beijing to shame! It is winter here, and I need my soup to warm me up! The Spicy Dai Tomato Soup is a spicy Dai soup incorporating green bean cake (or substitute with rice cake). Tomatoes are high in antioxidants, credited with fighting cancer cells and other toxic objects in your body. The spiciness of this soup reminds me of Szechwan food. Yunnan Cookbook features seven marvelous soups. I

will have to try them all in this new year!! I concur with the previous reviewer about the inconvenience of missing page numbers throughout the cookbook. This renders the Table of Contents meaningless. A lack of index in the back of the book makes it difficult to find exactly what I need to get to the pages I want without having to flip through the entire cookbook. I am sure these little copy-editing details can be fixed with little difficulty. The index, however, is a major project, and will take some time and effort to implement. I would suggest implementing these additions in future print batches. Looking through the publisher webpage (Blacksmith Books in Hong Kong), it looks like cookbooks are a relatively new genre. Publishers are always learning and evolving, so every book production is a learning process. Other than this minor copy-editing "imperfection", The Yunnan Cookbook is a major contribution to Yunnan cuisine, and, ultimately, to the diversity of Chinese cuisine. I imagine it would be a big hit with foodies interested in venturing beyond traditional hole-in-the-wall Chinese takeouts. The Yunnan Cookbook was one of the best birthday presents I received this year!

The book I received was very bent as if the book itself had not been stored properly. The recipes are relatively simple, and some are delicious, though after cooking a few I feel the proportions are not always quite right, leaving the dish bland. Yunnan ham is impossible to get in the US but prosciutto is a good substitute.

A well-written and edited cookbook of a regional Chinese cuisine little-known in the West. The recipes I have tried have worked out well. Highly recommended.

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