

taste buds

chef Larry Janes

Partners give out a secret

Here are more comments on Szechuan cooking from Chef Larry Janes, whose column did not appear in its entirety last week due to limited space.

The Sze-Chuan Restaurant in Canton is one of metropolitan Detroit's premier west-side eateries, specializing in hot, spicy Szechuan cooking.

As with most restaurants of this type, a complete carry-out menu is also available. Rumor has it that there are a few upscale west-side domains that have purchased the Sze-Chuan's food and presented it to dinner guests at home. Personally speaking, I think it's camp to sit around the coffee table with those cute cardboard containers and chopsticks, passing the different taste treats and watching the tiny beads of sweat begin to form on my friends' foreheads.

Although a little hesitant to share their culinary secrets, Pallas and Sonny Wang, who own and operate the Sze-Chuan Restaurant, have provided a recipe for Kung Pao Chicken. This dish bears the moniker of a high-ranking Chinese officer who died during the Ching dynasty.

KUNG PAO CHICKEN
2 whole chicken breasts, skinned and boned
1/4 tsp. salt
1 egg white
1 tsp. corn starch
2 cups of oil for frying
1/4 cup skinless roasted peanuts
10 whole dried red chili peppers
2 green onions, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced

SAUCE
1 tsp. chili paste with garlic (can be purchased at Chinese grocery store)
2 tbsp. soy sauce
1 tsp. sherry
1 tsp. wine vinegar
1 tsp. sugar
1/4 cup chicken stock
1 tsp. corn starch
1 tsp. sesame seed oil

1. Cut chicken into 1/4-inch cubes. Combine chicken with salt, egg white and corn starch. Mix well. Set aside.
2. In a small bowl, blend the sauce ingredients.
3. Heat oil in wok to 400 degrees. Deep-fry chicken until cooked throughout. Remove and drain.
4. Lower heat in wok to 350 degrees. Deep-fry peanuts in a strainer till golden brown. Drain.
5. Remove all but 2 tablespoons of oil from the wok. Heat to 400 degrees and stir-fry red chili peppers until they are dark red. Lower the heat to 275 degrees, add green onions and garlic. Stir-fry 1 minute.
6. Pour in chicken, stir-fry 1 minute.
7. Add the sauce, stir-fry till heated and glazed. Add peanuts, toss and serve with rice or noodles.

Here is a list of the area's best Chinese restaurants that specialize in serving Szechuan foods:

THE SZE-CHUAN RESTAURANT
45188 Ford Road
Canton
459-3980
A11-100 WOK
41583 10 Mile Road
Novi
349-9260
WING HONG
19203 10 Mile Road
Southfield
569-5527
NEW PEKING
29501 Ford Road
Garden City
510-5129
DIN HOW
29195 Plymouth Road
Livonia
425-9888
CHIN ASTAR
2710 S. Wayne Road
Westland
326-1310

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STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Moon Ja Yoon, a Birmingham resident, is author of a new cookbook, "Korean Cooking for You," designed for American cooks. She is a registered dietitian at William Beaumont Hospital.

Korean cuisine offers variety

By Elise Frohman
staff writer

Think of bits of fish, meat and vegetables surrounded by vinegared rice and wrapped in sheets of seaweed. That's Japanese sushi, right? Wrong.

Think of a mixture of meats and vegetables, finely chopped and wrapped in a noodle skin for deep frying. That's Chinese wonton, right? Wrong.

Think of beef short ribs marinated in a spice, pungent barbecue sauce and grilled over a charcoal fire. That's good old Texas cooking, right? Wrong.

What looks a bit like sushi is Kim Bob; the fish is cooked, by the way. What looks like wonton is Man Doo. And what could possibly be a Texas barbecue is Gal Bee.

The country of origin for all three dishes is not China, not Japan and not the United States. These are examples of Korean cooking, as presented by Moon Ja Yoon in her newly published cookbook, "Korean Cooking for You."

Yoon, a Birmingham resident, has written a book explaining the ins and outs of the Korean kitchen for the American cook. The instructions are designed to be simple and clear, even if the cook has never attempted Oriental cooking.

"We use a lot of meat and vegetables mixed. It's not oily at all. There isn't as much gravy (as in Chinese food) and it's a little spicier."

— Moon Ja Yoon

See recipes, Page 2

INGREDIENT LISTS are made up of items that can be obtained easily in the Detroit area. Most are available at the supermarket. A few may require a trip to an Oriental grocery.

"When kids grow up, they may want to cook Korean food," Yoon said. "But they didn't have a cookbook. But the book isn't just for Korean Americans. Many families are adopting Korean children and want to learn more of their culture, and many people have Korean friends."

Yoon, who has lived in the United States for 25 years, is a registered dietitian at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak. Along with ingredients and instructions, she offers a

nutrient analysis of each recipe, showing the calories per serving and proportion of fat, protein and carbohydrates.

YOON EMPHASIZES the healthy aspect of Korean cooking.

"We use a lot of meat and vegetables mixed," she said. "It's not oily at all. There isn't as much gravy (as in Chinese food), and it's a little spicier."

"Korean Cooking for You" was a family effort. Yoon's husband, Hak, photographed each dish after she prepared it. There were months of cooking and photographing and typing and proofreading. To create attractive settings for each recipe, Yoon borrowed china serving pieces from many of her friends.

"For four months this room (the living room of her Birmingham house) was full of dishes. I was so glad to finish and clean up."

Occasionally, it took several tries to get a good picture of a recipe.

"SOME FINE CHINA doesn't take a good picture, so we would have to start over and change dishes," she said.

When the book was ready for publication, Yoon decided to combine business with pleasure and took the entire project to Seoul, Korea, for printing. She was able to visit relatives while checking galleys.

A traditional Korean meal would include appetizers, several different meat dishes,

several vegetables, a soup, and fresh fruit for dessert, Yoon said. (Yoon has included several sweet dishes in the cookbook to satisfy American tastes for a sweet dessert. However, fruit would be more authentically Korean.)

No Korean meal would be complete without a serving of Kim Chee, a hot, spicy pickled vegetable dish.

"The taste is very hard to describe. But once you get used to it, you have to have it. It is a fantastic food."

PREPARATION of Korean foods is a matter of lots of cutting and chopping and short cooking times, she said.

"The traditional Korean kitchen usually burned wood. Most foods were boiled or stir-fried. We don't use the oven."

Because, like the Chinese and Japanese, Koreans use chopsticks, foods must be cut into bite-sized pieces. That means a lot of cutting and chopping.

In addition to working as a dietitian, Yoon teaches Korean culture at the Korean Presbyterian Church at Nine Mile and Beech Daly roads. She and her husband have two sons, Paul and David.

"Korean Cooking for You" is available by writing to Moon Ja Yoon, P.O. Box 160, Franklin 48015. Send check or money order for \$17.50 plus \$1.95 for shipping and handling.

Vinegars add dash to gourmet recipes

By Rob McCabe
special writer

For centuries, people have searched for ways to make bland-tasting foods more palatable by incorporating condiments — with surprising and pleasant results. The onslaught of cuisine magazines and cookbooks features certain dishes calling for specific ingredients. Gourmet stores in the Detroit area carry a wide assortment of both domestic and European-made vinegars.

Marc Jonna of Birmingham's Merchant of Vino, a discount wine and gourmet food emporium, said anyone can make vinegar, yet what distinguishes a good vinegar from an excellent one is the time it takes to ferment.

"Vinegars are aged like wine," Jonna said. "They become richer the longer they age in their barrels." Almost any unpasteurized juice can be turned into vinegar, depending on the type of bacteria introduced into it. Aside from the usual selections of cider and wine vinegars, there are now a wide variety of herbal and fruit-flavored vinegars.

NUTRITIONAL consultant June Godin of the Rocky Point Co., in downtown Detroit's Eastern Market, says, "Many gourmets do a lot of testing with vinegars to see which ones they like to incorporate into their recipes."

"People have been using them for centuries. They're also used in preserving foods."

One of the most popular vinegar brands on the market appears to be the Balsamic Monari Federzoni from Modena, Italy.

Different people produce Balsamic vinegars using their own fermentation processes, making each one unique, said John Jonna, owner of the Merchant of Vino in Southfield.

Balsamic vinegars have a sweet, mellow aroma and



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Vinegars, shown here with olive oils, are from an elaborate display of vinegar and oil at the Cucina di Pasta restaurant in West Bloomfield.

taste, which can be used in spaghetti sauces, salads and sometimes even drunk straight. Various countries develop a difference in flavors to the vinegars due to the soil.

"VINEGARS HAVE different levels of acidity also," Jonna said. He has shown numerous bottles with numbers on their labels. "The higher the number, the more acidity you'll find." The numbers are there to warn the consumer of its strength.

"Many people wonder about the difference between vinegars and vinaigrettes. Vinegars are fermented juices and grains. Vinaigrettes are wine vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper and lemon juice."

Many types of vinaigrettes may be found in your local grocery store or gourmet shop.

CONCERN FOR health also contributes to the rise in pop-

ularity of vinegar. Kevin Gawronski, owner of the Cucina di Pasta restaurant in West Bloomfield, said, "I think there has been an increased interest from the health standpoint because obviously there are no calories in vinegars."

"Now that there's so much more diversified use for flavored vinegars — say for instance a peach-flavored vinegar — you can make a dressing out of it and use it for a fruit dip."

Gawronski's restaurant sells fresh sauces and pastas made on the premises and also has a nice selection of homemade vinegars with fresh fruit and herbs inserted by hand rather than by machinery.

Recipes abound in numerous cookbooks and fine food magazines, so the next time a recipe calls for a certain type of vinegar, experiment a little. It could make for a very pleasant surprise.

Also, you might like to try this recipe for:

SPAGHETTI WITH SPECIAL SAUCE

1/4 onion
1/4 shallot
1 sage leaf
butter
olive oil

carrots
parsley
tomato puree
spaghetti

Cut onion and shallot into slices. Brown in hot oil together with a sage leaf. In a separate pan and using equal parts of butter and olive oil, prepare a sauce with carrots, a pinch of parsley and fresh tomato puree, which should be cooked over a small flame.

When the sauce is cooked, add the already browned onion and shallot, then cook again for a further 3-4 minutes. Pour this sauce over spaghetti cooked "al dente" and immediately add a teaspoonful of Balsamic condiment for each person. Quickly mix before serving.