



The Seventh Annual Worlds of Flavor
International Conference & Festival

Savoring Asia –
Authentic Flavors
for American Menus

November 11th – 13th, 2004

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PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Thursday, November 11

4:30 PM **Registration**

Atrium

5:30 PM **Welcome and Overview**

Third Floor South

Speakers: Mark Erickson and Greg Drescher

5:45 PM Opening General Session I

Keynote Presentations

Third Floor South

Presentation

Asia as Inspiration for American Menus: Reflections on Ancient Flavors and Modern Tastes

Speaker: R. W. Apple, Jr.

Kitchen Segment: Host/chef: Mai Pham

Vietnam: Charles Phan, Hoang Trang, Pham Thi Ngoc Tinh

China: Fuchsia Dunlop, Yu Bo, Lan Guijun, Xiao Jianming

India: Suvir Saran, Julie Sahni, Nabhojit Ghosh,

M.A. Rasheed, Nimmy Paul

Japan: Gene Kato, Elizabeth Andoh, Keiji Matsuoka

Thailand: Chai Siriyarn, Kobkaew Naipinij, Ning Naipinij

Singapore: Violet Oon, Shermay Lee, Jasmine Ng, Chris Yeo

Presentation

America Cooks Asian, Then and Now – The View from *Gourmet*

Speaker: Ruth Reichl

Presentation

Die! Die! Must Try Asian Street Food: Tasting Singapore

Speaker: K.F. Seetoh

Guest chefs: Low Thye Hong, Subramanian Ramanan

Thank You Presentation to Our Platinum Sponsors

Durkee/Tone Brothers and Kikkoman International

7:30 PM **Opening Reception**

A festive walk-around event featuring guest chefs preparing Asian flavors, with a chance to meet our conference faculty – chefs, authors, and other experts – as well as our Worlds of Flavor Conference sponsors

Barrel Room

Sponsored by Durkee/Tone Brothers and Kikkoman International

Rice Demonstration Kitchen
In Pursuit of Flavor in South Asia: Rice, Spices and Aromatics
Speaker/ author: Naomi Duguid
Sponsored by California Rice Commission

Friday, November 12

- 7:30 AM **A Light Breakfast**
Tastes of California and Asia
Third Floor South
*Sponsored by California Raisin Marketing Board and National Peanut Board/
The Peanut Institute*
- 8:30 AM General Session II
Regions and Flavors in Focus: Sichuan Province, China
Third Floor South
Speakers/chefs: Fuchsia Dunlop (moderator), Yu Bo, Lan Guijun,
Xiao Jianming
- 9:30 AM General Session III
Regions and Flavors in Focus: India – North to South
Third Floor South
Speakers/chefs: Julie Sahni (moderator), Suvir Saran, Floyd Cardoz
- 10:30 AM **Break**
Sponsored by The Perfect Purée of Napa Valley
- 11:00 AM General Session IV
Regions and Flavors in Focus: Vietnam – Hue to Saigon
Third Floor South
Speakers/chefs: Mai Pham (moderator), Hoang Trang, Pham Thi Ngoc Tinh,
and Charles Phan
- NOON Lunch
The Spice Traditions of India
Herb Terrace and First Floor
Sponsored by Spices Board of India
- 1:30 PM General Session V
Regions and Flavors in Focus: Japan
Third Floor South
Speakers/chefs: Elizabeth Andoh (moderator), Keiji Matsuoka

2:30 PM Concurrent Activities
Various campus locations

2:30 PM **Seminar Series (2:30 PM – 5:30 PM)**
(12) Seminars plus Teaching Kitchen Demonstration/Tasting Workshops

Seminar I A (2:30 PM – 3:45 PM)

Ecolab Theater

Exquisite Encounters: The Allure of German Riesling and Vietnamese Cuisine

Speakers/chefs: Karen MacNeil (moderator), Charles Phan, Mark Ellenbogen,
Johannes Selbach

Sponsored by German Wine Information Bureau

Seminar I B (4:15 PM – 5:30 PM)

Ecolab Theater

**Vietnamese Flavors for American Kitchens: Traditions of “Pho” Soup,
Rice Noodles and Salads**

Speakers/chefs: Mai Pham (moderator), Hoang Trang, and Pham Thi Ngoc Tinh

Seminar II A (2:30 PM – 3:45 PM)

Third Floor South (with a live feed from the wok kitchen)

The Singaporean Kitchen: Memorable Flavors at the Crossroads of Asia

Speakers/chefs: Violet Oon (moderator), Jasmine Ng, Shermay Lee and
Chris Yeo

Sponsored by Singapore Tourism Board

Seminar II B (4:15 PM – 5:30 PM)

Third Floor South

A Master Class in Contemporary Japanese Flavors

Speakers/chefs: Elizabeth Andoh (moderator), Keiji Matsuoka

Sponsored by House Foods America Corporation

Seminar III A (2:30 PM – 3:45 PM)

DeBaun Theater

Fish in the Japanese and New American Kitchen

Speaker/demonstration: Hiroko Shimbo

Sponsored by Viking Range Corporation

Seminar III B (4:15 PM – 5:30 PM)

DeBaun Theater

Irresistible Indian Vegetarian Cooking

Speakers/chefs: Suvir Saran (moderator), Hemant Mathur, M.A. Rasheed,
Abhijit Saha

Sponsored by Viking Range Corporation

Seminar IV A (2:30 PM – 3:45 PM)

Rudd Center for Professional Wine Studies

The Flavor Traditions of Thailand: A Component Tasting

Speakers/chefs: Naomi Duguid (moderator), Saipin Chutima, Prakas and
Vilai Yenbamroong

Seminar IV B (4:15 PM – 5:30 PM)

Rudd Center for Professional Wine Studies

Savoring Vietnam Through its Aromatics and Sauce Traditions

Speakers/chefs: Bill Yosses (moderator), Tamie Trans-Le

Seminar V A (2:30 PM – 3:45 PM)

Rudd Center for Professional Wine Studies

Exploring Asian Flavor Dynamics and the Wines of New Zealand

Speakers/chefs: Steve Hosmer (moderator) with Bruce Cost

Sponsored by Allied Domecq Wines USA

Seminar V B (4:15 PM – 5:30 PM)

Rudd Center for Professional Wine Studies

Exploring Asian Flavor Dynamics and the Wines of New Zealand

Speakers/chefs: Evan Goldstein (moderator) with Paul Muller

Sponsored by Allied Domecq Wines USA

Seminar VI A (2:30 PM – 3:45 PM)

Chuck Williams Flavor Discovery Center

The Spice Traditions of India: Mastering Flavor Strategies

Speakers/chefs: Julie Sahni (moderator), C.J. Jose, Nabhojit Ghosh

Seminar VI B (4:15 PM – 5:30 PM)

Chuck Williams Flavor Discovery Center

**Building Flavor in the Contemporary Japanese-Inspired Kitchen:
Umami and More**

Speakers/chefs: Sandra Hu (moderator), Gene Kato

Sponsored by Kikkoman International

2:30 PM **Demonstration/Tasting Workshop Series (2:30 PM - 5:30 PM)**

Third Floor Teaching Kitchens

Sponsored by Almond Board of California and Sunkist Growers

Demonstration Workshops A (2:30 PM-3:45 PM)

I. A Master Class with Hiro Sone: The Asian Flavors of Terra

Workshop leader: Hiro Sone

**II. Contemporary Southeast Asian Cooking: Balancing Texture, Flavor
and Fragrance**

Workshop leader: Tammy Huynh

III. From Goa to New York: The Signature Indian Flavors of Floyd Cardoz

Workshop leader: Floyd Cardoz

**IV. Smokey Flatbreads, Savory Chutneys and other Memorable Indian
Flavors: A Live Fire Workshop**

Workshop leaders: Neela Paniz (moderator), Rohit Singh

Demonstration Workshops B (4:15 PM - 5:30 PM)
(Workshops repeat)

I. A Master Class with Hiro Sone: The Asian Flavors of Terra
Workshop leader: Hiro Sone

II. Contemporary Southeast Asian Cooking: Balancing Texture, Flavor and Fragrance
Workshop leader: Tammy Huynh

III. From Goa to New York: The Signature Indian Flavors of Floyd Cardoz
Workshop leader: Floyd Cardoz

IV. Smokey Flatbreads, Savory Chutneys and other Memorable Indian Flavors: A Live Fire Workshop
Workshop leader: Neela Paniz (moderator), Rohit Singh

5:30 PM General Session VI
Balancing the Art and Business of Asian Flavors, Part I
Speaker: Kozo Iwata

6:00 PM General Session VII
Regions and Flavors in Focus: Thailand
Third Floor South (concludes with Thai dance performance)
Moderator: Olivia Wu
Speakers/chefs: Chai Siriyarn, Kannika Siriyarn, Ian Chalermkittichai, and Prakas and Vilai Yenbamroong

7:15 PM Tasting and Dinner
The Night Market: A Street Food Feast and Opening of the World Marketplace
A memorable immersion into the sights, smells, sounds and tastes of Asian food and culture – with guest chefs, colorful market stalls, music and dance performances, comparative tastings, book signings, and more
The Barrel Room
Dinner co-sponsored by Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

Rice Demonstration Kitchen
Of Fish and Rice: Savoring the Flavors of Japan
Speaker/chef: Hiro Sone
Sponsored by California Rice Commission

9:45 PM Program ends for the evening

Saturday, November 13

7:30 AM **A Light Breakfast**
Tastes of California and Asia
Third Floor South
*Sponsored by California Raisin Marketing Board and National Peanut Board/
The Peanut Institute*

8:30 AM General Session VIII: FORUM
Asian Flavors and American Appetites: Envisioning the Future
Third Floor South
Moderator: R.W. Apple, Jr.
Panelists: Michael Bauer, Elizabeth Andoh, Suvir Saran, Charles Phan, Bruce Cost, Bill Yosses, Julie Sahni, Mai Pham, Robert Schueller, Naomi Duguid, Prakas Yenbamroong

10:00 AM Break
Sponsored by Pear Bureau Northwest

10:30 AM **Concurrent Activities**
Various campus locations

10:30 AM **Seminar Series (10:30 AM – 11:45 AM)**

Seminar I (10:30 AM – 11:45 AM)

Ecolab Theater

Ancient Indian Flavors for Modern Menus

Speakers/chefs: Suvir Saran (moderator), Abhijit Saha, Neela Paniz, Hemant Mathur

Sponsored by Baluchi's Indian Food/DEVI Restaurants

Seminar II (10:30 AM – 11:45 AM)

Third Floor South (with a live feed from the wok kitchen)

The Flavors and Techniques of Sichuan Cooking

Speakers/chefs: Fuchsia Dunlop (moderator), Yu Bo, Lan Guijun, Xiao Jianming

Seminar III (10:30 AM – 11:45 AM)

DeBaun Theater

The Art of Chinese Dim Sum

Speakers/chefs: Ding Ying Shun, Le Pei Qing, Law Wui Wing

Sponsored by Viking Range Corporation

Seminar IV (10:30 AM – 11:45 AM)

Rudd Center for Professional Wine Studies

The World of Southeast Asian Flavors: Beverage Pairing Strategies

Speakers/chefs: Karen MacNeil (moderator), Saipin and Suchay Chutima

Seminar V (10:30 AM – 11:45 AM)

Rudd Center for Professional Wine Studies

Asian Herbs, Aromatics and Teas: An Asian Flavor Odyssey

Speakers/chef: Sara Deseran (moderator), Charles Phan, David Lee Hoffman

Seminar VI (10:30 AM – 11:45 AM)

Chuck Williams Flavor Discovery Center

Building Flavor in the Contemporary Japanese-Inspired Kitchen:

Umami and More

Speakers/chef: Sandra Hu (moderator), Gene Kato
Sponsored by Kikkoman International

Seminar VII (10:30 AM – 11:45 AM)

Phelps Room

Chinese Flavors and American Menus: What's Ahead for Authenticity, Adaptation and Invention?

Moderator: Olivia Wu

Speakers/chefs: Grace Young, Bruce Cost, Paul Muller

10:30 PM Demonstration/Tasting Workshop Series (10:30 AM - 11:45 AM)

Third Floor Teaching Kitchens

Sponsored by Almond Board of California and Sunkist Growers

I. The Regional Thai Kitchen

Workshop leaders: Prakas and Vilai Yenbamroong

II. Flavors of a Beijing Kitchen: Blending the Ancient and Modern

Workshop leaders: Aw Yong Khing Leong, Du Jin Song

III. A Taste of Tao: The Signature Asian Flavors of Sam Hazen

Workshop leader: Sam Hazen

IV. Techniques of Singaporean Street Food: A Live Fire Workshop

Workshop leaders: K.F. Seetoh (moderator), Low Thye Hong,
Subramanian Ramanan

V. Nonya Cuisine: At Table in Singapore

Workshop leader: Shermay Lee

11:45 AM Opportunity to Explore the Spice Islands Marketplace (Campus Store)

12:00 PM Lunch and World Marketplace

Millstone Barrel Room

Lunch participants will be able to sample a variety of Asian foods – and meet the cooks and chefs that created these irresistible flavors – as the World Marketplace re-opens.

Rice Demonstration Kitchen

The Modern Indian Flavors of Bombay ... and L.A.

Speaker/chef: Neela Paniz

Sponsored by California Rice Commission

1:30 PM General Session IX

Balancing the Art and Business of Asian Flavors, Part II

Moderator: Mai Pham

Speaker: Achim Lenders

Panelists: Bruce Cost, K.F. Seetoh, Paul Muller, and Olivia Wu

Third Floor South

2:30 PM **Concurrent Activities**
Various campus locations

The World Marketplace (2:30 PM – 4:30 PM)

Barrel Room

Demonstrations by guest chefs, book signings, comparative tastings, and more are all part of the colorful activities in this dazzling 15,000 square-foot historic space

2:30 PM **The Rice Demonstration Kitchen**
Sponsored by California Rice Commission

2:30 PM **Techniques of Singaporean Cooking: The Multi-Ethnic Kitchen**
Guest author/cook: Violet Oon

3:15 PM **Break**

3:30 PM **Sauce Traditions of Vietnam: A Tasting**
Guest chefs: Bill Yosses (moderator), Tamie Trans-Le

2:30 PM **Demonstration/Tasting Workshop Series (2:30-3:45 PM)**
Third Floor Teaching Kitchens
Sponsored by Almond Board of California and Sunkist Growers

Demonstration Workshops (2:30 PM - 3:45 PM)

I. Of Royal Cooking and Regional Flavors: The Cuisines of Thailand

Workshop leaders: Chai Siriyarn (moderator), Kannika Siriyarn, Kobkaew Naipinij and Ning Naipinij

II. Modern Singaporean Cooking: Adapting Tradition for American Kitchens

Workshop leader: Jasmine Ng, Chris Yeo

III. A Taste of Tao: The Signature Asian Flavors of Sam Hazen

Workshop leader: Sam Hazen

IV. The Art of the Tandoor: Regional Flavors of India

Workshop leaders: Hemant Mathur (moderator), Rohit Singh

3:15 PM **Seminar Series (3:15 PM – 4:30 PM)**

Seminar I (3:15 PM – 4:30 PM)

Ecolab Theater

Biryanis, Curries, Chutneys and More – Balancing Sweet, Salty, Sour, and Spice in the South Indian Kitchen

Speakers/chefs: Julie Sahni (moderator), Nabhojit Ghosh, M.A. Rasheed, Nimmy Paul

Sponsored by California Raisin Marketing Board

Seminar II (3:15 PM – 4:30 PM)

DeBaun Theater

Nonya Cuisine: At Table in Singapore

Speakers/chefs: Shermay Lee (moderator), Violet Oon

Sponsored by Viking Range Corporation

4:45 PM General Session X

Faces of Culture: Food and Life in Asia

A visual feast of food photography, and concluding remarks

Third Floor South

Moderator: Naomi Duguid

Comments with images: Fuchsia Dunlop, Julie Sahni, Chai Siriyarn, and Ian Chalermkittichai with Mai Pham, K.F. Seetoh, Naomi Duguid

6:00 PM **A Final Toast**

Third Floor South

SPEAKER AND GUEST CHEF BIOGRAPHIES

The speakers and guest chefs listed below will be joined in staging this conference and festival by the talented faculty of The Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, including **WILLIAM BRIWA; AARON BROWN; ADAM BUSBY, C.M.C.; JAMES CORWELL, C.M.C.; JOHN DIFILIPPO; STEPHEN DURFEE; ROBERT JÖRIN; LARS KRONMARK; TONI SAKAGUCHI; AND KEN WOYTISEK.**

ELIZABETH ANDOH is an American writer and lecturer specializing in Japan's food and culture. She owns and operates the Tokyo-based culinary arts program "A Taste of Culture." Ms. Andoh is *Gourmet* magazine's Japan correspondent and a frequent contributor to the *New York Times* travel section; she is the only non-Japanese member of the prestigious Japan Food Journalists association. As a lecturer on historical and cultural aspects of Japanese society and cuisine, she conducts workshops and speaks frequently to industry and general-interest audiences on both sides of the Pacific. Ms. Andoh received her formal culinary training from the Yanagihara School of Traditional Japanese Cuisine in Tokyo. (Tokyo, Japan)

R. W. APPLE, JR is the associate editor of the *New York Times*, where he writes about food, the arts, travel, and politics. Mr. Apple is also an advisor to the executive editor of the *New York Times*, and was previously the paper's chief correspondent. During his tenure at the *Times*, Mr. Apple has covered wars, presidential summits, papal trips, and other national and international events and stories, and has written from every state in the union and more than 100 countries. His comprehensive articles on food and travel are well known to the *New York Times* readers. (Washington, DC)

MICHAEL BAUER is the executive food and wine editor and restaurant critic for *the San Francisco Chronicle*. In his 18 years at the newspaper, the staff has increased to 17 people, making it the largest food and wine staff of any newspaper in the country. In 2002 he was responsible for starting the wine section, the first freestanding weekly newspaper section of its kind in the country. Mr. Bauer is past president of the Association of Food Journalists, a current member of the James Beard Foundation Restaurant Awards Committee, and a 2004 inductee into the foundation's Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America. (San Francisco, CA)

YU BO is the proprietor and head chef of Yu's Family Kitchen restaurant in the Sichuanese capital, Chengdu. He has won gold medals at culinary contests in Beijing, and been covered in Chinese and international media. He is fascinated by Japanese approaches to cookery and food presentation, although his own dishes are rooted in the Sichuanese tradition. He is perhaps best known for his set-piece displays of 24 appetizers which are typical of his cooking. (Chengdu, China)

FLOYD CARDOZ is the executive chef at *Tabla*, a restaurant presenting unique Indian cuisine. A Bombay native, Cardoz enrolled in culinary school there and apprenticed at the *Taj Mahal Intercontinental Hotel*. He continued his education in Switzerland at *Les Roches*, a hotel management culinary school in *Bluche*, where he gained experience in Italian, French, and Indian cooking. Later Cardoz was hired as a chef de partie at *Lespinasse* under *Gray Kunz*.

He rose to the position of executive sous-chef before leaving to open Tabla in 1998 with Danny Meyer. Tabla has been awarded three stars from the *New York Times* and was named Best Indian Restaurant in the Sixth Annual Eat Out Awards conferred by *Time Out New York*. (New York, NY)

IAN CHALERMKITTICHAI recently launched Kittichai, a Thai restaurant in SoHo, New York, designed by David Rockwell. Before coming to New York he was the executive chef at the Bangkok Regent's Grill in the Four Seasons, Bangkok, Thailand. Chef Chalermkittichai was the first Thai national executive chef in a major five-star Bangkok hotel restaurant. He oversaw the menus at all of the hotel's dining rooms, including the legendary Spice Market. The *Bangkok Post* dubbed Chalermkittichai "the Golden Boy" in 2001, after he began hosting the weekly cooking show "Chef Mue Thong" ("The Golden Hand Chef"). Chef Chalermkittichai first studied culinary arts in London and Sydney. In Sydney he worked with Chef David Thompson at the renowned Thai restaurant Darley Street. (New York, NY)

SAIPIN CHUTIMA is the chef and co-owner, along with her husband Fuchay Chutima, of Lotus of Siam restaurant in Las Vegas. Jonathan Gold of *Gourmet* magazine called Lotus of Siam "the Single Best Thai Restaurant in North America." Chef Chutima is from Chiang Mai, Thailand, and her cooking is in the style of Isan, in Northeast Thailand bordering Laos. She apprenticed under her husband's grandmother, a cook who worked for the country's royal family. Before opening Lotus of Siam in Las Vegas, Saipin and Fuchay Chutima had a Thai restaurant called Renu Nakorn in Norwalk, California, which received raves in the *New York Times*, *Vogue* and the *Los Angeles Times*. (Las Vegas, NV)

BRUCE COST is a partner with Lettuce Entertain You and Brinker International in Big Bowl restaurants. Cost is the author of *Bruce Cost's Asian Ingredients* and *Ginger East and West*, as well as numerous articles in publications such as the *New York Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Washington Post*. He was the creator of Monsoon, Ginger Island, and Ginger Club restaurants in the San Francisco Bay Area in the early 1990s, and is a frequent guest lecturer and teacher. (Chicago, IL)

SARA DESERAN is currently the senior editor at *7x7*, a lifestyle magazine based in San Francisco, where she is in charge of the publication's extensive "Eat + Drink" section. Prior to this, she worked as the food editor at *Williams-Sonoma Taste* as well as the food editor at *San Francisco* magazine. Her writing and recipes have also been published in *Savour*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *New York Post*. A graduate of Peter Kump's Cooking School (now known as I.C.E.) in New York City, she's written two cookbooks for Chronicle Books: *Asian Vegetables* and *Picnics*. Deseran's writing was selected for this year's Best Food Writing 2004 for Marlowe & Company. She lives in San Francisco with her husband and son and is currently working on a book on sake. (San Francisco, CA)

GREG DRESCHER is senior director of strategic initiatives at The Culinary Institute of America (CIA). Previously, for nearly 10 years Mr. Drescher served as director of education/international studies at the CIA's Greystone campus in Napa Valley, CA. He has overseen the development of the CIA at Greystone's continuing and advanced studies in the culinary arts, including the founding of the college's Worlds of Flavor International Conference & Festival series and other leadership initiatives. Previously, Mr. Drescher was the co-founder of Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust, where he designed critically acclaimed culinary education programs in the United States and throughout the

Mediterranean region. In the 1980s, Mr. Drescher served for seven years as the national program director of the American Institute of Wine & Food, and its first associate director. (Napa Valley, CA)

NAOMI DUGUID is a cook, writer, photographer, and great traveler. She is the author, along with her husband Jeffrey Alford, of *Flatbreads and Flavors*, winner of the James Beard Cookbook of the Year and the IACP Julia Child Best First Book Award; *Seductions of Rice*, named the Cuisine Canada Cookbook of the Year; and *Hot Sour Salty Sweet: A Culinary Journey Through Southeast Asia*, about the cooking of the Southeast Asia's Mekong River region. Naomi also writes for major magazines in Canada and the United States, including *Food & Wine*, *Food Arts*, *Gourmet*, and *Bon Appetit*. She is an accomplished photographer, and co-creator of Asia Access, a stock photo library that specializes in images of food, agriculture, and traditional cultures. She spends several months a year traveling and researching. (Toronto, Canada)

FUCHSIA DUNLOP is the author of *Sichuan Cooking* and *Sichuan Land of Plenty: A Treasury of Authentic Sichuan Cooking*, and is the only Westerner to have graduated from the Sichuan Institute of Higher Cuisine. She also writes about Chinese food and culture for the *Economist*. An Englishwoman, Fuchsia Dunlop spent several years in Sichuan, studying first at the university, then at Chengdu's prestigious cooking school. Dunlop went to Sichuan's capital, Chengdu, on a British Council scholarship, and was invited to be the first foreign student to enroll as a regular student on a professional training course in the Sichuan Institute of Higher Cuisine. She has revisited Chengdu many times for research and further study. (London, England)

MARK ELLENBOGEN has been the wine director at the Slanted Door restaurant in San Francisco for eight years, and created the wine lists for six other Bay Area restaurants. He has worked in numerous areas of the wine business, from growing grapes in Italy to wine production to retail and wholesale sales. (San Francisco, CA)

MARK ERICKSON, C.M.C., is vice president of continuing education for The Culinary Institute of America at the college's New York and California campuses, and managing director of the CIA at Greystone. Chef Erickson is one of only 62 Certified Master Chefs in America, and has been instrumental in the development of the college's programs on nutrition and healthy cooking. In recent years he has overseen the creation of the CIA at Greystone's new Rudd Center for Professional Wine Studies, as well as its new Chuck Williams Center for Flavor Discovery and MenuMasters Center for Menu Research & Development. Chef Erickson paired his knowledge of the culinary field with extensive previous expertise in the technology sector in guiding the development of the CIA's innovative www.ciaprochef.com Internet initiative. (Napa Valley, CA and Hyde Park, NY)

MARK FURSTENBERG is the founder and owner of the Bread Line in Washington, DC, which specializes in hearth breads and the bread-based foods of many cultures. He previously owned Marvelous Markets, and is credited with pioneering artisan bread in Washington, DC. Mr. Furstenberg was instrumental in organizing the bread-baking program at the CIA at Greystone, where he is a regular visiting instructor. He is currently the consultant to the French Laundry's bakeries in Yountville, California, and New York City. (Washington, DC)

NABHOJIT GHOSH is the executive chef at the Taj Malabar in Kochi, India. A hotel management graduate from the Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, in Kolkata, India, Chef Ghosh has worked with the Taj Group of Hotels since 2003. A specialist in Indian and European cuisines, Chef Ghosh has worked as executive chef at various Oberoi Hotels in India, and Radisson Hotel in Kathmandu, Nepal. (Kochi, India)

EVAN GOLDSTEIN, M.S., is the vice president of education and PR for Allied Domecq Wines USA. The son of chef and author Joyce Goldstein, he began his career at age 19; later he joined his mother in opening the San Francisco restaurant Square One. In 1987 he became the eighth American and youngest ever (at the time) to pass the master sommelier examination, and in 1990 was appointed director of the Sterling Vineyards School of Service and Hospitality in Napa Valley. He's served two terms as chairman of the American chapter of the Court of Master Sommeliers, and served as advisor to the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation. He's co-authored numerous books, and been nominated three times for James Beard Wine and Spirits Professional of the Year. (Napa Valley, CA)

LAN GUIJUN is the proprietor of the Village Cook restaurant in Chengdu, and the administrative head chef of Xiang Lao Kan, both of which are known for their renditions of Sichuanese folk dishes. He trained as a chef at one of Chengdu's top restaurants, the Shu Feng Yuan, and spent two years in Japan as a specialist Sichuanese chef. (Chengdu, China)

SAM HAZEN is the executive chef of Tao. Chef Hazen, a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America, worked his way up through the kitchens of La Côte Basque, Le Gavroche, and Gualtiero, among others. As executive chef at Terrace in the Sky, he earned a three-star review from the *New York Times*. After a stint teaching at the CIA, Chef Hazen returned to the kitchen full-time at Cascabel and Tavern on the Green, later opening Rue 57 and Tao. (New York, NY)

DAVID LEE HOFFMAN is owner of and leaf merchant at Silk Road Teas in Lagunitas, California. Mr. Hoffman, who has a background in vermiculture (the raising and production of earthworms and their byproducts), has been traveling the backcountry of Asia for years, seeking out the best tea leaves. He's currently working in China with the Tea Institute and the Chinese Academy of Agriculture Sciences to implement sustainable organic tea farming. (Lagunitas, CA)

LOW THYE HONG is the Singapore hawker famous for his delicious char kway at stall number 65 at Newton Circus Food Centre, which he will prepare at the conference. He will also be serving up other Singaporean favourite hawker fare such as fried hokkien mee and fried oyster omelette. (Singapore)

STEVE HOSMER is regional education director for Allied Domecq. He held positions as a wine retailer and wholesaler before joining Clos du Bois as a sales representative in 1983. When Clos du Bois became part of Allied Domecq, he became director of wine education, where he trained the distributor sales force. In his current position Mr. Hosmer does everything from orchestrating wholesaler and wait staff education to helping educate food science students at Purdue University. (Napa Valley, CA)

SANDRA HU is a consultant for Kikkoman International Inc. Ms. Hu has more than 25 years of experience in food communications – editorially, as a newspaper and magazine food

editor, and in public relations, where she has worked on the agency side, client side, and as the head of the national culinary center at Ketchum, a leading food marketing agency. Today she is a senior public relations consultant to numerous clients, including Kikkoman International Inc., with whom she has worked for more than 18 years. Ms. Hu is also a freelance writer for the Associated Press. Her stories on food and chefs are seen in hundreds of newspapers around the country. (San Francisco, CA)

TAMMY HUYNH is the executive chef and proprietor of Tamarine. Born in the coastal city of Vung Tau, Vietnam, her cooking blends the classical skills she learned from her mother with her own experimental approach. Chef Huynh studied biochemistry at U.C. Davis, and earned a doctorate in pharmacy from University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, but her love of cooking and experimenting with food prompted her to leave her pharmacy practice and begin her culinary career in 1996. In addition to overseeing the kitchen at Tamarine, Chef Huynh operates Tam and Vung Tau restaurants, both in Milpitas, California. (Milpitas, CA)

KOZO IWATA is the founder of the Rock Field Company, the first company to bring European-style delicatessens to Japan. A native of Kobe, Japan, Mr. Iwata began his restaurant training in 1956. Nine years later he opened Restaurant Hook, specializing in French food. In 1972 he founded the Rock Field Company, which combines the delicatessen concept with the Japanese tradition of *sozai* – meals made up of many small dishes. DELICA rf-1, Rock Field's first American delicatessen, opened in San Francisco's historic Ferry Building in 2003. (Tokyo, Japan)

XIAO JIANMING is the administrative head chef and manager of the Drifting Fragrance restaurant in the Sichuanese capital, Chengdu. Born in 1956, he began his culinary education at the age of 19 at the famous Rongleyuan restaurant in Chengdu. From 1978 he served as apprentice to one of China's top chefs, Chen Songru, at the Sichuan Restaurant in Beijing, where he cooked for dignitaries including Deng Xiaoping and François Mitterrand. He bears the title "Special First Class Chef" (*te yi ji chu shi*), the highest ranking for a chef in China. (Chengdu, China)

DU JINSONG is the sous chef at the Grand Hyatt Beijing's Made in China Kitchen. Chef Jinsong began training in 1985 at the Tianjin First Hotel and went on to work at the Hyatt Regency Tianjin and the Dun Huang Restaurant before joining the Grand Hyatt Beijing. Chef Jinsong won the Grand Hyatt Taipei Cooking Competition for the 2004-2008 cycle. (Beijing, China)

C.J. JOSE, IAS, is the chairman of the Spices Board of India. Mr. Jose, who has a degree in economics, entered administrative service in 1974. He's served in positions as varied as Secretary of the Ports and Fisheries Department of Gujarat; Commissioner of the Vadodara Municipal Corporation; and Vice Principal of St. John's High School in Missoram. His education has taken him from Bangalore to Birmingham to Washington, DC. (Cochin, India)

GENE KATO is executive chef/partner of Japonais Restaurant and Ohba Restaurant in Chicago. Since the opening of Japonais in 2003, Chef Kato has been marrying modern-day Japanese cuisine with European elegance. Chef Kato's culinary training is a blend of East and West – he received his associate degree in culinary arts at Central Piedmont Community College in North Carolina, and then spent a year honing his knowledge of

Japanese cuisine in kitchens throughout Japan. Upon his return to the U.S., Chef Kato was chef de cuisine at Upstream Restaurant in Charleston, South Carolina, and at Mimosa Grill in Charlotte, North Carolina. (Chicago, IL)

SHERMAY LEE is an award-winning cookbook author and the executive chef/managing director of Shermay's Cooking School. She comes from strong culinary roots—her grandmother, Mrs. Lee Chin Koon, was considered “the doyen of Peranakan cuisine.” Shermay's primary objectives are to pass on the traditional methods, principles, and skills of Peranakan cuisine. Her first cookbook garnered two awards at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards in 2003. (Singapore)

ACHIM LENDERS is director of food and beverage for Hyatt International. A 16-year veteran of Hyatt International, Mr. Lenders worked for company in Australia, South Korea, the Philippines, Japan, China, and Brazil prior to assuming his role as director of food & beverage. He was executive chef for the opening of the Grand Hyatt Fukuoka, Japan, and the Grand Hyatts in Shanghai and Beijing, where his responsibilities ranged from creating menus to designing kitchens to sourcing local produce and products for the restaurants. Mr. Lenders started his career as a chef at the age of 14 near his hometown in Germany, and worked for over 10 years in Asia as an executive chef. (Lausanne, Switzerland)

AW LEONG is the executive chef at the Grand Hyatt Beijing. Chef Leong, who has been with Hyatt for 15 years, has helped open four hotels for the chain. He began his culinary career as an apprentice at Maxim's de Paris, going on to apprentice at the Pavilion Inter-Continental Singapore. Since then he has enjoyed a distinguished career, including leading the Singapore Culinary World Team to several top-10 finishes, being invited to cook for the Prime Minister of Norway, and placing in the top 10 at the Bocuse d'Or. (Beijing, China)

KAREN MACNEIL is a wine and food teacher, writer, and consultant, and chair of the wine program at the CIA/Greystone's new Rudd Center for Professional Wine Studies. The author of the award-winning *The Wine Bible*, she is the recipient of the 2004 James Beard Award for Outstanding Wine and Spirits Professional. Her articles have been published in more than 50 national magazines and newspapers, including the *New York Times*, *In Style*, and *Food & Wine*. When not teaching at Greystone, she conducts private wine tutorials for individuals, small groups, and corporations; among her clients are American Express, Merrill Lynch, and Time Warner. Ms. MacNeil frequently appears on national television, and is host and creator of the PBS series “Wine, Food, and Friends with Karen MacNeil.” (Napa Valley, CA)

HEMANT MATHUR is co-executive chef, with Suvir Saran, of DÉVI, which opened recently in Manhattan. A native of Jaipur, India, Chef Mathur's culinary education has taken him everywhere from Bukhara Restaurant in New Delhi to Mexico, where he was private chef to British financier and activist Sir James Goldsmith. In New York City, Chef Mathur garnered much acclaim for his work at Diwan Grill, Tamarind, and most recently Amma, and for bringing a new level of sophistication and innovation to Indian food in America. (New York, NY)

KEIJI MATSUOKA is the head chef at Akasaka Seiyu, a top ryotei restaurant in Japan. Little known outside of that country, ryoteis are exclusive restaurants which feature traditional high-end Japanese food, accompanied by art, entertainers, and handcrafts as tableware.

Akasaka Seijyu is one of the most famous ryoteis in Japan, and has never opened its doors to the general public, instead serving customers from politics to show business. Mr. Matsuoka has been a celebrated ryotei chef for over 30 years; this conference will mark the first time that Chef Matsuoka has presented his cooking skills outside of Japan. (Tokyo, Japan)

PAUL MULLER is the corporate executive chef and director of culinary operations for P.F. Chang's China Bistro and Pei Wei Asian Diner, the latter of which he also created. He joined P.F. Chang's in 1995 as executive chef of the La Jolla restaurant, and was promoted to corporate executive chef in 1996. Before joining P.F. Chang's, he was partner and chef de cuisine of Abiento, a Pasadena restaurant specializing in continental fare. He received his formal training at the New York Institute of Technology's School of Culinary Arts, and was honored with the Executive Chef Award for Excellence. (Washington, DC)

KOBKAEW NAIPINIJ and **NING NAIPINIJ** are a mother and daughter team who teach at the prestigious Rajabhat Institute Suan Dusit Royal Cooking College in Bangkok. They have written about and taught cooking collectively for over 30 years, focusing on classical Thai cuisine with a special interest in both the history and health concerns of their dishes. (Bangkok, Thailand)

JASMINE NG is a culinary arts instructor at the Hospitality & Tourism Management School at Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore. A chef for the past 21 years, Ms. Ng has considerable experience in both the hotel business and education. Chef Ng has represented Singapore in many international culinary competitions, where she won numerous awards. She was part of the team that was first runner-up in the overall national team competition, and won gold for the cold and hot displays, at the IGEHO 99 4e Salon Culinaire Mondial Basel/Switzerland in 1999, as well as a silver medal at the Ika Hoga Culinary Olympiad in 1996. (Singapore)

PICHET ONG is the pastry chef at 66. A graduate of Brandeis University and U.C. Berkeley, he began working at bakeries and restaurants in the Bay Area starting with Acme Breads, Chez Pannise, and La Folie. Pichet grew up in a number of Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and focuses on reinterpreting classic Asian desserts and introducing unusual and exotic Asian flavors in his pastry menus. He has served as a consulting pastry chef for Patroon, 92, Butterfield 81, the Park, and for Jean Georges Vongerichten, including the opening of 66 and the upcoming Spice Market. In 1999, Pichet opened two new Vietnamese restaurants in Boston called Pho, featuring seasonally changing Asian-accented cuisine and desserts. In 2001, Pichet returned to New York City. (New York, NY)

VIOLET OON is an acknowledged authority on Asian cuisines and the evolution of cuisines around the world. She was a guest chef at the James Beard House in New York and has appeared on the Food Network, Fox Television, and Ken Hom's BBC cooking series. In April 2004, Chef Oon made a presentation – "Singapore, Culinary Crossroads" – at the International Association of Culinary Professionals' annual convention in Baltimore, with co-presenters Joyce Jue and Chris Yeo of San Francisco. She has also written three cookbooks. (Singapore)

JAMES OSELAND is a food writer based in New York, specializing in the foods of Southeast Asia. He has written extensively for *Savueur*, *Vogue*, *Time Out New York*, and the *Village Voice*.

In 2003 he was nominated for a Jacob's Creek World Food Media award as best food journalist, and in 2002 his *The Spice of Time* was nominated for a James Beard Award. Currently he's working with Maria Guarnaschelli on *The Cradle of Flavor: A Treasury of Recipes from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore*. (New York, NY)

NEELA PANIZ is the chef/owner of Bombay Café, the critically acclaimed Los Angeles restaurant. Bombay Café has been voted "Best Indian Restaurant" in the Los Angeles *Zagat Survey* for the last seven years. Ms. Paniz is also the co-owner of the Bombay Café Catering Company, author of the *Bombay Café Cookbook*, and is launching a line of Indian specialty foods. (Santa Monica, CA)

NIMMY PAUL is an internationally recognized cooking instructor with more than 14 years' experience. She teaches traditional Kerala Syrian Christian cookery and native Kerala cuisine to visiting travelers, and she and her husband host meals for guests who wish to sample home-cooked food in a friendly ambience. Ms. Paul and her recipes have been featured in *Saveur*, the *New York Times*, and *Chile Pepper Magazine*. (Karala, India)

MAI PHAM is the chef/owner of Lemon Grass Restaurant in Sacramento and author of *Pleasures of the Vietnamese Table* and *The Best of Vietnamese and Thai Cooking*. A food columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and host of the Food Network special, "My Country, My Kitchen: Vietnam," Chef Pham is the winner of the 1998 IACP Bert Greene Award for Distinguished Journalism. She leads culinary tours of Southeast Asia on behalf of The Culinary Institute of America (her first tour to Vietnam for the school was the subject of a two-part "CNN Travel Now" special). She is also a frequent guest instructor at the CIA's Napa Valley campus. (Sacramento, CA)

CHARLES PHAN is the chef and owner of the Slanted Door, a modern Vietnamese restaurant in San Francisco. Born in La Dat, Vietnam, Chef Phan left his home country along with his family – his parents and five siblings – after the war in 1975. The Phan family opened the original Slanted Door in the Mission District in 1995 with a vision to blend Vietnamese cooking technique with local ingredients. Current plans include reopening their original Valencia Street location with a menu featuring the street foods of Vietnam. Chef Phan was named San Francisco Focus magazine's rising star chef for 1998, won the 2004 James Beard Award for "Best Chef: California," and is a frequent visiting instructor at the CIA at Greystone. (San Francisco, CA)

LE PEI QING is the Chinese dim sum chef at the Shanghai Peace Hotel. (Shanghai, China)

ERNIE QUINONES is executive chef and director of culinary operations for Boston's Mantra Restaurant. He worked with Chef Thomas John to open Mantra in the emerging Boston neighborhood the Ladder District, and is currently working to open a Mantra Restaurant in Miami. A Los Angeles native, Chef Quinones earned a degree in Baking and Pastry Arts from The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. He worked at Chocolate Central (the Hotel Hershey in Pennsylvania), Four Seasons Dallas, and Four Seasons Houston before making the move to Mantra. He served as executive pastry chef for Mantra for three years before being named executive chef. (Boston, MA)

SUBRAMANIAN RAMANAN is chef at the Casuarina Curry restaurant, famous for its crispy and fragrant roti prata. At the conference he plans to prepare special creations such as prata

with pork floss, cheese chocolate and ice cream. He will also serve tea Singapore-style – teh tarik. (Singapore)

M.A.RASHEED is the executive chef at the Taj Residency, Ernakulam, India. A hotel management graduate from the Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology in Mumbai, he has been working with the Taj Group of Hotels, India since 1980. Specializing in Indian cuisine, Chef Rasheed has worked as executive chef with various Taj Hotels in India and abroad since 1990. He has also represented the Taj Group of hotels for Indian food promotions in locations such as Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Singapore, London. (Ernakulam, India)

RUTH REICHL is editor-in-chief of *Gourmet* magazine. Ms. Reichl had been the restaurant critic for the *New York Times* since 1993. Prior to that time she was both restaurant critic and food editor of the *Los Angeles Times*. From 1972 to the present Ms. Reichl has had feature articles printed in numerous publications, including the *New York Times Magazine*, *Ms.* magazine, *Metropolitan Home*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Savoyeur*. Her latest memoir is *Comfort Me with Apples*, a follow-up to her bestselling memoir, *Tender at the Bone: Growing Up at the Table*. Ms. Reichl was elected to Who's Who of American Cooking in 1984. She received a James Beard Award for Journalism in 1995, and the James Beard Award for Restaurant Criticism in both 1996 and 1998. (New York, NY)

ABHIJIT SAHA is executive chef at the Park, Bangalore. Rated amongst the top 10 chefs in the country, Chef Saha specializes in Indian, Italian, and Continental cuisines. A gold medalist at the International Mango Culinary Contest in 1998 and the Taj Culinary Olympics in 1996, he trained under Michelin star chef Giorgio Locatelli at Zafferano in London, and also at the French Horn in Reading, England. He has worked very closely with Antonio Carluccio of Neal Street Restaurant, London, to set up the award-winning restaurant Italia at the Park, Bangalore. (Bangalore, India)

JULIE SAHNI is one of America's leading experts on the food and cooking of India. She is recognized for her work as a chef, cooking teacher, and author of a group of critically acclaimed books. Her written works to date include *Classic Indian Cooking*, *Classic Indian Vegetarian and Grain Cooking*, and *Savoring Spices and Herbs: Recipe Secrets of Flavor, Aroma and Color*. She is at work on a book on the world of Indian curries. (New York, NY)

SUVIR SARAN is a chef, caterer, teacher and frequent contributor to *Food Arts Magazine*. His book, *Indian Home Cooking: A Fresh Introduction to Indian Food*, was published in September 2004. The publication coincided with the opening of Saran's new restaurant DÉVI, where he and Hemant Mathur are co-executive chefs. Saran has already become a respected food authority, poised to make great contributions to the development of Indian food in the U.S. He is at once faithful to the authentic homemade dishes of his youth, and yet a champion of the diversity that India has to offer and to the continual evolution of the multitude of flavors. (New York, NY)

ROBERT SCHUELLER is director of public relations for Melissa's, the largest variety provider of specialty produce in the United States. He frequently presents at leading food and produce trade industry conferences, including those for the Produce Marketing Association, the National Association of Specialty Foods Trade, United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, and at the Food Marketing Institute Annual Expo. (Los Angeles, CA)

K.F. SEETOH is the creator and publisher of Singapore's Bible of food, *Makansutra*, a comprehensive guide to restaurants and the phenomenal world of Singaporean hawker centers and street food. Mr. Seetoh, recently profiled as part of a major *New York Times* feature on the food and restaurant scene in Singapore, is also the host of the food show "Makansutra," and recently launched Soul Food by Makansutra, Singapore's first hawker bistro. (Singapore)

JOHANNES SELBACH is the winemaker/owner of Weingut Selbach-Oster in Germany's famous Mosel-Saar-Ruwer region. The Selbach family has been continuously cultivating Riesling in steep vineyards along the Mosel River since 1661. Mr. Selbach and his wife Barbara run the estate with a passion for producing wines of outstanding quality. (Germany)

HIROKO SHIMBO is the author of *The Japanese Kitchen*, a comprehensive book which has become the standard English language work on Japanese cuisine. Her next major book, *The Sushi Experience*, will be a comprehensive treatment of sushi. Hiroko also writes for magazines and newspapers on Japanese cooking. She began in Hiroko's Kitchen in her native Japan in 1989, offering culinary consulting services for restaurants and the food industry, professional and avocational training in Japanese and other Asian cuisine, unique culinary tours to Japan, and cooking implements. Hiroko also appears frequently on radio and television in the United States. (New York, NY)

DING YING SHUN is the executive chef at the Shanghai Cypress Hotel. (Shanghai, China)

ROHIT SINGH is the owner of Breads of India and Gourmet Curries, a Berkeley restaurant known for its vast array of curries and specializing in a variety of tandoor and domed griddle Indian flatbreads. He learned cooking in his college days, and is currently working on a cookbook of rural and classical cuisine of regional India, and recently opened a Walnut Creek branch of Breads of India. A third Breads of India will open in Oakland by the end of 2004. (Berkeley, CA)

CHAI SIRIYARN is the chef/owner of Marnee Thai restaurant, with two locations in San Francisco. Marnee Thai has been one of the top Thai restaurants in the San Francisco *Zagat Survey* for the last 12 years. Born and raised in the family food business in Bangkok, Chef Siriyarn's 30 years of experience, specializing in the home-style cooking of Central Thailand, have contributed to the popularity of his San Francisco restaurant. Chef Siriyarn was the grand prize winner in the Pad Thai Festival contest organized by the Office of the National Culture Commission of Thailand and the Royal Thai Consulate General in Los Angeles. He was also awarded International Chef of the Year at the Awards of the Americas in New York City. (San Francisco, CA)

KANNIKA SIRIYARN learned traditional Thai cooking and desserts from her aunt, who had a food store in the market of Ayudthaya, one of the oldest cities in Thailand. She moved to Bangkok in 1952 and ran her own business as a food vendor in the market of Prakanong, selling her curries and Thai sweets for over three decades. After her retirement, Mrs. Siriyarn moved to Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand, where she still loves to cook, always keeping abreast of the new trends in Thai cuisine. (Chiang Mai, Thailand)

HIRO SONE is the chef/co-owner of Terra restaurant in St. Helena, CA. Terra has consistently been named as one of the top 10 restaurants in the San Francisco Bay Area by *Gourmet*, the *San Francisco Examiner*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Zagat's Survey*. Chef Sone was formerly chef at Spago, Los Angeles, and head chef at Spago, Tokyo. He formally trained in French cooking at the famous Ecole Technique Hoteliere Tsuji, where he studied with such prestigious Michelin three-star chefs as Paul Bocuse, Pierre Troisgros, and Joel Rubuchon. Chef Sone grew up in Miyagi, Japan, where his family has grown premium (sasanishiki) rice for 18 generations. (Napa Valley, CA)

TOMMY TANG is an author, television personality, and the owner of Tommy Tang's Restaurant in West Hollywood. Born in Bangkok, the youngest of 12 children, Mr. Tang became familiar with Americans during the Vietnam War and subsequently immigrated to the United States. After a stint working in music as a manager and producer, Mr. Tang took a job as manager/chef at a Thai restaurant in Hollywood. In 1982 Mr. Tang and his wife opened his namesake restaurant on Melrose Avenue. Two years later they opened a New York location as well. Mr. Tang released his first cookbook, *Modern Thai Cuisine*, in 1991. Since 1996 he has co-produced and starred in a travel/cooking series for PBS. (Los Angeles, CA)

PHAM THI NGOC TINH is the chef and owner of Thuong Chi restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. A native of Hue, Tinh specializes in royal cuisine and the foods of the central region of Vietnam. Prior to opening her restaurant, Tinh was the founding chef of Ngu Binh, a highly acclaimed restaurant specializing in Hue cuisine in Ho Chi Minh City, and then the chef of the Vietnamese restaurant in the New World Hotel. (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam)

HÒANG TRANG is in charge of food and beverage for the M&T Company in Ho Chi Minh City, and collaborates on *Culture and Art of Food and Beverage* magazine. Born in Central Vietnam, she graduated from Hue University with a B.A. in Vietnamese literature. Before her culinary career, she was an announcer on Vietnamese television. Her culinary experience includes cooking at T.I.B Restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City, at the New World Hotel's Vietnamese restaurant, and at the Temple Club Restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City. (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam)

TAMIE TRANS-LE is the chef at Bôi Restaurant, Food of Vietnam in New York. Chef Trans-Le grew up in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, in a large family that specialized in food shops and restaurants. Their home was in the center of that thriving city, and their take-out food shop was a favorite of gourmets in their busy neighborhood. She learned how to cook from her mother, a fine chef. Today she relives her memories of Vietnam through her cooking at Bôi Restaurant, Food of Vietnam. (New York, NY)

OLIVIA WU is a chef, teacher, and food writer. Ms. Wu has been in food journalism since the late 1980s, when she was a food editor, restaurant critic, and food and nutrition writer at the Chicago dailies. She won the Newspaper Food Editors and Writers Association awards for feature and column writing in 1991 and 1992. Prior to that, she wrote *The Grand Wok Cookbook*, a Tastemaker Award winner in 1984. She has taught and studied cooking (at the Ecole LeNotre in France, and in Thailand), opened a patisserie, and worked as a caterer. In 2000, her non-cookbook, *Turning 50: Fifty Personal Celebrations*, was released. She currently works as a private chef and caterer, teaches cooking and yoga, and writes for several professional chefs' associations. (San Francisco, CA)

LAW WUI WING is the Chinese executive chef at JW Marriott Hotel Tomorrow Square Shanghai. (Shanghai, China)

PRAKAS and **VILAI YENBAMROONG** are the co-owners of three Thai restaurants in Los Angeles, as well as Talesai Thai in West Hollywood. Talesai has enjoyed a steady stream of customers and critical raves over the years, which Prakas Yenbamroong credits to his executive chef and mother, Vilai. Prakas drew up a casual variation on Talesai that caters to the home-meal market and has a duplicable system of operations; the first Cafe Talesai opened in Beverly Hills last year. (West Hollywood, CA)

CHRIS YEO is the chef/owner of Straits Café, San Francisco and Palo Alto. Mr. Yeo was one of the first restaurateurs to present genuine Singaporean cuisine, a blend of the flavors and cooking styles of Thai, Indonesian, Chinese, and Malay, Indian, and Nonya, to San Francisco. He is the co-author of *The Cooking of Singapore*. Mr. Yeo has served as a guest chef at the Smithsonian Institute and the James Beard House, as well as Singaporean embassies to the United States and the United Nations. (San Francisco, CA)

BILL YOSSES is the pastry chef at Josephs and Bôi, Food of Vietnam in New York. He began his career working at La Foux, a traditional French restaurant, while in France studying for his master's degree. Upon returning to New York in 1985, Chef Yosses teamed up with David Bouley at Montrachet and moved with him to his four-star restaurants Bouley and Bouley Bakery before moving on to Citarella the Restaurant, now known as Josephs. He was nominated for the 2004 James Beard Outstanding Pastry Chef Award. Chef Yosses has appeared on "Regis & Kelly," NBC's "Today Show," and "Martha Stewart Living," and been featured in the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Times* and *Art Culinare*, among others. (New York, NY)

GRACE YOUNG is a food writer and the author of *The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen*, which won the IACP International Cookbook Award. It was also an IACP First Cookbook Finalist and James Beard International Cookbook Finalist. Ms. Young's newest cookbook, *The Breath of a Wok: Unlocking the Secrets of Chinese Wok Cooking Through Recipes and Lore*, was published in 2004. Ms. Young has been featured on numerous television shows, including "CBS Sunday Morning," "Good Morning America," and "Cooking Live with Sara Moulton." For 17 years Ms. Young was the test kitchen director and director for food photography for Time-Life Books. (New York, NY)

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RESOURCE MATERIALS

MAPS

Reference maps of China, India, Japan, and Southeast Asia

GREYSTONE CAMPUS STORE AND MARKETPLACE BOOK LIST

Publications from our participating chefs, cooks, authors, and experts,
available for sale throughout the conference, as well as
other recommended books on the subject

GLOSSARIES

Demystifying some of the ingredients found in
Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Southeast Asian cuisines

MAP OF CHINA



MAP OF INDIA



MAP OF JAPAN



MAP OF SOUTHEAST ASIA



THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA AT GREYSTONE CAMPUS STORE AND MARKETPLACE

BOOKS FEATURING THE FLAVORS OF ASIA

China

- Breath of a Wok*, by Grace Young
China Moon, by Barbara Tropp
Chinese Chicken Cookbook, by Eileen Yin-Feilo
Chinese Kitchen, by De-Ta Hsiung
Class Chinese Cuisine, by Nina Simonds
Dim Sum, by Ellen Leon Blonder
Foolproof Chinese Cooking, by Ken Hom
Helen Chen's Chinese Home Cooking, by Helen Chen
Land of Plenty: A Treasury of Authentic Sichuan Cooking, by Fuchsia Dunlop
Martin Yan's China Town Cooking, by Martin Yan
Martin Yan's Chinese Cooking, by Martin Yan
Martin Yan's Journey Through China, by Martin Yan
Modern Art of Chinese Cooking, by Barbara Tropp
Potsticker Chronicles, by Stuart Change Berman
Savoring China, by Jacki Passmore

India

- 100 Great Curries*, by Keith Floyd
Bombay Café Cookbook, by Neela Paniz
Chiles to Chutneys, by Neelan Batra
Classic Indian Cooking, by Julie Sahni
Café Spice, by Cyrus Tudiwale
Cook by Numbers, by Mahbook Momen
Flavors of India, by Meena Pathak
From Curries to Kebabs, by Madhur Jaffrey
Indian Grill, by Smite Chandra
Indian Grocery Store Demystified, by Linda Bladholm

Indian Home Cooking, by Suvir Saran
Indian Regional Classics, by Julie Sahni
Raji Cuisines, by Raju Allepalli
Savoring India, by Julie Sahni
Savoring the Spice Coast of India, by Maya Kaimal
World Vegetarian, by Madhur Jaffrey

Japan

At the Japanese Table, by Lesley Downer
Complete Book of Sushi, by Hideo Dekura, Brigid Treloar, & Ryuicki Yoskii
Great Sushi and Sashimi Cookbook, by Whitecap
Iron Chef
Japanese Cooking: A Simple Art, by Shizuo Tsuji
Shunju New Japanese Cooking, by Takashi Sugimoto
Squeamish About Sushi, by Betty Reynolds
Zen: The Art of Modern Eastern Cooking, by Den Ming Dao

Southeast Asia

Authentic Vietnamese Cooking, by Connie Trang
The Best of Vietnamese and Thai Cooking, by Mai Pham
Cracking the Coconut, by Su-Mei Yu
Dancing Shrimp: Favorite Thai Recipes for Seafood, by Kasma Loha-unchit
Lemongrass & Lime: New Vietnamese Cooking, by Mark Read and Jean Lazals
New Mrs. Lee's Cookbook, volumes one and two, by Shermay Lee
Noodles and Rice, by Tommy Tang
Pleasures of the Vietnamese Table, by Mai Pham
Quick & Easy Thai, by Nanci McDermott
Real Thai, by Nanci McDermott
Thai Food, by David Thompson
Vatch's Thai Street Food, by Vatcharin Bhumichitr
Vietnam: Spirits of the Earth, by Mary Cross & Frances Fitzgerald

Vietnamese Home Cooking, by Robert Carmack

Other Asian Cuisines

Asian Grilling, by Su-Mei Yu

Asian Herbs & Spices, by Periplus

Asian Sauces & Marinades, by Wendy Sweetser

Asian Soups, Stews & Curries, by Alexandra Greely

Asian Wraps & Rolls, by Vicki Liley

Cuisine of Southeast Asia, by Martin Yan

Dok Suni, by Jenny Kwak

Elephant Walk Cookbook, by Longteine de Monteiro

Growing Up in a Korean Kitchen, by Hi Soo Shin Hepinstall

Kimchee Cookbook, by Periplus

Martin Yan's Asia, by Martin Yan

New Wave Asian, by Sri Owen

Occidental Tourist, by Stan Frankenthaler

Savoring Southeast Asia, by Joyce Jue

Seafood of South-East Asia, by Alan Davidson

Seaweed: A Cook's Guide, by Lesley Ellis

Seductions of Rice, by Jeffrey Alford & Naomi Duguid

Simply Asian, by Kelsey Lane

Simply Ming, by Ming Tasi

Taste of Laos, by Daovone Zayavong

Terra, by Hiro Sone

Vegetables from the Seas, by Jill Gussman

Wok Everyday, by Barbara Grunes

General

Comfort Me with Apples, by Ruth Reichl

Endless Feasts, by Ruth Reichl

Gourmet, by Ruth Reichl

Picnics, by Sara Deseran

Tender at the Bone, by Ruth Riechl

The Wine Bible, by Karen MacNeil

GLOSSARY OF SELECT INGREDIENTS AND PREPARATIONS

CHINA

Bean Sauce (excluding soy sauce), bean pastes, miso Throughout China, sauces and pastes derived from soybeans are pantry essentials. Because they can vary in composition from region to region, these condiments make a complex topic. Soybean sauces of various styles are used throughout China. Some versions include whole beans, others are ground; some are sweetened, some salty, some hot with chilies. When sweetened and thinned with sesame oil, soybean sauce is the classic condiment for Peking duck. The ubiquitous hoisin sauce in its export guise is a fermented soybean sauce with other seasonings added – typically garlic, sugar and sesame oil.

Black Vinegar This dark, aged, smoky vinegar may be made from rice or other grains. Chinese cooks use it with cold noodles, with stir-fried greens or eggplant, in twice-fried string beans and with rich pork dishes.

Cassia Bark Most of what’s imported to the U.S. as cinnamon is actually cassia bark, *Cinnamomum cassia*, indigenous to China. Cassia bark is more pungent and thicker than true cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*), which grows in Sri Lanka. Chinese cooks typically use cassia bark whole, adding shards to braised meats and soups. It lends its distinctive sweet aroma to tea-smoked chicken.

Cellophane Noodles (bean threads, glass noodles) These white, threadlike noodles are made from mung bean starch. Soaking them briefly in hot water makes them pliable and clear, ready for use in soups, salads and stir-fries. They can also be deep-fried in hot oil, which makes them puff up and turn crisp, producing a crunchy foundation for a stir-fry. Cellophane noodles are the proper choice for Ants Climbing a Tree, the Szechwan specialty of noodles with a fiery ground pork sauce.

Chinese Chili Sauce A thick but not pasty sauce of red chilies, vinegar and salt, typically thickened with soybeans, black beans or Asian sweet potatoes. Unlike hot bean sauce, which is thicker and chunkier, Chinese chili sauce is usually a smooth puree. A variation, labeled “chili paste with garlic,” is a modern concoction, says Barbara Tropp, that “saves Westerners the trouble of chopping garlic.”

Dried Shrimp Long before refrigeration, resourceful fishermen learned to dry their catch to preserve for use throughout the year. Although cooks today use a variety of dried fish, dried shrimp are perhaps the most prevalent. Markets carry dried shrimp in a range of sizes, some as small as a baby’s fingernail, but all valued for the concentrated fish flavor and saltiness they contribute to dishes. They are usually rehydrated before using, although some recipes call for pounding the dried shrimp to a powder. Chinese cooks use dried shrimp to flavor soup, congee and pork fillings for dumplings.

Fish Sauce Fermented fish sauce provides the salty element in many Southeast Asian dishes and a characteristic pungent flavor. As Bruce Cost writes, if fish sauce isn’t in the dish, it’s probably alongside as part of a dipping sauce. In essence, it’s the equivalent of the Western salt shaker on the table. Typically it’s made with anchovies that are brined and fermented for months until they yield an aromatic liquid

Ginger, young Harvested before it develops the familiar brown skin, young ginger has a thin, translucent skin, a lively ginger taste, and a moist, non-fibrous texture. Chinese cooks prize it for its texture and typically pair it with fish or beef. It does not need peeling.

Lily Buds These golden, needle-shaped blossoms are indeed the dried flower buds of a day lily. They must be soaked briefly to soften, then the hard tip is removed and they are hand-shredded, or halved lengthwise or crosswise or, for some uses, tied in a knot. Lily buds add their delicate flavor to hot and sour soup and mu shu pork.

Lotus Lightly blanched slices of lotus root add crisp texture and eye appeal to Chinese soups and stir-fries. The buff-skinned vegetable looks like a plump link sausage; sliced, it resembles potato but with decorative “piercings” thanks to hollow spaces that run the length of the rhizome. Lotus leaves are often used to wrap the sticky rice packages that you see on dim sum carts. The edible lotus, by the way, is the same beautiful water lily you see floating on ponds in Asia.

Mushrooms In addition to the now-familiar dried shiitake mushroom (*Lentinus edodes*) with its aggressive flavor, the chewy tree ear (*Auricularia polytricha*)—also known as cloud ear or wood ear—is widely used. Tree ears don't taste like much but they add a pleasing gelatinous texture to soups, stuffings, noodle dishes and vinegared salads.

Oyster Sauce A dark brown, concentrated condiment made from oysters (or oyster flavoring), salt and cornstarch, oyster sauce adds depth and savoriness to Chinese stir-fries. Even a simple dish of steamed or stir-fried broccoli seems rich and satisfying when drizzled with oyster sauce. Markets carry brands that differ considerably in quality and price; both Bruce Cost and Barbara Tropp suggest that the more expensive bottlings have better flavor. Less expensive products may be made with oyster flavoring, not real oysters.

Preserved Vegetables The vegetable can be cabbage, mustard, turnip, radish or other members of the cabbage family. The preserving is done with salt or brine, followed by drying. The result is a wrinkled fermented pickle that, chopped and added in small quantities to stuffings, braises, soups, stir-fries and noodle dishes, adds a pungent, salty edge.

Rice Noodles Dried rice vermicelli, also known as rice sticks, look like a tangle of bleached blonde hair; they must be soaked in hot water for a few minutes to soften them. The rehydrated off-white noodles are used in soups, salads, stuffings and stir-fries. Like bean threads, they can also be deep-fried in hot oil to make a puffed, crunchy nest for stir-fries. Rice sticks also come in medium and wide widths for soups and stir-fries. *Sha he fen* (a floppy, fresh rice noodle sheet) is often rolled around a filling of shrimp or pork, then steamed, or cut into ribbons and stir-fried.

Rice Wine Chinese rice wine from the city of Shao-Hsing has a nuttier, more sherry-like taste than Japanese rice wine, but it is fundamental to the cooking as a component of sauces, marinades, steamed seafood dishes, stuffings and braises. In China's "drunken" dishes—using crab, shrimp or chicken—Shao-Hsing wine is the predominant ingredient in the sauce.

Rock Sugar (rock candy) A golden lump sugar made from white sugar, brown sugar and honey, rock sugar is used in some Chinese dishes. Cooks use rock sugar with soy sauce-braised chicken and pork and with "red-cooked" dishes. Barbara Tropp's popular Master Sauce Chicken includes crushed rock sugar.

Salted Black Beans These soft, salty black soybeans have been brined and fermented to produce their distinctive, winy flavor. Early agricultural records confirm that they are an ancient condiment, a soy product that predates even soy sauce. Chinese cooks mash or chop them lightly to release their flavor, then add them to steamed whole fish and shellfish, stir-fried vegetables and braised meats. Some brands are seasoned with ginger or five-spice powder.

Sesame Oil Oil pressed from roasted sesame seeds, which give this oil a nutty aroma and rich dark color. The pale sesame oil available in some health food stores are made with unroasted seeds and have an entirely different character. Sesame oil is used primarily as a seasoning, or finishing, oil to be used in dipping sauces, in salad dressings or as a final drizzle in finished soups.

Shrimp Sauce and Shrimp Paste Like anchovies in Italian cuisine, fermented shrimp sauce and shrimp paste contribute a salty, pronounced fishy note to many Chinese dishes. They are not for the timid. Some of these shrimp products are thick and spoonable; others are pastelike and sold as bricks. The cook breaks off a little and pounds it with other ingredients, then fries it in oil to release its flavor.

Soy Sauce Familiar to Western cooks as China's answer to salt, soy sauce has more permutations than most Westerners know. Made from fermented soybeans, it also contains wheat in varying proportions and, sometimes, sugar or molasses. These other ingredients and different aging regimens give soy sauces their varied characters. Chinese manufacturers produce both light and dark soy sauces. The dark soy is aged longer and contains some molasses, and it's saltier than the lighter version. Cooks use dark soy in noodles, red meats and heartier braises that can support its stronger character; they save light soy for more delicate dishes such as fish preparations, vegetables and dipping sauces.

Szechwan Peppercorns These dried reddish-brown pods are unrelated to black peppercorns but they have a similarly fragrant, warming character. Cooks heat the peppercorns with salt to release their aroma, then grind the two seasonings to make an aromatic dipping salt for fried or roasted meats. The peppercorns are also warmed in oil, then strained out, to make a flavored oil used for stir-fries and salads.

Tofu (bean curd) Made from coagulated soy milk, tofu can be firm or custardy soft, fresh or fermented, pressed or deep-fried. High in protein and low in cholesterol, it is “meat without bones,” say the Chinese. Chinese cooks use cheesy fermented tofu to heighten the flavor of stir-fried vegetables, especially spinach. To vary the character of this essentially bland food, Chinese manufacturers also make pressed tofu – weighting the bean curd until it’s a thin, firm, cheeselike slab and seasoning it with soy sauce and, sometimes, cinnamon or star anise. This seasoned tofu is often used in vegetarian dishes.

INDIA

Adapted from Madhur Jaffrey’s *A Taste of India*, Maya Kaimal’s *Savoring the Spice Coast of India*, and Neela Paniz’s *The Bombay Café Cookbook*

Amchoor Dried powder and slices made from sour unripe mangoes. *Amchoor* gives foods a slightly sweet sourness. If unavailable, lemon juice may be substituted. (MJ)

Asafetida (asafoetida)(Heeng) A somewhat smelly brown resin used mainly for its digestive properties and its truffle-like flavour. It is available both in lump form and as a grainy powder. The lump is supposed to be purer. Break off a small chip with a hammer and crush it between two sheets of paper to make your own powder, if you wish. (MJ)

Atta Flour or Chappathi Flour Indian whole wheat flour, called *atta*, is made from low-gluten wheat milled to a fine powder. It makes a beautifully soft dough, perfect for flat breads such as *chappathis* and *parathas*. If it is not available, substitute half all-purpose and half standard whole wheat flours. (MK)

Basmati Rice A fine aromatic, long grain rice grown in the foothills of the Himalaya mountains. If unavailable, any fine long grain rice may be substituted. Basmati rice should be carefully picked over and washed in several changes of water before being cooked. (MJ)

Bitter Gourd (Pavakka) Also called bitter melon, this vegetable has a thick, spiny light green skin and large seeds. The less ripe the gourd, the more tender and edible the seeds, but once the seeds become tough they should be removed before cooking. The skin, however, is always left on. Indians sometimes blanch it first to mellow the bitterness, and it’s tastiest when fried to a deep golden brown. When selecting a bitter gourd, look for one that is firm without yellow spots or wrinkled areas. (MK)

Black Pepper (Kurumulaku) The combination of Kerala’s climate and soil yields some of the largest, most flavorful peppercorns in the world. Before Portuguese traders introduced chili peppers from the New World, black pepper was the primary hot ingredient in Indian food. But black pepper with its sharp bite continues to be a flavor component, particularly in South Indian cooking. Whether the peppercorns are crushed, coarsely ground, or powdered greatly changes the effect they have on the curry, so take note of the form used in each recipe. (MK)

Black Salt (Kala Namak) This salt, which is highly sulphuric, is pink in its powdered form but turns black when it touches liquid. It is more flavorful, but not as salty, as ordinary salt and there is no substitute. If it is not available, simply omit it and increase the regular salt slightly. (NP)

Buttermilk (moru) Unlike the thickened version sold in the United States, Indian buttermilk is the leftover liquid from freshly churned butter, and has a thinner texture and less sour flavor. Both Syrian Christians and Hindus in Kerala have thin tangy buttermilk curries that they serve over rice with fish curry. Commercial buttermilk is a satisfactory substitute. (MK)

Cardamom (Elaichi) An aromatic spice, generally sold in its pod and is native to the hills of eastern Kerala. The green-coloured pods are more aromatic than the plumper, bleached, whitish ones. Some Indian grocers sell the seeds separately, a great convenience when grinding spice combinations such as *garam masala*. Many recipes call for whole cardamom pods. They are used as a flavouring and are not meant to be eaten. If a recipe calls for a small amount of ground cardamom seeds, pulverize them in a mortar. (MJ)

Cardamom, Large Black (Bari Elaichi) They look like black beetles and have an earthier, deeper flavour than green cardamom. Use them only when the recipe calls for them. They can be ground whole, skin and all. (MJ)

Cashew Nuts (*kashumandi*) Cashews arrived in India from Brazil by way of the Portuguese. The plants thrived in Kerala's climate, and today South India is one of the world's leading exporters of cashews. Only raw, unsalted nuts are used in cooking; they are either fried in *ghee* (clarified butter) for a garnish, or ground into a paste to thicken a curry. It's not necessary to buy whole nuts because the broken pieces work fine in these recipes. (MK)

Chapati Flour A very finely ground wholewheat flour found only at Indian grocers and used for making Indian breads. If unavailable, use suggested combinations of wholewheat or wheatmeal flour and plain flour/white flour. (MJ)

Chickpea Flour Flour made out of chickpeas. In Indian shops it is known as gram flour or *besan*. It is also available in Britain in health food shops and in the United States in specialty stores where it is known as *farine de pois chiches*. (MJ)

Chiles, Fresh Hot Green (*Hari Mirch*) The fresh chiles used in India are 2 to 4-inches (5-10 cm) long and quite slim. They are generally green but sometimes ripen to a red colour and may be used just as easily. Besides being rich in vitamins A and C, their skins give Indian food a very special flavour. If other varieties of chiles are substituted, adjustments should be made as they could be very mild in flavour, such as Italian hot peppers or wildly hot, such as the Mexican *jalapeño*.

To store fresh chiles, do not wash them. Just wrap them in newspaper and put them in a plastic container or plastic bag. Any chiles that go bad should be thrown away as they affect the whole batch.

All chiles should be handled with care, especially when cut or broken. Refrain from touching your eyes or mouth, and wash your hands as soon as possible after you finish with them.

If you want the flavour of the green chilli skin and none of its heat, remove its white seeds before cooking. (MJ)

Chiles, Whole Dried Hot Red (*Sabut Lal Mirch*) These chiles are generally 1½-2½-inches (3.5 – 6 cm) long and quite slim. They too should be handled with care, just like the fresh hot green chiles. If you want the flavour of the chiles, without their heat, make a small opening in them and shake out and discard their seeds. (MJ)

Whole dried red chiles are one of the many forms of the capsicum to lend heat to South Indian curries. Browned in hot oil together with mustard seeds and curry leaves, dried chiles help form the trademark seasoning of a Kerala curry. Some cooks break the chiles open before adding them to the oil, thereby releasing the seeds and making the dish hotter. They are sold under different names, but look for chiles that are 2 to 3 inches long, deep red, and unbroken. (MK)

Chilli Powder, Red/Cayenne Pepper (*Pisi Hui Lal Mirch*) Indians refer to ground dried red chiles as red chilli powder. This is not the 'chilli powder' used in America to make Mexican "chile." American 'chilli powder' is a spice mixture which includes ground cumin seeds. Because of this confusion, I have been forced to write 'red chilli powder (cayenne pepper)', even though I'm aware that cayenne is a particular red chilli. Indian red chilli powder and cayenne pepper may be used interchangeably. (MJ)

This is the dried powdered form of ripe capsicums otherwise known as red chili peppers. In Kerala they use Kashmiri chili powder, which has a bright red color and a tempered heat. Since that type is milder than the cayenne we purchase here, South Indian curries can take on a pretty shade of red without being overwhelmingly hot. Use our cayenne judiciously, because if overdone, its heat is sharp on the back of the throat. (MK)

Cinnamon (*Karuvapatta*) Another spice from Kerala, cinnamon adds a sweet and intense perfume to chicken and meat curries. Often used in combination with whole cloves, cinnamon stick brings a rich aroma to Kerala's outstanding coconut milk stews. It is also one of the ingredients in garam masala, the sweet and hot spice blend found in Muslim dishes across India, such as *kurma and biriyani*. (MK)

Cloves (*grambu*) Cloves originated in the Spice Islands (Indonesia), and were probably brought to India for cultivation by Portuguese spice traders. Whole cloves are the dried unopened flower buds of the clove tree. Their sweet yet sharp flavor adds a warm layer to the same meat and vegetable curries in which cinnamon is used. In its ground form it is one of the ingredients in the spice blend garam masala. (MK)

Coconut, Grated Fresh When buying coconuts, make sure that they have no mould on them and are not cracked. Shake them to make sure that they are heavy with liquid. The more liquid the better. To break a coconut, hold

the coconut in one hand over the sink and hit around the centre with the claw end of a hammer or the blunt side of a heavy cleaver. The coconut should crack and break into two halves. (The coconut water may be saved. It is generally not used in cooking but is very refreshing to drink.) Taste a piece of the coconut to make sure it is sweet and not rancid. Prise off the coconut flesh from the hard shell with a knife. If it proves to be too obstinate, it helps to put the coconut halves, cut side up, directly over a low flame, turning them around now and then so they char slightly. The woody shell contracts and releases the kernel.

Now peel off the brown coconut skin with a potato peeler and break the flesh into 1-inch/2.5-cm pieces (larger ones if you are grating manually). Wash off these coconut pieces and either grate them finely on a hand grater or else put them in an electric blender or food processor. Do not worry about turning them into pulp in these electric machines. What you will end up with will be very finely “grated” coconut, perfect for all the Indian dishes that require it.

Grated coconut freezes beautifully and defrosts fast. I always grate large quantities whenever I have the time and store it in the freezer for future use. (In America, excellent frozen grated coconut is available in some Mexican and Asian grocery stores. It is frozen in flat rectangles and defrosts very fast. It may be used in all recipes that call for grated fresh coconut and may also be used to make coconut milk.) (MJ)

Coconut Milk, Fresh Fill a glass measuring jug up to the $\frac{3}{4}$ pint/450ml/2 cup mark with grated coconut. Empty it into a blender or food processor. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ pint (300ml or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) very hot water. Blend for a few seconds. Line a sieve with a piece of muslin or cheesecloth and place it over a bowl. Empty the contents of the blender into the sieve. Gather the ends of cloth together and squeeze out all the liquid. This is Thick Coconut Milk if the recipe calls for both thin and thick coconut milk. You should get about 12 fl. oz./350ml/1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups. To make Thin Coconut Milk, repeat the process with the coconut dregs and fresh hot water once or twice until you have the amount you require. If the recipe calls simply for Coconut Milk then follow the instructions for Thick Coconut Milk. (MJ)

North Indians use cream to thicken their curries, but South Indians use coconut milk. This “milk” is the juice pressed out of grated coconut mixed with hot water. The process is always done twice: the “first milk” is richer and will curdle if boiled, so it’s added at the end of cooking; the “second milk” is more watery and can be cooked for a long time without breaking down. I find using canned coconut milk infinitely easier than extracting fresh milk, but I still follow the principle of using thinned coconut milk initially, then adding undiluted canned coconut milk at the end. Coconut milk spoils quickly, so if you don’t plan to use it within a day, freeze the unused portion. (MK)

Coconut Milk, Tinned Excellent quality tinned coconut milk is sold by most grocers who stock East Asian, South Asian or Latin American foods. Make sure to buy unsweetened coconut milk. When you open the tin, stir its contents first as the cream tends to rise to the top. If the recipe calls for thin and thick coconut milk, go about it this way: buy two tins, each roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ pint/300ml/1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups in capacity. For the Thin Coconut Milk, open one tin and scoop off the cream which rises to the top. Set the cream aside. Pour the remaining liquid into a measuring jug to make the required quantity. For the Thick Coconut Milk, open the second tin and stir its contents. As you happen to have a little extra coconut cream handy, this may be added to the contents of the second tin to make it extra rich. (MJ)

Coconut Milk made from Creamed Coconut Creamed coconut is available fairly easily in Great Britain and in some Indian shops in Europe and the United States. It, too, may be used to make coconut milk. Put 5 (level) tablespoons/75 ml/6 tablespoons in a bowl. Slowly add $\frac{1}{4}$ pint/150ml/2/3cup of hot water and mix well. You should get about 8 fl. oz./250 ml/1 cup of coconut milk. This may be used in any recipe that calls for Coconut Milk or Thick Coconut Milk. Where Thin Coconut Milk is required, put 5 tablespoons/75 ml/6 tablespoons in a bowl and slowly add $\frac{1}{2}$ pint/ 300 ml/1 cup of hot water. This should give you about 12 fl. oz./350 ml/2 cups of thin coconut milk. (MJ)

Coriander, Fresh Green /Chinese Parsley (*Hara Dhania*) One of India’s favourite herbs, this is used both as a seasoning and a garnish. Just the top leafy section is used. To store fresh green coriander, put it, unwashed, roots and all, into a container filled with water, almost as if you’re putting flowers in a vase. The leafy section of the plant should not be in water. Pull a plastic bag over the coriander and the container and refrigerate the whole thing. It should last for weeks. Every other day, discard any yellowing leaves. (MJ)

The fresh leaves of the coriander plant have a lively herbal flavor – quite different from the earthy, lemony taste of ground coriander seeds from the same plant-that makes curries sparkle. The flavor fades with cooking, so add

it just after removing a curry from the heat. Always buy it fresh, not dried, and use the leaves and tender stems for cooking. In Kerala it is primarily used in Muslim cooking. (MK)

Coriander Seeds, Whole and Ground (*Dhania, Sabut and Pisa*) These are the round, beige seeds of the coriander plant. You may buy them already ground or you can buy whole seeds, and grind them yourself in small quantities in an electric coffee grinder. I like to put my home-ground coriander seeds through a sieve but this is not essential.

Ground coriander seeds, if stored for long, begin to taste a bit like sawdust. It is best at this stage to discard them and start with a fresh batch. (MJ)

Coriander and Cumin Seed Mixture, Ground (*Dhana Jeera Powder*) This combination of roasted and ground coriander and cumin seeds, in the proportion of 4 parts to 1 part, is used in Gujarat and Maharashtra. To make it, put 4 tablespoons/60 ml/ 1/3 cup of whole coriander seeds and 1 tablespoon /15 ml of whole cumin seeds into a small cast-iron frying pan and place the pan over a medium flame. Stir the seeds and keep roasting them until they turn a few shades darker. Let the seeds cool somewhat. Put the seeds into the container of a coffee grinder or other spice grinder and grind as finely as possible. Store in an airtight container. (MJ)

Cream of Rice (*idli rava*) A coarsely ground rice product called *idli rava* in India offers a short-cut to grinding rice from scratch. The breakfast cereal called Cream of Rice is essentially the same, so it makes a perfect substitute. (MK)

Cumin Seeds, Whole and Ground (*Zeera, Sabut and Pisa*) Whole seeds keep their flavour well and may be ground very easily in an electric coffee grinder when needed. You may also buy the seeds in their ground form. (MJ)

Cumin is like the bass note of Indian cooking: it provides an indispensable layer of flavor, especially in vegetable curries. Pre-ground cumin is used most often in Kerala, but occasionally the seeds, resembling caraway seeds, are dropped into hot oil to flavor it for a stir-fry. It's useful to have both whole seeds and ground cumin on hand. The ground cumin sold through Indian grocery stores and mail-order sources has a high turnover and so tends to be fresher than what is sold in supermarkets. But if you prefer to grind your own cumin with a mortar and pestle, be sure to use only two thirds of the amount called for in the recipe because the taste will be stronger. (MK)

Cumin Seeds, Roasted and Ground (*Bhuna Hua Zeera*) Put 4-5 tablespoons/60-75 ml of whole cumin seeds into a small cast-iron frying pan and place the pan over a medium flame. Stir the seeds and keep roasting them until they turn a few shades darker. Let the seeds cool somewhat. Put the seeds into the container of a coffee grinder or other spice grinder and grind as finely as possible. Store in an airtight container. (MJ)

Cumin Seeds, Black (*Shah Zeera, Siyah Zeera or Kala Zeera*) A caraway-like seed with a flavor that is more refined and complex than that of the ordinary cumin. As it is expensive, it is used in small quantities. If you cannot find it, use regular cumin seeds as a substitute. (MJ)

Curry Leaves, (Kari Leaves) Fresh and Dried (*Kari Patta*) The highly aromatic curry leaves are shaped rather like bay leaves and are sold in India while still attached to their stems. Indian housewives and cooks use them only when they are fresh, pulling them off their stems just before they throw them into the pot. Only the dried leaves are available in most Western cities though I notice that some grocers in Great Britain are now beginning to import them, fresh and on the stem, from Africa. There are sections of India, such as the South, where curry leaves flavour more than half the dishes. Use the fresh leaves whenever you can find them – otherwise resort to the less flavourful dried ones. (MJ)

This fragrant herb is a signature flavor in the cooking of Kerala. It has no relationship to the mixture of ground spices called curry powder, except that both come from the Anglicized version of the Tamil word *kari*, or sauce. The taste falls somewhere between green bell peppers and citrus peel, but like cilantro, the flavor is fleeting. Ways to capture its essence include sizzling the leaves in hot oil (the *tarka* method) and adding them at the last stage of cooking. There are roughly twenty flat leaves attached to each stem, and the leaves are stripped off the stem much like thyme. Fresh curry leaves, sold at Indian and Asian markets, are the most flavorful form by far, and I have discovered how to keep them fresh and green for up to 6 weeks: Remove them from their plastic bag; pat them dry of any moisture; place them in between dry paper towels; store them in a large airtight Ziploc bag

in the refrigerator. Some people keep them in the freezer for months, which is slightly better than using the dried leaves that have little taste. (MK)

Dalia This is a small chickpea sold roasted, husked, and split in Indian markets. It is seasoned and eaten as a snack. It acts as a thickening agent in chutney. (NP)

Dals/Dhal (Dried Split Peas and Beans) Technically, a dal is really a dried, split pea though, even in India, the word is used rather loosely at times for all pulses (legumes)—dried beans and split peas. Most split peas are sold in India in two forms, skinned and unskinned. It is the skinned variety, also known as “washed,” “white,” or “*dhuli dal*” that are primarily used. Dhal can be cooked with seasonings to make a dish by the same name, or soaked and ground into batters for pancakes, dumplings, and fritters; sometimes a small handful is fried in hot oil-like a spice—to add crunchiness to a vegetable or rice dish. (MJ, MK)

Chana Dal This is very much like the yellow split pea although it is smaller in size and sweeter in flavour. It is used as a spice in South India. Make sure you buy the skinned, split variety. (MJ)

Masoor Dal A hulled, salmon-coloured split pea, this is also known as red split lentils. If buying from an Indian shop, make sure you buy the skinned variety. (MJ)

Moong Dal Split *moong dal* or mung beans are sold both hulled and unhulled. My recipes call for only the skinned, all-yellow variety, also known as “white” or “washed.” (MJ)

Toovar Dal Also known as *toor dal* and arhar dal, this hulled, ochre-coloured split pea has quite a dark, earthy flavour. Make sure you buy the skinned variety, sometimes called “washed” or “white.” Some shops sell an oily *toovar dal*. Here the *dal* has been rubbed with castor oil which acts as a preservative. The oil needs to be washed before the *dal* can be used. None of my recipes call for the oily *dal* though you may use it if the plain kind is not available. (MJ)

Urad Dal Only buy the “washed” or “white” *dal*, i.e., the skinned variety. This rather pale *dal* is used in the South for all kinds of savoury cakes and pancakes. (MJ)

Fennel Seeds (*Sonf*) These seeds look and taste like anise seeds, only they are larger and plumper. They may be roasted (see the method for roasting cumin seeds) and used after meals as a mouth freshener and digestive. To grind fennel seeds, just put 2-3 tablespoons/45 ml into the container of a clean coffee grinder or other spice grinder and grind as finely as possible. Store in an airtight container. (MJ)

Fenugreek Seeds (*Methi*) Yellow, square and flattish, these seeds are meant to soothe the intestinal tract. They have a slightly bitter flavour and should not be allowed to burn. (MJ)

They add a bitter-butterscotch flavor to South Indian fish curries, *sambar* (a spicy lentil stew), and pickles. The seeds are usually used whole since they are hard to crush, but if the recipe calls for powdered fenugreek, I suggest using a mini food processor or a clean coffee grinder. Use sparingly—too much of this spice makes a curry taste bitter. (MK)

Fish Tamarind (*Kodampoli*) This sour rind of a special fruit—*garcinia indica*—is dried over wood smoke to make a black, sour, smoky seasoning that is particularly good with fish. It is used frequently in the cooking of Kerala. Before it is used, it should be rinsed off, sliced, and then given a quick soak for a few minutes to soften it a bit. If you cannot find it, use *kokum*, an unsmoked version of a fairly similar seasoning that is used further up the same West coast. It, too, needs to be rinsed off, sliced and soaked briefly. If you cannot find either *kodampoli* or *kokum*, lemon juice may be used as suggested in the specific recipes. (MJ)

This very tart fruit also goes by the name “gamboges” and is used in Southern and Central Asian cooking. In Kerala, where it is very popular with Hindu and Syrian Christian cooks, it is sometimes called ‘fish tamarind’ because it is used to remove fishy odors and flavor fish curries, plus it has a taste similar to regular tamarind. The fruit is sold in dried rubbery-looking segments, and although it appears almost black, it releases an orange pigment when soaked in liquid. It has a very high acid content, so in addition to lending a sourness, it acts as a preservative in fish curries, making it possible for them to keep for days without refrigeration. It is possible but difficult to find this ingredient in the United States. (MK)

Garam Masala There are hundreds of spice mixtures in India, each used for different dishes in different ways. *Garam masala* is a highly aromatic mixture that is often sprinkled over the top of dishes that have almost finished cooking. There are many recipes for it. Here is one. Take 1 tablespoon/15 ml cardamom seeds, 1 teaspoon/5 ml each whole black cumin seeds, whole cloves and black peppercorns, as well as about 1/3 of a nutmeg and a 2-inch/5-cm cinnamon stick. Put them all into the container of a clean coffee grinder or other spice grinder and grind as finely as possible. Store in an airtight container. (MJ)

To make **Bengali Garam Masala**, put 3 x 1-inch/2.5-cm cinnamon sticks, 15-20 whole cardamom pods and 8 whole cloves into the container of a clean coffee grinder or other spice grinder and grind as finely as possible. Store in an airtight container. (MJ)

The name of this ground spice mixture means ‘hot spices’ in Hindi and it is an important ingredient in North Indian cooking. Although the elements vary according to individual tastes, this homemade blend usually includes sweet and hot spices such as: cinnamon, clove, cardamom, and black pepper. In Kerala, the Mappilas (Muslims) use a version that also includes nutmeg, star anise, and fennel in their biriyanis and meat curries. (MK)

Garlic (veluthulli) Fresh garlic is used in most Indian cooking except by certain Hindu sects, who shun it as an aphrodisiac. It is part of the aromatic mixture (along with onion and ginger) that is at the base of a large number of curries, especially fish, poultry, and meat. (MK)

Ghee This is butter that has been so well clarified that you can deep fry in it. Because it is totally free of all milk solids, it does not need refrigeration. *Ghee* has a very special, nutty taste. If you have access to Indian shops, my own advice would be that you buy ready-made *ghee*. The Netherlands, for example, exports an excellent quality *ghee* which many Indian shops buy in bulk and then package in their own bottles. If you cannot buy ready-made *ghee*, here is how you go about making your own: take 1 lb./450g/2 cups of the best quality unsalted butter that you can find. Put it in a heavy, smallish pan and let it melt over a low flame. Soon it will begin to simmer. Let it simmer on a low heat for about 45 minutes (timing really depends upon the amount of water in the butter), or until the milky solids turn brownish and either cling to the sides of the pan or else fall to the bottom. Because you have to boil all the water away without letting the butter brown, you must watch it, especially toward the end of the cooking time. Now strain the *ghee* through a quadrupled layer of cheesecloth. Homemade *ghee* is best stored covered in the refrigerator. (MJ)

Ginger, Dried, Ground (Sont) This is the ginger that is dried and ground (powdered), the same that you might use to make gingerbread. It is available in supermarkets. (MJ)

Ginger, Fresh (Adrak) Known sometimes as ginger “root,” this is really a rhizome with a refreshing pungent flavour. Its potato-like skin needs to be peeled before it can be chopped or grated. To grate ginger, use the finest part of a hand grater. You should end up with a paste.

When buying ginger, look for pieces that are not too wrinkled and have a taut fresh skin. If you use ginger infrequently, you can store it by planting it in somewhat dry sandy soil. Water infrequently. Your ginger will not only survive but may sprout fresh knobs. If you use ginger frequently, store in a cool airy basket along with your onions and garlic. (MJ)

Fresh-sliced ginger adds a peppery quality to coconut milk stews, and chopped ginger is an essential aromatic in fish, poultry, and meat curries, and chutneys. (MK)

Jaggery Jaggery sold by weight in Indian markets, is solidified molasses. It has a caramel flavor important to chutneys. If necessary, substitute ¼ cup brown sugar for every 2 ounces of jaggery. (NP)

Kokum flowers The flower of the kokum tree, this is always sold dried. The dried blossoms resemble dark sundried tomatoes and add tartness to Southern Indian cooking. (NP)

Karhai This is the Indian wok and may be made out of cast-iron or stainless steel. It is excellent for stir frying and its rounded bottom makes it very economical for deep frying. (MJ)

Mango Many shops sell ripe mangoes that are actually unripe and quite hard. You may ripen them yourself at home by wrapping them individually in newspaper and then storing them either in hay or in a basket. When

they are ripe they should be very slightly soft to the touch and should begin to smell like mangoes. There should however, be no black spots on them. Once they are ripe they can be refrigerated. (MJ)

Mustard Oil (*Sarson Ka Tel*) This yellow oil, made from mustard seeds, is quite pungent when raw, and sweet when heated to a slight haze. It is used all over India for pickling. In Kashmir and Bengal it is also used for everyday cooking and gives the foods of those regions their very special character. If you cannot find it, any other vegetable oil may be substituted. You might consider the rather unorthodox use of virgin olive oil. It has as much character and 'kick' as mustard oil, though of course the taste is completely different. (MJ)

Mustard Seeds, Whole Black These tiny dark round seeds, sometimes quite black, sometimes reddish-brown, are used throughout India for pickling and for seasoning everything from yoghurt to beans. They have a dual character. When popped in hot oil, they impart an earthy sweetness. However, when they are ground, they turn nose-tinglingly pungent and slightly bitter. Indians have developed a taste for this bitterness and consider it to be very good for their digestive systems. If you wish to cut down on the bitterness, use only freshly-bought black mustard seeds or use yellow mustard seeds. (MJ)

Tiny brown mustard seeds have a pungent flavor when raw, but turn pleasantly nutty when fried in oil. One of the distinctive features of Kerala cooking is to "pop" mustard seeds in oil, then add a dried red chili and curry leaves, all of which aromatize the oil of the curry—a process known as *tarka* in some parts of India. When heated, mustard seeds release their moisture and actually make a popping sound as they jump in the pan. For this reason, it is best to place a cover over them during this process. (MK)

Mustard Seeds, Whole Yellow These are commonly available and may be substituted for black mustard seeds should the latter prove elusive. They are less bitter and milder in flavour. (MJ)

Mysore Sambar Powder, see Sambar Powder

Nigella Seeds (*Kalonji*) These seeds are sometimes known, inaccurately, as onion seeds. They are little tear-shaped black seeds used throughout all of India for pickling. Some North Indian oven breads are dotted with them and in Bengal they are used commonly for cooking vegetables and fish. (MJ)

Panchphoran (5-Spice Mixture) This very Bengali spice combination contains whole cumin seeds, whole fennel seeds, whole nigella seeds (*kalonji*), whole fenugreek seeds, and a tiny aromatic seed known in Bengal as *radhuni*. As *radhuni* is generally unavailable outside Bengal, even Indians, in India, use black mustard seeds as a substitute. You may buy ready-mixed *panchphoran* or you can put it together yourself by mixing 2 teaspoons/10 ml of whole cumin seeds, 2 teaspoons/10 ml of whole black mustard seeds, 2 teaspoons/10 ml of whole fennel seeds, 1 teaspoon/5 ml of nigella seeds (*kalonji*) and $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon/4 ml of whole fenugreek seeds. Store in an airtight container. (MJ)

Papadam Also called paper. These Indian wafers are generally made out of split peas and flavoured with red pepper, black pepper or garlic. *Papadums* made with sago flour or potato flour are also very popular in India. Keep what you do not use in a tightly sealed tin. (MJ)

Poppy Seeds, White (*Khas Khas*) These tiny white seeds can become rancid so they should be kept in a tightly closed bottle and stored in a cool place. You may even freeze poppy seeds. Blue poppy seeds are never used in India. (MJ)

Muslim cooking in North and South India uses ground white poppy seeds as a thickener in meat curries. (MK)

Rice Flour Also called rice powder, it has the same texture as corn flour and is sold in Indian and Oriental grocery stores. (MJ)

This flour is used for making noodles, pancakes, and breads, and is always freshly milled on an as-needed basis in Kerala. The fine, powdery rice flour sold here works perfectly well in making these dishes. Lightly roast the rice flour first to remove any excess moisture. (MK)

Saffron Use only leaf saffron, the whole dried saffron threads. Find a good, reliable source for your saffron, as there is a great deal of adulteration. (MJ)

Sambar Powder, Mysore A South Indian spice mixture. (MJ)

Sesame Seeds (*til*) I use the beige, unhulled seeds. They have a wonderful nutty flavour especially after being roasted. (MJ)

Star Anise (*thakkolam*) The sweet strong licorice flavor of this spice is part of the Mappila (Kerala Muslim) spice blend, garam masala. It complements meat curries and adds an extra perfume to biriyani. In its whole form it has a tough woody texture, so a coffee grinder or mini food processor is useful for grinding it. (MK)

Tamarind (*Imli*) This is the bean-like fruit of a tall tree. When ripe, it is peeled, seeded and compressed into brick-like shapes.

To make tamarind paste: break off ½ lb./225g from a brick of tamarind and tear into small pieces. Put in a stainless steel or a non-metallic bowl covered with ¼ pint/450 ml/2 cups of very hot water, and set aside for at least 3 hours or overnight. (In an extreme case when you need to use it instantly, you may simmer the tamarind for 10 minutes.) Set a sieve over a stainless steel or non-metallic bowl. Empty the soaked tamarind and its liquid into the sieve and push as much pulp through with your fingers or with the back of a wooden spoon as you can. Put whatever tamarind remains in the sieve back into the soaking bowl. Add 4 fl. oz./125 ml/½ cup of hot water to it and mash it a bit. Return it to the sieve and try to extract some more pulp. Do not forget to collect all the thick, strained paste clinging to the bottom of your sieve. This quantity will make about 12 fl. oz./350 ml/1½ cups. (Whatever tamarind remains in your sieve may be used for polishing brass!) Tamarind paste freezes well and will also last a good 2-3 weeks in the refrigerator. As long as it has no mould on it, you may use it. (MJ)

Tava A slightly curved cast-iron griddle used in India for making breads. A cast-iron frying pan may be substituted. (MJ)

Turmeric A rhizome of the ginger family with bright yellow flesh. Generally, only ground turmeric is available. It is made by boiling, drying and grinding the rhizome. In India it is considered an antiseptic. (MJ) Turmeric's flavor is bitter and woody and should be used sparingly and in combination with other ground spices. (MK)

White Radish (*Mooli*) Long white radishes are sold in India with their leaves and the combination of vegetable and leaf is often cooked together. If you cannot find *mooli* with its leaves, substitute round or oval red radishes and their leaves. (MJ)

JAPAN

Adapted from Elizabeth Lambert Ortiz and Mitsuko Endo's *The Complete Book of Japanese Cooking*

Beni-shoga Red pickled ginger.

Daikon (*Raphanus sativus*) The Oriental white radish is a large, cylindrical root sold fresh in Japanese markets usually as daikon or as Oriental radish in other markets. It varies in size and may be as large as 6 inches in diameter and weigh as much as 50 pounds. It is sold by the piece and is used both cooked and raw, often grated as a garnish, and added to sauces.

Dashi The basic Japanese soup and cooking stock made from kombu (kelp) and pre-flaked katsuobushi (dried bonito). An instant version requiring only the addition of water is available, packaged, in Japanese markets.

Donabe Ribbed earthenware casserole unglazed outside, glazed inside. Comes in various sizes and can be used over direct heat. The larger sizes are used for one-pot dishes cooked at the table, such as shabu shabu (simmered beef and vegetables).

Donburi Large individual ceramic bowl, often with a lid, used for noodle and rice dishes.

Fu Wheat gluten cake available in Japanese markets, packaged in a number of sizes and shapes. Used mainly as a garnish in soups and one-pot dishes.

Ganmodeki Fried bean curd balls, available packaged in Japanese markets.

Ginnan, ginkgo (or ginkgo) Nuts, available in Oriental markets and specialty food stores, cooked and bottled or canned.

Gobo The root of burdock (*Arctium lappa* of the daisy family) is a long, slender root sold fresh in Japanese markets usually under its Japanese name.

Goma Sesame seed, both black (*kuro goma*) and white (*shiro goma*) are available, boxed, in Japanese markets. White sesame seed is sold in the spice section of supermarkets.

Hakusai Chinese cabbage or celery cabbage. It has broad, ribbed, pale green leaves 12 to 16 inches long, and will keep, refrigerated in a plastic bag, for a week or more. It is used a great deal in Japanese cooking.

Harusame Literally “spring rain,” bean gelatin noodles, also called cellophane or transparent noodles.

Hijiki Flaked dried seaweed which looks rather like dry tea leaves.

Hiyamugi Thin pink, white and green wheat-flour noodles usually eaten cold in summer dishes. Available packaged in Japanese markets. Ika, squid, cuttlefish, available in fish stores and in Japanese markets. Itazuri is the method of cutting a slice off the ends of cucumbers, then rubbing the cut surfaces with the slices, after which the cucumber is rolled in salt. This is to remove any bitter taste.

Itsuke warabi Fernbrake, bracken, fiddleheads, seasoned with soy sauce, sugar, msg, etc. Available in vacuum-sealed plastic bags in Japanese markets.

Ji-no-moto MSG (monosodium glutamate) powder used to enhance flavor. The Chinese call it *mei iung*. Sold in supermarkets under the name of the compound and under brand names, which are more expensive.

K-oji Malted rice, available in Japanese markets.

Kabocha Japanese pumpkin. Any winter squash or West Indian pumpkin available in Caribbean markets are the best substitutes.

Kamaboko Fish sausage made from pounded white fish mixed with cornstarch, formed into a sausage shape and cooked. It is sold in Japanese markets and comes in many shapes and sizes.

Kanpyo Dried gourd strips. Available packaged in Japanese markets.

Kanten (*Gelidium amansii*) A red alga high in gelatin, is manufactured into colorless kanten (agaragar) and used as gelatin in Japanese cooking. Available packaged in Japanese markets and in Chinese markets as agar-agar.

Karashi Mustard sold dried and ground in small cans. It is mixed with boiling water to form a stiff paste and is very hot. Dried ground English mustard is the best substitute.

Karashina Mustard greens (genus *Brassica* of the Crucifer family). Available in Japanese markets and frequently available in supermarkets.

Katakuriko Starch made from the root of the Japanese dog-toothed violet (*Erythronium japonicum*), closely resembles arrowroot. Available in Japanese markets, often incorrectly labeled potato starch.

Katsuobushi Dried bonito fillet, used for dashi (soup stock) and as a garnish. Looks like a piece of wood.

Kgemono Deep-fried foods, including tempura.

Kikurage Jelly mushroom.

Kinome Japanese pepper leaf, used as a garnish.

Kinako Soy bean flour.

Kinugoshi tofu Silky bean curd, a custard-like cake made from white soy beans, sold fresh from refrigerator section of Japanese markets. Must be kept refrigerated in water which is changed daily. Will keep for several days. This is the most delicate of all the forms of bean curd.

Kiriboshi daikon Dried white radish strips, available in Japanese markets.

Kishimen Broad, flat wheat-flour noodles.

Kisu Smelt.

Knives Japanese kitchen knives (hocho) are magnificent tools, and though good sharp Western knives can well be used for cutting in the Japanese manner, a set of four hocho is worth investing in as they can be used for cutting in any cuisine. There is a sashimi knife for slicing raw fish; a boning knife for fish, meat or poultry; a slicing knife for fish, meat or poultry; and a cutting knife for vegetables. Available made of stainless steel in sets from specialty and Japanese stores.

Kombu Kelp, sometimes spelled konbu (*Laminaria japonica*), also called tangle and Japanese kelp, is a large marine plant which plays an important role in the Japanese kitchen. The leathery fronds of the seaweed, sold dried in packaged sheets in Japanese markets, are used principally in dash, the basic soup and cooking stock. The seaweed is also sold flaked and shredded (see hijiki and tororo kombu).

Kona sansho Japanese pepper, used as a table condiment, is made from the ground leaf of the prickly ash, (*Zanthoxylum piperatum* of the citrus family). Available, packaged, in Japanese markets. Kinome, the pretty pinnate leaf, is used whole as a garnish.

Konnyaku Translucent oblong cake made from the tubers of an aroid also known as Devil's Tongue or Snake Palm, sold packaged in Japanese markets.

Koshi-an Red (azuki) bean paste in powder form.

Koyadofu Freeze-dried bean curd, also called koridofu. Koya is the name of the place where it was first made, kori is ice, hence the two names.

Kushi Small bamboo or metal skewers.

Kuwai The edible corm (bulbous root) of *Sagittaria sagittifolia* of the arrowhead family. The cylindrical corm is small, usually only a few inches long. When cooked, its pale yellow flesh is rather like the white sweet potato.

Kuzu shirataki Dried green bean noodles, used in sukiyaki instead of shirataki.

Kuzuko Arrowroot starch, available in supermarkets, health food stores and Japanese markets.

Kyuri Narazuke Nara-style pickled cucumber.

Lburaage Deep-fried bean curd sold in packages.

Lemono Literally, mixed things, such as poultry, fish, and vegetables in a sauce or dressing. Served as an accompaniment to a main course or a salad.

Lzaki bean (*Phaseolus angularis*) An Asian species of legume called dzuki in Chinese markets, varies in color from dark red to black, mottled and cream.

Matsutake (*Armillaria edocles*) The pine mushroom, found in Japan's pine forests in autumn. The large mushroom is highly prized as a delicacy. Sometimes available canned in Japanese markets.

Mirin Sweet rice wine used in cooking. No substitute.

Misezuke Meat, fish, or vegetables pickled in bean paste.

Miso Paste made from fermented, cooked soy beans.

Mitsuba (Cryptotoenia canadensis of the carrot family) Trefoil, an herb with a distinctive flavor, used in soups and as a garnish.

Mochi Rice cakes.

Mochigome Sweet, or glutinous.

Na-no-hana Rape blossoms, the yellow flowers found on sprigs of Brassica napus of the Crucifer family, known as broccoli di rape, colza, rape, or rape greens.

Nagashikan Resembles an aluminum loaf pan with an inserted side-less tray that lifts out, making it easy to remove and slice delicate custards and similar dishes that would be hard to unmold.

Nama Udon Fresh noodles, ready cooked in 7-ounce packages needing only to be reheated in hot water. Also uncooked name udon, to be cooked in the same way as dry noodles.

Natto Fermented soy beans, eaten as a garnish with rice.

Nimono Simmered or boiled foods, stews.

Nori Purple laver seaweed pressed into thin sheets, greenish black in color, is used principally as a garnish and for sushi. Keeps indefinitely.

Oshiwaku Oblong wooden box about 6 by 4 inches with a removable top and bottom used for pressing vinegared rice when making certain kinds of sushi.

Otoshibuta An inner wooden lid that fits closely on top of the food being cooked in a saucepan. A smaller saucepan lid or a plate may be used as a substitute.

Ponzu Pon vinegar, made from dai dad, a lime-like Japanese citrus fruit. Use lime or lemon juice as a substitute.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Banana Leaves Used to wrap fish or other foods before steaming or grilling in Thai, Vietnamese, and Singaporean cooking. The leaf itself is not eaten but it does flavor the filling. Available fresh occasionally and frozen. Cut away the thick spine and dip the leaf briefly in boiling water to make it pliable.

Basil, Asian or Thai An anise-flavored basil with purplish stems and flowers. Traditionally served with *pho*, Vietnamese beef noodle soup, and used liberally in Thai cooking.

Cilantro (fresh coriander) Root Thai and Malaysian cooks use not only the leaves but the roots of fresh coriander. Thai recipes often call for pounding the roots with garlic and pepper to make a paste for marinating meats before grilling. The pounded or ground roots also figure in Thai curries. You can find fresh coriander with the roots attached in many Asian markets and farmers' markets with an Asian clientele. A little trivia, courtesy of Bruce Cost: Cilantro is by far the world's most widely used herb.

Galangal/galanga A rhizome related to ginger, galangal is fundamental to Thai cooking. Its root-like shape resembles ginger, but it is paler, thinner skinned and firmer, with a sharper, mustard-like bite and a camphor-like smell. One distinguishing visual feature: galangal has fine dark rings on the skin. It is typically peeled and thinly sliced for flavoring soups or ground for curries.

Ginger, lesser Resembling a knobby root with long, pencil-thin fingers, this ginger relative has a strong, sweet aroma and a pungent, slightly medicinal-tasting flesh. Southeast Asian cooks use it in seafood dishes, salads and curries. The Thai word for it is *krachai*, although in markets it is sometimes simply labeled "rhizome."

Kaffir Lime The grated zest of this knobby lime is used in Thai curry pastes and fish cakes. The glossy green leaves, finely julienned, figure in Thai soups, salads, stir-fries and curries. If you can't find the fresh item, look for dried or frozen leaves and dried lime rind.

Lemon grass a plant that resembles a woody scallion, with a slender, multilayered base and branching leaves. When sliced, chopped or crushed, it releases a lemony scent and flavor. Discard the branching leaves and the fibrous outer layers of the base. Chopped lemon grass is used to flavor Thai curry pastes, stir-fries and salads and Vietnamese marinades for chicken and beef. Large chunks of lemon grass are smashed with a cleaver and added to Thai soups. They are typically not removed before serving, although they are not meant to be eaten.

Mint The mint favored by Vietnamese cooks is a round-leafed tropical variety. It is an essential element in the salad platter that accompanies many cooked dishes. Grilled skewered meats, for example, are typically wrapped in a lettuce leaf with fresh mint, cucumber and bean sprouts, then dipped in tangy, spicy fish sauce (*nuoc cham*). Thai cooks also make frequent use of cooling tropical mint in seafood and minced meat salads.

Pandanus Leaf (screw pine leaf) The long, slim leaves of *Pandanus odorata* look like finely ridged day lily leaves. They are valued in Thailand as a flavoring, primarily for desserts. Typically, the leaves are steeped in sugar syrup to extract their flavor and green color, then the tinted syrup is strained for use in sweets. Kasma Loha-unchit calls it "a Thai equivalent to vanilla" because of its popularity as a dessert flavoring. Bruce Cost writes that it tastes something like new-mown hay with a floral dimension. Pandanus leaves are also sometimes used to flavor plain rice.

Tamarind Resembling a dry, brown pea pod, tamarind is the fruit of the tamarind tree. Inside the pod is a moist, sour pulp that looks like prune paste. Tamarind is available as whole pods or as a compressed cake made from the pulp. Typically, the pulp is soaked in water and the resultant liquid is used as a souring agent in Thai curries.

Taro This water-loving plant is prized in India and Southeast Asia for its underground tubers and its leaves. The barrel-shaped tubers have a rough, hairy brown skin and a white or cream-colored starchy flesh. In Vietnam, the steamed chunks are added to stews. In Thailand, the tubers are cooked and eaten like potatoes.

Turmeric The dried powdered spice that gives many Indian dishes their golden hue comes from a rhizome related to ginger. Like ginger, the fresh rhizome has a thick main stem with ring markings; the side shoots look like stumpy fingers. The flesh is carrot-colored and delicate in flavor, with a slightly sweet, slightly musty quality. In Thailand and Singapore, cooks use the fresh root, peeling and pounding it in a mortar for curries and soups. It has a long tradition of medicinal use.

Spices

Cassia Bark Most of what's imported to the U.S. as cinnamon is actually cassia bark, *Cinnamomum cassia*, indigenous to China and Indonesia. Cassia bark is more pungent and thicker than true cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*), which grows in Sri Lanka. Southeast Asian cooks typically use cassia bark whole, adding shards to braised meats and soups. It lends its distinctive sweet aroma to Vietnamese beef noodle soup (*pho*).

Five-Spice Powder Not always limited to five ingredients, this fragrant brown powder typically contains star anise, fennel, Szechwan peppercorns, clove and cinnamon. Bruce Cost writes that it sometimes includes licorice root and ginger as well. It's used as a seasoning for roasted and braised meats, especially poultry, in Vietnamese cooking.

Sauces and Condiments

Bean Sauces (excluding soy sauce), bean pastes, miso Throughout Southeast Asia, sauces and pastes derived from soybeans are pantry essentials. Because they can vary in composition from region to region, these condiments make a complex topic.

Vietnamese cooks use hoisin sauce as a dip or barbecue sauce for grilled meats; they also have their own soybean sauce, called *tuong*, that is used in dipping sauces. Thai and Singaporean cooks also turn to these full-flavored, salty bean sauces for seasoning stir-fries and dips.

Asian markets also carry hot bean sauces and pastes, which are simply fermented soybean products with chili added – and sometimes sugar, garlic or sesame oil.

Chili Pastes and Sauces Asian markets carry a wide variety of chili-based condiments to meet the tastes and needs of a diverse Asian clientele. These sauces and pastes are not interchangeable. In Vietnam, chili sauces are often table condiments. Some sauces and pastes are fermented; some are not.

Among those you are most likely to find in Asian markets:

Sriracha Sauce a smooth, pureed Thai condiment made of chiles, vinegar, garlic, sugar and salt, it's on the table in most Thai and Vietnamese restaurants. Diners add it to soups or use it as a dipping sauce, sometimes mixed first with bean sauce.

Sambal Oelek The Indonesian version of chili paste is a rough-textured sauce that includes red chiles, vinegar, oil and salt. It is a widely used table condiment, allowing diners to spice their food to taste, and an ingredient in some dishes.

Coconut Milk In Southeast Asia, coconut milk plays many of the roles that cow's milk does in the West. It adds body to soups, stews, sauces and curries; it's the foundation of numerous desserts; and it sometimes replaces water as the cooking medium for rice.

Although some cooks make their own from fresh grated coconut, others rely on the canned product. Coconut milk is made by soaking pulverized coconut meat in hot water, then squeezing it to extract the maximum liquid. As the milk sits, the coconut "cream" rises to the top. It can be stirred back in or lifted off for recipes that call for it.

Fish Sauce Fermented fish sauce provides the salty element in many Southeast Asian dishes and a characteristic pungent flavor. In essence, it's the equivalent of the Western salt shaker on the table.

Typically made with anchovies that are brined and fermented for months until they yield an aromatic liquid that smells not unlike overripe Brie, the clear condiment is highly nutritious. Fish sauce and rice sustained the Vietcong, writes Cost.

Most Asian markets carry a variety of bottled fish sauces imported from China, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines. They vary widely in intensity. The Vietnamese version, *nuoc mam*, is mixed with sugar, lime juice, red chiles and garlic to make the indispensable dipping sauce, *nuoc cham*. Thais make a similar dipping sauce (*nam prik*) from their fish sauce (*nam pla*).

Oyster Sauce A dark brown, concentrated condiment made from oysters (or oyster flavoring), salt and cornstarch, oyster sauce adds depth and savoriness to Thai and Vietnamese stir-fries. Even a simple dish of steamed or stir-fried broccoli seems rich and satisfying when drizzled with oyster sauce. Asian markets carry brands that differ considerably in quality and price; both Bruce Cost and Barbara Tropp suggest that the more expensive bottlings have better flavor. Less expensive products may be made with oyster flavoring, not real oysters.

Shrimp Sauce and Shrimp Paste Like anchovies in Italian cuisine, fermented shrimp sauce and shrimp paste contribute a salty, pronounced fishy note to many Southeast Asian dishes. They are not for the timid. Writer Kasma Loha-unchit diplomatically calls Thai shrimp paste even more "compelling" than fish sauce, although cooking mellows it considerably. Thai cooks depend on the paste for curries and spicy dipping sauces. In Singapore, where the shrimp paste is called *blachan*, it's added to noodle dishes, curries and *sambals* (dipping sauces).

Some of these shrimp products are thick and spoonable; others are pastelike and sold as bricks. The cook breaks off a little and pounds it with other ingredients, then fries it in oil to release its flavor.

Soy Sauce Familiar to Western cooks as Asia's answer to salt, soy sauce has more permutations than most Westerners know. Made from fermented soybeans, it also contains wheat in varying proportions and, sometimes, sugar or molasses. These other ingredients and different aging regimens give soy sauces their varied characters.

The Thais have their own style of dark (or black) soy sauce, which is distinctly sweeter than Chinese or Japanese brands. And Malaysian and Indonesian cooks use yet another soy sauce called *kecap manis*, a thick, sweet

product that includes palm sugar or molasses and sometimes garlic and other seasonings. It's used to flavor soups, stews, stir-fries and sambals.

Dried, Salted and Preserved Foods

Dried Shrimp Long before refrigeration, resourceful Asian fishermen learned to dry their catch to preserve for use throughout the year. Although Asian cooks today use a variety of dried fish, dried shrimp are perhaps the most prevalent. Asian markets carry dried shrimp in a range of sizes, some as small as a baby's fingernail, but all valued for the concentrated fish flavor and saltiness they contribute to dishes. They are usually rehydrated before using, although some recipes call for pounding the dried shrimp to a powder.

In Thailand, dried shrimp powder seasons the popular green papaya salad and whole dried shrimp are used in *pad Thai*. Vietnamese cooks use the pungent crustaceans in soups and stir-fries, and in Singapore, they figure in stuffings, soups and noodle dishes. In general, the best dried shrimp are large and pinkish-orange; graying ones are old.

Mushrooms In addition to the now-familiar dried shiitake mushroom (*Lentinus edodes*) with its aggressive flavor, the chewy tree ear (*Auricularia polytricha*)—also known as cloud ear or wood ear—is widely used in Asia. Tree ears don't taste like much but they add a pleasing gelatinous texture to soups, stuffings, noodle dishes and vinegared salads in Vietnamese kitchens.

Grains and Beans; Grain and Bean Products

Cellophane Noodles (bean threads, glass noodles) These white, threadlike noodles are made from mung bean starch. Soaking them briefly in hot water makes them pliable and clear, ready for use in soups, salads and stir-fries. They can also be deep-fried in hot oil, which makes them puff up and turn crisp, producing a crunchy foundation for a stir-fry. In Thailand, Vietnam, and Singapore, these gelatinous noodles turn up frequently in stuffings, soups, salads and braised dishes.

Rice This Asian staple, worthy of a book in itself, can only be treated superficially here in brief descriptions of the rice varieties commonly used.

For most uses, *long-grain rice* is preferred in Thailand and Vietnam, but all long-grain rices aren't alike. Some are fluffy when cooked, others sticky. The choice depends largely on national taste. A few types worth noting:

Glutinous rice, also known as sticky rice, comes in short-grain and long-grain varieties. The people of northern Thailand prefer long-grain sticky rice for their table rice and for desserts, such as the popular sticky rice with coconut milk and mango.

Jasmine rice, a long-grain rice valued for its perfume, is the favored variety among Southern Thai cooks. The name is poetic license: Jasmine rice doesn't smell like jasmine, but it is aromatic.

Black sticky rice or *Indonesian black rice* is not the whole-grain version of glutinous rice; it is a distinct variety that looks something like wild rice. It has a nutty flavor that is most appreciated in Thailand where it is used primarily in sweet snacks, puddings and desserts. And, as you can tell if you soak it, it's closer to dark burgundy or purple than to black.

Rice Noodles Asians use a wide variety of rice noodles, both fresh and dried. Because their Asian names vary by country and their English names by manufacturer, mastering rice noodle nomenclature can take some time.

Dried rice vermicelli, also known as rice sticks, look like a tangle of bleached blonde hair; they must be soaked in hot water for a few minutes to soften them. The rehydrated off-white noodles are used in soups, salads, stuffings and stir-fries. Like bean threads, they can also be deep-fried in hot oil to make a puffed, crunchy nest for stir-fries. Rice sticks also come in medium and wide widths for soups and stir-fries.

Asian markets also carry many types of fresh rice noodles, some round like spaghetti, some as flat and wide as fettuccine.

Among the well-known Asian dishes that depend on rice noodles: Thailand's *pad Thai* (stir-fried rice noodles with shrimp) and *mee krob* (deep-fried rice vermicelli with stir-fried topping and a sweet-sour sauce); Vietnam's

pho (beef noodle soup with flat rice noodles) and *goi cuon* (fresh spring rolls); and Singapore's *laksa lemak* (rice noodles and shrimp in spicy coconut milk gravy).

Rice Papers, dried A staple in the Vietnamese kitchen, these transparent, brittle, rice-flour sheets soften quickly in warm water and become pliable. Round sheets are used as wrappers for fried spring rolls (*cha gio*) and fresh spring rolls (*goi cuon*). Triangular ones are brought to the table as wrappers for grilled meats.

Miscellaneous

Palm Sugar Some species of palm yield a sap that can be boiled down until it crystallizes into a dark sweetener with a taste reminiscent of maple sugar. Thai cooks use it in coconut-milk desserts and to balance the flavor of curries. Palm sugar may be soft and sticky or as hard as an open box of brown sugar. Coconut sugar, made from the sap of the coconut palm, can be used in any recipe calling for palm sugar. Bruce Cost recommends liquefying palm sugar and using the syrup as an ice cream topping.

Rock Sugar (rock candy) A golden lump sugar made from white sugar, brown sugar and honey, rock sugar is used in some Vietnamese dishes. Vietnamese beef noodle soup (*pho*) is often gently sweetened with rock sugar.

PROFILES

OF FEATURED COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

THE JAPANESE TABLE

The Japanese “make a little look like much, make much out of little, in a mystical combination of ascetic and aesthetic.”

M.F.K Fisher

In stark contrast to the super-sized American way of eating, the Japanese diner values quality over quantity. A petite bowl of miso soup with one perfect clam would bring delight in Japan, where an American might wonder, “Is that all there is?” The Japanese diner, more accustomed to scarcity, has learned to prize aspects of a dish other than volume: the artfulness of the composition, the seasonality of its elements, the harmony of the dish with its servingware.

“There is nothing more important in Japanese food than arranging it well,” said Ka-ichi Tsuji, a Japanese master chef. Rigorously visual, Japanese cuisine requires that its practitioners think like artists, presenting each dish in a complementary vessel, with a carefully chosen garnish. Yet food is never over-embellished in Japanese hands. The aesthetic calls for restraint, order, and serenity.

Famed culinary educator Shizuo Tsuji says that the essence of Japanese culture is closeness to nature. This characteristic plays out in the kitchen in the Japanese cook’s reverence for seasonality. It is said that when a diner lifts the lid on a bowl of clear soup, the season should be immediately apparent in its contents.

Formal Japanese meals consist of many small courses that arrive in a ritualized order. An appetizer, clear soup, and sashimi make up the prelude, followed by grilled, steamed, simmered, and fried dishes, served in that order. A dressed salad might precede the finale of plain rice, miso soup, pickles, and green tea.

Japanese dishes are almost always light on the tongue and subtly seasoned. Think of the delicacy of dashi versus Western chicken stock. Made with water and only two other ingredients – dried kelp (konbu) and dried bonito, a fish in the mackerel family – dashi is fundamental to the Japanese kitchen. Although many home cooks now use instant dashi powder or dried bonito shavings, purists still shave their own bonito for the best-quality stock. Konbu is naturally high in glutamic acid, the precursor to umami.

Most dishes in the Japanese repertoire are so low in fat that cooks hardly need soap to wash their knives. Sushi, sashimi, and many of Japan’s soup and noodle dishes are virtually fat free, perhaps one reason why the country has so little obesity.

Japanese cooking would be unrecognizable without the soybean, a valued plant source of protein. It’s the foundation of tofu, miso, and soy sauce, three essentials in the Japanese kitchen. Miso, a fermented soybean paste, comes in many colors, flavors, and textures. It is not just a soup flavoring; it can top broiled fish and, when thinned, it dresses salads. Soy sauce, Japan’s “salt,” is the ubiquitous seasoning, dipping sauce and glaze ingredient, the very foundation of Japan’s flavor profile.

The Japanese eat about 150 pounds of white rice per person a year. In a modest household, dinner may consist of only miso soup, rice, and pickles – a nourishing if humble meal.

Families with more resources may add a pork cutlet or piece of fish, but the rice is ever present. Of course, the Japanese are also some of the world's most avid noodle enthusiasts. Noodle shops abound, luring Japanese workers at midday for a restorative bowl of ramen, udon, or soba.

Key ingredients: soybeans, soy sauce, tofu (fresh and fried), miso, soba (buckwheat noodles), udon (wheat-flour noodles), kabocha squash, cucumbers, sweet potatoes, yams, Chinese cabbage, burdock, Daikon, lotus root, wild mushrooms, dried kelp (konbu), dried seaweed (nori and wakame), fresh and pickled ginger, shiso, yuzu citron, sesame seed, mirin, shichimi (7-spice mixture), rice vinegar, wasabi.

THE VIETNAMESE TABLE

“It’s comforting to know that wherever I happen to be, whether it’s in Vietnam or California, pho will always lurk in the background, ready to nourish and sustain me.”

Mai Pham

A long, narrow country shaped like an elongated S, Vietnam can truly lay claim to a “lean cuisine.” Many of its most famous dishes are simmered in broth or grilled. The many fresh salads are sauced with lime juice, fish sauce, and sugar – rarely with oil. The ubiquitous dipping sauces are likewise oil free. In its heavy reliance on rice and noodles, herbs and greens, with small amounts of meat and fish, it is a resoundingly healthful cuisine.

Vietnam acknowledges several influences on its table – most notably, China, Thailand, India and France. The earliest settlers came from China, and China ruled Vietnam for 10 centuries, until 938 A.D. This long occupation explains why the Vietnamese eat with chopsticks and stir-fry many dishes, and why they developed a taste for soy sauce, bean curd, noodles, and ginger.

From India by way of Thailand comes the Vietnamese interpretation of curry. Vietnamese curries are lighter and less spicy than their Indian or Thai counterparts, relying on coconut milk, curry powder, and chili paste, rather than the laborious pounding of herbs and spices.

France ruled Vietnam for a century, until 1954, and that European country’s fingerprint can be seen in the Vietnamese fondness for drip coffee (always with milk) and the presence of baguettes, baguette sandwiches, and French pastries in the cafés. Vietnamese cooks in colonial French households mastered *boeuf bourguignon*, giving it a local twist with the addition of star anise and Asian basil. The baguette sandwiches may look French, but inside them is pork pâté flavored with fish sauce and cinnamon, with a garnish of pickled vegetables and cilantro.

Author and Sacramento restaurateur Mai Pham, who was born in Vietnam, points to three distinguishing characteristics of her native country’s table: the presence of fish sauce in almost every dish; the lavish use of herbs; and the common practice of wrapping hot foods, especially grilled foods, in lettuce and/or rice paper and enhancing the resulting package with a dipping sauce.

Fish sauce (*nuoc mam*) is Vietnam’s salt. A savory splash goes into every stir-fry and marinade, into soups and noodles. It is the basis of *nuoc cham*, the tangy condiment and dipping sauce that is always on the table. Other common condiments include chopped roasted peanuts, scallion oil, fried shallots, sliced chiles, and chili sauce. “Much of the creation of flavor happens at the table,” writes Pham, as diners spoon these condiments into noodles or noodle soups, along with masses of fresh herbs.

Herbs are used so plentifully that they are essentially thought of as greens. Cilantro, mint, Asian basil, saw-tooth herb, and *rau ram* (Vietnamese cilantro) are among the most favored for tearing into soups and noodle preparations. Many Vietnamese dishes arrive with a “table salad” of leaf lettuce, bean sprouts, cucumbers, and herb sprigs. The diner tucks a piece of grilled meat or crisp fried spring roll into the lettuce leaf along with the other raw vegetables and herbs, then dips this “taco” into *nuoc cham* or peanut sauce.

Rice dominates the Vietnamese table and agriculture. Steamed rice, rice noodles, steamed rice cakes and rice-flour crepes are all part of the repertoire. *Goi cuon*, the popular salad roll, features rice vermicelli tucked inside a rice-paper wrapper, with bean sprouts, herbs, shrimp, and pork. Hanoi's beef noodle soup, *pho*, a common breakfast or lunch in Vietnam that's finding many fans in the U.S., showcases rice noodles in an aromatic, ginger-infused beef broth.

Key ingredients: rice, rice paper, rice noodles, fish sauce, herbs, bean sprouts, mushrooms, cucumber, eggplant, tomato, lemon grass, banana blossoms, green mangoes, pineapple, lotus root, peanuts, tamarind, shallots, lime, ginger, garlic, shallots, fresh chiles, chili paste, coconut milk.

THE SINGAPOREAN TABLE

“Gastronomically, [Singapore] is the culinary bazaar of the East.”

Joyce Jue

This tiny island nation at the southern tip of Malaysia delights visitors with its fascinating culinary repertoire and lively street food scene. Its nearest neighbors – Malaysia, Indonesia, Southern China, and Southern India – have left large imprints on the Singaporean table, their ingredients and techniques merging in the island’s paradigmatic fusion cuisine.

The British saw Singapore’s potential as a trading hub in the early 1800s. They promoted it as a trading center and made it a Crown Colony in 1867, granting it self-rule only in 1959. Many immigrants from Southern China arrived in the early 1800s, seeking opportunities in trade. Fortune-seekers and laborers also arrived from Indonesia and Southern India, bringing their food traditions and ingredients with them. Many Chinese men married Malay women; their offspring – known as Nonya, Peranakan, or Straits Chinese – represent a unique merged culture and cuisine that has been revived and celebrated in Singapore in recent years.

Singaporean cuisine “is an amalgamation of four distinct kitchens representing three nationalities (Chinese, Malay-Indonesian, and Indian),” writes Joyce Jue in *The Cooking of Singapore*. China is represented in the many stir-fries and steamed dishes; the use of noodles, bean curd, ginger, dried black mushrooms, and soy sauce; and the popularity of dim sum. Hainanese chicken rice, an island favorite, has obvious Chinese roots but a Singaporean twist. A multi-part dish of poached chicken, rice cooked in the chicken broth, and more of the broth served separately as soup, chicken rice comes with a trio of dipping sauces, one of them a lime-based *sambal*, a decidedly Malaysian condiment.

From Malaysia and Indonesia come coconut-milk curries, *sambals*, satays, and creamy peanut sauces. *Rempah*, a complex and varied spice blend made of pounded aromatic seasonings fried in oil, underscores many of the Malaysian and Nonya dishes found in Singapore. Other popular Malaysian dishes common in Singapore include *gado gado*, a cold mixed-vegetable salad dressed with peanut sauce; and *mee goreng*, a fried noodle dish similar to pad Thai, with vegetables, shrimp, tofu, and chili sauce.

The Indian influence can be seen in the use of such spices as clove, cinnamon, fennel seed, coriander and cumin. Singaporeans eat *samosas* (Indian pastry turnovers); *murtabak*, an Indian grilled bread stuffed with meat; griddle-cooked *dosas* and spongy, steamed *idlis*, both thin rice-flour breads from Southern India made with a fermented batter.

Nonya dishes bring the worlds of China and Malaysia together. One example from Jue’s book is a Nonya seafood curry, with dried shrimp paste, galangal, and lemon grass (all Malaysian) flavoring a curry with Chinese eggplant and bamboo shoots. Chili crab, arguably Singapore’s national dish, is itself emblematic of the country’s melting-pot cuisine, featuring the wok-fried crustacean in a fiery chili sauce flavored with Thai fish sauce.

Singapore’s rich street-food tradition is a boon to the traveler who wants to sample many of the island’s dishes inexpensively. In designated parts of the city, hawkers gather to sell their

specialties, sometimes just a single dish. Urban legend has it that some of the more acclaimed vendors have made modest fortunes off their hawker stalls.

Key ingredients: bean curd, noodles (wheat, rice and mung bean types), rice, coconut milk, lemon grass, peanuts, pandan leaf, curry leaf, kaffir lime leaf, banana leaf, bitter melon, bean sprouts, cucumber, cabbage, galangal, ginger, shallots, turmeric, candlenut, tamarind, dried shrimp, shrimp paste, chili sauce, oyster sauce, fish sauce, soy sauce.

THE THAI TABLE

“At the Thai table ... no matter how refined, delicate, or complex dishes may be, they are merely accompaniments to the rice.”

David Thompson

It is hard to overstate the importance of rice in Thai culture and cuisine. The Thais revere this grain, which is the foundation of the country’s agriculture. Instead of saying grace at the start of a meal, children are taught to put their palms together and bow toward their empty plate at the end of a meal to give thanks to the Rice Mother. Thais frown on wasting rice and will rarely leave any grains on their plate.

According to Kasma Loha-unchit, the Thai cookbook author and cooking teacher, Thais eat 350 pounds of rice per capita a year – almost a pound a day. Forty percent of the jobs in Thailand are rice related. Jasmine rice, a long-grain aromatic rice, is preferred in much of the country, although glutinous rice (sweet rice) is common in the north.

In Thailand, rice is not an accompaniment to a meal; it is the center of it. The other dishes – soups, curries, salads, relishes – accompany the rice and are subsidiary to it. Thais typically begin a meal by spooning a large portion of rice onto their plate. Then they spoon a small portion of, say, green curry onto their rice, mix it in and eat it before moving on to something else. Throughout the meal, they will go back and forth among the dishes until their appetite is satisfied. Thais eat with fork and spoon, not chopsticks, using the fork to scoot food onto the spoon.

Unlike other Southeast Asian countries, Thailand has never been ruled by a Western power. But the country’s distinctive cuisine reflects the influence of two neighboring countries: China and India. The Chinese, who were Thailand’s first settlers, contributed the wok, the stir-fry method, and the technique of balancing sweet, tart, hot, and sour flavors. India introduced many spices and bequeathed a taste for curries, although Thai curries have their own flavor profile and texture – typically, soupier and more herbaceous than their Indian counterparts.

Every traditional Thai cook owns a mortar and pestle, or several, and uses it daily. Wooden mortars are used for softer ingredients, as when making green papaya salad. Stone mortars stand up to the heavy pounding required when making curry pastes with fibrous ingredients like lemon grass, galangal, and ginger.

Most Thai food ranges from hot to incendiary. The heat comes from a variety of fresh and dried chiles as well as chili sauce. The familiar Sriracha sauce, an all-purpose table condiment, is made in Thailand and is as commonplace there as Tabasco is in the American South, says Loha-unchit. Roasted chili paste (*nam prik pao*) also adds heat to soups and stir-fries. Americans sometimes find Thai food impossibly hot because they don’t eat it as Thais do, with a great deal of rice.

The tartness in Thai cooking usually comes from lime juice or tamarind. Thais are fond of sour flavors, the well-known hot-and-sour prawn soup being a good example of how deftly they balance sour with hot, salty, and sweet. The sweet element often comes from palm sugar or *nam prik pao*, which contains sugar. For saltiness, Thai cooks turn to fish sauce, soy

sauce, bean sauce, or shrimp paste. Lemon grass, galangal and kaffir lime are the “holy trinity” of Thai herbal seasonings, the aromatic foundation of many curries.

Key ingredients: rice (jasmine rice, sweet rice), cellophane noodles, coconut milk, bean curd, eggplant, mushrooms (fresh and dried), tomato, bok choy, bamboo shoots, baby corn, mango, papaya, pineapple, durian, lime, banana (leaves, blossom and fruit), tamarind, chiles, ginger, lesser ginger (kra chai), galangal, shallots, lemon grass, fresh turmeric, cilantro (including the roots), Thai basil, holy basil, kaffir lime (leaves and rind), pandan leaf, mint, palm sugar, bean paste, shrimp paste, fish sauce, oyster sauce, soy sauce, chili sauce.

THE INDIAN TABLE

“Indian food is the most aromatic of all cuisines – it is the cooking of captivating fragrances and intriguing flavors.”

Julie Sahni

An enormous country, as big as all Europe, with more than a billion people, India and its food defy easy categorization. Not until 1947, when the country gained its independence from Britain, was it unified as a single nation. It still has no national language. The new country was partitioned into 28 states, largely along linguistic lines.

Reflecting its vastness, India has huge extremes of topography and climate, from the snow-covered Himalayas in the north to the tropical, palm-lined coasts of the south. When it comes to food, geography is destiny. Not surprising, then, that people in the temperate north eat more meat, warm spices, and wheat bread, while the southerners eat more seafood, coconuts, mangoes, cooling tamarind, and rice.

Religion has also played a role in the development of India’s many cuisines. The majority of Indians are Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, or Sikhs, with numerous dietary restrictions; Muslims are a large minority. Hindus and Sikhs don’t eat beef; some are strict vegetarians. Muslims don’t eat pork. The Hindu Brahmins don’t cook with onions or garlic, considered aphrodisiacs. Some Hindu Brahmins will eat fish; some won’t. Keeping these many dietary customs and taboos straight can’t be easy and may partly explain why Indians had no restaurant culture until modern times. People preferred to eat food prepared by “clean” hands they knew; even today, many people take a homemade lunch to work.

For religious reasons or otherwise, more than half of India’s people are vegetarian, giving rise to a rich and varied meatless repertoire. Indians are accomplished cooks of beans, grains, legumes, and vegetables because these foodstuffs, in many cases, form the core of the diet. Nuts and dairy products (yogurt and *paneer*, for example) are other valued non-meat sources of protein. Yogurt appears as salad (*raita*), beverage (*lassi*), meat marinade (tandoori chicken), and sauce thickener (lamb *korma*, braised in spiced yogurt).

Indian meals throughout the country share some similarities, although the particulars will vary from region to region. Indians don’t dine in courses; all the dishes are served at once, often on an individual *thali*, a round metal tray with smaller metal bowls that hold each dish. Bread or rice, and sometimes both, accompanies every meal, which typically includes a main meat or vegetable dish, a lentil or bean dish (*dal*), a salad such as *raita*, plus pickles and chutney.

Perhaps the distinguishing characteristic of Indian cuisine, from north to south, is the liberal and masterful use of spices. Indian cooks maintain a large pantry of spices, most of them aromatic, not hot. They use herbs, too (mainly cilantro, mint, basil, and curry leaf), but the skilled handling of spices separates the best cooks from the rest. The same spice may be toasted dry, bloomed in hot oil or ground in a mortar, depending on the desired results. Madhur Jaffrey recalls that when she was a young girl, most affluent homes in India had a servant whose chief job was to grind all the spices for the day’s meals. Indians not only relish the fragrance and complexity of well-spiced dishes; they also believe that many of these seasonings have medicinal value.

It's not possible here to treat all of India's regions in depth, but the following represents a basic overview.

THE NORTH

The Northern Indian table shows the most foreign influence because foreigners entered the country from the north. Many never made it to Southern India because the long route was too difficult and the tropical weather too challenging. Consequently, some would argue that Northern cuisine is more complex, having absorbed more ingredients and techniques from elsewhere.

The Moghuls arrived in Northern India in the sixteenth century, bringing with them a taste for all things Persian. They introduced elaborate rice pilafs and *biryani* (layered meat and rice dishes); kebabs and other yogurt-marinated meats; and braised *kormas* (meat stews). Using yogurt and cream to mellow sauces is a Moghul technique. The Moghuls flavored their rice with saffron and used mild aromatic spices like cinnamon, cardamom, and clove. Their cooking became the palace cooking and remains the dominant influence on northern cooking today.

The foundation of northern cooking is *garam masala*, a blend of warm spices (typically cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, and black pepper) added to a dish usually at the end. Southerners have their own spice mixtures, but the lavish use of warm spices is characteristic of the cooking in the cooler north.

The preferred cooking fat in the north is *ghee* (clarified butter), and although basmati rice is eaten, especially in Kashmir, bread is the staple.

Kashmir: A beautiful, mountainous region with a temperate climate, India's northernmost state has fruit and nut orchards in its valleys, rice growing on hillside terraces, and wild mushrooms in its forests. Farmers also grow wheat here, and Kashmiri saffron is prized. The climate is suitable for sheep, so lamb is part of the diet.

Kashmiris are meat eaters, and many dishes are rich with nuts, fruit and cream. *Rogan josh*, lamb braised in a velvety garlic cream sauce, is a signature dish.

Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh: These three states lie in the foothills of the Himalayas and experience much warmer temperatures than Kashmir. Irrigated by the Ganges, the plains produce wheat, barley, legumes, vegetables, and basmati rice. Punjab is farm country, and the cooking tends to be rustic, based on dairy products, vegetables such as mustard greens, and beans and legumes. Punjabis are the masters of the tandoor, which they introduced to Delhi when many fled there after the 1947 partition.

Among the dishes you might find on tables in this area are basmati pilafs with meat; *samosas* (savory pastries stuffed with spiced potatoes and peas); *pakorras* (vegetable fritters); lamb *korma*, braised in yogurt with warm spices; *parathas* (flaky unleavened bread); *pooris* (puffy, deep-fried wheat breads); and the leavened tandoor-baked bread *naan*.

WESTERN INDIA

Gujarat: As a state, Gujarat dates only from 1960. Parts of it are fertile, hospitable to the production of grains and legumes. Most Gujaratis are vegetarian and big consumers of lentils and millet. *Dhoklas*, steamed savory cakes made with a fermented split-pea batter, are a regional specialty. The Parsis, a Gujarati-speaking minority originally from Persia, have their own distinctive cuisine with obvious Persian influences, such as dishes marrying meat with fruit.

Maharashtra: This large state is home to the cosmopolitan seaside metropolis of Bombay, renowned for its street food. From vendors at Chowpatty Beach, one can purchase snack foods like *bhel puris*, the crunchy, sweet-and-sour Indian snack made with puffed rice, mango, and tamarind. In Maharashtra, suggests Jaffrey, one begins to see the dividing line between the wheat-eating north and rice-eating south. Maharashtra also produces the prized Alphonso mango, which Jaffrey calls the best in the world. Maharashtrians make juice from it, which they drink with fried *pooris*.

EASTERN INDIA

Bengal: The state of Bengal, with its main city of Kolkata, has a hot, humid climate suited to production of rice, coconuts, and bananas. Coconut milk replaces cow's milk in many dishes. The Ganges flows into the sea at the Bay of Bengal, and Bengalis are great aficionados of the fresh-water fish from this river and its estuary. Even Bengali Brahmins eat fish, calling it the fruit of the ocean, whereas Brahmins elsewhere are usually vegetarian. The area produces half of India's mustard crop, so mustard greens, oil, and seeds figure prominently in kitchens here. Mustard oil is the main cooking medium. Bengalis have their own spice mixture called *panchphoran*, a blend of fenugreek, cumin, mustard, fennel, and onion seeds. Bengalis are renowned for their sweet tooth; *rasgullas*, cheese dumplings cooked in sugar syrup, are a favorite.

THE SOUTH

The South is monsoon country, with enough rain to produce a wide variety of vegetables. Along the coast, fish and shellfish dominate the diet; elsewhere, southern Indians are largely vegetarian. Rice thrives here, as do bananas, date palms, coconut palms, and other tropical fruits such as jackfruit and mangosteens. Southern dishes tend to be soupier than in the north because they are eaten with rice, which absorbs their flavorful juices. As is often true in tropical countries, the food is hotter here and many dishes take advantage of the cooling, sour flavor of tamarind.

Goa: This small state on the west coast was ruled by the Portuguese for four centuries; many Goans are consequently Catholic. Their famous *vindaloo*, a spicy meat stew with mustard oil and tamarind juice, is one of the rare pork dishes eaten in India. Goans eat a lot of seafood, including mussels and clams, preparing them with tamarind and coconut milk.

Kerala: A narrow state with a long coastline, Kerala is lush and tropical. Nutmeg, pepper, cinnamon and clove grow here. Tellicherry, world famous for peppercorns, is in Kerala. This is a major rice-growing region, and the rice-flour pancake called *appam*, made with a fermented batter containing coconut milk, is a local specialty. Keralans are enthusiastic fish

eaters if they're not vegetarian, cooking the fish in banana leaves or in a clay pot with spices, or making pilaf with prawns.

Tamil Nadu: The cooking of this state, India's southernmost, is rice-centered and spicy. Rice appears with the many fish curries and lentil curries, but also in the form of giant crepes (*dosas*), steamed cakes (*idlis*) and thin, crisp-edged savory pancakes (*utthappams*), all made with a fermented batter. A typical meal includes one of these rice dishes, plus a lentil curry called *sambhar* and a tart, spicy broth called *rasam* flavored with tamarind. Most Tamils are vegetarian.

THE CHINESE TABLE

“No civilization has ever done more with its food resources than China.”

Ken Hom

China, the world’s most populous country, has 22 percent of the world’s people but only seven percent of its arable land. That the Chinese have been able to feed their huge and growing population is testament to their skill at agriculture and to their ingenuity in using what they have. The Chinese eat many foods that others wouldn’t (birds’ nests, for one) and have a saying that the only four-legged thing unfit to eat is the table.

China has arguably had more influence on its neighbors’ tables – think of Korea, Japan, and Thailand – than foreigners have had on China. The Great Wall of China, built more than 2,000 years ago, effectively kept invaders and foreign contact to a minimum, although the Chinese did trade with the outside world and welcomed exotic ingredients like the New World’s peanuts, chiles, tomatoes, and squashes.

Rice cultivation originated in China, as did the making of bean curd. The spread of Buddhism in China inspired the Chinese to develop many types of bean curd and bean curd dishes to meet the protein needs of vegetarians. The Chinese claim to have produced the first wheat noodles, and they indisputably gave the world the wok and chopsticks.

Chinese cooks and diners have an almost innate appreciation of the importance of balance and contrast, the notion that the most appetizing dishes present a variety of colors, textures, and flavors. Some bland foods are admired for their texture alone, like chewy jellyfish, tripe, sea cucumbers, and smooth, soft shark’s fin. Chinese cooks use few spices regularly (star anise, cassia, and Sichuan peppercorns, primarily) and possibly even fewer herbs (mostly fresh coriander, and Chinese chives), but no kitchen operates without the aromatic trinity of ginger, garlic, and scallions.

The Chinese imbue many foods with symbolism and meaning. Noodles represent long life; thus they are always long and often served on birthdays. Crisp fried spring rolls look like gold bars, so eating them at New Year’s should bring fortune. Some foods are relished because their name sounds like something else desirable. Grace Young writes in *The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen* that some Chinese like to have a sweet and sour dish on New Year’s Eve because the Cantonese word for sour resembles the word for grandchild – a good omen.

Selecting four culinary regions to represent China is obviously a gross simplification, but most authorities agree that the following regions are the most significant.

THE SOUTH: GUANGDONG PROVINCE

With Canton as its capital, Guangdong province is the headquarters for Cantonese cooking, the style most familiar in the U.S. and reputedly China’s best. Canton has long been a major trading port, so its people have enjoyed relative affluence. The Cantonese saying “every five steps a restaurant” suggests how food-centric this region is; many of the elegant, refined dishes in the Chinese banquet repertoire – such as bird’s nest soup and shark fin soup – are

Cantonese. So is dim sum, the tea-house meal based on an enormous repertoire of dumplings, buns, pastries, and other small snacks.

Cantonese cooks are obsessed with freshness. They want their fish to come from a tank, their chickens alive when they buy them. Traditional Cantonese home cooks may shop twice a day.

The region enjoys fish in abundance and Cantonese cooks believe in treating it simply, often steaming it whole, then dressing it with hot oil, ginger, scallions, and cilantro. Perhaps because they enjoy such fine raw materials, Cantonese cooks have great respect for simplicity; they try to preserve the essential nature of their ingredients. Steaming is a popular technique, as is stir-frying, although oil is lightly used. Many Cantonese dishes are prepared simply, then served with a pungent dipping sauce containing hoisin sauce, plum sauce, mustard, or sesame oil.

From the kitchen of the Chiu Chow people of Southern Guangdong province comes the idea of the “master sauce” – a soy-based liquid for simmering chicken or duck that is repeatedly re-used, becoming richer each time. Hakka cooking is another subset of the Cantonese kitchen; the Hakka people, originally from Mongolia, are renowned for salt and pepper squid, pork-stuffed bean curd, and salt-baked chicken.

The region has a subtropical climate and a year-round growing season, blessing cooks with abundant fruits and vegetables. Cantonese tangerines, loquats, lichees and plums are prized.

BEIJING AND THE NORTHERN PROVINCES

Wheat, not rice, is the staple grain of the north. Northern Chinese eat steamed buns and breads, noodles, boiled dumplings, and potstickers. As the seat of the Imperial Palace, Beijing developed elaborate royal dishes such as Peking duck and the dough-wrapped beggar’s chicken.

Most of China’s Muslims are in the north, so beef and lamb are more widely seen here than elsewhere in China, where pork is favored. The Mongols introduced lamb to Northern China, as well as the techniques of barbecuing and boiling. These influences remain in the famous Mongolian barbecue and Mongolian hotpot.

The region’s cold winters compelled people to master the art of preserving foods. A cabbage pickle similar to kimchee is popular, as are salted duck eggs, dried abalone, and fermented dried black beans. Northern cooking is oilier than southern cooking, with greater use of aromatics such as scallions, leeks, garlic, and onions, and Northern diners love hot-and-sour dishes using vinegar and pepper.

SHANGHAI AND THE EASTERN PROVINCES

Cosmopolitan Shanghai, a coastal city on the Yangtze River delta, is at the heart of this agriculturally rich region. The climate is subtropical, without the temperature extremes of

the north, and farmers enjoy a year-round growing season. In large part because of this agricultural abundance, the region's vegetarian cooking is particularly sophisticated.

Fish figures largely in the cooking here, both freshwater fish from the Yangtze and seafood from the East China Sea. The regional rice wine, Shaoxing wine, is used in many stir-fries and other dishes and in so-called "drunken" dishes, where chicken or shrimp are marinated in it. Red-stewing – braising in soy sauce with tangerine peel, Shaoxing wine, and rock sugar – is a Shanghai technique for poultry and pork.

Shanghainese food is often sweet and oily. Black vinegar is a common seasoning or condiment. Bruce Cost's Shanghai-style sweet and sour spareribs calls for deep-frying the pork riblets, then simmering them in soy sauce and black vinegar with a good deal of sugar.

SICHUAN, HUNAN, AND THE WESTERN PROVINCES

Landlocked Sichuan province is a major rice-producing area and a land of relative plenty. Subtropical fruits such as citrus do well here; dried tangerine peel is a common seasoning, as is the aromatic Sichuan peppercorn. Many dishes include nuts (walnuts, peanuts, or cashews) or sesame seed. Bong bong chicken, a Sichuan specialty, is a cold chicken salad with peanut sauce; the name comes from the pounding that tenderizes the raw chicken.

The liberal use of chiles characterizes both Sichuan and Hunan food. Chili oil enlivens noodle dishes and dipping sauces for dumplings and cold dishes. Kung pao chicken (stir-fried with chiles and peanuts); ma po dofu (tofu with ground pork and chiles); ants climbing a tree (bean thread noodles with ground pork and chili sauce; and don don noodles (egg noodles with spicy peanut sauce) are among the fiery dishes from this region that are beloved in the U.S.

Key ingredients: soy sauce, rice, noodles (rice, wheat, and bean thread) bean curd, bean sauce, chili sauce, oyster sauce, plum sauce, eggplant, long beans, bok choy and other cabbage relatives, bitter melon, lotus root, bamboo shoots, water chestnuts, daikon, snow peas, broccoli, bean sprouts, chiles, dried black mushrooms, lily buds, cilantro, rice wine, rice vinegar, black vinegar, star anise, Sichuan peppercorns, dried tangerine peel, dried black beans, ginger, sesame oil, peanut oil, chili oil.

ASIAN FLAVORS AND AMERICAN MENUS: PERSPECTIVES

Remember when most Americans were afraid of raw fish? Remember when Japanese dining meant steak teriyaki and a Thai restaurant was too scary to contemplate?

American diners now embrace Asian ingredients and dishes they wouldn't have considered a generation ago. Take-home sushi tempts shoppers in almost every urban supermarket now. Southeast Asian fish sauce is a pantry staple in the dining-hall kitchens at Stanford University. And the giant warehouse clubs, where much of America shops, stock basmati rice in 20-pound bags.

"I remember when people looked at a five-pound bag and said, 'Don't you have a one-pound bag?'" recalls Julie Sahni, the India cooking teacher and cookbook author.

Americans aren't afraid of Asian flavors anymore. They're confident, curious, and committed to expanding their taste experiences. In one recent survey, 94 percent of respondents said that when they dine out, they want to try dishes they don't prepare at home (up from 74 percent in 1992). Chefs who never thought they would need to know how to make a Thai curry or a Vietnamese spring roll are realizing that their future lies in mastering the fundamentals, if not the intricacies, of Asian cuisines.

Just a few of the signs that America's palate is trending toward Asia:

- New York City, where so many culinary trends start, can't seem to get enough of Japanese food. Several top non-Asian chefs – among them, Eric Ripert, David Bouley and Marcus Samuelsson – have their hands in new Asian concepts. Hot new restaurants include Matsuri, Asiate, Megu, Sumile and Riingo, all Japanese-inspired.
- P. F. Chang's China Bistro, a 12-year-old casual-dining concept, is one of the top chains in the country in unit growth. At its more than 100 locations, diners are choosing ever-spicier food, much of it designated by region. Sichuan-style pork, Shanghai street dumplings, and Cantonese roast duck are among the top sellers here. "We've been introducing some robust flavor profiles high up on the spice and brine levels, and I've been very encouraged," says corporate executive chef Paul Muller.
- At the new Wow Bao in downtown Chicago's Water Tower building, a multi-ethnic crowd lines up for takeaway bao, steamed Chinese buns. At first, says Bruce Cost, the Asian-food authority for Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, customers didn't know what bao were. Now, the operation sells 1,500 buns a day to people of every race, age and ethnicity. "The craving for chiles has gone way up," reports Cost. "Our kung pao bun is hot by any measure, but we never get complaints."
- Kikkoman, the soy sauce specialist, introduced four new products recently: plum sauce, black bean sauce, hoisin sauce, and Thai chili sauce. Packaged for industrial, foodservice and consumer use, the new products will hasten the mainstreaming of these Asian condiments.

- Whole Foods Market has introduced an extensive Indian menu to its self-service food bars in San Francisco and Manhattan. Shoppers can help themselves to naan, dal, saag paneer, tandoori chicken, chutneys, and other Indian specialties. Other Whole Foods stores have a made-to-order stir-fry station, where shoppers choose their own vegetables, meats, noodles, condiments, and seasonings, including options like Thai green curry. “The ability to present customization is what it’s about,” says John Mitchell, prepared foods coordinator for the Northern Pacific region.

Observers credit many influences with broadening America’s taste buds. Sahni says Emeril Lagasse, the Food Network star, has helped introduce people to bolder flavors. Successful movies about India and Indians, such as *Mississippi Masala* and *Monsoon Wedding*, have made the culture more familiar, less foreign. And the growing presence in the U.S. of well-educated Indians in fields like technology, medicine and business has raised the country’s profile here. A decade ago, says Sahni, Indian food was still looked upon suspiciously. Now suspicion has changed to curiosity.

Travel and trade have sparked American interest in the varied cuisines of Asia. Vietnam and Thailand have become popular travel destinations, and business travel to China has skyrocketed. “Nobody went to China 20 or 30 years ago,” says Cost. “Now, when you go to Shanghai, the flights are booked. You can’t get a seat in business class.” These travelers are being exposed to the “real food” of China, says Cost, and they’re returning with a taste for authenticity.

American chefs who toyed with East-West fusion, so rarely successful, are now digging deeper. They’re mastering the flavor profiles and aesthetic of Asia’s many cultures, so their own creations seem more grounded, less capricious. Wholesale invention is giving way to respectful adaptation.

We’ve also experienced a revolution in our thinking about wine with Asian food. Henry Leung, who plans to open a Chinese restaurant with a serious wine program in the Napa Valley, recently talked with the *Wine Spectator* about his early days in the Chinese restaurant business in New York. His customers then, in the mid-1970s, were convinced that wine didn’t go with Chinese food. Today, knowledgeable diners and restaurant wine buyers no longer make such blanket statements or think of “Chinese food” or “Asian food” so monolithically. They know that a good wine cellar offers possibilities for just about any dish and enjoy seeking the right match for a Vietnamese grilled-beef salad or Indian chicken masala.

Asia is huge, Cost reminds us, much bigger than the Mediterranean. Chefs and operators can find an untold number of untapped niches. Pat Dailey, editor in chief of *Restaurants & Institutions*, thinks Indian food holds a lot of promise and is ready to break through in a big way.

She cites DEVI, Suvir Saran’s New York restaurant, as a trendsetting endeavor that may elevate Indian cuisine in the American mind. “The type of Indian cuisine that Suvir is doing – clean flavors, nice spicing, beautiful presentation – it’s time for it be warmly embraced,” says Dailey.

A few more predictions from expert observers about Asian flavors in our future:

- “I think a lot of chefs are looking in Southern India, to Kerala. That’s where a lot of spices are grown. They couldn’t not be inspired. It’s nothing but inspiration over there.”
Pat Dailey, Restaurants & Institutions
- “Yuzo, lemon grass, and miso are my top three. We have miso-glazed salmon, definitely a top seller. We’re playing with yuzu, which is typically found only on higher-end restaurant menus. What would have been exotic (in the past) is starting to break the surface. (These ingredients) are not too foreign.” *Robert Okura, corporate executive chef, The Cheesecake Factory*
- “Sushi is one of the most significant growing categories in the store. Our sushi company has created a bunch of new items, like Vietnamese spring rolls that are grab and go.”
John Mitchell, Whole Foods
- “Some Indian spices and flavorings are making a mark in a big way. One is curry leaf, the herb for the next decade. It is very big. There’s also quite a lot of buzz about masala sauces. Mango powder and pomegranate seeds are ‘in’ because they sound exotic. Mango powder is sour, with an almost pinelike fragrance. It’s great to add to salad dressings.” *Julie Sahni*

At this year’s Worlds of Flavors conference, you may find yourself seeing Asia in a whole new way – not as an undifferentiated and faraway “East,” but as a vast continent comprised of many distinctly different countries and kitchens, each with its own history, pantry, and regional differences. It’s no longer good enough to skim the surface of these culinary cultures. Diners want what’s real, so chefs need to dive deeper. No longer too exotic for mainstream America, Asian flavors are the here and now.

APPENDIX:

METRIC WEIGHTS AND MEASURES EQUIVALENCIES

1 gram (g.)	=	1/28 oz. (or 0.035 oz.)
1/2 ounce (oz.)	=	14 g.
1 ounce	=	28.35 g. (approx. 30 g.)
2 ounces	=	56 g. (approx. 60 g.)
4 ounces	=	110 g.
6 ounces	=	170 g.
8 ounces	=	225 g.
12 ounces	=	340 g.
1 pound (16 oz.)	=	450 g.
1 kilogram (kg.)	=	2.21 lb.
1 liter	=	35 fl. oz. (1 3/4 pt.)

TEMPERATURE EQUIVALENCIES

250° F	very low	130° C
300° F	low	150° C
350° F	moderate	180° C
400° F	hot	200° C
450° F	very hot	230° C

METRIC CONVERSION TABLE

To Change	To	Multiply by
Ounces (oz.)	Grams (gm)	28.35
Pounds (lb.)	Kilograms (kg)	.45
Teaspoons (tsp.)	Milliliters (ml)	5
Tablespoons (Tbsp.)	Milliliters (ml)	15
Fluid Ounces (fl. oz.)	Milliliters (ml)	30
Cups	Liters (l)	.24
Pints (pt.)	Liters (l)	.47
Quarts (qt.)	Liters (l)	.95
Gallons (gal.)	Liters (l)	3.8
Temperature (°F)	Temperature (°C)	5/9 after subtracting 32*

*Example: 9°F above boiling equals 5°C above boiling.

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