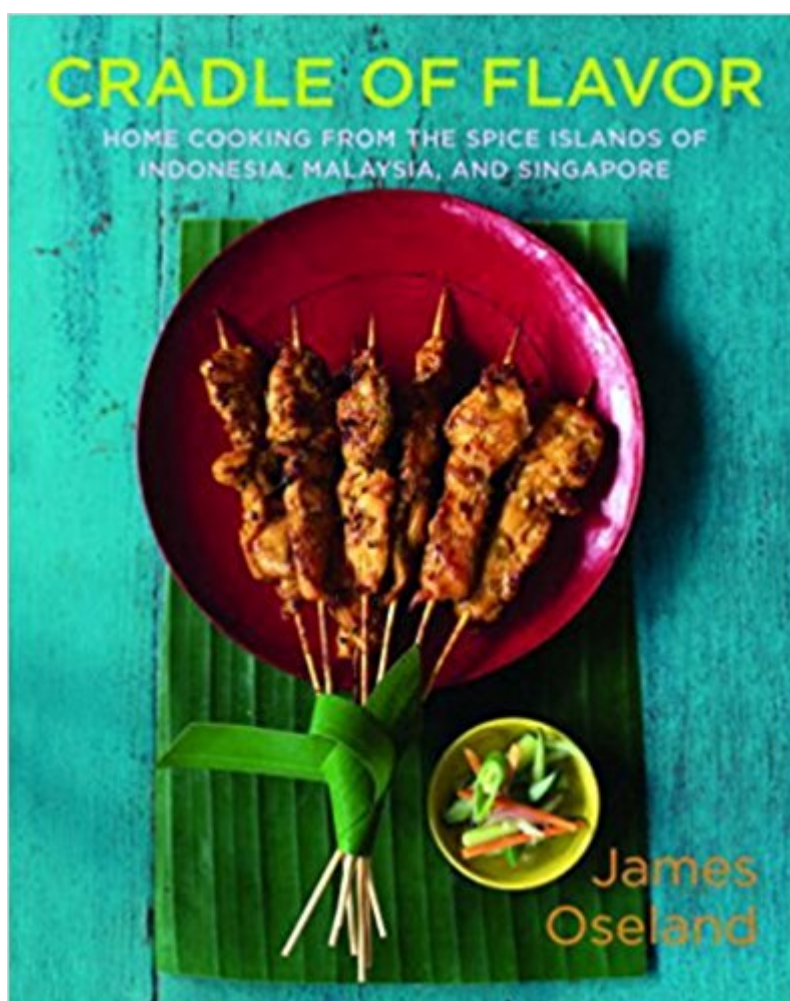


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Cradle Of Flavor: Home Cooking From The Spice Islands Of Indonesia, Singapore, And Malaysia



Synopsis

The first book to reveal the undiscovered jewels of Southeast Asian cuisine. Just when you thought you knew everything about Asian food, along comes James Oseland's Cradle of Flavor.

Oseland has spent two decades exploring the foods of the Spice Islands. Few can introduce us to the birthplace of spice as he does. He brings us the Nyonya dishes of Singapore and Malaysia, the fiery specialties of West Sumatra, and the spicy-aromatic stews of Java. Oseland culled his recipes from twenty years of intimate contact with home cooks and diverse markets. He presents them here in easily made, accessible recipes, perfect for today's home cook. Included is a helpful glossary (illustrated in color in one of the picture sections) of all the ingredients you need to make the dishes and where and how to buy them. With Cradle of Flavor, fans of Javanese Satay, Singaporean Stir-Fried Noodles, and Indonesian curries can finally make them in their own kitchen.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Oseland, who has lived in Singapore for 20 years, hopes to help people who haven't had the benefit of a trip to West Sumatra or Kuala Lumpur to discover those places' scents and tastes. Oseland devotes close to half the book to explaining ingredients, techniques and eating traditions as well as relating anecdotes from 20 years of roaming the islands and picking up the natives' cooking wisdom. Many ingredients will require special trips to ethnic markets, though Oseland allows for some substitution or omission of difficult-to-find items like fresh galangal or daun salam leaves. The first chapter covers sambals, every meal's essential spicy accompaniment, as well as other small dishes like the fiery Sweet-Sour Cucumber and Carrot Pickle with Turmeric; he follows with slightly

more familiar street foods and snacks such as satays and gado-gado, then rice and noodles in all their guises, from simple, heavenly steamed rice to the zingy Malaysian Penang-Style Stir-Fried Kuey Teow Noodles. Oseland's instructions are detailed, and he makes a convincing case that with a little time and care, the best of these complex, interrelated cuisines can be enjoyed thousands of miles from their origin. Maps and color photos not seen by PW. (Aug.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

James Oseland's writing has appeared in *Gourmet*, *Saveur*, and *Vogue*. He has been traveling to Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia for twenty years. He lives in New York City.

I'm a chef and have been fortunate to travel somewhat extensively to the three countries whose cuisines are covered in this book, particularly Indonesia. I love this book. I'm actually relocating to Malaysia soon, and this book will go with me. It's great as a cookbook, but its true delight is found in the prose that accompanies the recipes, recounting the author's experiences in SE Asia, discussing hints for shopping at an Asian market, selecting the best spices, etc. I've had many of the dishes in the book, from satays in Bali to Padang-style food in Jakarta to the wonderful gudeg and ayam bubur in Yogyakarta to a fantastic fusion of Chinese, Malay, and Indian street food in Kuala Lumpur, to the comfort-food appeal of Nyonya cooking in small, family-run restaurants in Melaka (Malacca) to the fantastic crossroads of cuisine found in Singapore (indeed, about the only things to really do in Singapore are shop and eat). It's been said that food is the most apparent uniter of any culture, and that once everything else has been watered down or weaned away completely (think of Greek or Italian immigrants who have come to America), the last cultural identifier that remains is the food. It's so true, and this book absolutely takes you on a cultural and culinary journey. The author's passion for food and for the people of these fascinating countries practically leaps off the pages. The wonder of Indo-Malay cuisine is indeed the best-kept secret in Asia. Any sizeable city in America is likely to be overrun with Chinese and Thai restaurants. Vietnamese food is plentiful, and you can usually find Korean or Japanese food without much difficulty. But try to find an Indonesian restaurant, or a Malaysian restaurant serving up Nyonya chicken. If you do find one at all, it's likely to disappoint if you've ever spent any time in these countries. This book is the cure for what ails you. Any cookbook will offer a list of ingredients, preparation instructions (in varying degrees of clarity and depth), and occasional notes on the dish itself. This book utterly transcends the basic offering. Virtually every recipe is replete with anecdotes, personal observations, and a truly in-depth guide to making the dish spectacular. I do wish there were more color photos, the few that are

included aren't really sufficient, but the quality of the recipes and the fantastic depth of the writing more than makes up for it. Highly, highly recommended.

I've owned this book since 2007 or so and cooked most of the recipes in it. Do not be put off by the reviews that complain there aren't enough photos -- go online if you want a picture or just figure it out yourself. While these recipes are generally easy to follow it will take some time to get the balance right in many of them. This is home cooking at its best, which means you have to get a feel for it. Not all recipes are great -- chicken rendang is tough to keep moist. But then there's the nyonya pork and the beef rendang. Absolutely incredible and surprisingly easy. The chapter on vegetables is also a revelation...

James Oseland has done a wonderful job of compiling a set of representative recipes from a cuisine that is still relatively unknown in the United States. His recollections of how he came to be familiar with the region and its food are good reading and engage the reader on a personal level.

We've cooked a few recipes out of this book, and we've found them clear, simple to follow (no complicated procedures), lots of substitution suggestions for obscure ingredients. Oh, and the food is delicious!

No wonder this book was a James Beard winner for 2007. The text is exceptional-you feel like you are there. The photos are perfect. All the food is interesting and the ingredients are available-if you know where to obtain them. Many foods can be bought locally and if you run into a snag, there are internet sites listed. An exceptional book.

This I would call the bible of Spice Island / Indonesian cooking. Great recipes and full of ingredient information. A must for anyone interested in this cuisine.

I have only done a couple of recipes so far, but I can see this is going to be a solid and much used addition to my Asian cookbooks.

I bought Cradle of Flavor based on the credentials of the author and on the glowing reviews that this book was a definitive work on Indonesian / Malaysian cooking in English. Granted it is not loaded with photos, which I always enjoy, but the recipes are terrific and what you need to learn about this

cooking is in this book. I am very happy I bought it.

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