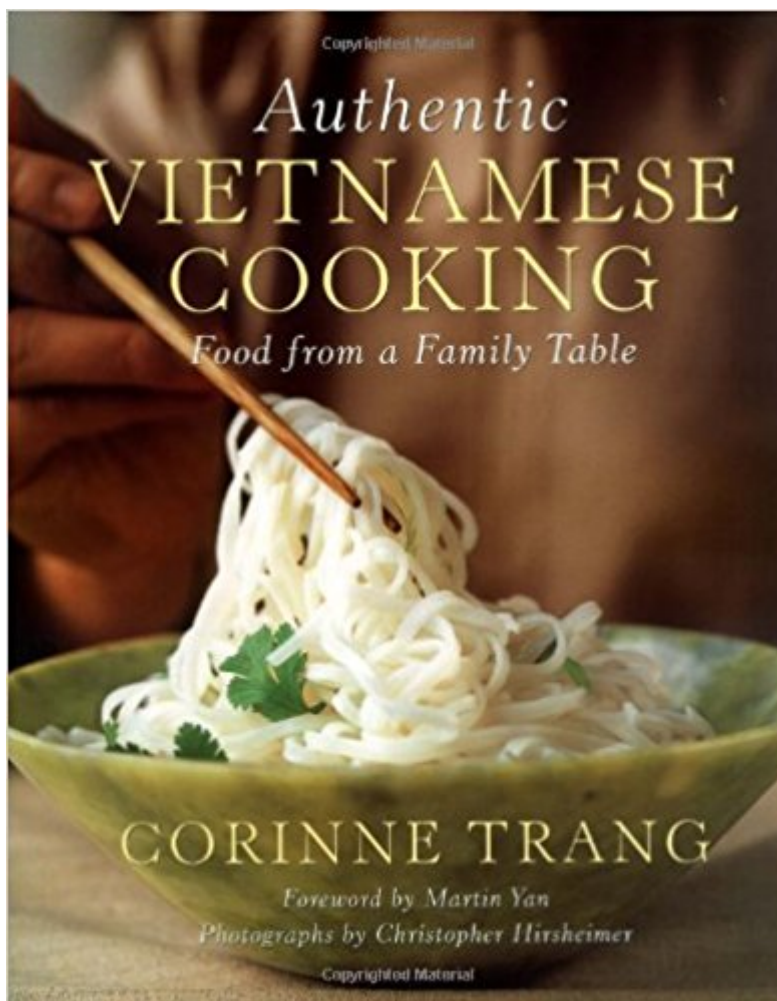


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Authentic Vietnamese Cooking: Food From A Family Table



Synopsis

Refined, subtle, challenging, and accessible all at the same time, the food of Vietnam was the first true fusion cuisine, blending the techniques and ingredients of French and Chinese culinary traditions. In *Authentic Vietnamese Cooking*, culinary writer and consultant Corinne Trang introduces you to the pleasures of regional Vietnamese cooking. Born in France's Loire Valley to a French mother and Cambodian-born Chinese father, and raised in Phnom Penh, Paris, and New York, Trang shares more than 100 delicious, authentic Vietnamese recipes designed especially for the home cook. In this beautiful volume, the complicated processes of assimilation, adaptation, and evolution have been distilled into magnificent dishes that represent the three distinct culinary regions of Vietnam: the Simple North, the Sophisticated Center, and the Spicy South. There are recipes for family meals and special occasions, sauces, marinades, flavored oils, soups, noodle dishes, and more. Trang translates the complex flavors of Vietnamese cuisine into easy-to-follow, step-by-step recipes, so even inexperienced cooks can create such classic dishes as Cha Gio (Spring Rolls), Sup Cua Mang Tay (Crab and Asparagus Soup), Pho Bo (Hanoi Beef and Rice Noodle Soup), Tom Nuong Xa (Grilled Lemongrass Prawns), Ga Nuong Toi (Garlic-Roasted Baby Chicken), and Banh Gan (Coconut Creme Caramel). Enhanced by stunning photographs, *Authentic Vietnamese Cooking* also includes sections on essential ingredients, equipment, and techniques; sample seasonal menus; and a list of mail-order sources and Web sites for securing hard-to-find items. Rich with historical, cultural, and personal anecdotes, *Authentic Vietnamese Cooking* brings the experience and pleasures of Corinne Trang's family table to yours.

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Customer Reviews

Authentic Vietnamese Cooking offers remarkable insight into the history and details of this seemingly simple yet enchantingly sophisticated cuisine. Author Corinne Trang shares the story of her family, starting with her grandparents, who emigrated from Hunan, China, to Cambodia and then to Vietnam. Eventually, Trang herself made homes in Paris and New York, as well as Asia. The resulting blending of cultures and culinary traditions in her family is a common experience for Southeast Asians who, over the centuries, have had to flee from one place to the next to survive despotism, hunger, and war. Trang clarifies the distinctions between dishes from the three regions of Vietnam. There is the Simple North, where stir-fries are common and the seven-course beef meal, Bo By Mon, originated. The Sophisticated Center features Chao Tom, shrimp paste grilled on lengths of sugar cane created to please the wealthy families of Hue. In the Spicy South, sea trade with India, plus Cambodian influences, led to the development of aromatic, golden curries. Today, the Vietnamese serve them with Banh Mi, the light, crusty Saigon baguette made with rice and wheat flour. In addition to the four groups of condiments essential to Vietnamese cooking (sweet, pungent Nuoc Cham, vinegared vegetables, sate, and table salad), Trang gives recipes for rice-paper-wrapped Summer Rolls, filled with rice noodles, pork, and shrimp, and Mint Rice with Shredded Chicken. Requiring only rice, chicken stock, shallots, fresh mint, and cooked chicken, it has the clean and layered flavors typical of Vietnamese food. Western sensibilities may recoil at Trang's brief, honest discussion of the exotic meats served in Vietnam, including dog, snake, and monkey, served mostly to demonstrate machismo or status (no recipes are given). Christopher Hirsheimer's artistic black-and-white photos enhance the poetic simplicity of Trang's deeply involving text. --Dana Jacobi

Vietnamese cuisine, which fuses French and Chinese traditions, is no stranger to the American palate, and food writer Trang, raised by a French mother and a Cambodian-born Chinese father, is ideally suited to become its latest proponent. Subtly combining such familiar ingredients as chilies, cilantro, garlic, star anise and lime, Trang also calls for rarer components like Thai basil (for which Italian is no substitute), lotus seeds, and dried squid and shrimp. Though home cooks will have to scavenge Asian markets for ingredients, they will not be intimidated by the recipes. The dishes are as intriguing as Pineapple and Anchovy Dipping Sauce for beef and as familiar as Chicken Curry. Stuffed Fish is a carp or sea bass filled with a redolent paste of pork, reconstituted shiitake mushrooms, ginger and fish sauce. Spicy Beef and Carrot Stew with its five-spice powder, lemongrass and coconut milk has evolved from the classic French dish, Boeuf aux Carottes.

Because most Vietnamese main-course recipes call for sugar or another sweetening agent, the desserts are traditionally fresh fruits. Trang, however, does offer recipes for Toasted Coconut Ice Cream and Sesame Rice Dumplings. Her inspired, often simple dishes will nicely stretch the boundaries of home kitchen fare. (Dec.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is yet another book by Corinne Trang that is on my list of 10 Most Valued cookbooks. I am finding so many things of value in her writings and recipes that are of great encouragement. Each time I read one of her books I am left with a renewed enthusiasm to learn more about Asian cooking as she sees it. The day I discovered her books was a good day for me and I appreciate her for sharing with all of us the knowledge and wisdom she's acquired from her diverse background in delicious and wholesome food. Thank you, Corinne, for another great insight.

gift

Great book that had the exact Pho recipe I wanted to make and some really great recipes as well

Easy to read and understand. My husband says it's a fantastic book and is a great anniversary present.

I said I love it, now stop asking me to waste time typing for your benefit, thank you very much.

I think the title "..Food from a family table.." is very appropriate for this cookbook. I really like the instructions that Corrine Trang gave accompanying the recipes. I feel that she had tried all her recipes herself. She also gave lots of correct insights about the Vietnamese culture and food. I really like this book and would like to buy her other book as well. About the people complaining about eating dogs, I don't eat dogs and don't like meat in general even though i am not a vegan nor a vegetarian. I have a few comments. Why do dogs have such a special status compared to cows, pigs, chickens, ducks, deers, snakes, etc...? In the U.S. dogs are more pure bred and are highly regarded as pets. In other countries, they are just another domestic animal like a cow or a chicken. Most people don't eat dogs as everyday meat, dog meat is like specialty meat such as snake or deer that only men or adventurous minded people would dare try. You don't see people complaining about eating the other animals such as cows or chickens. Some people have one of these animals as pets too. I think if you are going to complain about people eating dogs, then don't be a hypocrite

and mention other animals too. Otherwise i don't think they should be saying anything.

I'm Vietnamese, and I don't think Corinne Trang knows much about Vietnamese cooking. She probably likes Vietnamese food & decided to learn how to cook certain dishes from someone and compile the recipes into this book. Her recipe for "Banh Cuon" is flavorless, and I don't think the "banh cuon" needs to be re-steamed once one has put the cooked pork filling on the "banh uot" and rolled it up. She should have noted that "banh cuon" could be served at room temperature. Better Vietnamese cookbooks are "Pleasures of the Vietnamese Table" by Mai Pham or "The Foods of Vietnam" by Nicole Routhier. I also like "The Classic Cuisine of Vietnam" by Bach Ngo, but this book is out of print, unfortunately. I was ecstatic when I found the recipe for "Banh La" in "The Classic Cuisine of Vietnam". "Banh La" is what Vietnamese people make at home and what's sold by Vietnamese food vendors in Vietnam. One recipe I do like in Corinne Trang's book is the one for "Banh Mi" (Saigon Baguette). Beyond that, I don't like anything else in her book.

I collect Vietnamese cookbooks and so found this cookbook very valuable: 1 - the recipes are relatively authentic; 2 - very easy to understand. This and Pham's Best of Vietnamese and Thai Cooking should be the references bought though Routhier's Foods of Viet Nam is considered a standard. Pham's recipes are more westernized but background information is good and recipes are sound. I have yet to track down independent publications from Australia but I would say this comes closest to the recipes garnered from personal interviews with Vietnamese home cooks. Vietnamese cooking allows variation making room for available ingredients and influences (it is the best of fusion). So if the Trang recipe does not resemble the very traditional recipes of family it still contains the basic outline. You will encounter recipes usually not covered such as pork pate and other delicacies. I was also impressed that Trang decided to discuss exotic meats including dog. Usually Vietnamese and Asian cookbooks in general avoid the topic completely but Trang decided to confront the issue (bravo). Trang is quite correct that eating of certain exotic meats is restricted to males (aphrodisiacs) and interviews with Vietnamese cooks confirm this. An essential reference for Vietnamese cookbooks but keep in mind that the home recipes are still varied and that this it is not an exhaustive source book. Another thing to keep in mind that this book does not cover in great detail techniques regarding preparation of meats (assumption is made that you already know to slice against the grain for beef). The most glaring flaw of meat preparation and options is demonstrated in the pho ba recipe which does mention the use of tendon but not its preparation. It skips tripe as well. Discusses condiments as sidebar but does not tell you what condiments to use with pho (hoisin,

chili paste, nouc mam, lemon wedges). A good recipe source but not definitive in technique. I would have on hand a book devoted to Asian preparation practice in conjunction with this book. Overall, the best available American books for a Vietnamese collection are this book, Pham's *Best of Vietnamese and Thai Cooking* and Nicole Routhier's *Foods of Viet Name* or *The Best of Nicole Routhier*. Recommended but not definitive.

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