

herbs in a food processor, or use anything other than the mortar and pestle to pound his *sambal belachan* as you just can't get the same texture with a machine. Traditional cooking utensils still have a place in the modern kitchen, he believes, and is researching this as the topic for his next book.

"It took more than five years of research before I could come up with the final draft of *Penang Heritage Food*," says Ong. "That was longer than it took me to complete the thesis for my PhD from London's Imperial College!" he adds. Nevertheless, Ong says the research cleared a lot of misconceptions he had about Penang, its food, history, and heritage.

To Ong, the most challenging part of producing the book was cooking for the photography. "I had to cook six or seven dishes a day, starting early in the morning and ending just before sunset, not to mention the preparatory work needed the day before and the clearing up after!"
 – Lee Khang Yi

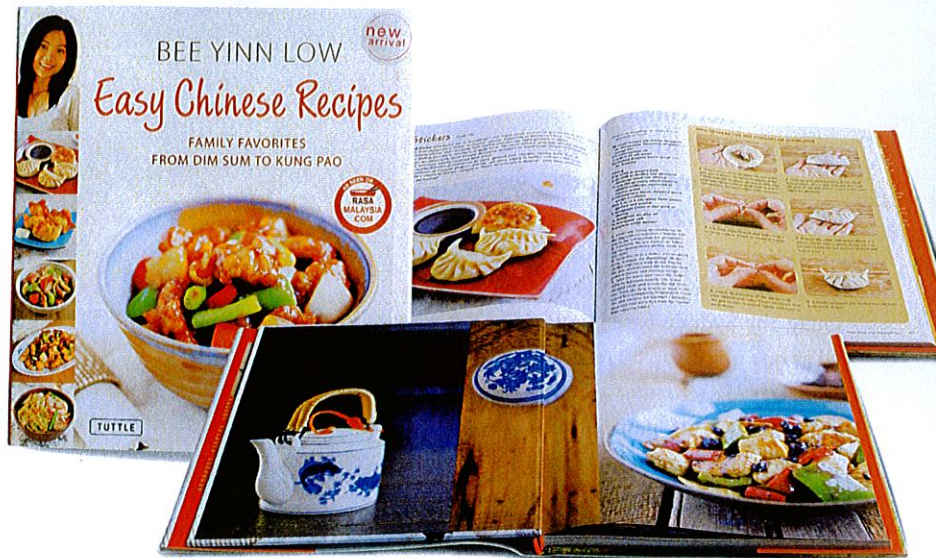
EASY CHINESE RECIPES

Author: **Low Bee Yinn**

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Price: **RM82** (Kinokuniya)

Low Bee Yinn is a bit of a celebrity on the blogosphere – since July 2006, this Penang-born lass has kept her readers enraptured with her Asian cooking experience, attracting 1.5 million page views a month on her *Rasa Malaysia* blog. Following the success of *Rasa Malaysia*, Low started a *Nyonya Food* blog, and an easy cooking and baking blog titled *Gourmand Recipes* with fellow blogger Ellie Hoeve, and has decided to conquer the publishing realm too with her cook-



book, *Easy Chinese Recipes*.

The book is a labour of love for Low, who in addition to penning the recipes and explanations, also styled and shot the food – in all 80 Chinese dishes harvested from her blog entries. You will find popular Chinese classics like fried rice, tea leaf eggs, as well as *dim sum* items that Low has perfected at home, and American favourites like Mongolian beef, and Beef with broccoli; some recipes are contributed by friends, and a few are inspired from her travels to China.

The recipes featured are simple dishes that can be prepared fast from easily-sourced ingredients. She often includes shortcuts for time-pressed cooks, using ingredients available in America, where she now resides – like substituting Pillsbury's biscuit dough for Chinese steamed buns (*mantou*). Low has ensured that each recipe works – one of the reasons for the success of her blog – by roping in her fans to help test (and retest) them.

But before you get started on the cooking, Low explained in detail what the basic Chinese cooking techniques are, complete with step-by-step shots, and provided a list of basic tools and utensils you will need to get started, going so far as to explain how to sea-

son a cast iron wok – for this, she roped in cooking teacher and wok expert Eleanor Hoh to instruct. There's also a primer on Chinese ingredients and a collection of basic recipes. All these are written to make it a personable read, much like her blog.

This book is ideal for beginner cooks and those looking for some simple, mid-week meal ideas. – LKY

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