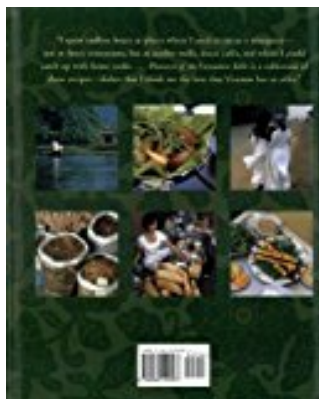


[PDF] Pleasures Of The Vietnamese Table: Recipes And Reminiscences From Vietnam's Best Market Kitchens, Street Cafes, And Home Cooks

Mai Pham - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: Pleasures of the Vietnamese T
Author: Mai Pham
Released: 2001-07-31
Language:
Pages: 242
ISBN: 0060192585
ISBN13: 978-0060192587
ASIN: 0060192585

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Description:

When Mai Pham--chef and owner of the renowned Lemon Grass Restaurant in Sacramento, California--left her home and her grandmother in Saigon in 1975, just days before the city fell to communist rule, she never thought she'd see either again. Happily for her, she returned 20 years later to rediscover her roots and reconnect with her 100-year-old grandmother. Happily for us, she's written *Pleasures of the Vietnamese Table*, in which she shares that journey--and the vibrant cuisine of her homeland. She weaves a stirring tale of rediscovery; of visiting with cooks in market stalls and street cafés and home kitchens; and, perhaps most importantly, of rediscovering her "favorite food on earth," *pho*, the noodle soup often referred to as the national dish of Vietnam.

Pham begins with a chapter on dipping sauces, condiments, and herbs, which, she explains, are the true backbone of Vietnamese cooking. She explores culinary variations: the "rice bowl" of the southern peninsula and the French- and Indian-inspired foods of Saigon; the more robust style of the cooler central region of Hue; and the straightforward style of the mountainous north. And she shares the simple, classic recipes that define Vietnamese food. Green Mango Salad with Grilled Beef is at once salty (from the ubiquitous fish sauce), sweet from the fruit, and tangy and spicy from Chili-Lime Sauce. Ginger Chicken is bright with the flavor of ginger and spicy with dried chilies; caramel sauce adds body and an intriguing sweet and smoky element to the dish. And of course, one can't forget the beloved *pho*, which gets a whole chapter to itself. The traditional Hanoi-style Vietnamese "Pho" Rice Noodle Soup with Beef is fragrant with anise and ginger and thick with velvety noodles and delectably rare beef suspended in the hot broth.

Featured throughout the book are black-and-white photographs of the country and its people, stories of Pham's childhood, and enchanting tales of the history and people of Vietnam that, taken together, highlight a rich and vibrant picture of the ancient cuisine of this complex country. Helpful guides to the Vietnamese pantry and cooking techniques, along with a glossary, menu suggestions, and a list of resources for the more exotic ingredients make the book extremely useful to even the uninitiated.

--Robin Donovan

From Publishers Weekly Pham (The Best of Vietnamese and Thai Cooking) recently began making a yearly visit to her relatives in the Mekong Delta and found treasures in the culinary heritage of her homeland. She already had plenty of experience cooking Southeast Asian food (she co-owns and cooks at the successful Lemon Grass Caf  and Restaurant in Sacramento and has taught at the Culinary Institute of America), but this was a chance to reconnect with her family. Artfully arranged with beautiful photographs, this collection of recipes is a celebration of family traditions as well as the popular national dishes of Vietnam. A list of basic pantry elements describes important tools, such as the clay pots used for making Kho (braised meats), condiments and the intricacies of rice paper, including how to make your own with an improvised fresh-rice-wrapper cooker. She also offers recipes for salads, steamed rice cakes, delicacies such as Rice Rolls with Shrimp and Wood-Ear Mushrooms and a variety of noodle dishes with fresh herbs, grilled pork, shrimp and shaved beef. In addition, the book includes many steamed, poached, simmered and grilled seafood dishes and a whole chapter of vegetarian specialties inspired by Pham's grandmother, all enlivened with the keen flavors of shrimp paste, lemongrass, fish sauce and lots of ginger and garlic. An excellent introduction to Vietnamese food for all skill levels. B&w photos and illus. (Aug.)Forecast: Vietnamese cooking is increasingly popular, with restaurants opening nationwide, and Vietnam is a tourist destination for many Americans. Author appearances in five major cities will help this book find the commercial success it deserves.

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