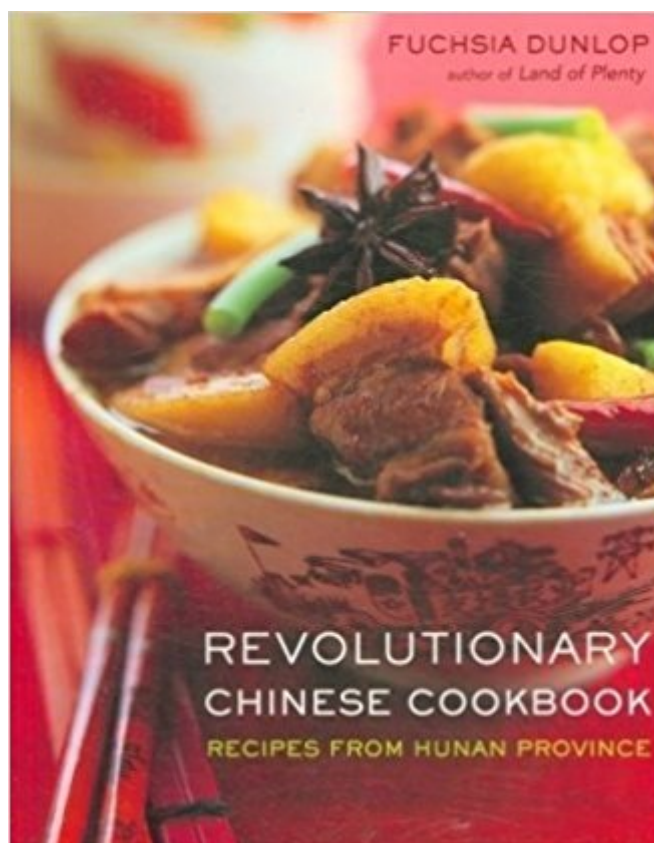


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Revolutionary Chinese Cookbook: Recipes From Hunan Province



Synopsis

Authentic recipes and fascinating tales from one of China's most vibrant culinary regions. Fuchsia Dunlop is the author of the much-loved and critically acclaimed Sichuanese cookbook *Land of Plenty*, which won the British Guild of Food Writers's™ Jeremy Round Award for best first book and which critic John Thorne called "a seminal exploration of one of China's great regional cuisines." Now, with *Revolutionary Chinese Cookbook*, she introduces us to the delicious tastes of Hunan, Chairman Mao's home province. Hunan is renowned for the fiery spirit of its people, its beautiful scenery, and its hearty peasant cooking. In a selection of classic recipes interwoven with a wealth of history, legend, and anecdote, Dunlop brings to life this vibrant culinary region. Look for late imperial recipes like Numbing-and-Hot Chicken, Chairman Mao's favorite Red-Braised Pork, soothing stews, and a myriad of colorful vegetable stir-fries. 65 color illustrations

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Customer Reviews

I enjoyed her first cookbook on Sichuan cookery, *Land of Plenty*, and I like this second book on Hunan cookery even more, with even more helpful beautiful photos. As far as portion sizes, she states "all recipes serve two people with one or two other dishes and rice, or four people, with 3 or 4 other dishes and rice". The Sichuan and Hunan cuisines differ from each other as New Orleans Southern food differs from South Carolina Southern cuisine, and yet both of Dunlop's cuisines are clearly hotter and spicier "Chinese" to our tastes. Hunan folks are said to like food with chilies "fire-hot-hot" whereas Sichuan's dominant style is a mix of chili hot and the peculiar "mouth numbing", from the Sichuan "peppercorns". The Hunan recipes in this *Revolutionary Cookbook* are

straightforward, nearly all ingredients can be obtained from a local Chinese or Asian grocery store. The only one I can't find is "purple perilla", for which Asian basil is not quite a substitute. Not a problem. The 120 recipe instructions are for preparing simple, straightforward "comfort food", and the food comes out tasting very good. It's lighter, and not gooey, like the cornstarch-laden Americanized Chinese food. Delights include: Spicy steamed pork buns, BBQ'd lamb chops, Changde Clay-bowl chicken, yellow cooked salt cod in chili sauce, with most fish dishes steamed. Try Chairman Mao's red braised pork, or one of its 7 supplied variations. I think Ms. Dunlop overdoes the Chairman Mao bit, putting his cheery face on many, many pages for no good reason; it contributes little to understanding of him, or of the Hunan cookery. I'd rather have had more beautiful photos of food and other aspects of Chinese culture and people, instead of so many of Mao's images. Have you had the traditional Hunan dish- "General Tso's Chicken"? Guess again! FYI, She met the accepted creator of this NON-Hunan dish, with added sugar for US tastes, created in the 1970's in New York by Hunan chef Peng Chang-Kuei! And yes, most Hunanese have never tasted this bogus, yet popular dish that is known in the USA as the "quintessential Hunan dish"! To adjust for tastes, she has both a Hunan version, and a USA version of General Tso's to choose from. From her first book being shown to a Chinese friend of mine from Chengdu, who cooked from it and proclaimed it "the real thing" I know that Ms. Dunlop's current book is gonna be just as accurate. No, I do not currently have an authentic Hunan friend to vouch for the recipes, and I do not mind, I like what spicy hot things I have cooked so far! Just as an aside- Her photo is only somewhat kind to her, it is an oldie, and she looks better than that in person. She clearly "knows her stuff"; I recommend meeting/hearing her on her book tour. Buy this, and buy the Sichuan book, Land of Plenty, and cook and taste authentic Chinese "comfort food" as it tastes in China... It's a lot better than the cornstarch-laden "Chinese" food served in most US restaurants. I look forward to her next books.

I am originally from Hunan and loved its food when I was there. The recipes here are (brace for cliche) AUTHENTIC, insofar as reading these pages brings me to these very dishes experientially.

Like Dunlop's previous cookbook, Revolutionary Chinese Cookbook offers a vast collection of authentic recipes, this time with a focus on Hunan cooking. The dishes I have cooked from this book taste true to the food I enjoyed in Hunanese restaurants in China. The book contains sections for street food, appetizers, meat, poultry, vegetables, tofu, and soups, with classics like nongjia ("farmhouse style") stir-fried pork and Mao's red-braised pork. Hunan cooking involves less

difficult-to-find ingredients than Sichuan cooking, and thus might be more accessible to the typical Western cook. Together with Dunlop's previous book on Sichuanese cooking, it is a refreshing change from the typical "Chinese" cookbook offering sticky-sweet Americanized versions of the real thing. Dunlop provides interesting commentary on the origins of particular recipes and Hunan cuisine throughout the book, making it enjoyable to read in itself, especially for those of us who love food. In addition, the book is printed on glossy paper and has many more photos than Dunlop's previous book. Highly recommended.

I cherish my copy of Dunlop's *Land of Plenty*, and had eagerly awaited this new book. I've cooked 15 or so recipes from this book so far, and all of them have been perfectly successful. My favorite so far is her rendition of red-cooked pork (Chairman Mao's Red-Braised Pork), and some others I've made which were wonderful were her Tiger-Skin Steamed Pork, Beef Slivers with Coriander, her unctuous & delectable Steamed Eggs, and a delicious dish of stir-fried baby greens & shrimp. Ooh, and another extraordinarily delicious dish: Stir-fried Zucchini with Salty Duck Egg Yolks. Yum! I think that *Land of Plenty* is still her best book, but this is a close second. The essays in *Land of Plenty*, for instance, are just superb, particularly the one about tea. I'm wishing this cook & author a LONG life so she can continue to explore the food & food culture of China, and write many more books to share her learning with us.

I own both of her cookbooks now. The first one was merely great, but this one is fantastic. Perhaps I just like the Hunan region more? I especially like how this cookbook is loosely tied to the theme of Mao's revolution. The book is well written, seems well researched, and, most importantly, well laid out. There are a few gratuitous pictures of food, but the emphasis is definitely on the content and not the eye candy. (A general rule I have is that the quantity of color photographs in a cookbook is inversely proportional to the quality of the cookbook.) There are two recipes for General Tso's Chicken in this book, and a good deal of text about the history of the dish. By far it seems to be more researched and (hopefully) more accurate than it is available on the many "fan pages" for the dish that the internet offers up. One recipe is for a Hunan-style General Tso's, and the other is for an American-style General Tso's. There is also a recipe for pock marked grandmothers tofu. Another favorite, and it comes with a surprise. In this book, pork is substituted for the more traditional beef in the dish. I've never even seen the dish made with beef. All in all, I'm already getting impatient for her next book to come out. There is lots more of China to explore culinarily, and I hope she manages to explore it all.

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