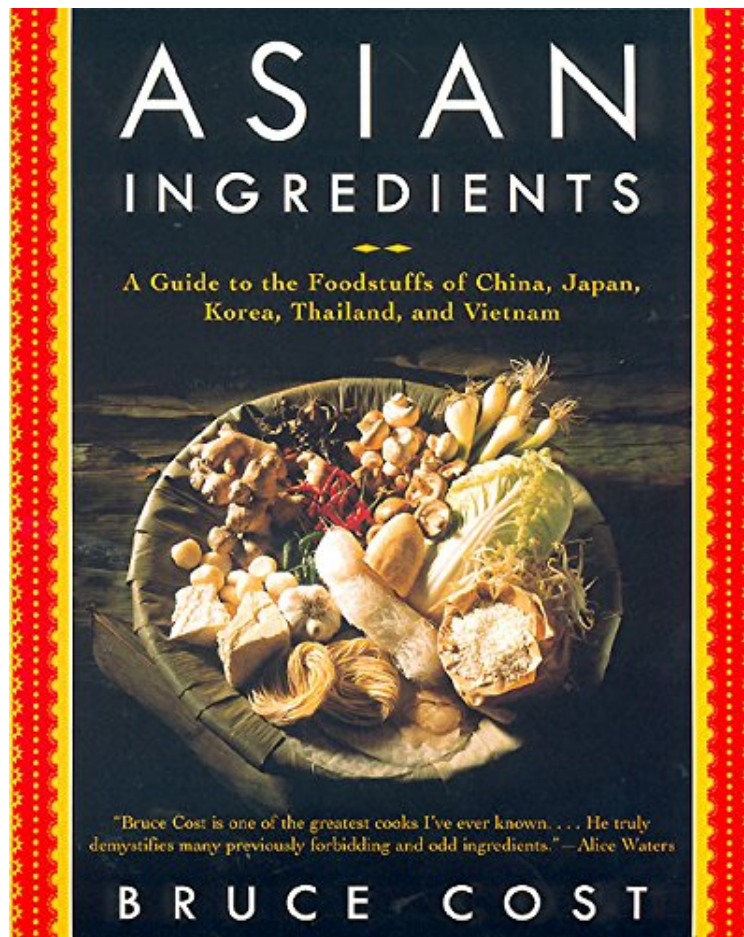


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Asian Ingredients: A Guide to the Foodstuffs of China, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Vietnam

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Bruce Cost : Asian Ingredients: A Guide to the Foodstuffs of China, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Vietnam

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Asian Ingredients: A Guide to the Foodstuffs of China, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Vietnam:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By L. Dobbins Love this cookbook. Love the stories and it really helps to clarify the ingredients to be used. 20 of 20 people found the following review helpful. A Cookbook in Reverse By Stephen Jack Asian Ingredients is a cookbook in reverse. The familiar formula dictates that a little of the cookbook is dedicated to some cultural background tidbits and a glossary; the rest is devoted to recipes. Cost, as his title indicates, offers us a major tour of the foodstuffs with just a sprinkling of recipes throughout. And that is exactly why the book appealed to me. Here you get the best bookish knowledge mixed with personal experience as he gives ingredients not just names, but cultural context, almost bringing them to life as if historical characters. Soy sauce, he tells us in the introduction, "evolved from ancient methods of fermenting and preserving meat and game K" The

Chinese value fresh water fish above salt water because the latter are considered to be already partly preserved (less fresh) - salted by the water they swim in. Amongst gems like these are plenty of practical advice for both the market and kitchen. But while the book includes a Region of Use listing for each ingredient, the geographical origin of each recipe is unfortunately left a mystery. The book is also crying out for a separate recipe index. You would not buy this book for the recipes alone but I tried four or five and whenever I wore my reading glasses and did not try to cut corners, I ended up with some really good food. Simple Roast Chicken with Sichuan Pepper (I was drawn to the word Simple), for example got the thumbs up from my friend Linda. The photographs being black and white are not always as illuminating as they should be, and there may be a few questionable facts. For instance, we learn that Dong gwa (gua) is Cantonese for Winter Melon. Not mentioned is the fact that this pronunciation is virtually identical in Mandarin. All in all I would call this an excellent reference.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must Have Asian Food Reference

By ElmoTheCatBeing an Asian-American born in the US, sometimes we need something to understand Asian cooking and foodstuffs ourselves! I consider Bruce Cost the ultimate Asian food expert considering he's not Asian! Everything is explained in an easy to understand manner and is authentic as any Asian food reference. His Big Bowl cookbook is also excellent.

First published in 1988, Bruce Cost's *Asian Ingredients* was immediately hailed as one of the most comprehensive and fascinating books on Asian foodstuffs ever written. Now fully revised and updated, *Asian Ingredients* offers a wealth of information on identifying and using the often unfamiliar ingredients in traditional bottled condiments. This book's clear black-and-white photographs make it easy to identify ingredients in your local supermarkets or Asian grocery, while Cost's carefully researched notes explain how to select, store, and cook with these wonderful foods. Cost also includes more than 130 simple recipes for sumptuous Asian specialties. Cooks can create the dramatic flavors of China, Japan, and southeast Asia in their own kitchens with this indispensable resource.

"Bruce Cost is one of the greatest cooks I've ever known . . . He truly demystifies many previously forbidding and odd ingredients."-- Alice Waters

"Asian Ingredients is by far the most comprehensive guide to essential ingredients for Asian cooking ever published in English. It unfolds the many mysteries of precisely what you are tossing into your wok or skillet . . . the recipes are excellent."-- Craig Claiborne

"For a long time, I have valued Bruce Cost as a cook. And his recipes, of course, are terrific. But even if you never set foot in the kitchen, you'll probably want this book. For if you have ever eaten in a Chinese, Japanese, Thai, or Korean restaurant and wondered what was on your plate, this book has the answers. I honestly can't imagine that any curious eaters will want to be without it."-- Ruth Reichl, Editor in Chief, "Gourmet"

"This book is about a fascination with foodstuffs. It can be your guide through an immense and profound realm of Asian cuisine."-- From the Foreword by Alice Waters

About the Author Bruce Cost is widely recognized as one of the nation's leading experts on Asian cooking. An award-winning restaurateur and chef, acclaimed cooking teacher, and former food columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Cost is now a culinary partner in Big Bowl Restaurants, the Chicago-based chain renowned for its innovative pan-Asian food. He is the author of two other books, *Ginger East to West* and *Big Bowl Noodles and Rice*, a new collection of recipes from the restaurant.

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Eggplant Sauteed with Crushed Red Chili and Black Vinegar

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

A simple dish, good hot or at room temperature, this makes good use of the smoky Chinese black vinegar.

Ingredients 1 1/4 pounds Asian eggplant 3 tablespoons Gold Plum "Chinkiang" vinegar other Chinese black vinegar 2 teaspoons sugar 3/4 teaspoon salt 1/3 cup peanut oil 1 teaspoon crushed dried red chili pepper 2 tablespoons finely chopped scallions, green part included

Instructions Cut the eggplants in half and then into wedges no more than 1/2 inch wide. Cut the wedges into strips measuring 2 inches by 1/2 inch. Blend the vinegar, sugar, and salt, and set aside. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat and add the oil. When it is hot, add the eggplant and cook, stirring constantly, about 5 minutes or until lightly browned and thoroughly wilted. Add the dried chili pepper and stir briefly. Add the vinegar mixture and cook another minute or two, until the liquid is thoroughly absorbed. Stir in the scallions and turn off the heat. Serve warm or at room temperature.