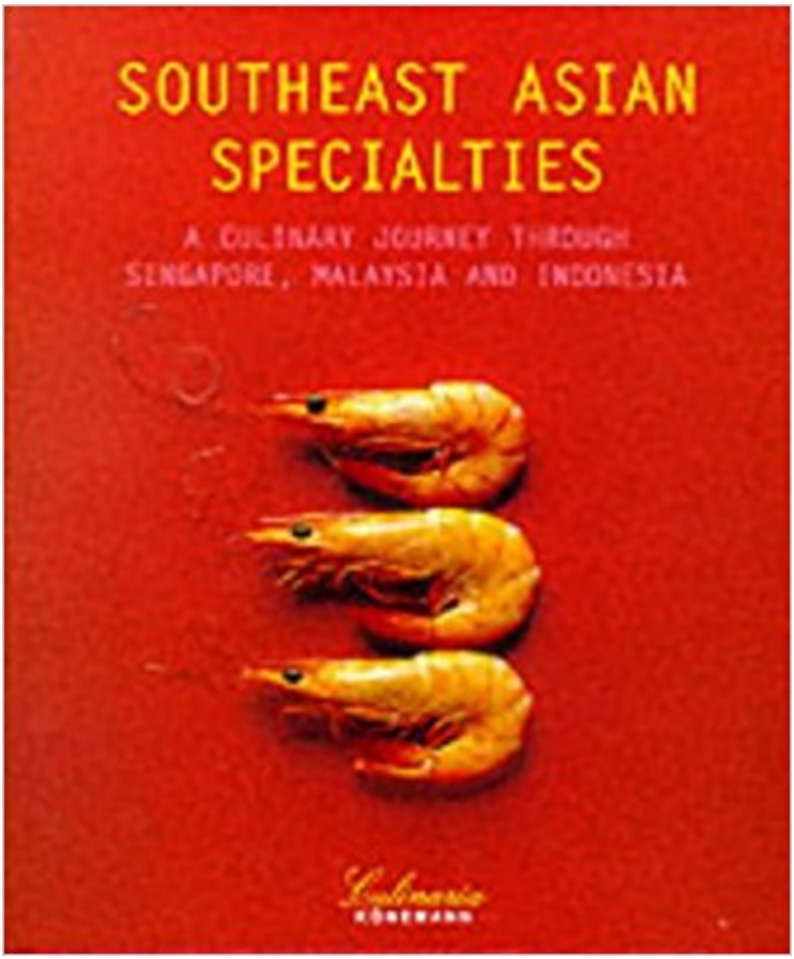
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Southeast Asian Specialties (Culinaria)



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Synopsis

Book by Mowe, Rosalind

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Southeast Asian Specialties starts with a map, a proverb ("other fields, other insects; other seas, other fish"), and a photo of whole, bronzed, barbecued chickens suspended in a shop window. The image is so vivid you can taste the salty crackle of their crisp, lacquered skin. From here, this encyclopedic book, crammed with information, unforgettable photos, and more than 200 recipes, takes you on a vivid journey through Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The chapter on each of these places opens with a brief overview of the local culture and history. This is followed by a procession of spreads, each devoted to a single subject. Cumulatively, this provides a comprehensive experience of the area’s rich culinary life. Since the Chinese are a major influence throughout Southeast Asia, you learn about the health-promoting principles of balance and about ingredients with medicinal benefits that are commonly used in home cooking. The "Dim Sum" section, like many others in the book, shows a dozen or more dishes, with captions providing detailed information. Often names are given in both Mandarin and Cantonese, and the Latin name is provided for anything that grows, from water spinach to various mushrooms. To deepen your understanding of local ingredients, you see how fresh beans become bean sprouts, how tofu and tempeh, indigenous to Indonesia, are made, and how shiitake mushrooms are grown. Equipment is described, with such details as how to season a new earthenware cooking pot. Daring cooks can enjoy recipes for spicy Malaysian Fish Head Curry and succulent, silken Hainanese Poached

Chicken. Those with access to an Asian market can try the recipe for Kuak Durian, a sauce made with the infamous fruit Southeast Asians adore, despite its revolting fragrance. On a simpler note you can make a Eurasian omelet, filled with fresh red chile peppers and onions. Whether or not you use its recipes, if you enjoy Asian food, this book is valuable and enlightening. --Dana Jacobi

Nice pictures but very lacking in recipes compared to the other Culinaria issues I have read. How can you talk about Indonesian cooking without a single mention of kecap manis? And the fruit section does not include mangosteen.

We recently lived for 4 years in Indonesia and this book is like a trip back! Wonderful information, photos and recipes. So glad to find it through a 3rd party seller.

Looks small and lost next to my other Culinaria cookbooks. Format is as important as content.

As with other books in the Culinaria series, this one covers lots of ground relating to preparing and serving the food of Southeast Asia, divided into sections for Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia.Culinaria contains recipes, but it’s more than a cookbook. Culinaria is a lesson in the geography, topography, climate, history and art of the cultures they are covering. For example, did you know that Dim Sum originated when the Dowager Empress Tzu Hsi became bored with her food and the kitchen staff were challenged to keep her interested and amused? (They certainly outdid themselves on that task!) Well, there is an explanation of who the Dowager Empress was - mother to the only heir, defacto ruler of China for 39 years (into the 20th Century) when her own son died without an heir; renown for her beauty, charm and manners. This is followed by two glorious pages of pictures and explanations of various Dim Sum dishes.Lots of space here is devoted to teas. Tea is important in almost every aspect of life, so it’s important to know what to look for when selecting a tea. Did you know that in Asia there are tea tastings similar to wine tastings in the West? There is also information about tea ceremonies. You may have noticed that many Asians pour hot water over the outside of the teapot when they are making tea. The reason? The teapots are unglazed...by the time the water dries, the tea inside is brewed to perfection.Plenty of space is devoted to herbal cures and medicines, how they are gathered and prepared. The uses of soups as medicines - or perhaps how medicines (for example, seahorses) are turned into soups. There is plenty of information about noodles, wines, seafood, Asian cooking utensils and methods.The only complaint I have about this volume in the series is that it attempts to cover more material (multiple

countries) in fewer pages than some of the other books.

When I got this for Christmas, 1999, I thought it was interesting...but more of a coffe table book than an actual working cookbook. And to some degree I was right: the print is rather small, making it hard to use in the kitchen, the recipes are the bare minimum and assume you absolutely know what you are doing, and the book is more photos of scenery than photos of dishes. But some of the recipes intrigued me, so I gave it a shot...and wow! I have not made a thing in here I didn't like. The Indonesian stuffed squid in spicy sauce ("cumi-cumi isi") is fabulous, and the Malaysian mutton in soy sauce with onions and tomatoes ("kambing kecup") is now a standard of mine -- I make it whenever I have some meat (I use any kind, including fish) and I can't be bothered to be ingenious! Another thing that makes me very fond of this book is the photos of ingredients, like galangal and kaffir limes leaves and candlenuts, with the names of things in several Asian languages, which I have found indispensible.

This book is one of the best south-east asian cookbooks I've ever seen. There are plenty of pictures to show you what each dish should look like and there is an index of all the different ingredients you will have to find. The directions are easy to follow and the recipes that I've tried are wonderful. Just like being back in Malaysia. Even my mother has bought the book and she's Malaysian and a great cook! This book is also just a great book to learn about the different culture in south-east asia, but turning the pages will make your mouth water. Great recipes like penang laksa, assam chicken and rojak will make any meal authentic and delicious.

I LOVE THE CULINARIA BOOKS. THIS ONE DID NOT DISAPPOINT ME! THE ONLY THING THAT I COULD WISH MORE OF FROM THIS BOOK IS THAT IT BE BIGGER. IT'S QUITE SMALL COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE BOOKS IN THIS SERIES, OTHER THAN HUNGARY,BUT JUST AS GOOD ALL THE SAME. VERY BEAUTIFUL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE FOOD, PEOPLE AND THE COUNTRIES MENTIONED. NOT ONLY IS IT A COOKBOOK, IT'S ALSO A SMALL ENCYCLOPEDIA ABOUT THE FOOD DISCUSSED FROM SOUTH EAST ASIA. I WOULD RECOMMEND IT TO ANYONE SERIOUS ABOUT ASIAN FOOD AND WITH DEEP POCKETS. IT'S HARD TO FIND THIS BOOK FOR UNDER $90 ANYWHERE. TRY EBAY IF YOU CAN'T FIND IT HERE!

It just received a new reprint this year (07). Technically, I wouldn't call it a true cookbook. You aren't

going to find glossy Jamie Oliver-ish recipes in them. But if you ever wonder what the heck is Singaporean-Malaysian-Indonesian cooking all about - this is a great AUTHENTIC guide and reference. No catering to western palettes; no pandering to external tastes preferences. Discover indigenous tastes; get to know unique ingredients; understand the culinary delights of this region.

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