





How to be an ASIAN DOMESTIC GODDESS

Few pleasures soothe the soul the way a home-cooked meal can; all the better if it has the flavours you grew up with. Olivia Tan, a nutritionist and author of *Cook With Olivia – Chinese Flavours*, shares her favourite, fuss-free recipes to help you whip up your own Asian-inspired banquet in no time at all.

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Recipes **Olivia Tan**

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With her sylphlike figure, it is hard to believe Olivia Tan is as passionate about food and cooking as she says she is. But watching her navigate her way around the kitchen while whipping up a succession of traditional Chinese dishes without getting a strand of hair out of place, we are convinced in no time at all. Elfin good looks and inimitable domestic grace aside, Tan is also fast making a name for herself, with the recent launch of her debut cookbook, *Cook with Olivia – Chinese Flavours*.

Published in collaboration with the popular multifunctional kitchen appliance Thermomix brand, Tan is one of the first authors to come up with a bilingual Thermomix-cookbook focused entirely on Chinese home cooking. With millions of Thermomix converts around the world, Tan was surprised at the dearth of cookbooks catering for the Asian market, thus she deftly stepped in to rectify the situation. For the mum of a six-year-old girl, motherhood was also an impetus to write her first cookbook as she understands how hard it is to juggle career and family, particularly for many modern women who have zero cooking knowledge but who want to ensure that their family gets all the nutrition they need. “Cooking is so quick and easy with a Thermomix. I also studied nutrition, so I know the benefits of cooking at lower temperatures as it doesn’t destroy the nutrients,” says Tan, who is writing her second cookbook.

Of Hakka and Peranakan descent, the flavours Tan grew up with are a pleasing blend of comfort, spice and delicacy, as reflected in her book. “My mum has always been my inspiration,” she explains. “She was an interior designer before she gave up her career to be a homemaker, but her artsy, creative ways could be detected in the way she ran the home and, of course, the meals she delighted us with. My favourite dishes would have to be her braised chicken with potatoes, her soups — my mum makes really good soups — and, of course, her signature laksa.”



This early introduction to the pleasures of eating well resulted in Tan being an extremely keen student. From the age of nine, she began participating in the cooking classes that were part of her school’s enrichment programme. “I started off by baking cupcakes,” she shares. “After all, which child doesn’t like chocolate? This progressed to more elaborate dishes and, soon, the family kitchen became as much Tan’s domain as it was her mother’s, although she is quick to add that they rarely cook together. “My mum loves to say, ‘Too many cooks spoil the broth,’” she laughs.

Today, Tan loves nothing more than carrying on the family tradition of feeding children well. “My daughter loves the char siew I make, as well as my superior herbal chicken. She likes everything I cook and, I have to say, she’s my number one fan!”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Olivia Tan’s bilingual cookbook, *Cook with Olivia – Chinese Flavours*, is produced in collaboration with Thermomix Malaysia and features her family’s favourite recipes that can be easily prepared using the multifunctional kitchen appliance. Visit www.cookwitholivia.com for more information.



SUPERIOR HERBAL CHICKEN

1-1.5kg free-range chicken
1 tbsp sea salt
15g old ginger, shredded
½ tbsp wolfberries, rinsed
5 pieces Chinese angelica root (dong quai), rinsed
3 tbsp Dom Benedictine/Shaoxing wine
Water for steaming

OTHERS

Grease-proof baking sheet
Aluminium foil

Marinate chicken with salt and set aside for 30 minutes. Place the grease-proof baking sheet on the aluminium foil, then place chicken on the baking sheet. Insert some dong quai into the cavity of the chicken and scatter the rest on top, along with the ginger and wolfberries. Pour the liqueur or Shaoxing wine over the chicken. Wrap the chicken up into a parcel and place it on a dish. Steam for an hour. Let it rest for 10 minutes before serving.





PINEAPPLE PRAWNS

400g medium-sized prawns
200g pineapple, cut into chunks
1 red chilli, shredded
3 tbsp oil

A
3 dried chillies, washed & deseeded
2 pips garlic, peeled
2 shallots, peeled

SAUCE
5 tbsp chilli sauce
3 tbsp tomato sauce
1 tbsp sugar

Devein the prawns and remove the heads. Blend ingredients A until fine. Heat oil in a pan and sauté the blended ingredients until fragrant. Add prawns, pineapple and sauces. Stir well over medium heat until cooked. Add shredded chilli and mix well. Serve hot with steamed rice.



“COOKING A WELL-BALANCED MEAL FOR THE FAMILY IS IMPORTANT — CHILDREN SHOULD BE GIVEN HOMEMADE, UNPROCESSED AND PRESERVATIVE-FREE FOODS”

HOT & SPICY CLAMS

500g clams
1 tbsp garlic, chopped
1 tbsp ginger, chopped
2 red chillies, diced
1 tbsp bird's eye chilli, chopped
150ml water
1 tbsp oil

SEASONING

1 tbsp light soy sauce
2 tbsp tomato sauce
2 tbsp chilli sauce
3 tbsp white rice vinegar
3 tbsp water
1 tbsp sugar
½ tsp salt
1 tsp cornflour

GARNISHING

2 stalks spring onions, chopped

Soak clams in salted water for 30 minutes. Wash thoroughly to remove sand and drain. Boil clams until their shells open, then drain and set aside. Heat oil in a pan, sauté the garlic and ginger until fragrant. Add the chillies, water and seasonings, then bring to boil. Add clams and stir well. Garnish with spring onions before serving.



STIR FRIED KAILAN WITH GINGER

300g kailan (Chinese kale), rinsed,
cut into 5cm lengths
2 cloves garlic, peeled & smashed
5 slices old ginger
3 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine
3 tbsp old ginger juice
1 tbsp oil
Salt to taste

Heat oil in a pan, sauté ginger and garlic until fragrant. Add kailan, ginger juice and Shaoxing rice wine and stir-fry until cooked. Add salt and give it a toss. Serve hot.





SOY MILK

150g organic soybeans

1 litre water

60g rock sugar or raw cane sugar, adjust to taste

3 pieces screwpine (pandan) leaves, knotted

Soak soybeans in water overnight or for at least eight hours. Drain and remove skin. Blend the soybeans with the water. Strain the soy milk with a fine sieve or muslin cloth. Skim off foam and bubbles with a spoon. Pour soy milk into a pot, add screwpine leaves and sugar. Boil at medium-to-low heat for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve warm or cold.

“I LOVE CREATING FOOD FROM THE FRESHEST INGREDIENTS.”

SWEET SNOW FUNGUS DESSERT

25g snow fungus

25g dried longan, washed

30g lotus seeds, washed

10 red dates, pitted

100g rock sugar, adjust to taste

1.5 litre water

Soak snow fungus in water for at least two hours. Using scissors, cut off the hard stems. Cut the snow fungus into small pieces. Rinse thoroughly and drain. Place all ingredients except the rock sugar into a pot. Bring to a boil and then let simmer for an hour. Add rock sugar and stir until it is fully dissolved. Serve the dessert warm or chilled.

Tip: Some snow fungus may take longer to soften. It can also be soaked overnight. This dessert may be stored in the refrigerator for up to two days. **H**

