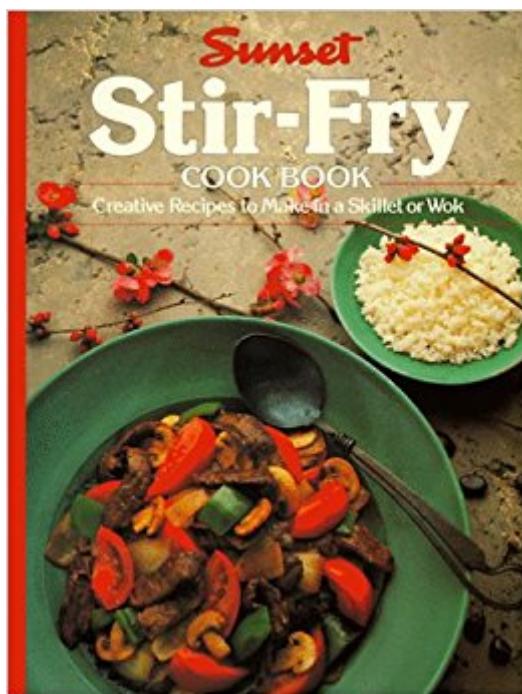


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Stir-Fry Cook Book



Synopsis

LINDA J. SELDEN 1989

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

LINDA J. SELDEN 1989

I love to stir-fry, and this book gives me more ideas.

Boo was water damaged and mostly useless. I did get the one recipe I needed out of the book so it was not a complete loss.

I have mixed feelings about this book, which corresponds to my own increasing skill in stir-fry cooking. This is the first cookbook which I purchased, as I tried to develop a more healthy style of eating. It provided an approachable method to learn the technique of stir-fry cooking. For that, I'd give it 4 stars. However, do note that the book uses the stir-fry technique to present a variety of recipes -- traditional Chinese, Chinese-American, Asian, and even European recipes. Here, you'll find Tequila-Lime Ice with Shrimp, Crunchy Indian Snack, Steak Paprikash and others. This can be enlightening, using the technique outside of traditionally Chinese cuisine. However, if one wants to gain an appreciation of Chinese cuisine, its cultural background, and more subtle renderings of the technique, one will be disappointed. It is not unreasonable for a person purchasing the cookbook.

To be clear, the focus is on the technique, not on the cuisine. Hence, I rate 2 stars for this. What this book does is reduce the stir-fry technique to a series of steps repeated for each recipe. So, reading the introductory chapter is absolutely essential to understand the much briefer descriptions provided for each recipe. In the introduction, there is valuable information, particularly for the steaming of vegetables. But, in each recipe, that information is reduced to "stir fry vegetables." I found the recipes typically flavorful and generally accurate. I think the book could have used one more editing review to catch a few of the remaining issues. I've added steps to some recipes -- such as reserving vegetables rather than adding meat to them. Because the technique is reduced to specific steps, there is often less information than would be helpful about the state of the cooking which prompts the next step. In particular, doneness of meats at particular steps is something that you'll need to experiment with to get the desired end result. The step of stir-frying aromatics prior to introducing meat doesn't work as described, IMHO. Aromatics tend to burn if the oil is heated to the level necessary to sear the meat. A couple other approaches suggest themselves: 1) heating oil to medium, adding aromatics, stir fry 30 seconds, remove aromatics, heat oil to high, introduce meat; or cooking meat first then adding aromatics. In the introduction, insufficient attention is given, for an introductory book, to the type of stove one has. Obviously, a gas stove best suits a traditional rounded bottom wok, and works very well. An electric stove simply does not transfer heat as effectively or efficiently to the rounded wok surface -- which greatly extends cooking time and renders cooking meat less than optimal. A flat-bottomed wok or a sauteuse/large skillet work well on electric (though this still will respond a bit differently than gas). The significance of this should be underscored as neglecting it can render the book much less than helpful for the beginner. With those caveats in mind, I do think the book is a useful introduction to stir-fry cooking. There is no cumulative knowledge to be gained by going through the book from front to back. So, after reading the intro, all recipes are basically accessible to the aspiring cook. Feel free to tackle whatever sounds tasty!

This is one of my favorite stir fry cookbooks and one of the few I like to recommend to someone brand new to wok cooking, or experienced and wanting tasty easy recipes. The *Sunset Wok Cookbook*, and *Stir-Frying to the Sky's Edge: The Ultimate Guide to Mastery, with Authentic Recipes and Stories* by Grace Young, are other favorites. This cookbook has some info about stir frying, 9 sections including beef/ pork/ lamb, poultry, seafood, noodles & rice, eggs, salads, vegetables, and desserts. There are a few pictures, the recipes are very clear, easy to read and follow, and are simple, without having 12-24 ingredients. They are also very tasty, I've found it easy

to substitute if needed, and most ingredients are fairly easy to find. Quite a few recipes are commonly found in Chinese restaurants and buffets. Many of the recipes have sauces, which can be adjusted, heat added with crushed red pepper flakes, or used in a stir fry made of leftovers. You can make a stir fry from almost anything, anywhere. There's a couple Italian, French and Southwest US recipes included. To make a stir fry easily, you need a couple pieces of equipment. Items I have are; Knife - Kiwi brand Thai vegetable cleaver \$10, The Wok Shop, light weight, easy to handle - or a good chef type knife. 14" Carbon Steel Wok w/ Helper Handle (Flat Bottom) USA Made by Wok Shop - small flat bottom so it works very much like a round bottom, but stable on a flat stove. It needs seasoning (Grace Young book & YouTube, Wok Shop Tane Chan video). This 14" flat bottom carbon steel works beautifully for 1-4 servings, and is best to start with. It's one of my favorite woks. I currently have a 9" 10" 3-12" 4-14" 16" in round and flat bottoms carbon steel, and a cast iron 13" round bottom. One of the 14" has a very large flat bottom, so it doesn't stir fry well, but works for flatbreads. They are all nice and black. Avoid nonstick, you can't heat them as hot as you need to, and I've seen some videos showing someone stir frying when the nonstick coating catches fire, producing a 4' flame. Wok Spatula - I prefer wood or nylon, my nylon one is shaped like a wok spatula, as is one of my wood ones. I also use 14" and 18" cooking chopsticks a lot. Metal can scratch or scrape the seasoning off. I use an 8 oz glass to make my sauces in, and make them before starting food prep. You NEED to have everything ready and at hand before starting. Always heat the wok first, then add the oil (safflower, peanut, canola or other HIGH Smoking point oil) to the HOT wok, swirl the oil up the sides, then add garlic & ginger, then the food. A wok and stir fry can't be beat for emergency cooking, it was designed hundreds of years ago to quickly cook over a small hot fire, using very little fuel. If the power is out (happens a LOT where we live) I'll cook all veggies, or veggies and pre cooked sliced meat, or seafood, and have everything cut smaller/ thinner than usual. I use the 14" flat bottom wok on my GasOne one burner butane stove (about \$25) the stir fry is fully cooked in 2-4 min. Usually my stir fries take 3-8 min. For outdoor use I have a 16 brick volcano stove shown by survivalcommonsense www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qoyBVKC0nI \$6.08 volcano stove. My flat and round bottom woks work beautifully on it. I've found the recipes in this book are the ones I usually use during power outages. I highly recommend this and the other two books for beginners & experienced, who want to make easy, tasty foods. Grace Young's book is excellent for beginners, or anyone who wants to learn good stir frying techniques and get great recipes. Grace also has several international recipes in her book.

Very easy to read and follow - recipes are both innovative and exciting as well as nutritious. For

someone who's always wanted to learn how to cook chinese food and stir fry this is a must have book. This book has more than just oriental recipes, and doesn't stress the need of a wok. The only thing the book lacks are pictures. Definitely a must have in any cooks library.

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