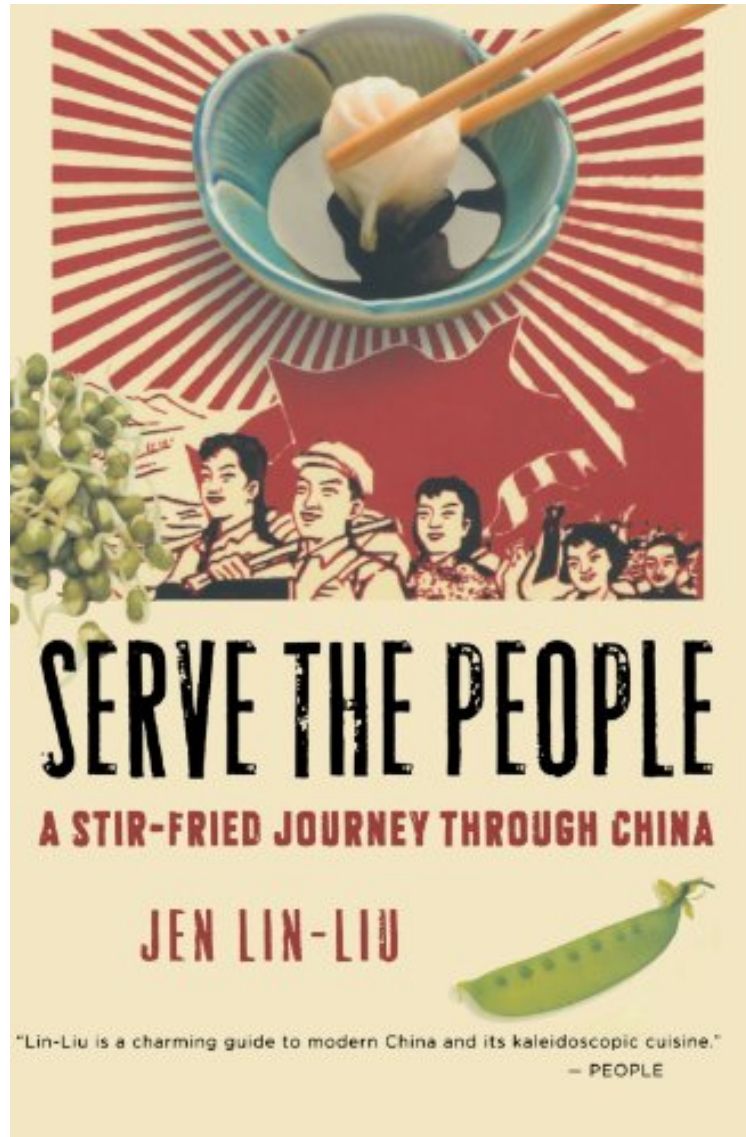


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Serve the People: A Stir-Fried Journey Through China

Jen Lin-Liu

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#485585 in Books Jen Lin Liu 2009-05-22 2009-05-22 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .88 x 5.251, .71 #File Name: 0156033747352 pages Serve the People A Stir Fried Journey Through China | File size: 62.Mb

Jen Lin-Liu : Serve the People: A Stir-Fried Journey Through China before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Serve the People: A Stir-Fried Journey Through China:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly enjoyable, educational read By nashvillegirl This is one of the best food books and memoirs I have read. By the time I got to the third page, I was hooked, and read it quickly over the next couple of days. After graduating from college, the author (Jen) is living in China, working as a freelance

journalist, when she decides to head to cooking school and learn about being a chef in China. She begins at the Hualian Cooking School in Beijing, where right off the bat, we learn that cooking schools and careers are different in China (it's not considered a glamorous or respected job, there's a national cooking exam to pass where the majority of the students teach, the students have almost no interest in being at school, and you learn primarily by watching someone else cook, not doing it yourself). She convinces one of the teachers at the school to give her private lessons, and between reading about the teacher showing Jen how to shop at markets and find the knife-sharpener, we get glimpses into what the teacher's life was like during Mao's time. The second part of the book focuses on Jen's time as an intern at a noodle stand and helping out at the rice harvest in rural China. In the third part, Jen becomes an intern at a fine dining restaurant in Shanghai, where we then learn about the lives of the other waitresses and the manager. Finally, in the fourth part, Jen returns to Beijing, where she briefly enlightens us on hutong living and cooking. I don't know a lot about Chinese culture, and I found Jen's descriptions of Chinese life, history, and food to be very interesting. Besides learning to cook herself, Jen also visits a wide variety of restaurants, searching for great dishes. We see her eat at some interesting places, including a restaurant that specializes in preparing dishes from "male parts." She also manages to meet a wide variety of people, all with different backgrounds and goals, and provides the reader with views of their lives and how they ended up involved in the food industry. Finally, Jen has an enjoyable, concise writing style that makes for an easy, quick read. I would recommend this book to anyone wanting to know more about Chinese food, and I would definitely read other books by this author.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An evocative and satisfying read. By WI enjoyed all the dimensions of this historical, cultural, and gastronomical narrative. The author has a keen wit and her tales truly seemed to come alive. My favorite section was probably the over-the-top description of test-taking in China (at least, kitchen skills test-taking), such an entirely different universe from the States. This book was entertaining, moving along at a good clip, and yet I felt the author really shared some perceptive observations as well. There were beautiful, evocative images of those secret things invisible to outsiders, like the knife sharpener bicycling through the alleyways. Toward the end I felt the final chapters didn't really jive as well, but overall I truly enjoyed this diverse look at food and life in China. My only negative comment would be that the Chinese pinyin (romanization of Chinese characters) didn't have any tone markings - for novice Chinese speakers, like myself, this would have made a huge difference in appreciating and learning the Chinese phrases used. I highly recommend this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. China viewed through the window of the kitchen. By BD Jen Lin-Liu peeks out through the kitchen window and the view of China is as clear-headed as anything I've read about China. In *Serve the People*, the author goes to a cooking school with the regular guys (yes, they're mostly men) who will get jobs as the equivalent of short-order cooks. She cooks with them, learns their tricks and the role that food plays in everyday Chinese life. This isn't a paean to the glories of the Chinese cuisine; it's about cooking for the masses, which is both utilitarian and ethereal. The author doesn't spare you the oil and the MSG. In fact, you'll learn in this book why Chinese food uses too much of both, but she also appreciates the artistry behind the knife. This is a great book for foodies and China hands alike -- and great fun. The scene where they all cheat on their final cooking exam is hysterical.

A memorable and mouthwatering tour of today's China. As a freelance journalist and food writer living in Beijing, Jen Lin-Liu already had a ringside seat for China's exploding food scene. When she decided to enroll in a local cooking school—held in an unheated classroom with nary a measuring cup in sight—she jumped into the ring herself. Progressing from cooking student to noodle-stall and dumpling-house apprentice to intern at a chic Shanghai restaurant, she finds poor young men and women streaming in from the provinces in search of a “rice bowl” (living wage); a burgeoning urban middle class hungry for luxury after decades of turmoil and privation; and the mentors who take her in hand in the kitchen and beyond. Together they present an unforgettable slice of contemporary China in the full swing of social and economic transformation.

From Publishers Weekly Chinese-American journalist Lin-Liu's delightful mixture of memoir and cookbook records her years living and working in Shanghai and Beijing, when she attended a vocational cooking school and discovered a passion for Chinese cooking and culture. Growing up in the U.S. to Taiwan-born parents, the author admits feeling alienated from her heritage when she first moved to China in 2000; a graduate of an American journalism school, she eventually became the food editor at TimeOut Beijing. Moving between Shanghai and Beijing, she begins her account with her frustrating yet ultimately rewarding study at the Hualian Cooking School in Beijing, where she apprenticed to one of the school's instructors, Chairman Wang, an old-style cook raised during the Cultural Revolution, who taught the author the rudiments of chopping, shopping and how to pass the cooking exam. Despite the flimsy certificate, bias against women working in professional kitchens and the reluctance to hire foreigners, Lin-Liu found work at Chef Zhang's noodle stall serving migrant workers and at the popular dumpling house Xian'r Lao Man; she later snagged a plum internship at Jereme Leung's upscale Shanghai restaurant, Whampoa Club. Incorporating stories of many of the Chinese she worked alongside (and their recipes), as well as trips to the MSG factory in Henan or to the rice-growing Guangxi province, Lin-Liu offers a thoroughgoing, spirited celebration of overcoming cultural barriers. (July)

Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Lin-Liu is a charming guide to modern China and its kaleidoscopic cuisine."--People "Serve the People is light fare, a delicately crafted steamed dumpling of a book. It's peppered with delicious descriptions, authentic recipes, humorous anecdotes and all the goodness of a young woman who finds her way in life, and even falls in love."--International Herald Tribune "A mouthwatering tale of the thriving culinary scene in today's China--top rated by Zagat."--Nina and Tim Zagat, co-Founders and co-Chairs of Zagat Survey