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# HMONG RECIPE

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WINTER 2003

Hmong Recipe Cook Book: New Citizen's  
Finkle Kathy

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WINTER 2003



Community  
Resource  
Center

PO #  
DATE

# "NEW CITIZEN'S HMONG GARDEN PROJECTS"

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The traditional western way of separating food into the above categories creates some artificial designations that aren't appropriate for Hmong cooking. For example, small amounts of meat are added to greens, vegetables, and salads. These could be main dishes, or an accompanying dish with basic rice, or, with noodles, or rice sticks.

The extensive use of greens is an example of the Hmong's Chinese heritage; coconut milk, peanuts, coriander root, and banana leaves (for wrapping steamed foods) are examples of Laotian and Thai influence.

## INTRODUCTION

Hmong people left China early in the 19th Century and became land squatters in rural mountainous areas of Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia...now Kampuchea. Their verbal culture was first adapted into a written language in the 1950's.

When - as a result of support of American troops during the Vietnam War - Hmong people came to Minnesota as refugees, they began learning to read Hmong as well as English.

In many metro gardens - both large and small - Hmong people showed an assertiveness about growing their own food. Observation of Hmong gardens revealed unique patterns of pruning edible, tender, new growth from a plant, while the plant continued to mature and to produce. The use of whole plants as a source of greens, of vegetables, and of next year's seeds set a frugal example of careful harvesting.

To receive the plant's energy, Hmong gardeners harvest greens and vegetables early in the day or late in the day. When the sun shines hot, the plants' energy is in the roots; it is not a good time to harvest food.

These obvious gardening skills, led to questions about unwritten Hmong recipes. This is a beginning about answering some of those questions.

## EVERY-DAY COOKING IN LAOS

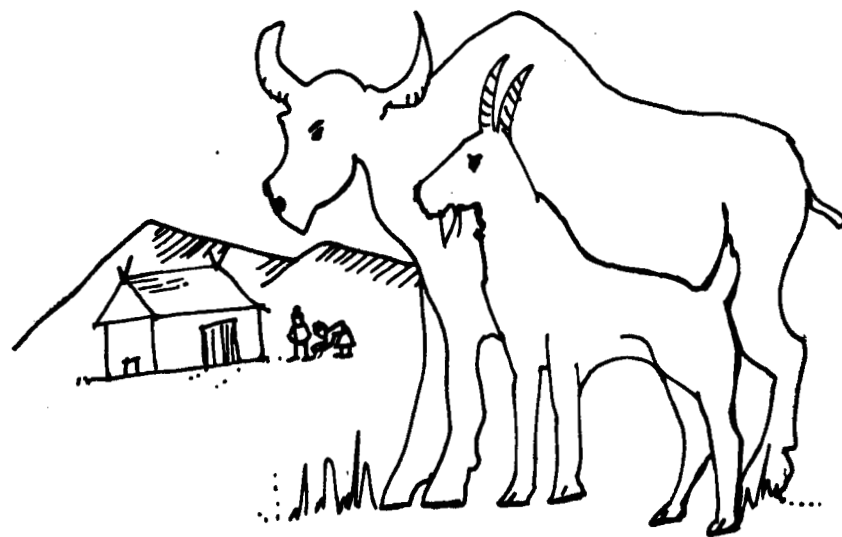
"The typical traditional Hmong family meal always includes one or two bowls of rice, and a green vegetable soup, (green leaves or melon vine tips boiled without salt and served with a considerable amount of the cooking water).

"If meat is available, it is served in a separate bowl with its own juices and cooking water. If the amount of meat is too small, it is extended by adding chunks of vegetables to make a stew. If there is no meat at all, this dish then includes only vegetables, cooked with lard and salt.

"At each end of the table there is generally a small bowl containing a mixture of salt and ground red pepper, sometimes with Chinese or Laotian fish sauce added. (This seasoning is either eaten in occasional spoon sips between bites of food from the main bowls, or used to flavor a piece of meat dipped into it.)

"No water or other beverage is served with ordinary meals. (The cooking water in the green vegetable soup is left without salt, since sips of it serve as drinking water during the meal.) The traditional Hmong meal includes no dessert."\*

\*Myths, Legends, and Folk Tales From the Hmong of Laos,  
Charles Johnson, Editor; Macalester College.



# UNUSUAL INGREDIENTS

The following ingredients are available from Hmong gardeners, from the Hmong retailers at metro Farmer's Markets or from your own garden:

1. squash, pumpkin, bitter melon, or luffa vine ends
2. prunings from pea plants
3. baby winter squash
4. baby cabbages
5. winter squash or pumpkin blossoms
6. bitter melon
7. fresh coriander
8. cucuzzi squash (edible gourd)
9. asparagus bean
10. pak choy
11. mustard spinach
12. Kyoto Chinese cucumber
13. Thai-Cambodian eggplant
14. luffa gourd
15. Chinese broccoli

The following ingredients are available from most oriental grocery stores:

1. bitter melons
2. lemon grass stalks
3. fresh coriander
4. canned coconut milk
5. rice sticks
6. edible soy beans
7. canned giant bamboo shoots (substitute: jicama)
8. chili peppers
9. glutinous sweet rice flour
10. mung beans
11. canned baby corn

The following ingredients are available at most metro supermarkets:

1. fresh bean sprouts
2. ginger

3. garlic
4. soy, fish, and oyster sauce
5. cellophane noodles
6. JAPANFOOD Oriental noodles
7. chili peppers
8. bok choy



## UNUSUAL INGREDIENTS

### Bitter Melon

Bitter melon is a wrinkled green cylindrical fruit - 4-9 inches long. There is no other appropriate word to describe the melon; it is bitter. The taste of bitter melon is appreciated by many Asian cultures. When California Hmong come to Minnesota, they bring bitter melon as gifts. In Minnesota, bitter melon is hard to grow.

### Lemon Grass

In Minnesota, lemon grass is a plant grown by most Hmong people during the summer months. The roots are tended as a house plant during the winter. To eat raw, remove the outer leaves and eat the tender white base. For cooking, cut into two-inch pieces. Upper leaves and stalk are added to soup. The pieces can be dried for winter use. Lemon grass is usually removed before serving (like a bay leaf). You can substitute grated lemon rind for the flavor of lemon grass... 1 T. rind equals - 2 two-inch pieces.

In California, lemon grass grows all year in huge clumps of plants.

### Coconut Milk

Coconut milk is not the clear liquid inside a coconut; it is the milky liquid extracted from the grated flesh of fresh coconuts or reconstituted from dried shredded coconut. Coconut cream is the thickest milk that surfaces on coconut milk. You can substitute equal amounts of dried flaked coconut and milk pureed in a blender. Pieces of undissolved coconut can be strained from the resulting coconut milk. Always stir coconut milk when it comes to a boil, and do not cover pan while cooking. If either of these precautions is neglected, the milk may curdle.

### Coriander, Chinese Parsley, or Cilantro (Spanish)

Coriander is the aromatic scent of all Minnesota Hmong gardens. It is planted in early spring, late spring, and again during late August for a fall harvest. Young plants are harvested for their leaves when they are about 10 inches tall. Seeds from mature plants would only be saved for future planting.

Fresh coriander is refrigerated with stems in a glass of water, or in a plastic bag ballooned out with air before sealing. The leaves are pinched off the stem. Leaves are scattered over many cooked foods, or, included in salads and spicy dipping sauce.

In Minnesota Hmong families freeze coriander for winter use by quickly blanching the herb in boiling water, and sealing it in plastic bags before freezing. Some people eat the root as a seasoning; others use it for a medicine for chicken pox.

In California, coriander can be grown all year. (There is no substitute.)



# BASICS



### STEAMING

Hmong homes in Laos did not have ovens. Wood was the fuel for open cooking fires and a clay stove. Foods were steamed, not baked.

In America the process remains the same. Traditional Chinese bamboo baskets inside a wok work well. If you don't own these, any large lidded pot will do. Simply place the food - on a heat proof plate elevated on a rack inside the pot - 1 inch above the boiling water.

Food takes twice as long to steam as it does to boil. Keep hot water available to replenish the water level, if it gets too low.

### STIR-FRYING

Most Hmong cooks use large heavy skilletts with tight lids. Stir-fry cooking requires preparation time. Meat is cubed, or cut into shreds; vegetables are cut into bite-size pieces... (smaller pieces and diagonal cuts for tough vegetables or peeled stems).

A small amount of oil or lard is heated in the skillet. The cut-up meat is added and stir-fried. Sometimes the vegetables are added to the meat; sometimes the meat is removed and the vegetables are stir-fried before the ingredients are combined. After stir-frying the lid is added, the heat is lowered, and the ingredients are steamed until the meat is fully cooked and the vegetables remain slightly crunchy. The salt is added last - on the surface of the food, not cooked through the food.

ABOUT RICE...a Hmong family of nine eats about 100 pounds of rice each month.

#### Regular Rice (Mov txua)

##### Rice cooked in a rice cooker

Soak the rice 1½ hours in hot water and drain. Fill a pan half full of water and boil, reduce heat and add rice. Cook the rice for 10 min., stirring now and then. Drain.

Put some water in the bottom of the rice cooker and boil. Then put the rice in the top of the rice cooker. Cover and steam 15 to 20 min. until done.

##### Rice Water

Stir rice in a little boiling water. Drain (in the basket or strainer that will be placed over fresh boiling water to finish cooking). Save the water with rice starch to thicken meat and vegetable dish. This is often used to feed infants or elderly (without teeth).

#### Sticky Rice (Mov nplaum)

On festive occasions, the Hmong eat a more expensive rice that is opaque and shorter-grained than their usual rice. This is called sticky, glutinous, sweet rice. A ball of sticky rice is a great snack because the grains stick together. Sticky rice is soaked before cooking (like dried beans), then steamed over boiling water rather than directly in the water.

#### Sticky Rice (cont'd)

2 c. glutinous rice  
2 c. cold water

Soak sweet rice in the cold water overnight or at least 6 hours. Put 1½ inches of water in lower part of double steamer, put the rice in the upper pan, cover and cook over medium heat about 20 minutes or until rice is soft and tender. Turn the rice out onto a large breadboard or a sheet of aluminum foil and squeeze handfuls of it together for about 5 minutes, or until the grains stick to each other and not to your hands. Serve in compressed balls.

#### RICE STICKS AND ORIENTAL NOODLES

Most Hmong people refer to a variety of Oriental noodles as "rice sticks." The shapes and names are so varied, that one simple phrase is tempting. Transparent noodles (cellophane noodles, Chinese vermicelli, or bean threads) are made from green mung beans. These noodles are usually soaked in warm water before they are added to various soups and main dishes. Sometimes transparent noodles are deep fat fried.

Oriental noodles - made from wheat flour - come under various names and in various shapes. In addition to products made from wheat and mung beans, there are other noodle products made from rice.

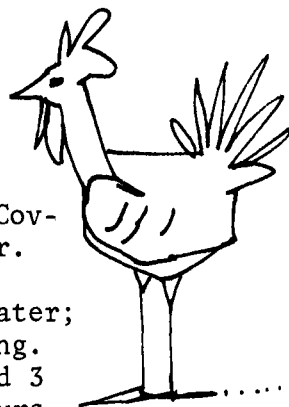
To avoid error, when discussing "rice sticks" with Hmong people, identify the product.

## SOUPS

Southeast Asian soups are usually served with a ladle from one bowl or one pan. People can spoon over meat/ rice/or vegetables; or, they can drink the soup from a cup. Soup can be the beverage that accompanies the meal. Soups are usually light, not hearty.

### CHICKEN BROTH

Use chicken backs, ends of wings, necks, skin, and bones - including thigh and drum sticks - chopped in half (not jointed) so that the marrow can cook out of the bones. Cover with water, and bring to a simmer. Skim surface for impurities. After several minutes add a little cold water; wait for simmer and continue skimming. After 20 min. add 3 green onions and 3 slices of ginger root. Simmer 2 hours. Strain out solids. Salt to taste. Cool broth. Remove surface fat. Freeze broth for future use.



### SWEET BASIL

Sweet basil is grown to season special foods. For example, a new Hmong mother eats chicken soup flavored with sweet basil.

### GINGER (qhiav)

In California, Hmong gardeners plant ginger rhizomes, eating the fresh green shoots, as well as the slices of the ginger rhizomes. In Minnesota most Hmong buy ginger.

### GARLIC (qij)

In Laos and in America, gardeners plant garlic cloves.

## HOT DIPPING SAUCE (Kua txob)

Every family seems to have a slight variation to Hmong hot dipping sauce. Everyone does agree to grind the solids with a pestle in a mortar.\*

### Variations

1½ T. fish sauce  
2 or 3 red chili peppers, seeded and chopped fine

or

2 T. fish sauce  
2 or 3 red chili peppers, seeded and chopped fine  
2 chopped green onions  
½ c. chopped coriander leaves (Chinese Parsley)

or

2 T. fish sauce  
lemon or lime juice  
2 or 3 chili peppers, seeded and chopped fine

\*Hmong cooks put small amounts of ingredients (usually spices and seeded, stemmed chili peppers) in a mortar and grind with a pestle. Using a mortar and pestle is a centuries old technique for grinding ingredients. Nothing else releases oils and flavors more effectively. Today's blenders and food processors will not produce a final product of equaled quality.



# SALADS

### TOSSED SALAD

Three fourths of the salad is shredded lettuce. Other ingredients might include:

tender chopped young dill plant (8 inches high, no main stems), chopped coriander (6 to 8 leaf stage, no main stems), young chopped mint plant (9 inches high, tender leaves), bean sprouts, Oriental mustard spinach (4 inches tall).

Use lemon or lime juice as an overall dressing. (Some Hmong families are now using American bottled salad dressings.) Toss salad.

Garnish top of salad with cellophane noodles, deep fat fried in hot oil and broken into small pieces.

### KOMATSUNA (ORIENTAL MUSTARD SPINACH)

#### Salad

If under four inches tall, eat as a salad green.

#### Main Dish

If over 4 inches, cut into bite size pieces and add to sautéed cubed pork or chicken. Sauté spinach with meat; cover pan with lid and steam for few minutes. Salt/soy sauce to taste.

### MEAT SALAD

Wash 1 head of lettuce, or an equal amount of leaf lettuce. Dry and break into bite size pieces.

Put ½ pkg. of 1 lb. rice sticks or cellophane noodles into warm water to soak for 15 minutes.

Sauté 1 lb. ground pork. Salt/pepper/soy or fish sauce.

Drain rice sticks. Chop into 2 inch pieces. Add to meat mixture and cook for 3 minutes.

Cool and toss with lettuce.



### BABY CORN

Canned baby corn ears are served as a salad to accompany a special meal. Sometimes the small ears are sliced to provide a special ingredient for a stir-fry main dish.

### NOODLE SALAD (nqaub poob)

This basic meal - with variations - is eaten by Hmong people many, many times. Variations in noodles/rice sticks, salad ingredients, and meat depend upon what is available. The bamboo shoots and coconut milk can be left out for everyday cooking.

Cook until tender one chicken breast in 5 c. water. According to directions, cook the 8 bundles of JAPAN-FOOD noodles. Rinse and set aside. Cube boned chicken breast, and sauté pieces in 2 T. oil. Add one clove of garlic, and three slices of ginger...the ginger is removed before serving.

When cubed chicken is sautéed, stir in:  
3 T. chili powder  
one 5.6 oz. can of coconut milk  
4 c. chicken broth  
Simmer above in open pan.

Partially fill 8 serving bowls with bean sprouts, shredded cabbage, and peeled chopped cucumbers. Open 1 can of Giant Bamboo Shoots, placing bite size pieces of bamboo shoots on raw salad.

Put 1/8 of noodles on top of each salad.

Pour hot, spicy chicken soup over the cooked noodles and salad.

### PEA VINE SALAD

Put one cup of thumb-length pieces of the pea plant --leaves and tender stems--on a bed of lettuce leaves. Squeeze lemon or lime juice over the pea vine as a dressing...one serving.

NOTE: Hmong people grow edible-podded peas: (1) to eat the raw leaves and stems as a salad, (2) to eat the leaves and stems as a stir fried vegetable, and (3) to eat the edible pods as a stir fried vegetable. The peas (or seeds) are saved for planting in next year's garden.

### ALL-MEAL LEAF LETTUCE SALAD

In some cases the salad substitutes for the diner's fork. Tear a piece of lettuce from a large leaf. This piece is used to carefully pick up one bite of food--rice, vegetable/meat, and a touch of hot sauce. This process is repeated and repeated. The last piece of lettuce cleans the plate.

At most Hmong buffet dinners, a plate of tender lettuce leaves is included for those who make the choice to combine their salad with their meal.

### EGG SALAD

Hard boil 4 eggs. Peel and chop white of eggs into little pieces.

Partially fill a medium sized bowl with washed dried lettuce broken into bite size pieces. Add 2 sliced raw carrots and 1 cubed peeled seeded cucumber. Add chopped egg white.

Mash 4 egg yolks; add 3 T. lemon juice, 2 T. oil, salt, pepper and soy sauce. Blend thoroughly. Use this as the salad dressing. Toss together.

### SPROUTS FROM MUNG BEANS (Kou Toum)

Soak mung beans in water overnight. Drain water. Keep beans in clean jar covered with a clean piece of net or cheesecloth. Keep at room temperature, out of direct sunlight. Rinse and shake beans daily until sprouts are about two inches long. Remove hulls from sprouted seeds; remove any brown tails.

Serve sprouts on a bed of lettuce.

or

Serve sprouts over rice.

or

Serve sprouts on top of soup.

or

Serve sprouts sautéed as one ingredient in fried rice.

YIA MOUA'S CARROT SALAD (Zaub ntug hauv pau daj)

1 lb. carrots (peeled & grated or shredded)  
1 c. dry roasted peanuts (or crunchy peanut butter)  
¼ c. salad oil  
¼ c. lemon or lime juice  
4 to 8 drops Tabasco sauce  
1 small clove garlic, crushed  
Pinch of salt.

Grind up peanuts in mortar or electric blender. Add remaining ingredients and 1 c. of the grated carrots; crush and stir to make juice. Add remaining carrots. Mix thoroughly. Refrigerate for several hours and serve on a bed of lettuce.

(Peeled and seeded cucumbers can be substituted for the carrots.)

NOTE: Even though carrots weren't grown by Hmong families in Laos, this recipe using grated raw carrots is a favorite wherever Hmong people have chosen to live in America.



# GREENS



CHINESE BROCCOLI (~~sometimes called Chinese Kale~~)

There are two varieties of Chinese broccoli - one with yellow flowers, and one with white flowers. Seed pods are saved for next year's seeds; occasionally, the seed pods are eaten.

VEGETABLE: SAUTEED CHINESE BROCCOLI

Break tender greens into thumb-length pieces; include top leaves, tender ends of stems and flowers. Heat 2 T. lard or oil, and stir fry Chinese broccoli.

Salt/pepper/soy sauce/butter to taste.

MAIN DISH: SAUTEED MEAT & <sup>broccoli</sup> ~~broccoli~~ GREENS

Fry 2 c. cubed pork or chicken in 2 T. oil. Wash tender greens and cut into 8 cups of thumb-size pieces; include leaves, tender end of stems, and flowers. Use  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. water. Simmer meat and greens 5 minutes. Add salt/pepper/soy sauce to taste. Serve over rice.

STEAMED CHINESE BROCCOLI

Break tender greens into thumb-length pieces; include top leaves, tender ends of stems and flowers. Steam cook until tender...about 30 minutes. Serve with oyster sauce or fish sauce poured over the greens.

### BABY WINTER SQUASH AND "ENDS-OF-VINE" SOUP

3 c. bite-size pieces of small immature winter squash (skin is soft and easily punctured with a fingernail).



2 c. chicken broth, plus  
1 c. water

2 c. bite-size pieces of tender stem and immature leaves from the last 7 inches of the winter squash vine.\* Remove any tough fiber or threads from the outer surface of the main stem.

Boil all above ingredients together for 8 minutes until squash (flesh, stem, leaves, or unopened buds) is tender.

Can be served as a soup, or spooned over cooked rice.

\*The pruned vine quickly grows a new end.

NOTE: In Minnesota Hmong people are freezing baby squash - butternut, buttercup and hubbard - for winter use.

### PAK CHOI

(This is not "bok choy", available in the produce department of most supermarkets. Pak choy greens are grown in all Hmong gardens.)

SNACK: Pak choy is eaten raw. The tender upper stalk is especially good...right before flowering. When stalk is picked, successive stalks develop.

### VEGETABLE: SAUTÉED PAK CHOI

Break tender greens into thumb-length pieces; include top leaves, tender ends of stems and flowers. Heat 2 T. lard or oil, and stir fry Pak Choi greens.

Salt/pepper/soy sauce/butter to taste.

### MAIN DISH: SAUTÉED PORK & PAK CHOI GREENS

Fry 2 c. cubed pork in 2 T. oil. Wash tender greens and cut into 8 cups of thumb-size pieces; include leaves, tender end of stems, and flowers. Use  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. water. Simmer pork and greens 5 minutes. Add salt/pepper/soy sauce to taste. Serve over rice.

### SOUP: PORK AND PAK CHOI SOUP

Put cooked smoked ham into boiling water. When water boils again, add lid and simmer until meat is tender. Remove meat and cut up 2 c. (Cool broth, remove fat, and save broth for soup.)

Wash tender greens and cut into 8 c. of thumb-size pieces; include leaves, tender end of stems, & flowers.

Boil 6 c. pork broth. Add meat & greens. Simmer for 10 min.

MAIN DISH: BOILED PORK & MUSTARD GREENS (zaub ntsuab)

Plunge an economy cut of pork into boiling water. When water boils again, begin skimming surface impurities. Cover, and simmer until meat is tender. Remove meat and cut up 2 cups of pork. (Cool broth, remove fat, and save broth for soup.)

Wash greens. Cut up 8 cups thumb-size pieces of tender greens & flowers. (Save any larger, tougher stems for soups or for pickling.) Add 3/4 c. meat broth for entire. Add meat. Simmer greens and meat for 5 minutes. Salt/pepper to taste.

SOUP: PORK AND MUSTARD GREEN SOUP

Same as main dish, with a few exceptions:

- (1) Add 6 cups pork broth.
- (2) Simmer longer...about 10 minutes.
- (3) Sprinkle coriander leaves (Chinese parsley) on surface of soup before serving.

VEGETABLE: SAUTEED MUSTARD GREENS

Break tender greens into thumb-length pieces; include leaves, tender stems and flowers. (Save any tougher stems or outer leaves for pickling.) Heat 2 T. lard or oil, and stir fry mustard greens until tender.

Salt/pepper/soy sauce/butter to taste.

MO YANG'S PICKLED MUSTARD GREENS (zaub nqhaub)

(Pickled mustard greens are like American sour cucumber pickles. Broad-leaf "swollen stem" mustard is best for pickling. [Sauerkraut is a possible substitute])

Use 8 c. of the large stems, the older, outer, tough leaves, and the core and bottom of mustard greens. Twist, crush and bruise the greens. Wash under hot water. Pack greens in a crock or glass container. Cover with brine:

BRINE: Boil 1/4 c. rice in 4 c. water. Drain rice and save all rice water. Add 2 T. salt and enough warm water to rice water to cover greens. A plate with a weight may be needed to hold greens under the brine. Set at room temperature for 3 days.

Eat immediately, or refrigerate. Once pickled, the greens keep for as long as 2 months. In Minnesota, Hmong families now freeze the pickled greens in plastic bags for winter use.

NOTE: For American cooks: If you don't have rice water, make this Chinese brine:

3 T. salt  
1 T. sugar  
2 T. white distilled vinegar  
Add enough water to cover greens.

After 3 days, remove and rinse greens, and place back in brine before refrigerating.

YOUNG DILL PLANT (zaub txwb nyug)  
(about 8 inches tall)

Sauté  $\frac{1}{4}$  c. chopped onion. Add 2 c. cooked left-over chopped beef or flaked fish. When onion and meat are blended and heated, add 1 c. water and  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. young dill plant (without any tough stems) chopped. Cook until dill is tender. Salt/pepper/fish or soy sauce.

NOTES: Occasionally, Hmong families steam fish. If available, young dill plant is added to the top of the fish before it is placed in the steamer. The dill is eaten with the fish, which is served with rice.

Some Hmong families place a piece of fish in the center of individual rice papers. Various bits of seasonings are added to the edible package: dill, garlic, or coriander. The edges of the rice papers are gathered at the top and placed in a steamer. The food is steamed some undefinable length of time... "until it is good."

BUNCHING ONIONS

Two weeks before planting, Hmong gardeners cut a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch slice from the top of saved onion bulbs. The topped onions are kept in a dark cool place, where they begin to produce many new green shoots. When planted, there will be more to eat earlier. The green tops are never thrown away.

WINTER SQUASH, PUMPKIN, BITTER MELON, SWEET POTATO,  
OR LUFFA "ENDS-OF-VINE" SAUTE

Use last seven inches of any of above vines.\* Wash carefully.

Cut up 4 c. bite size pieces. Peel any tough fiber or threads from the outer surface of the main stem.

Put 2 T. oil in heavy pan or wok and heat until hot. Stir fry the tender pieces of stem, new immature leaves, and unopened buds until all are tender, but slightly crunchy. You may need to add more oil. Can be garnished with a few sautéed or uncooked flowers.

Serves 3

\*The pruned vine quickly grows a new end.

PEA VINES AND SAUSAGE (ntsitau mogkib)

Brown 1 lb. sausage. Drain grease. Add 5 c. washed, tender, pruned pea vines and leaves, chopped into pieces. Continue cooking until pea vines are tender, but slightly crunchy. Salt/pepper to taste.



# MAIN DISHES

HMONG NOODLES AND MEAT\*

Bean thread noodles (or cellophane noodles) 400 grams,  
or 4 small pkg. Soak in warm water about 15-20 min.,  
then drain well.

Add: 1½ lbs. hamburger, browned  
1½ t. salt

Add: 1 sprig mint  
6 green onions  
¼ c. coriander, Chinese parsley  
(all cut into little pieces)

Add: 1 t. MSG  
2 T. fish sauce  
1 t. black pepper

Stir and serve.

by Shoua Yang

Stuffed Chicken Wings: The wings are deboned and the  
noodle mixture is stuffed inside. Then the wings  
are fried until the meat is done.

\*From International Recipes, Webster Open School  
in Minneapolis.

SAUTÉED CUCUMBER WITH PORK OR CHICKEN (dib kib)

Cut  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. meat into thin bite size pieces.

Heat: 2 T. oil or pork fat until hot. Sauté meat with 1 clove garlic, crushed and 1 green onion, chopped.

Add 1 T. soy sauce,  $\frac{1}{2}$  t. sugar,  $\frac{1}{4}$  t. salt. Stir until blended.

Peel and seed 1 large cucumber; cut into cubes. In another pan, heat 2 T. hot oil and sauté cucumber until transparent. Add:

$\frac{1}{2}$  t. salt  
1 T. sugar

Add seasoned meat to sautéed cucumber; stir, heat, and serve.

NOTE: The Kyoto 3-foot Oriental cucumber is grown by Hmong people. In California, this cucumber will grow to be 20 inches long.

TOFU (taum paj)

Buy 1 lb. edible soybeans at Hmong grocery store. Soak the beans 8 hrs. and remove the skins from the beans.

Put  $\frac{1}{4}$  c. beans in blender. Add enough water to cover the beans. Blend until water and beans are mashed. Repeat and repeat.

Put mashed beans in clean used cloth rice bag. Hang the bag over a large bowl. The liquid drains into the bowl. Squeeze, by twisting, the bag tighter and tighter to force the liquid out. Keep the drained liquid. Throw away the solids within the bag.

Put liquid in a pan, and over a slow heat carefully bring to a "little boil". (Don't stop watching.) Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. lemon juice to  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. warm water. Add lemon water until the liquid changes from white to clear, and solids separate from the liquid. When the top part is solid and the bottom part is liquid, it is done. Save liquid.

With a slotted spoon, remove solid part and put in a clean used rice bag. Hang the bag over a clean bowl for two hours. The tofu is in the bag. The liquid is drunk, or used as a soup base. Liquid that isn't used, can be refrigerated and used during the next two days.

NOTE:\* "In Laos, the Hmong made soy bean curd at any time of the year, from soy beans grown in their fields and stored dry in the attic. The beans were first soaked in water, then ground in the stone mill, yielding a wet mush, which was boiled in a cast-iron pan ("lub yias") and drained through a cloth. The liquid was saved and the solids discarded (though some would fry the solid part in grease and eat it). The liquid was heated

to boiling and some kind of acid added (lemon juice or the juice of certain leaves or vines), causing the liquid to thicken. The resulting tofu could then be eaten hot or left to cool.

"Tofu soy bean curd is very highly esteemed by the Hmong. Older Hmong, especially, like to eat a good tofu soup. Sometimes chunks of tofu are added to boiled chicken or capon, especially at the first meal of newly harvested rice. Tofu is served and eaten on other special occasions, such as visits between in-laws."

\*Myths, Legends & Folk Tales From the Hmong of Laos,  
Charles Johnson, Editor; Macalester College.

#### Tofu and Chicken Soup

##### Ingredients:

- ½ c. cubed chicken
- 2 c. cubed tofu
- 2 c. water
- 3 2-inch pieces lemon grass

Cut chicken meat into bite-size pieces. Sauté chicken in 1 T. oil or chicken fat. Add 2 c. water, salt, pepper and lemon grass. Cut tofu into bite-size pieces and add to chicken and broth. Boil 5 min.

#### YIA MOUA'S GLASS MAIN DISH NOODLE SOUP

3/5 oz pkg. bean thread (also called cellophane) noodles

2 T. oil, or, chicken fat

½ lb. uncooked chicken, cut in small pieces (or, left-over cooked chicken cut in pieces)

1 qt. water

2 t. fish sauce

1 t. black pepper

½ t. MSG, monosodium glutamate

1 T. sugar

¼ c. green onions chopped

¼ c. unsweetened coconut milk

Soak noodles for 15 min. in warm water until soft. Drain and cut with scissors or chop with straight-edge knife into bite-size pieces.

In a 4 qt. sauce pan, sauté uncooked chicken in hot oil, or chicken fat, adding onions last min. of cooking; or sauté onions and add leftover chicken. Add 1 qt. water, noodles and seasonings. Bring to a boil. Stir in coconut milk before serving.



### STIR-FRIED CHICKEN\*

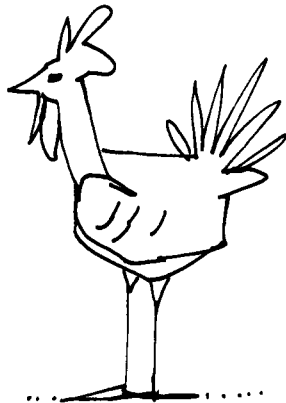
3/4 lb. chicken  
Dash salt  
3 oz. mushrooms, chopped  
1 stalk celery, chopped  
Dash black pepper  
1/2 to 1 onion, chopped  
Dash of black pepper  
1 c. water  
1 blade lemon grass

Wash chicken and scrape extra fat off skin with a sharp knife. Separate meat from bone and cut meat into strips about 1/2-inch wide by 2-inches long. Put chicken in heavy frying pan, add a dash of salt and cook over low heat, covered, a few minutes. If chicken sticks to pan, add a small amount of oil.

Add mushrooms and celery and continue to cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes. Then add pepper, onion and water.

Take one long blade of lemon grass and cut into 2-inch lengths. Add lemon grass to pan and continue to cook over low heat about 10 minutes or until chicken is done. Discard the lemon grass. Serve over rice, and dip in hot pepper sauce. Makes 3 servings.

\*Mpls. Star & Tribune, 10/24/84



### WHOLE ROASTED COCONUT CHICKEN\* (at least 5 lbs.)

Pound together peanuts, raw ground pork, sliced green onions, chopped seeded red chili peppers, mint leaves or fresh coriander leaves (Chinese parsley), cinnamon and one half of 14 oz can coconut milk. Stuff a chicken with this mixture. Sprinkle with fish sauce and bake covered until chicken is almost tender.

Remove lid, reduce heat, baste with remaining coconut milk several times and continue baking until all is tender.

\*McDonough's Family Education Classes

Suggested Adaptation for American Cooks:

### CHICKEN STUFFING:

1/2 lb. ground pork - sautéed (grease drained)  
3/4 c. salted peanuts (ground up)  
3 chopped green onions  
2 chopped seeded chili peppers  
1 egg  
1 c. bread crumbs  
2 t. cinnamon  
1 t. mint  
1/2 of 14 oz. can coconut milk

### MEAT ROLLS (or Egg Rolls) \*

1 lb. ground pork  
1 lb. ground beef  
½ lb. slivered carrots (shredded with potato peeler)  
1 pkg. bean threads or cellophane noodles, soaked 20 min. in warm water; drained, and chopped  
2 bunches green onions, sliced  
1 clove garlic crushed  
1 t. MSG (monosodium glutamate)  
salt and pepper to taste  
1 pkg. spring roll wrappers

Mix all of the above ingredients well. You can use egg roll wrappers, spring roll wrappers or rice paper. Rice paper is a little difficult, egg roll wrappers are a little too thick. Spring roll wrappers are easy to use. Keep them frozen until ½ hour before you use them. One package spring roll wrappers (1 lb.) Put some of the mixture in a corner of the paper and wrap according to package directions. Fry in about an inch of hot oil, not too fast as the skin will overcook before the meat is well cooked. Serve with a dipping sauce such as the following:

Sauce: 4 T. sugar (preferably melted in heavy skillet)  
Lemon or lime juice mixed with the following:  
Finely minced red chili pepper - stemmed, seeded  
Chopped peanuts  
1 clove crushed garlic

Grind solids with pestle in mortar; add liquids.

\*Adapted from Asian Business & Community News, "Special Food Issue," Dec., '85.

### CHICKEN WITH BITTER MELON\* (twiv iab)

Bitter melon is a wrinkled green cylindrical vegetable about 4 to 7 inches long.

¾ lb. chicken  
1 T. vegetable oil  
Dash of salt  
2 med. sized bitter melons  
1 t. finely chopped ginger root  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 t. cornstarch  
Dash pepper  
Dash MSG, optional  
½ c. water  
1 T. oyster-flavored sauce  
1 tomato, chopped into small pieces

Wash chicken, scrape extra fat from the skin. Separate meat from bone and cut the meat into strips about ½ in. wide by 2 in. long. Heat oil in frying pan over low heat, add chicken and dash of salt. Cook uncovered for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Slice the unpeeled bitter melon into ½ in. slices. If your bitter melon is more than 5 in. long, remove the white interior and seeds. Otherwise leave the seeds in and add to frying pan, along with the ginger root, garlic, Cornstarch, pepper, MSG, water and oyster-flavored sauce.

Heat 15 min., then add tomato, cook just a few minutes more and serve with rice and hot pepper sauce. Makes 3 servings.

\*Mpls. Star & Tribune. 10/24/84

NOTE FOR AMERICAN COOKS: To remove bitterness from bitter melon, sprinkle pieces with salt; after 15 min., squeeze the melon with your hands. Rinse in a sieve under cold water.

### SY XIONG VANG'S COCONUT CHICKEN

Cut uncooked chicken into bite size pieces (no bones or skin).

Sauté one crushed clove of garlic in several table-spoons of chicken fat. Add chicken pieces. Stir, cook, and brown.

Add 1 5.6 oz. can of coconut milk. Stir.

Reduce heat to simmer. Add 2 slices ginger and lemon grass. Cook 30 min. Remove ginger and lemon grass before serving.

Serve with rice.

### SWEET POTATOES

Lunch: In Laos, sweet potatoes were baked in the ashes of the evening fire after the main meal. In cool weather, the baked potatoes were wrapped in large leaves (to retain their heat) and taken to the fields as a lunch. In warm weather, they were cooled and eaten cold during the work day.

MAIN DISH: Peel 1 large or 2 medium sweet potatoes. Cut into 2 c. bite-size pieces.

Sauté 1 c. cubed pork or chicken in 1 T. oil. Add 2 c. water and 2 c. cubed potatoes. Add 1 chopped 2-inch piece of lemon grass, salt, and pepper. Cook until potatoes are soft. Serve with or over rice.

### SY XIONG VANG'S SWEET/SOUR PORK WITH EGGS

Sauté in lard or pork fat, 3 slices of ginger, 1 crushed clove garlic and 1 stalk lemon grass - cut in 2 inch pieces. Set aside.

In a heavy pan, melt ½ c. brown sugar...be careful not to burn.

Add ginger, garlic and lemon grass to brown sugar. Stir. (You may have to add several T. of boiling water.) Add 1½ lb. of bite-size pieces of uncooked pork. Cook uncovered 15 min.

Add 3 T. vinegar, 2 T. fish sauce, 1 t. salt, and soy sauce to taste. Stir and cook 5 minutes.

Add 8 hard boiled, shelled eggs. Add enough water to cover the eggs.

Cover and cook 1 hour on low heat. Serve with rice. Spoon hot spicy liquid over rice.

### SY VANG'S CUCUZZI SQUASH (TAUB HWB)

If squash skin is tender (can be broken with a finger-nail) use all - skin and seeds. If skin is tough and if squash is over 10 in., peel and remove seeds.

Use 3 T. heated oil or lard to brown 1 c. small pieces of pork. Add 3 c. bite-size pieces of squash. Stir fry pork and squash. Salt and pepper to taste.

NOTE: Cucuzzi is similar to zucchini squash.

SY XIONG VANG'S FILLED TOMATOES (twiv lws suav)

Combine Filling Ingredients:

- ½ lb. ground pork
- 4 eggs
- 8 chopped green onions

Cut stem and surrounding circle from top of 4 round tomatoes. Clean out seeds and pulp.

Fill emptied tomatoes with above filling. Put stem and top back on filled tomatoes.

Plunge tomatoes into hot oil and deep fat fry 2 min. Lower heat, cover, and cook slowly 1 hour. Remove from oil with slotted spoon and drain and cool slightly. Add chopped coriander to the top and serve with rice.



# VEGETABLES

THAI-CAMBODIAN EGGPLANT (Lws Pob taub)

This eggplant is light green...about the size of an egg. It is usually eaten raw with the rice at the main meal of the day.

Sometimes it is cubed and stir fried with bite-size pieces of fish or chicken.

Sometimes it is cubed and added to fish soup.

ORIENTAL LONG PURPLE EGGPLANT (lws liab)

Peel skin from 1 med. egg plant; cut in half, slice thinly. Set aside in a bowl of water.

Sauté ½ lb. cut up uncooked pork in 1 T. oil.

Drain all water from eggplant and add to meat. Stir and cook over medium heat for 2 min. Season to taste with salt and 2 minced chili peppers.

Cook covered (may have to add ¼ c. water) until eggplant is tender.

Sprinkle chopped green onion or coriander over the top and serve with rice.

SMOOTH, CYLINDRICA LUFFA  
(Chinese Okra or Vegetable Sponge)

Baby luffa (under 4 inches) can be cubed and added to sautéed pork.

Source of Fiber for Cleaning

Mature fruit can be saved for next year's seeds, for bath sponge, or for kitchen scraper. Mature fruits should be harvested before killing frost. After drying, soak the fruit in water so that the skin will peel easily without damaging the fiber that is used for cleaning.

BUSH OR POLE GREEN STRING BEANS (Taum ntev)

Remove stem from beans and cut into one inch pieces. Put in boiling water and cook until tender. Cool; drain and save cooking water.\* Add sugar or salt to beans and serve cold.

\*Refrigerate bean cooking water. Drink within 24 hrs. Bean "juice/soup" is an energizing drink.

ASPARAGUS LONG-BEAN

The green bean pods are about 1½ ft. long. Each pod contains 10-20 "seeds", or mature beans. The young tender pods are cooked like traditional bush bean pods.

The mature red seed beans are dried before soaking and cooking. The cooked seed beans are appreciated by older Hmong people.

In Laos, asparagus bean was planted in the mountain fields with non-irrigated (dry land) rice.

Note: One of the visual distinctions of a Hmong garden is the many branches poked into the soil of a spring garden...waiting for the pole beans to grow.

STIR FRIED EDIBLE PEA PODS (Taum mog)

Break stems from pods. Pull string from straight edge of pods. Leave the pods whole or cut in half.

Heat 2 T. oil to a high temperature. Add several thin slices of ginger root and one small crushed garlic clove. Press and smash ginger and garlic to release flavors. Work quickly, so that they do not burn. Remove ginger and garlic pieces.

Stir fry pea pods in seasoned hot oil. The pods cook quickly...about 30 seconds.

NOTE: For older people or infants (without teeth), both pea pods and pea vines would be boiled in water and seasoned to serve as a soup in bowl.

RIPE YELLOW CUCUMBERS (dib kaus)

Cut cucumber in half lengthwise. Remove seeds. With the end of spoon, scrap the flesh into a bowl. Add sugar to taste.

Some Hmong people prefer this ice cold, even served on crushed ice.

LARGE GREEN CUCUMBERS (dib chais)

Peel cucumber. Take seeds out. Cut flesh into bite size pieces. Add sugar to taste. Serve at room temperature, or very cold.

NOTE: In Minnesota Hmong families freeze the scraped flesh of seeded cucumbers for winter use.

### SAUTEED BABY WINTER SQUASH

Cut 4 or 5 baby immature winter squash into bite size slices. (Squash skin is soft and easily punctured with a fingernail.) Stir fry the squash in hot oil until tender, but not mushy.

Salt and pepper to taste; sprinkle with sweet basil and serve.

Note: Baby squash is cut into slices and boiled in a little water to make a thick soup for elderly or infants (without teeth). In Minnesota, Hmong families freeze winter squash.

### STEAMED CABBAGE LEAVES (Zaub qhwv)

Break separate leaves from head of cabbage. (Save inner part for cabbage stir fry.) Put in a steamer. Steam 30 min. Serve with rice and dipping sauce.

### CABBAGE STIR FRY (I)

Fry 2 c. bite-size pieces of chicken. Add 1 clove garlic, minced. When chicken is cooked, add:

- 2 carrots, sliced thin
- $\frac{1}{4}$  c. cubed celery
- 2 chopped green onions
- 2 c. shredded cabbage

Stir fry until vegetables are cooked, but slightly crunchy.

Dissolve 1 T. cornstarch in  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. cold water; add salt/pepper/soy sauce. Mix and pour over hot vegetables and chicken. Stir. Cover with lid. Wait 10 min. and serve with rice.

### COOKED RADISHES (zaub lauj pwm)

Clean and slice 1 c. raw red or white (Japanese "Daikon" radishes. Set aside.

Saute  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. onion in 1 T. oil. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. ground beef and continue cooking. (Drain grease.)

Add  $\frac{3}{4}$  c. water. When water begins to boil, add sliced radishes.

Cover and simmer 20 min., or until radishes are tender. Season to taste with salt/pepper/soy sauce.

Serve with rice.

Note for American Cooks: The Joy of Gardening Cookbook, by Janet Ballentyne, suggests cooks saute radishes as a side dish; steam radish slices with new peas; or, add slices to a stir fry - "they crunch like water chestnuts."



SY XIONG VANG'S STUFFED GREEN PEPPERS (Kua txob ntsuab)

Mix stuffing together: ½ lb. ground pork  
4 eggs  
8 chopped green onions

Cut stems and surrounding circle from tops of 3 green peppers. Remove seeds and fiber. Fill peppers with stuffing.

Steam cook for 1 hour. Add fresh or frozen leaves of coriander (Chinese parsley) to top of steamed peppers before serving.

SY VANG'S BLOSSOM & EGG SAUTE

2 c. pumpkin or squash blossoms  
3 eggs (beaten)  
¼ c. chopped onion  
salt & pepper to taste

Wash blossoms, remove stems, cut into 1 in. pieces. Add eggs and blossoms. Stir and cook - like traditional scrambled eggs.

Fresh coriander leaves or American parsley leaves can be sprinkled over the top.

Serve with toast or rice.

Note: In Laos, chicken eggs were eaten for special meals. Hmong people also ate pigeon and turkey eggs.

CABBAGE STIR FRY (II)

Shred 5 c. of cabbage.

In heavy pan, heat 2½ T. of oil. Add cabbage and stir fry. Add salt/pepper/soy sauce. Put on tight lid and wait 5 minutes. Serve with rice.

PORK AND CABBAGE

Plunge an economy cut of pork (Sy Vang prefers smoked ham) into water. When water boils again, begin skimming surface of impurities. Add lid and simmer until meat is tender. Remove meat and cut up pork. (Cool broth, remove fat, and save broth for soup.)

Cut cabbage into 5 c. of bite size pieces. Add to 2 c. of cut-up pork. Add 2 c. pork broth. Boil 5 min. Salt/pepper to taste.

BABY CABBAGE

Harvest main cabbage from main stem. Keep the outer leaves around the stem. Don't pull the root. Soon the main root grows little (baby) cabbages around the stem.

BABY CABBAGE AND SOUP

Put cooked smoked ham into boiling water. When water boils again, add lid and simmer until meat is tender. Remove meat and cut up 2 cups of meat. (Cool broth, remove fat, and save broth for soup.)

Wash baby cabbage. Slice into bite size pieces.

Boil 6 c. pork broth. Add meat and cabbage. Simmer until cabbage is tender. Season with salt/pepper/soy sauce.



### CABBAGE LEAF ROLLS\*

Trim outer leaves and stem from a 2 lb. head of cabbage. Boil whole head of cabbage in water for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour. Remove and cool. Use large outer leaves for this recipe. (Use inner part for stir fry cabbage.)

Mix: 1 lb. raw ground pork  
1 small bundle of rice sticks or cellophane noodles, softened in hot water, drained, and cut into 2 in. pieces  
7 eggs  
4 green onions, chopped  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 handful chopped Coriander leaves  
1 pinch MSG  
1 T. salt and 2 t. black pepper

Wrap filling with cabbage leaves, folding in the ends first, to make a roll about as long as your finger.

Steam for 45 min. Serve hot.

\*McDonough's Family Education Classes

Note: Most cabbage recipes could be made with either American traditional head cabbage, or with various Chinese cabbages...for example, Mastsushima No. 2. Hmong people carefully prune cabbage, Chinese broccoli, and other greens to produce new growth.



## DESSERTS/BREAD CAKE

### PUMPKIN PUDDING\*

Cut the top from a pumpkin to form a lid. Scrape out seeds and fiber. Beat 5 or 6 eggs. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. sugar and 1 small (5.6 oz.) can coconut milk. Pour mixture into the pumpkin and place on oven shelf with a pan of water just below the pumpkin. Put the pumpkin lid on the pumpkin and bake at least 1 hour.

\*McDonough Family Education Classes

### PUMPKIN SOUP/DRINK

Boil 4 c. water in large pot.  
Cut 3 c. peeled pumpkin into pieces.  
Add pumpkin to boiling water. Add 2 T. sugar. Simmer until pumpkin is dissolved in cooking water. Stir.

Use as a sweet drink with the meal.



### NCUAV OR STEAMED CAKE\*

4 c. uncooked sweet rice  
6 c. water, separated  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  c. sugar  
6 oz. split mung beans  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  T. sugar  
Oil or lard for frying

Soak rice in 4 c. of water for 8 or 9 hours, until it's very soft. Put in blender with  $\frac{1}{4}$  c. sugar and a little more water, as necessary, for easy blending. Blend at high speed, working in small batches, until rice is completely pureed.

Put rice in a cheesecloth bag and place bag in a colander in the sink. Put a weight over the bag (the Hmong use a 4 in. section of a tree trunk, which is also used as a chopping block) and let it sit overnight or until all the water has drained out, leaving a thick white dough.

Meanwhile soak the split mung beans in an equal amount of cold water overnight. In the morning, cook in the top of a double steamer for about 30 min. Put in bowl and stir in  $1\frac{1}{2}$  T. sugar.

To form the cakes, take about 3 T. of the white rice dough and put into a circle. Make an indentation in the middle of the circle with your thumb, and pat in 1 t. of the cooked mung beans. Roll the white dough into a ball so the mung bean mixture is in the middle. The balls should be slightly larger than golf balls.

Put about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. of oil or lard in a frying pan and place over medium heat (350 degrees). When the oil is hot, put in several cakes at a time and cook each batch until golden, about 15 to 20 min., turning once. Makes  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 dozen cakes.

\*Mpls. Star & Tribune, 10/24/84

### STEAMED CHINESE BREAD\* (Ncuav Pias)

2 c. stone-ground whole wheat Pillsbury flour  
 $2\frac{1}{2}$  c. glutinous sweet rice flour (Hmong grocery store)  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  c. sugar  
Hot water (about 1 c. water)

Roll out small pieces of dough into circles...about 50¢ size. Stack circles and steam for 1 hour.

Nothing is put on the bread. They aren't dipped, but eaten plain as a special treat.

NOTE: Some Hmong cooks steam this bread in little metal cups.

\*McDonough's Family Education Classes

### SY XIONG VANG'S FRESH HMONG CORN BREAD/CAKE

Ears of fresh tender sweet corn are scraped to remove corn kernels, juice, and tender fiber next to corn cob,

In Laos, Hmong cooks wrapped each 3 T. of the corn mixture in a banana leaf. In America they use foil.

The wrapped corn bread (like a small American pancake) is steamed for 45 min. or baked in an oven at low temperature - 250 degrees - for an hour.

On special occasions the corn bread is eaten plain with the main meal.

NOTE: This bread/cake is a nostalgic food for older Hmong people.

In Laos, fresh tender corn-on-the-cob was eaten as a vegetable.

In Laos, mature dried seeds of corn were saved for animal food. If hard times came before the next harvest, ground corn seeds would be added to the rice to extend the food supply. The hand-driven corn grinder (zeb zom) - that ground the corn into a coarse meal - is unique to Hmong culture.

MO YANG'S CORN PUDDING (Nab vam)

1 c. pearl tapioca	1 c. sugar
2 c. fresh corn, cut from cob	2 T. corn starch 1-5.6 oz. can of coconut milk

Soak tapioca in water overnight. Drain and put in large kettle. Add about 2- $\frac{1}{2}$  c. water. Bring gently to boil over medium heat; cook until tapioca is tender (approx. 20 to 30 min.) stirring often, as it burns easily.

Put corn in small to medium kettle with  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. water and cook until tender. Then add corn, without draining, to cooked tapioca. Stir in coconut milk and corn starch which has been mixed with a little water. Add 1 c. sugar. Bring the mixture to a slow boil so that the corn starch will be cooked. Stir often. Serve hot or cold.



MISCELLANEOUS

## MISCELLANEOUS

"The Hmong in Laos...gathered relatively little wild fruit, grain, or nuts, but grew almost all their food by planting and cultivation, along with some livestock raising. While they might pick up a few wild chestnuts in passing, they never went out in any organized way expressly for the purpose of gathering food growing naturally in the wild."\*

\*Myths, Legends and Folk Tales From the Hmong of Laos,  
Charles Johnson, Editor; Macalester College.

In Minnesota, Hmong gardeners allow one weed - the Common Nightshade - to grow wild in their gardens. They carefully prune the new tender foilage from the same plant all summer - boiling and eating the leaves and tender stems. The white flowers or berries (un-ripe (green) or ripe (black)) are never eaten. Most Americans are taught that the plant is poisonous. A Field Guide to Edible Wildplants by Peterson, warns that the green berries are poisonous. When Hmong people tried to retail the leaves of the Common Nightshade, or to share it with Americans, there was some understandable confusion.

In California, the common nightshade is scarce, and is destroyed at every opportunity. The common nightshade and the tomato plant are part of the same plant family. Any herbicide that would kill nightshade would also kill tomatoes...one of the main money crops of California.

### LOCAL HMONG FOOD STORES

- In Minneapolis: 1. M. F. Oriental Food Inc., 2601  
12th Ave. S. (The building says  
12th Ave. People's Coop on the  
side.)
- In St. Paul: 1. Chouleng Asian Foods, 375 Univer-  
sity Ave. N.
2. L. H. Oriental Grocery Store, 191  
Western Ave. N.
3. M. A. Food Store, 694 Rice Street
4. Arcade Oriental Market, 828 Haw-  
thorne Ave.
5. Mekong Oriental Food Market, 800  
University Ave. W.

### SEEDS

Oriental Seed Catalog  
Sunrise Enterprises  
P. O. Box 10058  
Elmwood, Conn. 06110

or

Dege Garden Center  
831 Century Ave. N.  
Maplewood, MN.

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