

Put up pickles for Chinese New Year

United Press International
Put up some pickles if you plan to celebrate the Chinese New Year on Feb. 16, the start of the lunar year of the Monkey, 4678.

Chinese families exchange gifts of homemade pickles when they visit one another on the holiday, says Marge Lin, co-author with Iris Friedlander of a new collection of home-style recipes, *The Orient Express Chinese Cookbook* (Spectrum, \$6.95 paper).

Unlike New Year's "cakes" that symbolize progress, Lin said, the pickle exchange is just a way of sharing traditional family favorites.

Their book lacks a recipe for the New Year's "cakes," because these steamed sweet or savory squares are traditionally made at bakeries, the authors said.

But they do include several pickle recipes and one for crispy twists — deep-fried, sugar-sprinkled wonton skins that are also a traditional New Year's gift.

We find the Friedlander-Lin cover-shake-stir cooking method more trouble and less satisfactory than traditional Chinese stir-frying. And their suggestion for storing oil in an open container "so that undesirable odors will escape" exposes it to dust and hastens rancidity.

But their recipes' simplicity and easy preparation make them good

YA' WANNA KNOW WHAT I LIKE PICKLED FOR NEW YEARS? ME!



choices for beginners. They use fewer special ingredients than most Chinese cookbooks, and provide both an extensive source list and a

shopping list in English and Chinese characters.

We particularly like their salads of cucumbers, radishes, celery, bean

sprouts, broccoli stems and other low-calorie vegetables. The pickles are also interesting, but very, very salty. The book's major drawback: lack of directions for storing special ingredients, which can become expensive if leftovers spoil.

Friedlander says their recipes are meant to serve 4-6 persons each in a meal containing either rice or noodles and a soup — although that information is unfortunately lacking in the book itself.

Among other new Chinese cookbooks, good buys include the *Sunset Chinese Cook Book*, by the editors of *Sunset Books* and *Sunset Magazine* (Lane \$3.95 paper) and *Cooking from Mainland China* (Barron's \$9.95). In her introduction to the latter, editor Sumi Hatano says the 158 recipes reflect the way the Chinese cook and eat today. Western influences are obvious in the use of such ingredients as tomatoes and potatoes. Potato pancakes Chinese style proved delicious, flavored with scalions, ground pork, a little soy sauce, sesame oil and sesame seeds.

Most of the Mainland recipes are simple stir-fried or steamed mixtures. The bean curd chapter demonstrates the great versatility of that low-cost vegetable protein food. There's no mail order source list but an excellent glossary of ingredients, with photos and names in Chinese. The translator, Stella Lau Fessler, is a Cornell University lecturer in Chinese and has taught Chinese

cooking classes in Ithaca, N.Y., for 10 years. Fessler's own Chinese cookbook is scheduled for publication later this year.

The *Sunset* book of regional re-

cipes lacks a source list for people who must shop by mail but the glossary, including ingredient storage directions, is extensive and excellent. Money-saving ideas include

directions for improvising a steamer from empty food cans and American racks. There's also sound advice on coping with the vagaries of electric woks.

Banquet helps club celebrate new year

By MELISSA MARTIN
Campus Reporter

February brings a special festival for the Orientals, the Chinese New Year. On Saturday the Texas A&M Hong Kong Club will celebrate with a Chinese New Year banquet, Hong Kong Club President Thomas Wong said.

The Chinese year is based on the lunar calendar and the Chinese zodiac consists of 12 animals which symbolize the prospective of each year, Wong said.

"This coming year is the Year of the Monkey, which symbolizes agility and intelligence," Wong said.

China has always been an agricultural country so the day of the Chinese New Year is time for farmers to lay down their tools and rest

at home for a period of jubilation, he said.

The New Year is also known as the New Spring because farmers are financially better off after harvesting the crops and can buy new equipment and clothing, Wong said.

"It has been a custom for workers to be paid double for the month, therefore everybody is happy during the Chinese New Year," Wong said.

"Very often you hear people say 'Kun Hai Fat Choi' which means getting rich in the coming year," Wong said. Families can afford time

to visit one another so it is tradition for family reunion.

The Hong Kong Club has 50 members. Besides organizing activities for club members, it also tries to bring an insight of Chinese culture to the community through displays, speakers and movies, Wong said.

The banquet will feature Dr. T. R. Greathouse, vice president of international affairs at Texas A&M, who will speak on the international program at Texas A&M. There will also be a slide presentation and movie on China and Hong Kong, he said.

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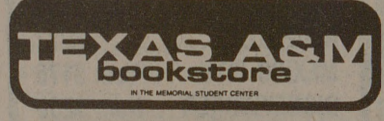
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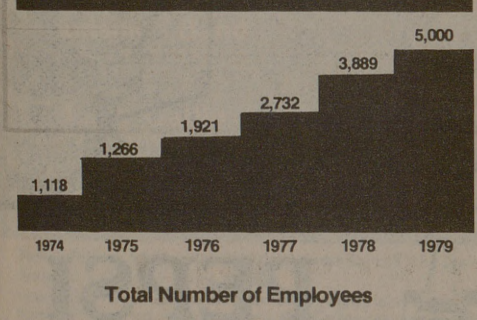


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