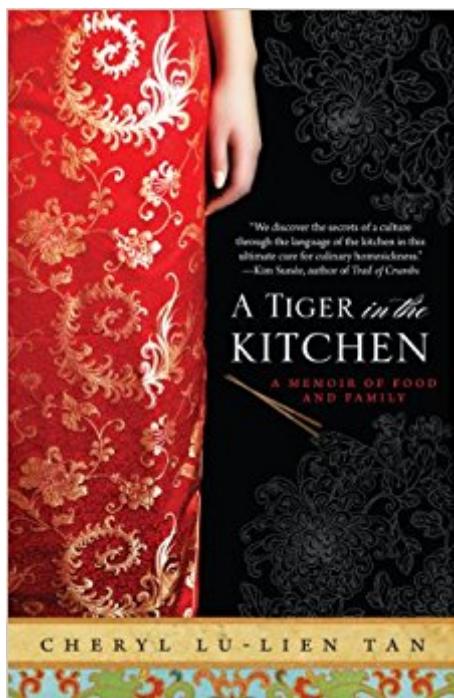


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# A Tiger In The Kitchen: A Memoir Of Food And Family



## Synopsis

"Starting with charred fried rice and ending with flaky pineapple tarts, Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan takes us along on a personal journey that most can only fantasize about--an exploration of family history and culture through a mastery of home-cooked dishes. Tan's delectable education through the landscape of Singaporean cuisine teaches us that food is the tie that binds."--Jennifer 8. Lee, author of *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles* After growing up in the most food-obsessed city in the world, Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan left home and family at eighteen for America--proof of the rebelliousness of daughters born in the Year of the Tiger. But as a thirtysomething fashion writer in New York, she felt the Singaporean dishes that defined her childhood beginning to call her back. Was it too late to learn the secrets of her grandmothers' and aunties' kitchens, as well as the tumultuous family history that had kept them hidden before In her quest to recreate the dishes of her native Singapore by cooking with her family, Tan learned not only cherished recipes but long-buried stories of past generations. *A Tiger in the Kitchen*, which includes ten authentic recipes for Singaporean classics such as pineapple tarts and Teochew braised duck, is the charming, beautifully written story of a Chinese-Singaporean ex-pat who learns to infuse her New York lifestyle with the rich lessons of the Singaporean kitchen, ultimately reconnecting with her family and herself. Reading Group Guide available online and included in the eBook.

## Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Hachette Books; Original edition (February 8, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1401341284

ISBN-13: 978-1401341282

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 31 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #808,685 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #89 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Asian Cooking > Pacific Rim #142 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Australian #976 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Education & Reference > Essays

## Customer Reviews

Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan is a New York-based writer who has covered fashion, retail and home design

(and written the occasional food story) for the Wall Street Journal. Before that she was the senior fashion writer for In Style magazine and senior arts, entertainment and fashion writer for the Baltimore Sun. Born and raised in Singapore, she crossed the ocean for college in the U.S. after realizing that a) she wanted to be a journalist and b) if she was going to be as mouthy in her work as she was in real life, she'd better not do it in Singapore.

Cheryl Lu-Lein Tan grew up in Singapore with no interest in the family traditional cooking that surrounded her youth. Cheryl's dreams were bigger than that. At the age of 18 she left home and family for America to become the fashion writer she had always hoped to. Yet in her 30's, Cheryl began to long for that taste of Singapore, the dishes that defined her childhood. Was it too late to learn the secrets that surrounded her youth and now were embedded within the kitchens of her Grandmothers and Aunts?A memoir of not only the beauty of tradition and food but also the strength found in unlocking the stories of the past.In this mouth-watering sensation of a book - I learned about the history of Singapore flavors to the point that I felt as though I could almost smell the scents of fried crab, peppery pork rib broth, and Hainanese Chicken Rice...During one trip back to Singapore when Cheryl has decided to actively pursue learning more about her Singapore heritage in cooking and offers to help make the traditional Pineapple tarts, I had to laugh when she walks into the kitchen to help to find not one or two pineapples for the tart making - but seventy. The plan was to make 3,000 tarts.Written and told by Cheryl Lu-Lein Tan herself, I enjoyed the humorous style of writing and had to laugh because she sounds a little like me - biting off more than she can chew (pun intended) such as traveling back and forth to Singapore to capture the family traditions, and in the midst of it all taking on the Bread Bakers Apprentice Challenge which was an on-line challenge to bake your way through every recipe in this book.... which includes triumphant stories "Bagels that were perfection right out of the oven!", as well as not so triumphant stories. "I knew the day would come when I would almost burn down my kitchen".Oh - and just wait until she calls her maternal grandmother a liar. :DHonestly I have not had so much fun reading a food memoir style read in a long time. I tasked myself to look up the words I did not know and turned this whole culinary adventure into a learning experience as well. As Cheryl makes her way through New York restaurants that feature Singapore favorites, and heads home to learn the "how to's" of her heritage she grows in more ways than she could have imagined.I thoroughly enjoyed every morsel of this book. If you are looking for a real treat in culture, food, and everything in between, I would highly put my stamp of approval on this book. This book includes recipes in the back.See more details on this review at my Book Blog: Book Journey

My one and only visit to Singapore was 30 years ago, and two distinct memories from that visit continued to be the sole basis of my overall impression about this intriguing country -- tall buildings and the ban on chewing gum. I knew little about its history, culture and food - until I read Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan's "A Tiger in the Kitchen." When I started reading the book, I expected to see pages and pages of recipes - linear listings of ingredients and cooking directions. Instead, I was pleasantly surprised to read about poignant accounts of family relationships, ethnic roots, and interesting facets of a culture that seamlessly intersects with those of its Malay and Asian counterparts - all told within the confines of kitchen chatter, and within the delightful context of, what else -- food. In addition, narrations of long-held traditions surrounding marriage proposals and holidays like the Lunar New provide some humorous moments in the book. I learned most of my cooking from my late mother, just watching her in the kitchen. She had no recipe books or cheat sheets, just the skill and knowledge probably passed on from my grandmother and my grandmother's mother. So it was a personal relief for me to read in Tan's book that the best dishes are probably the ones that are passed on by word of mouth and practice, judged not by measuring cups or kitchen timers, but by intuition and the pouring of one's heart into the cooking. "Agak-agak," as the book suggests. You will enjoy reading the book once for its memoirs, and you will want to keep it among your treasured kitchen library collection. You will keep going back for the memories . . . and the recipes imbedded in them!

It all started I was on my way to work and my husband was listening to NPR. I usually tune it out but the topic of the interview was about food. It really caught my attention when the interviewee said, "It's pretty much a national motto that people live to eat and they don't eat to live. All Singaporeans do is talk about food and the one thing they miss is the food. ". I thought this was so true for most Asians...I feel like I bonded with an Indian co-worker who grew up in Hong Kong over a conversation about food. My friends and I also made trips across state lines just to check out a restaurant or to reminisce college food hang out's. I thought I needed to check out this girl's book. A couple of weeks later I got the book from , I bought a few books but couldn't wait to read this one. As I was reading the book, I felt a connection to Cheryl... I am half Indonesian and half Iowan....I grew up in Asia and didn't really learn to cook from my mom, although I did learn to make brownies from her. I went to school in Iowa and settled in Chicago. Cheryl grew up in Singapore, came to school in Chicago and married a man that grew up in Iowa. My friends just laughed at me because I was just randomly connecting my life to Cheryl's. But I truly felt a connection with her and the way

she shared cooking with her aunties made me feel like I was there with them..... especially when she starts a line with Aiyoh... I could hear it in my head. And the whole cooking without measurements...I truly agree with her Aunties, people ask me for recipes of my cooking and I feel like I can't give them anything because I randomly throw things to my cooking and voila!!.....Reading the book made me want to open my Indonesian cookbooks and try out new dishes but the worst thing it did was, it made me miss all of the street vendors. Growing up, I was never allowed to eat from them but I had an Aunt that would go behind my parents back and take me and those were the best food I've ever tasted..... We've even hid behind the guy's cart as my dad drove by.I started to look Cheryl up on the internet and contacted her through facebook and twitter, she are so responsive.... I truly appreciate you and all that you do. Every time I'm about to go somewhere, I check your site to see if you have any recommendations of places to eat. I even do it for the auditors that I work with, they're going to Hong Kong next month and will be checking out the food stalls that you wrote about.Thank you for making me re-visit my past Cheryl, and making me pull out my cookbooks, by the way my husband thanks you too... Can't wait to meet you when you come to Chicago next month.

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