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**Chinese Proverb**
“To the people, food is most important.”
民以食为天

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**Tea Leaves Special Edition: Chinese Comfort Foods**

*Introduction by Jiaying Peng*

This summer I will be going back to China and visiting my family, and while I am more than excited to see my family and friends after so long, I am almost as equally excited about eating authentic Chinese food. Though one can sometimes find traditional Chinese food in some parts of larger cities like Denver in Chinatowns, the experience and taste is just not the same as the food in China.

Throughout my years here, my family and I have been trying to hold on to our Chinese heritage and culture, and usually, the way we do that is by cooking authentic Chinese dishes at home. To me, food is one of the best ways to experience a culture. So, whenever I eat something that screams “Chinese” to me, I feel a bit homesick, and lately that has been happening a lot due to my anticipation to go back to my home country.

That is why I have decided to do something special with this edition of Tea Leaves. I had the idea to ask the other writers to choose a Chinese dish that makes them think of home. Waiyuen is writing about a delicious Chinese delicacy known as law bak gow. And my mother, who is a special guest writer this edition, is writing about zong zi, a sticky rice dish my great-grandmother used to make on holidays; her piece is in Chinese. I will be writing about a dish that my hometown of Guilin is famous for, the Guilin rice noodles called mi fen. I hope that this edition of Tea Leaves will bring back memories of comfort foods for everyone, and maybe even encourage those who want to experience Chinese cultural to seek out some of these traditional dishes.
Mi Fen (米粉)
by Jiaying Peng

My hometown of Guilin is known for many things: the beautiful rock formations springing out of the rivers and lakes that run throughout the entire region, the stunning limestone caves under the city, and most importantly to me, a rice noodle dish that hails from my hometown called mi fen. I grew up eating this dish. My first experience with chopsticks actually was eating mi fen in a small noodle shop with my grandmother when I was about three years old.

Mi fen is a dish made of boiled and blanched rice noodles, comparable to Italian pastas like spaghetti or fettucine. The sauce that is poured over the noodles is a soy sauce based stock in which pieces of beef are boiled and later sliced and eaten with the noodles. Those ingredients are the base for the dish, but native Guilinians (is that what we’re called?) usually add pickled green beans, roasted peanuts, and some sort of spicy sauce. The people of Guilin usually eat mi fen at least three times each week, at least that’s how much I used to eat mi fen when I lived in China.

Now, as my mom and I are about to go back to Guilin to visit our family, I am more than excited to eat authentic mi fen again, because no matter how much my mother practices her own style of mi fen, it really won’t ever taste the same as the mi fen in China. Sorry, Mom, it tastes good, just not like back home. But I know that in the three short weeks that I’m back in China, I can get my fill of mi fen because my mom has promised me that we will eat it every, single day. I hope that three weeks’ worth of my favorite food in the world will be enough to hold me over for the next couple of years until I go back home.
Low Bok Gow
by Waiyuen Zeah

蘿蔔糕 (Law Bok Go) - Carrot Cake is a Cantonese traditional dim sum that can be easily found in any Chinese restaurant in the United States. It is also a very popular dish in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore as part of an everyday breakfast. Although carrot cake is commonly sold in Chinese restaurant, it can be easily make at home as well.

The main ingredients of 蘿蔔糕 are Chinese turnip or daikon radish, rice flour and water. To add more flavor to it. The following ingredients are often used: scallions, black mushrooms, dried shrimp, Chinese sausage, and Jinhua ham. However, some of the ingredients may be hard to find in the U.S. like Jinhua ham. For personal favor add scallions, black mushrooms, and dried shrimp, and fry it. They taste just as good.

蘿蔔糕 is usually steamed in a big pot, sliced into blocks or thick pieces, and then it is ready to serve. The two most common ways to cook it is to either steamed or fry it. Personally, I like it pan-fried after it is steam cooked. This way the middle is soft and meaty, and the outside is crunchy. Most restaurants would prepare it in this way to please their customers.

Preparing and to make 蘿蔔糕 maybe a lot work, but the process is very simple. Below is the recipe how my family make our carrot cake.

To give it some kick, serve it with Soy sauce or chili sauce. It will taste so good that no one can resist.

Ingredients:

• 800g turnip (meat only)
• 160g rice flour
• 4 table spoon Tangs flour
• 2 Chinese sausage
• 1 table spoon dried shrimps
• 2 shallots
• 1 cup water
• ¼ slice cane suger
• ¼ tea spoon salt
• A pinch of pepper

Step 1. Rinse Chinese sausages with some hot water, then dice. Sock dried shrimps, rinse and drain. Rinse and wipe dry turnip, scrape in tho thick shreds.

Step 2. Saute dried shrimps, diced Chinese sausages, mix well and dish up.

Step 3. Heat 2 tablespoon oil to saute diced shallots, stir in shredded turnips and seasonings, stew of 8-10 minutes. Remove, the immediately add in rice flour and Tang flour, blend well into a flour paste. Finally, stir in all ingredients to prepare turnip flour paste.

Step 4. Transfer turnip flour paste into a greased basin, then steam at high heat for 45-60 minutes till done. Serve hot or when cool, slice and fry briefly to serve.
ATTENTION:

The Dragon Boat Festival is coming to Colorado Springs this year, and the CSCCI wants rowers for our very own boat to compete in the race! We will need 12 rowers to sign up to compete on August 27th at Prospect Lake in Memorial Park. If you are interested, please email Mrs. Debra Bellas-Dow at debra.bellas-dow@comcast.net. We hope to have a full boat and a crowd of spectators at the event on August 27th!

Upcoming Asian Cultural Events

8th Annual U.S. Open Taekwondo Hanmadang
Broadmoor World Arena, Colorado Springs
June 17-19, 2016

Colorado Springs Dragon Boat Festival
Prospect Lake, Memorial Park, Colorado Springs
August 27, 2016

8th Annual U.S. Open Taekwondo Hanmadang
By Jiaying Peng

One of the things Asian culture is most associated with is the martial arts. Every year, the U.S. Taekwondo Center of Monument, Colorado holds a “hanmadang” to celebrate the art of taekwondo. Hanmadang means “festival” in Korean, and this event is truly a great festival. The festivities start with an opening ceremony on June 17th at 6pm. This show will include the world-famous Korean Tigers Demo Team performance. But before the show, the Taiko Society drummers will be playing at the main gate Friday afternoon.

There will also be appearances from famous individuals in the taekwondo world. Sloane Cameron, who broke the women’s power breaking turning back kick world record at last year’s event will be appearing again this year. Cameron will be competing again as well as speaking at this year’s event. Nia Sanchez, who was Miss USA in 2014 will also be making an appearance again this year. In addition to being Miss USA, Nia Sanchez is also a 4th degree black belt in taekwondo.

With all of these performances from world-class performance groups like the Korean Tigers and the Taiko Society, and appearances from inspirational ladies like Sloane Cameron and Nia Sanchez who have made their names known in the taekwondo world, the Eight Annual U.S. Open Taekwondo Hanmadang is sure to be a great gathering for everyone, even families. Just remember that there will be no sparring at this event as it is a celebration of forms and board breaking. We hope everyone can make it to this fun event on June 17th through the 19th, and make sure to stop by the CSCCI booth to say hi!