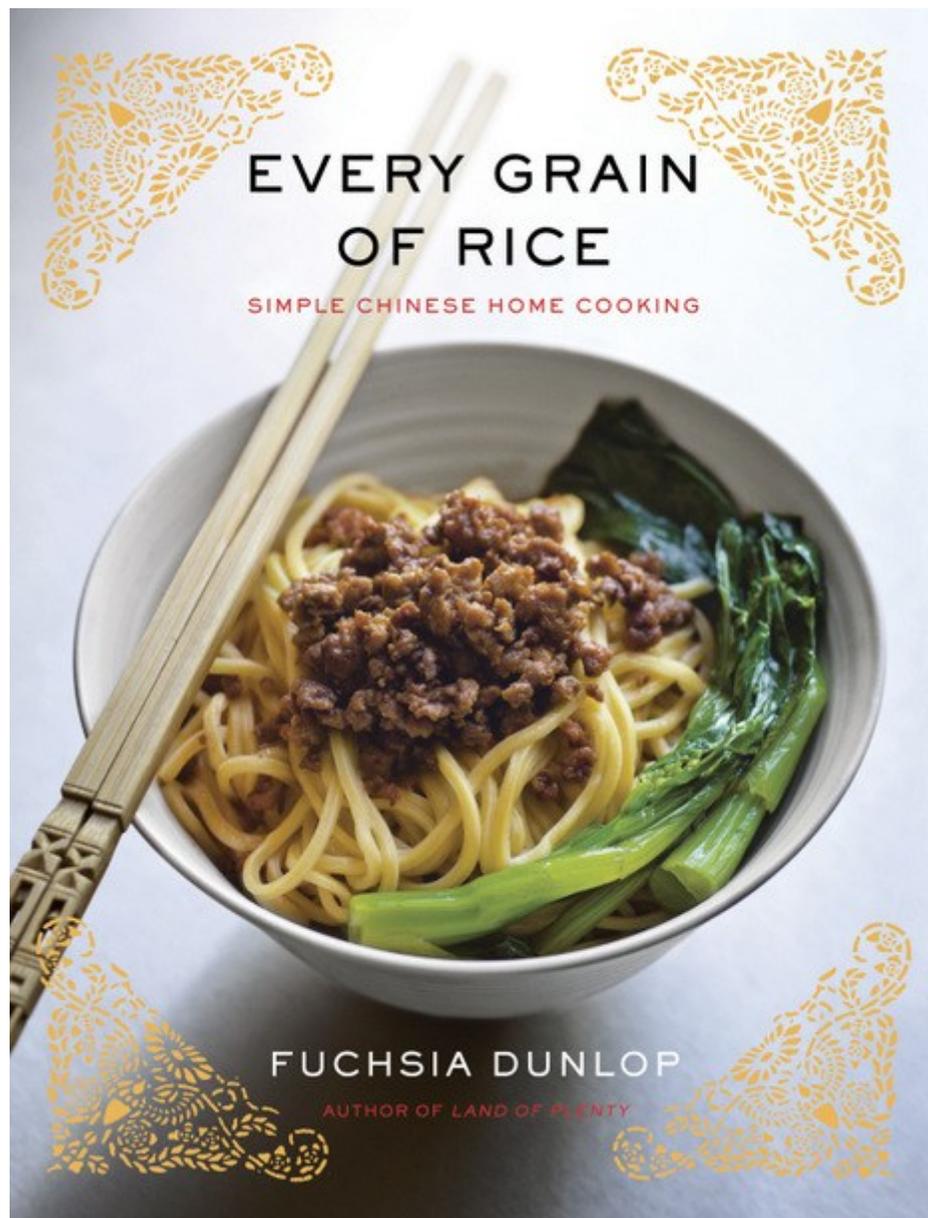


Cook the Book: 'Every Grain of Rice'

KATE WILLIAMS



When it comes to cooking Chinese food at home, I'm usually in the "stir-fry it or buy it" category. I'm more than willing to toss some veggies and pieces of meat in a skillet with soy sauce, chiles, ginger, and garlic come dinnertime, but ask me about red-braising or dry-frying and I'll usually shrug my shoulders and suggest heading to [Mission Chinese](#) or [Z&Y](#). It's not that I don't have the desire to cook more involved Chinese food at home, but with the learning curve so high and the take-out options so good, it didn't seem necessary to learn.

But now that I have a dog-eared copy of [Fuchsia Dunlop's](#) new cookbook, [Every Grain of Rice](#) on my kitchen counter, things have changed. In fact, since showing up at my doorstep two weeks ago, the book has been a permanent fixture and I've demolished more than my body weight in Sichuan and Hunan delicacies; and it's been a complete breeze. Even in my Western-style kitchen with few woks and no bamboo steamers, I've been dry-frying and red-braising up a storm.

Fans of Dunlop's earlier cookbooks will recognize many of her staple recipes from [Land of Plenty](#) and [Revolutionary Chinese Cookbook](#), but two things set this book apart from the others: its streamlined recipes and absolute embrace of vegetables. In fact, if you take out the brief meat and chicken chapters and you'd have an almost entirely vegetarian book on your hands. The bulk of the book is devoted to leafy greens, eggplants, mushrooms, tofu, garlic, and beans, with slimmer sections on cold appetizers, noodles, rice, and dumplings as bookends.

For those who need a primer on Chinese pantry ingredients and equipment, there are photographs and detailed descriptions for anything out-of-the-ordinary you'll need to buy, which is super helpful when combing the aisles of a Chinese supermarket. And yes, you will need to make that trek for many of the recipes in the book, but the transformation a few fermented black beans and a scoop of chili bean paste will make on your everyday cooking is totally worth it.

We'll sample a few of Dunlop's specialties this week. First, we'll set our mouths ablaze with her addictively hot **Cold Chicken with a Spicy Sichuanese Sauce**. Then we'll take a breather with a vegetarian take on a pork-based classic: **Twice-Cooked Swiss Chard**. Finally, we'll fill our bowls with meat-lite **Zhajiing Noodles**.

Win 'Every Grain of Rice'

Thanks to our friends at W.W. Norton, we have five (5) copies of [Every Grain of Rice](#) to give away this week. All you need to do to win is to tell us the one Chinese dish you've been dying to learn how to cook in the comments section below.