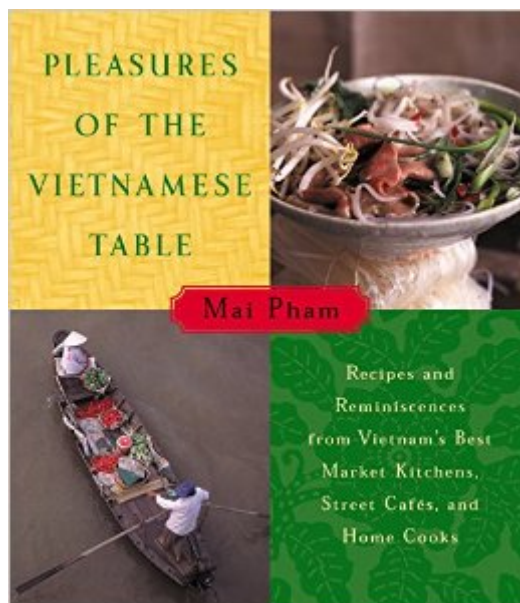


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# Pleasures Of The Vietnamese Table: Recipes And Reminiscences From Vietnam's Best Market Kitchens, Street Cafes, And Home Cooks



## Synopsis

A land of vibrant cultures and vivid contrasts, Vietnam is also home to some of the most delicious and intriguing food in the world. While its cooking traditions have been influenced by those of China, France, and even India, Vietnam has created a cuisine with a spirit and a flavor all its own. Chef and restaurateur Mai Pham brings to life this diverse and exciting cooking in *Pleasures of the Vietnamese Table*. Born and raised in Saigon before emigrating to the United States, Mai has often returned to her native land to learn the secrets of authentic Vietnamese cooking, from family, friends, home cooks, street vendors, and master chefs. Traveling from region to region, she has gathered the simple, classic recipes that define Vietnamese food today: Green Mango Salad with Grilled Beef, Stir-Fried Chicken with Lemongrass and Chilies, Caramelized Garlic Shrimp, and especially pho, the country's beloved beef-and-noodle soup. With more than 100 recipes in all, *Pleasures of the Vietnamese Table* offers home cooks the chance to create and savor the traditional flavors of Vietnam in their own kitchen. Filled with enchanting stories and stirring black-and-white photos of life in Vietnam, *Pleasures of the Vietnamese Table* provides a captivating taste of an enduring culture and its irresistible cuisine.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book works best for those who have access to very good asian markets and previous experience with Asian cooking otherwise, some of the recipes may be difficult to carry out since substitution of ingredients is not a very good option. Layout --the layout is done on a matte textured

paper. The ingredient list is done in an orange-brown ink while instructions and other text is done in black ink. There are informational inset boxes such as, "cooking with claypots" and "how to enjoy pho at a restaurant". Pictures are more decorative and done in a sepia kind of black and white . There are brushstroke paintings of certain ingredients. I think it would have been better with color photos of ingredients and of the country but that is just my personal preference. Information --More detailed in its information of ingredients and it does a great service in that category. Now, if one is shopping for the various said herbs listed in the book it may prove difficult since there are only brushstroke painting of said plants. A marked improvement is listing some brands of ingredients which makes shopping a whole lot easier. For even more detailed information on ingredients I highly recommend Bruce Cost's book on Asian ingredients. Recipes --These recipes cannot be done without access to a good asian market and also a devotion of time. Pham has tried to provide recipes that will work in less time and with less fat but if you are going to do "down home" recipes you might as well devote the true amount of time needed otherwise it will taste not quite right. The recipes are in some instances more aggressive with the spicing than her previous book (5 spice chicken) and sometimes not (dipping sauces) .

This book is great! The author describes the lifestyle in Vietnam when she was a little girl, and the lifestyle of Vietnam now. Although this has nothing to do with the recipes itself, it does allow the reader have a better understanding and appreciate the background and history of what they are making. My mother-in-law is Vietnamese from Hue and cooks extremely well. There is a language barrier between the two of us, and because of the lack of communication, she judges me by how well I cook. There are quite a few dishes that she makes that I have not been able to find anywhere in my five other cookbooks that were surprisingly in this one, such as the Hue Chicken Salad. This book has a great variety of recipes that are familiar to her, and even has some recipes that she has eaten as a teenager in Vietnam but does not know how to make herself, like Bun Rieu (which are in many other cookbooks). Even though there are lots of pictures of the country side and of the market stands, there are extremely limited pictures of what the food should look like. If the reader follows the recipe carefully, it does allow the reader to have a good idea of what it should look like. I do appreciate the few pages in the front of the book with pictures of some of the herbs and spices that are used in Vietnamese cooking. It was extremely helpful and saved a lot of time when looking in the grocery store. Also the description of these herbs also gave quick details of what they taste like, so the cook can omit these garnishes if it is not to the liking of their palates. I will not say that this cookbook is for just anyone. The reader should be willing to try something new and fresh. The

author of this book does not just use the recipes just from her own family like all of the other books I have.

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