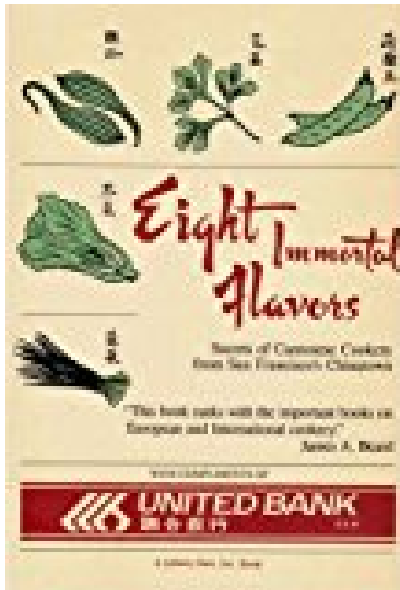


Eight Immortal Flavors Secrets of Cantonese Cookery from San Francisco's Chinatown



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Charles L. Leong
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BOOK SYNOPSIS

American diners began flocking to Chinese restaurants more than a century ago, making Chinese cuisine the first mass-consumed food in the United States. By 1980, it had become the country's most popular ethnic cuisine. *Chop Suey, USA* is the first comprehensive analysis of the forces that made Chinese food ubiquitous in the American gastronomic landscape and turned the country into an empire of consumption. Chinese food's transpacific migration and commercial success is both an epic story of global cultural exchange and a history of the socioeconomic, political, and cultural developments that shaped the American appetite for fast food and cheap labor in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Americans fell in love with Chinese food not because of its gastronomic excellence. They chose quick and simple dishes like chop suey over China's haute cuisine, and the affordability of such Chinese food democratized the once-exclusive dining-out experience for underprivileged groups, such as marginalized Anglos, African Americans, and Jews. The mass production of food in Chinese restaurants also extended the role of Chinese Americans as a virtual service labor force and marked the racialized division of the American population into laborers and consumers. The rise of Chinese food was also a result of the ingenuity of Chinese American restaurant workers, who developed the concept of the open kitchen and popularized the practice of home delivery. They effectively streamlined certain Chinese dishes, turning them into nationally recognized brand names, including chop suey, the "Big Mac" of the pre-McDonald's era. Those who engineered the epic tale of Chinese food were a politically disfranchised, numerically small, and economically exploited group, embodying a classic American story of immigrant entrepreneurship and perseverance.

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