

HELEN CHEN BIOGRAPHY

Like so many of us, Helen Chen learned to cook at her mother's side. But few of us had a mother like Joyce Chen. Helen grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where her mother prepared the authentic dishes of her native Shanghai and Beijing with the sort of regularity the rest of us came to expect of macaroni and cheese or meatloaf.

"I remember when I was little, watching my mother prepare meals for family and friends. I once wrote a list of my favorite Chinese dishes," Helen recalls. "I came up with 150 recipes. I do not have one or two favorites. All the dishes on the list are traditional and all are ones that I learned from my mother. That is what I love most about Chinese food: its variety, taste, texture and color all come into play, as does regional variations and culture. I think this is what cooking is all about." Helen Chen was born in Shanghai and moved to the U.S. with her family while still a baby. Helen grew up, as she describes it, in a traditional Chinese-American household. "When I was young, I wanted to be totally American," she remembers. "It wasn't until I was in high school that I realized how lucky I am to have two cultures."

Today, Helen Chen is a widely acknowledged expert in Chinese cooking. Besides her role as an educator and cookbook author, she also is a product and business consultant to the house wares industry. In 2007 she created and developed a new line of Asian kitchenware under the brand name, "Helen's Asian Kitchen," expressly for Harold Import Company in New Jersey.

Having been born in China, and raised and educated in the United States, Helen brings the best of both worlds to her approach to the art of Chinese cuisine. She understands the needs of the American cook as only a native can, yet she is intimately knowledgeable with the culinary practices and philosophy of China.

In her active role as teacher and educator, Helen teaches Chinese cuisine at Boston University, and through the Anderson Foundation's enrichment program called, "Cooking Up Culture," teaches Boston area school children from grades 1- 12 about Chinese cuisine and culture. She also teaches Asian cuisine in numerous cooking schools across the country.

Helen has lectured to various professional and culinary organizations such as the International Association of Culinary Professionals, Boston University Seminars in the Arts and Culinary Arts, Oldways Preservations and Exchange Trust, Small Business Development Center, The Culinary Historians of Boston, Women Chefs and Restaurateurs and the Culinary Guild of New England. In addition, she conducts culinary tours of Boston's Chinatown and is a frequent guest chef at cooking schools around the U.S.

Helen is the author of Helen Chen's Chinese Home Cooking (Hearst Books,1994), Peking Cuisine (Orion Books,1997), Helen's Asian Kitchen: Easy Chinese Stir-Fries (John Wiley & Sons, 2009) and Helen's Asian Kitchen: Easy Asian Noodles (John Wiley & Sons, 2010).