

# Homespun Goodness

Everyone loves a good book that transports them to the world it describes, but a cookbook that takes one on a journey back to a family's roots, for a charitable cause, is a rare treat TEXT LEENA NG

Discovering a great family recipe is one thing, but preparing a dish in a way that has been passed down through generations is a completely different matter. In fact, when it comes to heritage cuisine, it is more about preserving traditions and cooking with the sense of purpose and

passion that one generation has passed down to another—a sense that mere words on a page might have difficulty conveying. Words provided with proper context, however, will make a difference, and that is what the following volumes have tried to achieve.

## HERITAGE FEASTS – A COLLECTION OF SINGAPORE FAMILY RECIPES

Joyceline Tully and Christopher Tan (Miele; 2010)

Available at Miele boutique (167 Penang Road, B1-01 Winsland House. Tel: 6738 6286), [www.webshop.miele.sg](http://www.webshop.miele.sg) and major local bookstores, \$75

Published by high-end home appliance brand (and a family-run company) Miele, in conjunction with its 111th anniversary celebrations, Heritage Feasts – A Collection Of Singapore Family Recipes is a compendium of Singapore family recipes and culinary memories by 30 well-known local personalities. Comprising 59 recipes as well as interviews and short essays, this hardcover tome reflects Singapore's multicultural heritage and is rendered a little more interesting because of the people who served them up. For example, there's violinist Lynnette Seah's version of Chilli Crab, which she says is her comfort food; or Eight Treasures Duck by Chan Heng Wing, managing director of International Relations at Temasek Holdings, which he cooks for his father at reunion dinner each Chinese New Year. Recipes were also provided by the likes of restaurateur Ignatius Chan (Shanghai Dumplings), film-maker Eric Khoo (Pork Belly With Long Beans), hotelier Loh Lik Peng (Rice Cooker Claypot Rice) and playwright Stella Kon (Sambal Buah Keluak). Several high-flying corporate figures, such as Capitaland's Jennie Chua (Salted Vegetable & Duck Soup) and the Singapore Tourism Board's Aw Kah Peng (Spit-Roasted Chicken), also proved to be passionate about food. In keeping with the overall theme of shared family legacies, Miele will donate all proceeds from the book to a children's charity, Kidz Horizon.



*“The truth is when I used to cook with my grandma it wasn't necessarily about following recipes—it was more about the emotion and the fond memories.”*

## DELICIOUS MEMORIES

Genevieve Grosliere and Ingeborg Hartgerink (Black Albatross; 2010)

Available at major bookstores

Much more than your usual cookbook, Delicious Memories contains original recipes from many personalities who are actively involved in community projects and vignettes on how these recipes are meaningful to them. Some recipes come attached with sweet memories, and others, hilarious anecdotes. Indeed, it seems almost natural that recipes have stories behind them. After all, cooking is a way we share experience and memories with family and friends. Recipes are cultural inheritance, treasure troves of lived experiences, beliefs and values to be passed on to the next generation. All proceeds from the sale of the book will go to Food From The Heart (FFTH), a charity that channels unsold bread from hotels and bakeries island-wide to needy families in Singapore. Despite their hectic schedules, prominent personalities, in the likes of oncologist Dr Ang Peng Thiam, fashion dynamo Shabnam Melwani-Reis, socialite Olga Iserlis and hotelier Amadeo Zarzosa (general manager of St. Regis Singapore), among others, cooked their special dishes, wrote about them and participated in photoshoots. Their support for FFTH is admirable; many others would have just written a cheque, but these participants have given of themselves.

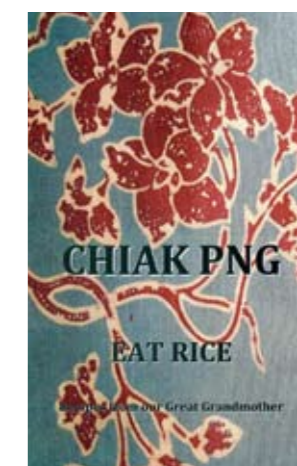


## CHIAK PNG – RECIPES FROM OUR GREAT GRANDMOTHER

Bronwen and Benjamin Harbinson (2010)

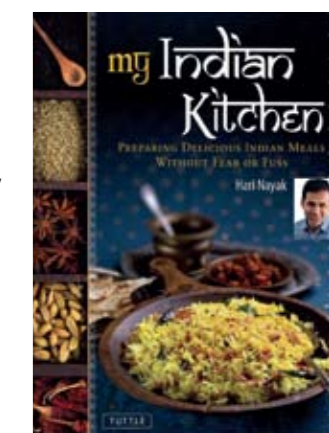
Available at Assisi Hospice (minimum donation of \$50). For enquiries, call Irene Chan at Tel: 63476446 or email [irene\\_chan@assisihospice.org.sg](mailto:irene_chan@assisihospice.org.sg)

Chiak Png – Recipes From Our Great Grandmother is not only a self-published work of art by the teenage sister-and-brother team, Bronwen and Benjamin Harbinson (admittedly with a lot of help from their mother and other family members), it is also a really, really good cookbook. The Harbinsons, who are studying in London and compiled this book during their summer vacation, share the favourite family recipes handed down from their Peranakan great grandmother along with personal anecdotes, in the Foreword, on the conception and the making of Chiak Png ('eat rice') — the proceeds of which will go to the Assisi Hospice — precious family photographs and images of the recipes painstakingly handwritten by their *Chorchor*. The dishes in this collection are clearly written for home cooks and are, thus, very reproducible. Each recipe is accompanied by a picture of the dish taken by the 13-year-old Benjamin, which may not be as sleek if styled by a professional, but nonetheless provides a good visual of how a dish should look like. Although it is an effort by amateurs, Chiak Png underscores the importance of family and togetherness. The wholesome collection offers a glimpse into a close-knitted family and will inspire readers to cook great food with the people who mean the most to them.



*“My grandmother was a matriarch in the true sense but as a young girl, I was nurtured and instilled with passion, not fear. It's important not to be stressed out when you want to learn family recipes. That's what heritage recipes are about—the emotion.”*  
– Shermay Lee, founder of the Shermay Lee Cooking School and a contributor of Heritage Feasts

## NEWLY RELEASED



## MY INDIAN KITCHEN – PREPARING DELICIOUS INDIAN MEALS WITHOUT FEAR OR FUSS

Hari Nayak (Tuttle Publishing; April 2011)

Available at leading bookstores, \$39

Trained under renowned chefs like Ferran Adria and Marcus Samuelson, author Hari Nayak shares for the first time the secrets of his family's own style of southern Indian cooking as well as his favourite dishes from other parts of the huge Indian sub-continent. Traditional Indian meals normally involve highly elaborate preparations, but the recipes in My Indian Kitchen have been simplified without sacrificing any of their authenticity. Hayak offers many time-saving tips to help readers unlock the “hidden magic” of Indian cooking, in the process educating them on how spices and herbs complement one another and interact with other ingredients to create the unique aroma and flavour in each dish. Hailed as part of the new generation of creative chefs coming out of Asia, Hayak now runs his own consultancy business and has been featured in publications such as The New York Times, Restaurant News, Food & Wine and India Times.