

# Nasi Goreng, Telor Besengflek, and Chilli Crab. Australian / Asian Culinary Engagements to 1976

July 2025

I recently had occasion to re-visit Charmaine Solomon's *The Complete Asian Cookbook* published in 1976. 'My aim in writing this book', Solomons said in her Foreword, 'has been to make it possible for keen cooks everywhere to explore the cooking of Asia'.<sup>1</sup> I was struck again with how comprehensive the book is in covering the cuisines of Australia's northern neighbour nations, those that form South East Asia - Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam. What, I wondered were the opportunities for 'keen cooks' in Australia to explore their cuisines pre-Solomons.

Solomons' is mainly a book of recipes so I decided to look at published recipes for these South East Asian cuisines prior to Solomons. I used two sources for information: *Trove* the digital repository of newspapers managed by the National Library and cook books in my library. There may well have been other newspaper recipes and books. However I think the material I have gathered here sufficiently makes the case for pre-Solomon culinary engagement with cuisines of South East Asia.

The books are:

- The Far Eastern Epicure, Maria Kozslik Donovan, Heinemann, 1961
- Cook Book, Festival of Asia, 1963
- Curries from the Sultan's Kitchen, Doris Ady, 1968
- South East Asian Food, Rosemary Brissenden, 1969
- The Margaret Fulton Cookbook, Lansdowne, Press 1968
- Cooking the Indonesian Way, Alec Robeau, 1970
- The Australia Women's Weekly Cookbook, Golden Press 1970

This article is descriptive not analytical. That is, it does not attempt to link the findings to Australian sociopolitical history except for instances mentioned in the research material.

Where a source had many recipes I have given some of the dishes with a view to showing variety across the cuisine.

Where the source gives English translations of the name of a recipe as well as its vernacular name I have given both.

Where the recipes are ascribed to an individual who is a national of the country from which the recipes comes I have given the name of the individual and their background as published with the recipe.

In brief, what emerged was a considerable volume of recipes for South East Asian food prior to 1976. Indonesia had far and away the largest number of recipes. This was abetted by having two cookery books with significant numbers of recipes, Brissenden having 80, and Robeau having 106. Indonesian was also the only cuisine to have a five page feature in the *Australian Women's Weekly* (called the AWW from here) *Indonesian Cooking*. More on this later.

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<sup>1</sup> Solomons, Charmaine, *The Complete Asian Cookbook*, Paul Hamlyn 1976

## Indonesia

Indonesia as was mentioned above was far and away the cuisine with the greatest number of recipes. The earliest Indonesian recipe I found was for Nasi Goreng (Fried Rice) published by *The Sun* in 1942.<sup>2</sup> In 1952 the AWW published recipes for *Dishes for a rice table, a Rijsttafel*: Fried Rice, Meat Kabobs, Eggs in coconut milk, Prawn Curry, Pineapple Fritters, Fried Chicken, Krupuk, Fried Salami, and Spiced Cucumber<sup>3</sup>. More recipes for Nasi Goreng and other Indonesian dishes were published in newspapers and magazines over the following years e.g. Nasi Gorong (sic) (1953)<sup>4</sup> and Bami (1953)<sup>5</sup>. In 1958 the Canberra Y.W.C.A. sold 'Adventures In Indonesian Cooking' compiled Mrs. H. G. Wattimena, wife of the First Secretary of the Embassy of Indonesia, as a fund-raiser.<sup>6</sup>

1958 Maria Kozslik Donovan published *The Far Eastern Epicure* with 10 Indonesian recipes including Soto Ayam (Boiled Chicken and Rice)<sup>7</sup> and Telor Besengflek (Spiced Eggs)<sup>8</sup>. She also gave instructions as to how to make coconut milk.<sup>9</sup> The book went through. Disappointingly she gave no background for the book.

The Festival of Asia Committee published the *Festival of Asia Cook Book* in 1963. The aim of the *Cook Book* was '... to present a typical menu of each country, which it would be possible for an Australian, with a little adventure in his or her make-up, to cook.'<sup>10</sup> But there was another reason for publishing it. It was published at a time when Asian migration to Australia was at the centre of much public argument, which spilled over to vilifying Asian students in Australia. The Committee's intent was to present itself and the *Cook Book* as 'Goodwill Agents'. Objective four of the Committee's was 'To promote friendship, goodwill and mutual understanding between all Asian students and the people of Australia.'<sup>11</sup> The *Cook Book* had recipes drawn from the cuisines of students. It carried recipes for five Indonesian dishes including Dendeng Ragi<sup>12</sup> and Sambol Goreng Telor<sup>13</sup>.

In 1964 the *Canberra Times* published a recipe for Mi, from Mme. Isarabhakd<sup>14</sup>. It also in 1964 published a recipe for Chicken With Peanut Sauce from Mrs. Joewono wife of the Charge d'Affaires of the Indonesian Embassy.<sup>15</sup> In 1965 the *Canberra Times* published a recipe for Nasi Kunning from Mrs R. A. Kosasih the wife of the Ambassador of Indonesia.<sup>16</sup> These three recipes were part of the *Embassy Recipe* feature in the *Canberra Times* which ran from 1 July 1964 to 23 June 1965. 55 recipes were published. Recipes for other South East Asian are listed later under the

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<sup>2</sup> Nasi Goreng, To-Days Recipe, *The Sun* 3 May 1942 p.9

<sup>3</sup> Dishes for a rice table, AWW 21 May 1952 p.49

<sup>4</sup> Nasi Gorong, Mary Ferber's Mailbag, *The Daily News* 25 July 1953 p.15

<sup>5</sup> Bami, Tasty Indonesian Dish, *Truth* 29 January 1953 p.37

<sup>6</sup> Sale of Recipe Book To Aid Y.W.C.A., *The Canberra Times* 3 September 1958 p.5. I could find no copies of this book.

<sup>7</sup> Kozslik Donovan Maria, *The Far Eastern Epicure* Heinemann 1958 p.16

<sup>8</sup> Kozslik Donovan 1958 p.17

<sup>9</sup> Kozslik Donovan 1958 p.7

<sup>10</sup> Festival of Asia 1963 p.2

<sup>11</sup> 'Asian Students Council of N.S.W. Formed', *Tharunka* 10 October 1955 p.10. *Tharunka* is the student newspaper of the University of New South Wales, Kensington.

<sup>12</sup> Festival of Asia, *Cook Book*, 1963 p.13

<sup>13</sup> Festival of Asia 1963 p.13

<sup>14</sup> Mi, Mme. Isarabhakd. Make Mi the Talking Point of Your Party, Embassy Recipe No.1 *The Canberra Times* 1 July 1964 p.21

<sup>15</sup> Chicken With Peanut Sauce, an Indonesian luncheon dish, Embassy Recipe No. 27. *Canberra Times* p.30 December 1964 p. 11

<sup>16</sup> Nasi Kunning, Embassy Recipe 41, the *Canberra Times* 2 May 1965 p.18

name of the South East Asian country to which it belongs. Inquiries to the newspaper for background information on the feature – how did the idea for the series come about, the name of the columnist at the paper responsible for it and how they went about getting the recipes – were not successful.

The AWW published *The World's Best Curries* in 1967.

Recipes in this book will help you to make a wonderful variety of curries with poultry, fish, meat, vegetables, egg, fruit. There are also many side dishes to serve with them and some delicious fruit flavoured desserts suitable to end a curry meal.<sup>17</sup>

It included Indonesian Beef, Prawn and Noodle Curry<sup>18</sup>, Indonesian Beef Curry<sup>19</sup>, Javanese Lamb<sup>20</sup>, Indonesian Curried Fish<sup>21</sup> Indonesian Vegetable Curry<sup>22</sup>, Indonesian Liver Curry,<sup>23</sup> Indonesian Rijsttafel<sup>24</sup>, and Indonesian Curried Chicken<sup>25</sup>. It also carried notes on the style of curry to expect in one or other of the countries reviewed. These were written by Mr. A.E. (Tiger) Ady, husband of Doris Ady. Of Indonesia he wrote:

INDONESIA: Compared with Indian curries, those from Indonesia contain relatively few spices. Coconuts are plentiful; coconut milk is used in nearly all curries and coconut oil is the common cooking oil.<sup>26</sup>

The article also carried descriptions of some curry ingredients – ghee, coconut milk or cream, tamarind sauce or paste, lemongrass, noodles, sambal oelek<sup>27</sup>

In 1968 the AWW published a five page feature by Indonesian born Mrs. Yohanni Johns<sup>28</sup> in response to readers' requests:

After a story about Mrs. Johns had appeared in *The Australian Women's Weekly* in February this year, we had many letters from readers, asking whether it would be possible for Mrs. Johns to give recipes for some of the Indonesian dishes mentioned in the story.<sup>29</sup>

There were 21 recipes including sambals and sauces. 'Many of the recipes', said the AWW, 'are excellent to serve at luncheons or barbecues - Gado-Gado<sup>30</sup>, Atjar Kuning (Mixed Vegetable

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<sup>17</sup> *The World's Best Curries*, *Australian Women's Weekly* 8 March 1967 p.2

<sup>18</sup> *World's Best Curries*, *Women's Weekly* 8 March 1967 p.4

<sup>19</sup> Indonesian Beef Curry, AWW 1967 p.4

<sup>20</sup> Javanese Lamb, AWW 1967 p.10

<sup>21</sup> Indonesian Fish Curry, AWW 1967 p.6

<sup>22</sup> Indonesian Vegetable Curry, AWW 1967 p.4

<sup>23</sup> Indonesian Liver Curry, AWW 1967 p.13

<sup>24</sup> Rijsttafel, AWW 1967 p.13

<sup>25</sup> Indonesian Curried Chicken, AWW 1967 p.13

<sup>26</sup> AWW 1967 p. 2

<sup>27</sup> AWW 1967 p. 2

<sup>28</sup> Mrs. Johns was the wife of Professor A. H. Johns, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the Australian National University, Canberra

<sup>29</sup> Indonesian cooking, the *Australian Women's Weekly* 12 January 1968. p.55

<sup>30</sup> Gado Gado (Salad with Peanut Sauce), *Indonesia Cookery*, *The Australian Women's Weekly* 12 June 1968 p.6

Relish)<sup>31</sup> or Prekadel (Meat-Potato Croquets)<sup>32</sup> would be ideal. Indonesian foods are also ideal for buffet dishes.<sup>33</sup>

All spices listed in Mrs. Johns' recipes', the AWW said, 'and the monosodium glutamate are easily obtainable in Australia.'<sup>34</sup> There are notes on 'unusual ingredients' - Chinese Green Beans, Lemon Grass, Noodles and Sambal Oelek - which can be sourced from Chinese shops or large food stores.<sup>35</sup>

In 1968 the *Margaret Fulton Cookbook* had recipes for Nasi Goreng<sup>36</sup> and Indonesian Pork Satay<sup>37</sup>. Rosemary Brissenden in 1969 published *South East Asian Food* with 80 Indonesian recipes including Soto Bandung (Garnished Tripe Broth)<sup>38</sup>, Abon Daging (Shredded Meat)<sup>39</sup>, and Pange Ikan (Fish Stew).<sup>40</sup> In the Introduction to the book she wrote:

I am well aware that no Occidental cook can hope to reproduce exactly the dishes that are prepared in South East Asia. To attempt to do so, though, can be a rewarding experience. This book is meant to serve as a guide to those who wish to try. If it also conveys some sense of a rich and diverse culinary tradition I shall be very happy.<sup>41</sup>

Also in 1969 the AWW published recipes for Indonesian Prawn Puffs<sup>42</sup>, Sate Kambing<sup>43</sup> and Sate Ayam<sup>44</sup>. Finally in 1969 the AWW published a recipe for Ayam Dan Nasi Kuning.<sup>45</sup>

In 1970 Alec Robeau published *Cooking the Indonesian way* with over 100 recipes, including Sajur Menir (Vegetable and Fish Dish)<sup>46</sup>, Sambal Bajak (Spiced Chilli Paste Extraordinary)<sup>47</sup>, Sop Kangkung (Watercress Soup)<sup>48</sup>, and Roti Kukus (Steamed Sweet Cake)<sup>49</sup>. His Introduction is an eight page glossary with items having descriptions of varying length and content e.g. Bean Sprouts take a page of instruction for how to produce them,<sup>50</sup> coconut milk takes a short paragraph.<sup>51</sup> He discusses availability with Chinese shops being regularly suggested. He directly addresses people's fears of the unknown:

When you look at the recipes in this book you will come across quite a few spices and ingredients you will never have heard of before. But let me assure you that none is harmful. After all, people in Indonesia have used these spices and ingredients for thousands of years

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<sup>31</sup> Atjar Kuning (Mixed Vegetable Relish), Weekly ... 1968 p. 59

<sup>32</sup> Prekadel (Meat and Potato Croquettes) Weekly... 1968p.58

<sup>33</sup> Indonesian Cookery, Weekly ... 1968 p.55p.

<sup>34</sup> Weekly ... 1968 p. 59

<sup>35</sup> Weekly ... 1968 p. 59

<sup>36</sup> Nasi Goreng , *The Margaret Fulton Cookbook* 1968 p.120

<sup>37</sup> Indonesian Pork Satay , *Fulton Cookbook* 1968 p.77

<sup>38</sup> Brissenden, Rosemary, *South East Asian Food*, Penguin 1969. Pp. 57-58

<sup>39</sup> Brissenden 1969 p.89

<sup>40</sup> Brissenden 1969 pp. 71 - 72

<sup>41</sup> Brissenden 1969 p.13

<sup>42</sup> Indonesian Prawn Puffs, Peanut Butter, AWW 1969 p. 73

<sup>43</sup> Satay Kambing AWW 1969 p.73

<sup>44</sup> Sate Ayam, AWW 1969 p.73

<sup>45</sup> Ayam Dan Nasi Kuning, Indonesia Cookery, (Yellow Rice and Chicken) AWW 27 November 1969 p.91

<sup>46</sup> Robeau, Alec, *Cooking the Indonesian Way* A. & A. W. Reed 1970 p.33

<sup>47</sup> Robeau 1970 p.117

<sup>48</sup> Robeau 1970 p.118

<sup>49</sup> Robeau 1970 p.141

<sup>50</sup> Robeau 1970 p.9

<sup>51</sup> Robeau 1970 p.10

without any ill effects. So you may rest assured that you will not only survive but, I am sure, actually enjoy the dishes in this book.<sup>52</sup>

He lists ingredients and spices with which the cook 'will be able to prepare almost any Indonesian dish.'<sup>53</sup> He gives three menus – Simple, More Elaborate, Elaborate (Banquet Style).<sup>54</sup> He goes so far as described 'How to set the table'.<sup>55</sup>

The book went through three reprints in 1973, 1971, and 1977.

The only thing he doesn't tell is why he wrote the book in the first place.

In 1970 the AWW published the *Rice Cookbook* with a recipe for Indonesian Nasi Goreng.<sup>56</sup> In that same year the AAW published *The Australian Women's Weekly Cookbook* and in the *International Cookery* section there are Indonesian dishes. The *Cookbook* said this about having an International section:

Each year, as a nation, our food tastes are changing, becoming enriched by the national cuisine of migrants from other countries who have now settled in Australia ... Because Australian housewives are always interested in new ways with food, new, delicious taste, dinner parties with an international flavour. Here we present some of the interesting recipes from other countries.<sup>57</sup>

Interestingly, Indonesian was the only South East Asian cuisine for which recipes were given. The six recipes for Indonesia is in contrast to just three for India here. Recipes included Telur Balado<sup>58</sup>, Serundeng,<sup>59</sup> Sambal Goreng Udang<sup>60</sup>, Goreng Bawang<sup>61</sup>, and Gado Gado.<sup>62</sup>

In 1971 Mrs. Johns published *Dishes From Indonesia* among which were recipes for Cucumber Relish, Skewered Lamb Grill, with recipes for Peanut Sauce and Soy Sauce as accompaniments, and Flaming Bana Flan<sup>63</sup>. In 1974 Mrs. L. Gwynne, a reader of the AWW won a prize for her recipe for "Chicken Princess" which she said she learned in Indonesia.<sup>64</sup> In 1976 the AWW published a recipe for Nasi Kuning (Yellow Rice).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Robeau 1970 p.8

<sup>53</sup> Robeau 1970 p.17

<sup>54</sup> Robeau 1970 p.19

<sup>55</sup> Robeau 1970 p.21

<sup>56</sup> The Rice Cookbook, AWW 6 May 1970 p.4

<sup>57</sup> International Cookery, *The Australian Women's Weekly Cookbook* 1970 p.120

<sup>58</sup> AWW, 1970 p.131

<sup>59</sup> AWW, 1970 p.130

<sup>60</sup> Sambal Goreng Udang, AWW Cookbook 1970 p.131

<sup>61</sup> Goreng Bawang, AWW 1970 p.131

<sup>62</sup> Gado Gado, AWW 1970 p.131

<sup>63</sup> New Indonesian Cookery Book, AWW 3 November 1971 p.59

<sup>64</sup> "Chicken Princess", AWW 5 June 1974 p.92

<sup>65</sup> Nasi Kuning, Mrs. Lee's Cookbook, *The Australian Women's Weekly* k 1976 p. 99

## Malaysia

This was the cuisine with the second most published recipes.

A recipe for Malay Mince Curry was published in 1900.<sup>66</sup> One for Malay Curry was published in 1914.<sup>67</sup> There was a recipe for Pickled Fish – A Malay Dish in 1915<sup>68</sup>. In 1927 there is a recipe for Delicious Curry.<sup>69</sup> In 1935 there was a recipe for Malay Stew.<sup>70</sup> There was a recipe for Malay Curry in 1936<sup>71</sup>. However, none of these have the spice profile of Malaysian cuisine - coriander, cumin, garlic, chilli, ginger - the only spicing being curry powder. Nor did they use coconut milk. I am inclined to discount them from Malaysian cuisine.

I found no recipes in 1940. But that may be an artefact of my searches.

In 1959 Kozslik Donovan in the *Far Eastern Epicure* published 10 recipes for Malaysian<sup>72</sup> dishes like one for Malay Fish Curry<sup>73</sup> and for Masak Lemak.<sup>74</sup>

In 1963 the AAW published a recipe for Veal Malaya that, like the earlier recipes had nothing Malaysian about it.<sup>75</sup> The Festival of Asia in its 1963 *Cook Book* published five recipes from Malaysia including Malay Curry<sup>76</sup> and Sambal Tumis.<sup>77</sup> 1967 the *Canberra Times* published a recipe for Malay Style Roast Chicken<sup>78</sup> In 1967 the AWW World's Best Curries included Malaysian Lamb Curry<sup>79</sup>, Malaysian Hot Fried Potato Curry<sup>80</sup>, Malaysian Egg Curry<sup>81</sup>, Malaysian Hot Chicken Curry<sup>82</sup>, Malayan Lobster Curry<sup>83</sup>, and Malayan Fish Curry<sup>84</sup>. In 1968 *The Margaret Fulton Cookbook* published a recipe for Malayan Beef Sate.<sup>85</sup>

In 1969 Brissenden published 10 recipes for Malaysian and Singaporean dishes in her *South East Asian Food*. Though in her introduction to the Malaysian recipes Brissenden says 'here you have in one geographical area three separate cuisines' Chinese, Malaysian and Singapore, in her recipes she doesn't differentiate the Malaysian from the Singaporean. Recipes she published here included Bangan Ikan Bawal (Barbecued Flat Fish) and Malay Satay.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Malay Minced Curry, *The Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs General Advertiser* 19 May 1900 p.6

<sup>67</sup> Malay Minced Curry, *Kapunda Herald* 20 November 1914 p.4

<sup>68</sup> Pickled Fish – A Malay Dish, *The Brisbane Courier* 2 June 1915 p.9

<sup>69</sup> Delicious Curry, *The Sun News Pictorial* 23 November 1927 p.34

<sup>70</sup> Malay Stew, *Worker* 23 July 1935 p.4

<sup>71</sup> Malay Curry, *The Mercury* 23 September 1936 p.10

<sup>72</sup> Though in her introduction to the Malaysian recipes Brissenden says 'here you have in one geographical area three separate cuisines' Chinese, Malaysian and Singapore, in her recipes she doesn't differentiate.

<sup>73</sup> Malay Fish Curry, Kozslik Donovan Maria, *The Far Eastern Epicure* Heinemann 1961 p.41

<sup>74</sup> Masak Lemak, Kozslik Donovan Maria 1961 p. 42

<sup>75</sup> Veal Malay, AWW 2 April 1963 p.54

<sup>76</sup> Malay Curry, *Cook Book ...* 1963 p.22

<sup>77</sup> Sambal Tumis, *Cook Book ...* 1963 p.23

<sup>78</sup> *Canberra Times* 5 July 1967 p.18

<sup>79</sup> Malaysian Lamb Curry, AWW 1967 p.4

<sup>80</sup> Hot Fried Potato Curry, AWW 1967 p.10

<sup>81</sup> Malayan Egg, AWW 1967 p.10

<sup>82</sup> Malayan Hot Curry, AWW 1967 p.7

<sup>83</sup> Malayan Lobster Curry, WW 1967 p.6

<sup>84</sup> Malayan Fish Curry, AWW 1967 p.6

<sup>85</sup> Malayan Beef Satay, *The Margaret Fulton Cookbook* 1968 p.216

<sup>86</sup> Brissenden 1969 pp.138--139

In her preamble to the section Brissenden, after identifying the uniqueness of the bipartisanship of Malaysia and Singapore says. 'Such a situation may at times cause disturbances in the nation's political life, but it can only throw the diner into ecstasy'.<sup>87</sup> It is an interesting, if unflattering, take on the relationship between politics and gastronomy.

In 1975 the AWW published recipes for Hot Beef Sate<sup>88</sup>, Chicken Sate,<sup>89</sup> Beef Sate<sup>90</sup>, and Lamb Sate.<sup>91</sup> In 1976 the AWW published a recipe for Chilli Crab<sup>92</sup> and also a recipe for Popiah.<sup>93</sup>

## Burma

The oldest recipes from Burma were published in 1927 for Chicken Souffle and Chicken Burma.<sup>94</sup> In 1955 *The Argus* published a recipe for Coconut Rice.<sup>95</sup> In 1962 *The Canberra Times* published a recipe for Cabbage Salad from Mrs. S. Shi Sho, wife of the Burmese Military, Naval and Air Attache.<sup>96</sup> A recipe for Burmese Cheese Fried Rice was published in the AWW in 1963.<sup>97</sup> Also in 1963 the Festival of Asia *Cook Book* published five recipes from Burma including Cauliflower Burmese style) and Burmese Beans.<sup>98</sup> A Burmese Beef Curry was published in the AWW as one of the *World's Best Curries*.<sup>99</sup> In 1967 the AWW published Thanat (Burmese Cucumber Salad).<sup>100</sup>

But the biggest fillip to Burmese cuisine was when in 1968 Doris Ady<sup>101</sup> published *Curries from the Sultan's Kitchen*<sup>102</sup> which has 20 recipes for Burmese dishes including Panthay Kaukswe (Egg Noodles in Coconut and Creamy Coconut and Chicken Soup)<sup>103</sup>, Mohinga<sup>104</sup>, and Prawn and Bamboo Salad.<sup>105</sup> In her Foreword Ady wrote:

I have written this book primarily for the Australian and New Zealand housewife ... who is game to tackle anything and everything ... I hope the little book will open up to her the infinite connotations of the word 'curry' and introduce to her the art of spice cooking.<sup>106</sup>

It's interesting that the AWW and Ady both see the Australian housewife (sic) as being adventurous when it comes to food.

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<sup>87</sup> Brissenden 1969 p.117

<sup>88</sup> Hot Beef Sate, Delicious Appetisers Asian Style, AWW 15 October 1975 p.103

<sup>89</sup> Chicken Sate, Food On Skewers AWW 1975 p.138

<sup>90</sup> Beef Sate AWW 1975 p.140

<sup>91</sup> Lamb Sate AWW 1975 p.140

<sup>92</sup> Chilli Crab, AWW 1976 pp. 82 – 91

<sup>93</sup> Popiah, Gourmet food from Singapore, AWW 3 March 1976 p. 87

<sup>94</sup> 'Chicken Burmese' Some Burmese Recipes, *The Herald* 25 October 1927 p.15

<sup>95</sup> Coconut Rice, Burmese Dish, *The Argus* 13 August 1955 p.8

<sup>96</sup> Cabbage Salad, the *Canberra Times* 3 October 1962 p.5

<sup>97</sup> Burmese Cheese Fried Rice, AWW 1 May 1963 p.7

<sup>98</sup> Cook Book 1963 pp. 4-5

<sup>99</sup> A Burmese Beef Curry, AWW 1967 p.4

<sup>100</sup> Thanat (Burmese Cucumber Salad) Side Dishes or Sambals, AWW 1967 p.12

<sup>101</sup> Doris Ady was Burmese born and for several reasons lived there from time to time. She and her husband managed a spice shop.

<sup>102</sup> Ady, Doris, *Curries from the Sultan's Kitchen*, A.H. & A. W. Reed 1968

<sup>103</sup> Panthay Kaukswe, Ady 1968 pp.70-71

<sup>104</sup> Mohinga, Ady 1968 Ady pp.74 - 75

<sup>105</sup> Prawn and Bamboo Salad, 1968 p.80

<sup>106</sup> Ady 1968 p.9

Unusually, she also described social context in which she wrote the book:

Visitors from Asia do not come to us in any great numbers and we in turn have been more apt to travel in a westerly direction, rather than to explore the sights and sounds and smells of Asia. But these trends are changing ...(following Britain's withdrawal from its Asian colonies) ... Australian and New Zealand have welcomed the thousands of people from these former British colonial territories. Many of these European people have lived for generations in the East, and know and love Asian foods.

Furthermore, we are involving ourselves more and more in Asian affairs – Australian and New Zealand women will find themselves entertaining their husband's business friends, as well as students from Asia.<sup>107</sup>

### Thailand

The Festival of Asia *Cook Book* in 1963 had seven Thai recipes including Chicken and Chillies<sup>108</sup> and Larp.<sup>109</sup> In 1967 The *Canberra Times* published Stuffed Sago a recipe from Mrs. Charn Charvastra<sup>110</sup>. Also in 1967 The *Canberra Times* published Chicken and Chillies.<sup>111</sup> In 1967 in the AWW's feature on The World's Best Curries, Thailand had four: Thai Pork Curry<sup>112</sup>, Thai Beef Curry<sup>113</sup> and Thai Prawn Kebab Curry<sup>114</sup>. Also in 1967 *The Western Herald* published Fried Fish With Ginger Sauce<sup>115</sup>, Ginger Sauce<sup>116</sup>, Fried Prawn Balls,<sup>117</sup> and Fried Cabbage or Beansprouts.<sup>118</sup>

### Vietnam

There were eight recipes from Vietnam.

In 1963 the Festival of Asia's *Cook Book* published four recipes for Vietnamese dishes including Canh Dau Phu (Soya Bean Curd Soup). Sweet Green Bean Dessert was published in the *Canberra Times* in 1965.<sup>119</sup> In 1966 the *Canberra Times* published a recipe for Ga Xao Bun Tau (Chicken with Vermicelli) from Mrs Nguyen Van Hieu, wife of the Ambassador of Vietnam.<sup>120</sup> In 1969 two recipes were published in the *Canberra Times*: Fish Steamed With Rice and Pork and Honey.<sup>121</sup> Vietnamese cuisine was about to begin fronting up to the Australian table with the arrival in April 1976 of the first boat load of refugees from the Vietnam War and the beginning of Vietnamese hot bread shops.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Ady 1968 p,

<sup>108</sup> Chicken and Chillies, *Cook Book, Festival of Asia* 1963 p.28

<sup>109</sup> Larp, *Cook Book, Festival of Asia* 1963 p.29

<sup>110</sup> Stuffed Sago, the *Canberra Times* 27 April 1966 p.18,

<sup>111</sup> Chicken and Chillies, the *Canberra Times* 27 April 1966 p.18

<sup>112</sup> Thai Pork Curry, AWW 1967 p.5

<sup>113</sup> Thai Beef Curry, AWW 1967 p.5

<sup>114</sup> Thai Prawn Kebab Curry, AWW 1967 p.6

<sup>115</sup> Fried Fish With Ginger, *The Western Herald* 1 December 1967 p.7

<sup>116</sup> Ginger Sauce, *The Western Herald* 1 December 1967 p.7

<sup>117</sup> Fried Prawn Balls, *The Western Herald* 1 December 1967 p.7

<sup>118</sup> Fried Cabbage or Beansprouts, *The Western Herald* 1 December 1967 p.7

<sup>119</sup> Sweet Green Bean Dessert, Embassy Recipe No. 28, The *Canberra Times* 6 January 1965 p.8

<sup>120</sup> Ga Xao Bun Tau, Ambassadors' wife at the stove, The *Canberra Times* 13 April 1966 p. 18

<sup>121</sup> Fish Steamed With Rice and Pork And Honey, The *Canberra Times* 6 August 1969 p.19

<sup>122</sup> Van Reylik, True to the Land. A history of food In Australia, Reaktion 2021 pp. 187 - 188



## Cambodia

There were three recipes from Cambodia in 1965 - Bananas in Rum, Baked Bananas, and Bananas in Red Wine - from Mrs. Sin-Suop, wife of the Cambodian Attache.<sup>123</sup> Cambodian refugees began arriving in the late 1970s and set about establishing food businesses for the community and soon for Australian diners.

## Laos

I found no Laotian recipes. Lao refugees began arriving in Australia in 1976 and have remained a small community.

## Summary and Discussion

I set out to track South East Asian Food in Australian newspapers, magazines and cookbooks before the publication of Charmaine Solomon's 1976 *The Complete Asian Cookbook*.

Indonesia had the largest number of recipes boosted by three cook books - *Cooking the Indonesian Way* by Alec Robeau, *South East Asian Food* by Rosemary Brissenden, and the *Far Eastern Epicure*. By Maria Kozslik Donovan. Malaysia had the second most recipes boosted here also by Brissenden and Kozslik Donovan. Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam each had a handful of recipes. Laos had none.

I think a word here about *Australian Women's Weekly* shaping food habits in Australia is called for. It had some 850,000 readers in the mid-1960s. They would find South East Asian recipes in 1967 in *The World's Best Curries*, and in the 1968 *Indonesian Cooking*. As some measure of its influence consider the *Indonesian Cooking* feature article written because of readership requests.

The recipes were published in a number of formats – single item e.g. the Nasi Goreng (Fried Rice) recipe published by *The Sun* in 1942 ; part of a group sharing some connection e.g. the Embassy Recipes project; full page e.g. Dishes for a rice table/Rijsttafel; section in a book e.g. the Burmese section in *Ady*; a book e.g. Alec Robeau's *Cooking the Indonesian Way*.

Reasons for publishing were usually culinary – a style of dish e.g. sates; a style of meal e.g. festive Nasi Gurih (Coconut rice in Brissenden); introducing the home cook to a new cuisine e.g. Burmese; introducing the home cook to new ingredients e.g. 'unusual ingredients in Indonesian Cooking' ; extending the skills of the home cook e.g. *The World's Best Curries*.

Other than my tentative look at Vietnamese refugees and their hot bread shops, there has not been a study/studies that I am aware of that has looked at the relationship of South East Asian refugees – Vietnamese, Cambodian and Lao to the Asianisation of the Australian table.

As to whether the distribution of cuisines at different times reflects South East Asian engagements with Australia for non-culinary reasons – work, study, commerce etc., that is a question for a later time.

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<sup>123</sup> Banana Recipes, Embassy Recipe No 29, From the Royal Cambodian table from Mrs. ' The *Canberra Times* 13 January 1965 p.14