

# Cooking Lessons from Grandma

By Joyce Doo Teekell (Granddaughter of Leu Shee Doo)

I cannot remember ever seeing a cookbook, measuring cups, teaspoons or tablespoons in Grandma's kitchen. I can remember many large and small cleavers, worn wooden chopping boards, colanders, black woks, big pots and the most delicious food you would ever want to eat. It was all Chinese food, as that was the only food that was cooked and served at Grandma's house.

Rice was served at every meal and we never tired of it. Rice was a basic for our meals and everything was better with rice.

My first cooking lesson from Grandma was how to make rice. I think I was about ten years old. Since Grandma usually cooked for the immediate family of approximately 20 people, from her and Grandpa to her adult sons to the ten grandchildren who visited daily. My Mother and Aunt Ying, the two daughter in laws, were her assistants in harvesting vegetables, preparing live chickens from the backyard chicken coop, planning the menu, chopping food and cooking the meals.

Our rice was held in a large, aluminum garbage can with a tight fitting lid. It sat on the back porch filled with 50 pound bags of rice. It was refilled often!

The amount of rice needed for the meal was determined by the number of people expected at dinner. Grandma used a small recycled Pet Evaporated Milk can as a measurement. One can of rice was to feed two adults. The rice was then to be gently swirled by hand to take off the starch. The cloudy water was to be carefully drained, clean water added and the process repeated until the water became clear. This could take three or more attempts.

Then for the crucial part, adding the correct amount of cooking water to the unmeasured pot of rice. Grandma said the recipe was always the same. Add enough water from the top of the rice to the first finger joint on your index finger. Any amount of rice, anyone's finger, any pot, this would work. How unscientific and illogical but it works!!!