

Chinese Cooking Glossary: Ingredients And Cooking Terms

A Companion Book of



Real And Healthy Chinese Cooking

Nicholas Zhou

<http://www.chinesefooddiy.com/>

Dear friend:

Welcome to join us with our Chinese cooking journey!

During my own 20 years of Chinese cooking, I've seen thousands of cooking ingredients and cooking terms. I used to write them down in my little yellow note book and asked my aunt and other cooks in town. In 2002, my cooking dictionary had over 1,000 terms and was still growing. Then I found the beauty of Internet and I started to revise the definition of some terms according to the information I found on the Web. There came this book – “Chinese Cooking Glossary: Ingredients And Cooking Terms”.

Please note that this is a companion book of my cookbook “*Real And Healthy Chinese Cooking*”. To know more about this #1 most downloaded cookbook on Chinese cooking and healthy eating with **over 500+ authentic and healthy Chinese recipes, hundreds of cooking tips** and **170+ colorful pictures** of Chinese dishes, please visit:

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If you have any questions/suggestions about our recipes, website or newsletters, please feel free to contact us. We will be glad to hear from you!

Cheers,

Nicholas Zhou

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Z

N/A

A

Abalone - Also called Awabi, Loco, Muttonfish and Paua. A mollusk that is popular ingredient in Chinese and Japanese dishes. In China it is featured in Cantonese cooking. Abalone is a member of the genus *Haliotis*, which means sea ear, referring to the flat shell. It is available fresh, dried, or canned. In dried form it must be soaked for several days before using. Asian markets are a good place to find these. Prod them gently before buying to make sure they're alive. The smaller ones are better. Canned or dried abalones are acceptable substitutes for fresh in some dishes.



Abalone

Substitutes: Ormer (smaller) OR geoduck clam OR conch OR other clams OR Flatten skinned and boned chicken or turkey breasts with a mallet, marinate in clam juice and crushed garlic, then sauté.

Storage: Unopened canned abalone can be stored for up to a year in a dry, cool place. Once opened, it will keep for up to two days if you wrap it well and refrigerate it.

Ajinomoto - See [MSG](#).

Allspice - Also called Toute-Epice, Jamaica Pepper, Myrtle Pepper, Pimiento, Pimento, Clove Pepper and Newspice. Allspice comes from a single tree, but it tastes like a mixture of cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg. You can buy it already ground, but for better flavor and a longer shelf life, buy the berries and grind them yourself.



Allspice

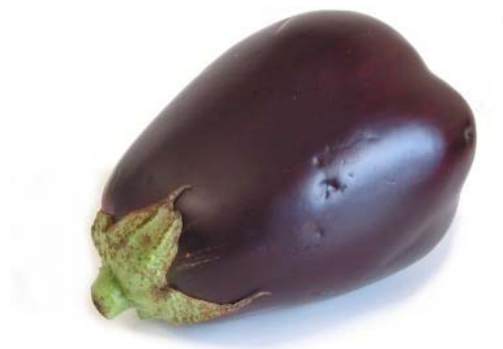
Substitutes: Equal parts cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg, all ground OR equal parts cinnamon and cloves, all ground OR equal parts cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and black pepper, all ground

Equivalents: 5 whole berries yield 1 teaspoon ground

Alum - Crystals of potassium aluminum sulfate, commonly used in canning before it was discovered that it can cause gastric distress in some individuals. Although still considered safe in small quantities, depending on individual tolerance, the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) no longer recommends its use for home canning. Alum is also sometimes used as a home remedy; treating canker sores for example. In Chinese cooking, it is one of the ingredients used to make deep-fried crullers.

Amaranth - A beautiful name for a group of plants that are found primarily in tropical areas. While some are grown for their seed which is used as a grain, and others are treated as weeds, there are several varieties which are grown as a leaf vegetable. These fall into two groups: those with green leaves and those whose leaves are tinged with beautiful red and purple colors. Amaranthus Tricolor, a red-leafed species, is also known as Chinese spinach.

American Eggplant - Also called Globe Eggplant. This is the familiar large, dark purple, pear-shaped variety.



American Eggplant

1 medium = 1 pound = 4.5 cups of peeled and cubed eggplant

Substitutes: Italian eggplant (this is smaller but similar) OR [Japanese eggplant](#) (1 American eggplant = 3 Japanese eggplants).

Angles or Angled Luffa - A great name for a gourd that is vaguely related to the luffa brush in your shower. It also goes by the rather unattractive name of "dishwater gourd," as well as silk squash and Chinese okra (it bears some similarity to okra in taste and texture). Like tofu,

angled luffa absorbs the flavors of the foods it is cooked with. It is used in stir-fries and deep-fried dishes. See also Silk Squash.

Anise - See [Anise Seed](#) or [Star Anise](#).

Anise Basil - This is used in Southeast Asia.



Anise Basil

Substitutes: Holy basil OR basil + mint

Anise Seed - Also called Aniseed and Anis. Cooks use anise seed to impart a licorice flavor to baked goods, liqueurs, and candies.



Anise Seed

Substitutes: Fennel seed (This has a milder flavor and is sweeter than anise.) OR star anise (stronger flavor; 1 crushed star anise = 1/2 teaspoon crushed anise seed) OR caraway seed OR tarragon

Arrow Root - Also called Arrowroot, Chinese Potato (this name also is used for [Jicama](#)), Goo, Seegoo, Arrowhead, Chinese Arrowhead, Tse Goo, Ci Gu and Tsu Goo. The name arrowroot is more commonly associated with a thickener that's made from the plant. A fresh arrowroot tuber looks like a small onion, only without the layers. It should be peeled, and then it can be boiled or stir-fried. Look for it in Chinese markets during the winter.



Arrow Root

Substitutes: Water chestnuts OR jicama

Asian Barbecue Sauce - This is made with oil, soy sauce, and other seasonings. Don't confuse it with the much sweeter American barbecue sauce.



Asian Barbecue Sauce

Asian Eggplants - Also called Oriental Eggplants, which include [Japanese Eggplants](#) and [Chinese Eggplants](#), have thinner skins and a more delicate flavor than American eggplants, and not as many of the seeds that tend to make eggplants bitter. They're usually more slender than American eggplants, but they vary in size and shape. They range in color from lavender to pink, green, and white.

Asian Wheat Noodles - These are made with wheat flour, salt, water, and sometimes eggs and flavorings. Always cook wheat noodles in plenty of boiling water. Some Asian cooks recommend cooking them until they're al dente (cooked through, but still firm), while others suggest cooking them a bit longer to make them softer. Rinse the noodles in cold water after they're done and let them drain. Toss them about to prevent them from sticking together, then fry them, or add them to your stir-fry or soup. Supermarkets often carry several varieties of dried Asian noodles, which can be stored indefinitely. Asian markets often carry fresh noodles, which can be kept for two or three days in your refrigerator.



Substitutes: pasta (especially ribbons or rods.) OR [rice noodles](#)

Asparagus - Asparagus has a wonderfully distinctive flavor and a meaty texture. It's often served as a side dish, after being steamed or briefly boiled. Better cooks insist that it be peeled first, but many people skip this step. To remove the tough base, simply snap the asparagus in half with your hands. The stalk should break right about at the point where it starts getting too tough to serve to company.



Asparagus

There's a purple variety, but it turns green when it's cooked and so loses its novelty. White asparagus, on the other hand, is tenderer than green, and more expensive. Asparagus is often available year-round, but the best time to buy it is in the spring.

Substitutes: [White asparagus](#) OR leeks OR okra OR fiddlehead fern OR broccoli

Asparagus Lettuce - See [Celtuce](#).

Aubergine - The North American word for aubergine is eggplant. While there are many varieties grown in Asian, the term Chinese eggplant refers to the narrow, purple variety that can be streaked with white (it looks somewhat like a purple zucchini). Interestingly, Asian recipes don't normally call for eggplant to be salted and degorged, as is the custom in western and European cooking.

Awabi - See [Abalone](#).

B

Baak Choi - See [Bok Choy](#).

Baby Bok Choy - See [Bok Choy](#).

Bai Cai - See [Bok Choy](#).

Bake - A method of dry-heat cooking done in an oven. Pans may be covered or uncovered. When applied to meat, fish, or poultry the term roasting is used.

Bamboo Broom - A normal short broom of bamboo sticks, widely used in Chinese kitchens to clean the wok.

Bamboo Shoots - Also called Takenoko, Take-Noko, Tung Sun, Choke-Sun and Chun-Sun. The shoots of the bamboo plant, native to Asia, and a popular item in Chinese cooking. Edible bamboo shoots fall into two broad categories, winter and spring shoots. Spring shoots are larger and tougher than winter shoots. In general, canned bamboo shoots are easier to obtain than fresh shoots. After opening the can, you can rinse them in hot water to get rid of any "tinny" taste. Unused bamboo shoots should be stored in the refrigerator in a jar of water, with the water changed daily. [Buy bamboo shoots](#).



Bamboo Shoots

Substitutes: [Asparagus](#) OR coconut shoots (sweeter)

Bamboo Steamer - A special kind of steamer made from bamboo strips used in Chinese cooking specially for steaming dim sums. [Buy bamboo steamer](#).

Barbecue - A method of dry-heat cooking where foods are roasted over coals, under a flame, or in an electric unit. Foods are generally basted (moistened) with a seasoned mixture or sauce, during cooking.

Barbeque Sauce - Chinese barbecue sauce is very different from western barbecue sauces, which are often tomato or mustard-based. While there are variations, Chinese barbecue sauces often contain hoisin sauce, vinegar, sesame oil or paste, and perhaps bean sauce.

Bar Clam - Also called Hen Clam, Sea Clam and Atlantic Surf Clam.

Substitutes: Quahog Clam

Basil Seed - Also called Sweet Basil Seed. Look for it in Southeast Asian markets.



Basil Seed

Basmati Rice - This aromatic, long-grain rice is grown in the foothills of the Himalayas and is especially popular in India. The cooked grains are dry and fluffy, so they make a nice bed for curries and sauces. Basmati is available as either white or brown rice. Brown basmati has more fiber and a stronger flavor, but it takes twice as long to cook. Aged basmati rice is better, but more expensive.



Basmati Rice

Substitutes: Popcorn rice (slightly milder than basmati) OR jasmine rice (has shorter grain than basmati, somewhat stickier; cooks slightly faster) OR long-grain rice (less expensive) OR wild pecan rice

Equivalents: One cup dried rice yields three cups cooked rice.

Bay Scallops - Also called Chinese Scallops



Bay Scallops

Shopping hints: These are easier to find in the East than in the West. Frozen scallops are a good substitute for fresh.

Substitutes: Calico scallop (not as sweet) OR sea scallop (This is larger than the bay scallop, and less sweet and delicate. Consider cutting it into bite-size pieces before cooking.) OR shark meat (Note: Unscrupulous restaurants sometimes palm off shark meat as scallops to unsuspecting customers.) OR cod cheeks OR skate

See also: [Scallops](#)

Bean Curd – See [Tofu](#).

Bean Curd is sold in cakes about 7.5 cm (3 inches) square.

Bean Curd Cheese - (fermented bean curd) Made by fermenting bean curd cubes in rice wine or salt. Available in two forms - white, or the Southern China red, which is more strongly flavored. Both are very salty and strong-tasting.

Bean Paste - See [Bean Sauce](#).

Bean Sauce - Also called Bean Paste, Brown Bean Sauce, Brown Bean Paste, Yellow Bean Sauce and Yellow Bean Paste. It is a thick (really more like a paste than a sauce) aromatic sauce that is made from soybeans mixed with flour and salt, and fermented. There are a number of varieties, including brown bean sauce, yellow bean sauce and bean paste. Keeps indefinitely when stored in the refrigerator. Chinese bean sauce isn't as salty as Thai bean sauce.



Bean Sauce

Substitutes: Black bean sauce OR chili bean sauce.

Bean Sprouts - Bean sprouts are sprouted green gram (*moong*) and are highly nutritious.

Bean Stick - Also called Dried Bean Stick, Bamboo Yuba, Bean Curd Stick, Dried Bean Curd Stick, Fu Jook Pei and Chinese Yuba. This is made from the skin that forms on the top of heated soy milk. It's rich in protein, and used by Chinese and Japanese cooks in soups. Look for it in Asian food stores.



Bean Stick

Bean Threads – It has many names: Cellophane Noodles, Mung Bean Threads, Bai Fun, Translucent Noodles, Shining Noodles, Slippery Noodles, Peastarch Noodles, Powdered Silk Noodles, Saifun, Sai Fun, Silver Noodles, Chinese Vermicelli, Transparent Noodles, Fen Szu, Fen Si, Fan Si, Fun See, Glass Noodles, Crystal Noodles, Jelly Noodles, Transparent Vermicelli, Soo Hoon (Cantonese), Sohoon (Cantonese), Su Boon, Tung Boon, SuUn (Indonesian), Pancit Sotanghon (Tagalog), Woon Sen (Thai), Bun Tau (Vietnamese), Bun Tao (Vietnamese), Bean Thread Vermicelli, Green Bean Thread Noodles, Invisible Noodles, Pekyasan, Vermicelli Noodles, Tanghoon (Malaysia) and Mung Pea Noodles.



Bean Threads

These slender, gelatinous noodles are widely used throughout China and Southeast Asia. They're made from mung beans and almost flavorless, though they readily absorb other flavors. They're commonly used in soups, stir-fries, salads, desserts, and even drinks. Before using, soak them in hot water until they're soft and transparent (about 15 minutes), then add them to boiling water and cook them for no more than a minute. Rinse them in cold water and drain. The dried noodles can also be deep fried to make a crunchy garnish or bed for sauces.

Substitutes: Harusame (a similar Japanese version) OR rice vermicelli (can also be deep fried) OR shirataki OR rice sticks.

Benne Seed - See [Sesame Seed](#).

Bird's Nest - Also called Dragon's Teeth. Authentic bird's nest soup is made using the nests of the swiftlet, a tiny bird found throughout Southeast Asia. Instead of twigs and straw, the swiftlet makes its nest from strands of gummy saliva, which harden when exposed to air. Once the nests are harvested, they are cleaned and sold to restaurants, where they are served simmered in chicken broth. Authentic bird's nest soup is quite popular throughout Asia, perhaps because it has the reputation of being an aphrodisiac. It is also quite costly; many western restaurants serve a less expensive version consisting of soup with noodles shaped to resemble a bird's nest.

Bitter Almond - Unprocessed bitter almonds have a more intense flavor than ordinary almonds, but they aren't available in the United States since they're mildly toxic if eaten raw. Instead, they're processed and used to make oil of bitter almonds, almond extract, almond liqueurs, and orgeat syrup. This name is often used (incorrectly) for the [Chinese Almond](#).

Substitutes: Chinese almonds (Warning: Cook these before eating to remove toxins.) OR oil of bitter almonds (1 drop = 6 bitter almonds) OR almonds plus a few drops of almond extract OR almonds plus some amaretto liqueur (not as flavorful, more oily)

Bitter Melon - Also called Balsam Pear, Bitter Cucumber, Bitter Gourd, Ampalaya, Chinese Bitter Melon, Foo Gwa and Karela. This is a very strange looking gourd, shaped something like

a cucumber with a rough, pockmarked skin. The flavor is unusual as well - like cilantro, it's an acquired taste. Fortunately, blanching it before cooking will help reduce the bitter taste. (You can also degorge them as you would with eggplant). In addition, you'll often find bitter melon paired with strong flavors such as black beans, which counteracts the bitterness. In one well-known Chinese recipe bitter melon is stuffed with pork, garlic, and mashed black beans, and steamed. Bitter melon has long been thought to have medicinal value, and has been used to treat low blood sugar and infections. More recently it has been used to treat HIV.

Stored in a plastic bag in the vegetable crisper section of the refrigerator, bitter melon should keep for four to five days. Before using, cut in half, seed and core, and then blanch if desired.



Bitter Melon

Substitutes: Winter melon (larger, needn't be salted before cooking to remove bitterness)

Black Bean Chili Sauce - Savory fermented soy beans and spicy chilies, ready to season stir-fried Black Bean Shrimp or other pungent recipes. Spread it on a fish fillet and steam for a memorable treat.

Black Bean Paste or Sauce - This is made from fermented black beans. A variation is hot black bean sauce, which has chile paste added, and black bean sauce with garlic. Used in place of soy sauce when a thicker sauce is required. Similar to [yellow bean paste or sauce](#), only darker.



Black Bean Paste or Sauce

Substitutes: (Brown) bean sauce OR hot black bean sauce

Black Blanch - Blanching is a process whereby the food is briefly plunged in boiling water for a moment, then immediately transferred to ice water to stop the cooking process. It is a technique commonly used with Chinese vegetables prior to stir-frying. The goal is to bring out the color and flavor of the vegetable without overcooking.

Black Currant - Also called Cassis. These are too tart to eat out of hand, but they're often used to make syrups, preserves, and the liqueur cassis. Frozen are a good substitute for fresh.



Black Currant

Substitutes: Elderberries OR blueberries OR red currants OR gooseberries

Black Mushrooms - Usually available dried, the caps are thick with a nice curl and range in color from black to speckled brown black.

Black Pepper - Also called Black Peppercorns.



Black Pepper

Substitutes: White pepper (less pungent, more delicate flavor) OR ground papaya seeds OR green peppercorns (softer, fresher tasting)

Black Sesame Seeds - Look for this in Asian markets.



Black Sesame Seeds

Substitutes: White sesame seeds (Toast them before using. They're not as pungent as black sesame seeds.)

Bloody Clam - *Latin:* Argina pexata



Bloody Clam

Blue Crab - Also called Chesapeake Blue Crab. These are found on the Atlantic coast. They're small, but otherwise similar to Dungeness crabs. When they molt, they're called soft-shelled crabs, a wonderful delicacy that can be eaten shell and all.



Blue Crab

Boil - A moist-heat method where food is cooked in water, or other liquid, at or above boiling (212° F).

Bok Choy – Also called Baak Choi, Baby Bok Choy, Chinese Chard, Chinese White Cabbage, Chinese Mustard Cabbage, Pak Choy, Pak Choi, White Mustard Cabbage, White Celery Mustard, Taisai, Bai Cai (Chinese name). Bok choy has crunchy stems and crinkled, spinach-like leaves. It's usually stir-fried with other ingredients, but it can also be steamed or sautéed and served as a side dish. Small heads of bok choy are called baby bok choy (see the picture below), and they're more tender than the larger variety. Of the baby bok choys, bok choy sum (Canton bok choy) has small yellow flowers (sum is the Chinese word for flower), while Shanghai bok choy is a uniform light green, doesn't have flowers, and isn't as sweet.



Baby Bok Choy

Substitutes: Chinese broccoli OR you choy OR napa cabbage (for stir-frying only; don't boil) OR broccoli OR Swiss chard OR celery (especially in stir-fry dishes) OR collard greens OR beet greens. Besides being used in soups and stir-fries, you'll also find it in braised dishes. Keep in the vegetable crisper section of the refrigerator. Rinse thoroughly before using.

Bok Choy Sum - See [Bok Choy](#).

Braise - As in western cooking, braising is a technique used with tougher cuts of meat. After browning, the meat is boiled and then slowly simmered in a stock, usually accompanied with

seasonings. Red cooking, popular in eastern China, is a method where the food is braised in [soy sauce](#), imparting a dark color. Vegetables such as bok choy can also be braised.

Broccoli - Similar to cauliflower, dark green in color. The word brocco means sprout.

Broccoli Raab - Also called Broccolirab, Broccoli De Rabe, Choy Sum and Chinese Flowering Cabbage. This slightly bitter cooking green has long been popular in Italy and is now catching on in America. It's best to just eat the florets and leaves; the stems are quite bitter.



Broccoli Raab

Substitutes: Chinese broccoli (similar, but not as bitter) OR dandelion greens OR Swiss chard OR mustard greens OR turnip greens OR kale OR broccoli (milder, takes longer to cook) OR cauliflower OR watercress

Broil - A dry-heat method where food is cooked directly under a heating element.

Brown Bean Sauce or Paste – See [Bean Sauce](#).

Brown Peppercorn - See [Szechwan Peppercorn](#).

Brown Rice - Also called Whole Grain Rice. Many rice varieties come as either brown rice or white rice. Brown rice isn't milled as much as white, so it retains the bran and germ. That makes brown rice more fiber-rich, nutritious, and chewy. Unfortunately, it doesn't perform as well as white rice in many recipes. Long grains of brown rice aren't as fluffy and tender, and short grains aren't as sticky. Brown rice also takes about twice as long to cook and has a much shorter shelf life (because of the oil in the germ). Keep it in a cool, dark place for not more than three months. Refrigeration can extend shelf life.



Brown Rice

Substitutes: Converted rice (less chewy, takes less time to cook) OR wild pecan rice OR white rice (Enriched white rice has less fiber, but many of the same nutrients.)

Brown Sugar - Small crystals of refined white sugar treated with dark grade molasses. Soft light brown sugar is treated with light colored molasses.

Brussels Sprouts - These look like small cabbages, and they're most often boiled or steamed and served as a side dish. They have a rather strong flavor, so it's best not to pair them with anything that's delicately flavored. They don't store well, so use them within a day or two after purchasing.



Brussels Sprouts

Substitutes: Broccoli flowerets (cooks more quickly)

C

Cabbage - See [Green Cabbage](#), [Red Cabbage](#), [Chinese Cabbage](#) and [Napa Cabbage](#).

Calamari - See [Squids](#).

Calico Scallop

Substitutes: [Bay scallop](#) (sweeter) OR [sea scallop](#) (This is larger than the [calico scallop](#), and less sweet and delicate. Consider cutting it into bite-size pieces before cooking.) OR shark meat (Note: Unscrupulous restaurants sometimes palm off shark meat as scallops to unsuspecting customers.) OR cod cheeks OR skate

Canal Shrimp - Also called Kuruma Ebi. These are popular in Japan, where they're often served as tempura.



Canal Shrimp

Canela - See Cinnamon.

Canton Bok Choy - See [Bok Choy](#).

Cantonese Noodles - See [Lo Mein Noodles](#).

Cassia Cinnamon - Also called Cassia, Chinese Cinnamon, Chinese Cassia and False Cinnamon. Most of the cinnamon that's sold in America is cassia, which is cheaper and bitterer than the choice Ceylon cinnamon.



Cassia Cinnamon

Substitutes: Cinnamon OR nutmeg OR allspice

Celery - Raw celery is flavorful and wonderfully crunchy, and it's a great vehicle for dips or fillings like peanut butter or cream cheese. Celery can also be sautéed and used to flavor soups, stews, and sauces. A bunch or stalk of celery consists of a dozen or so individual ribs, with the tender innermost ribs called the celery heart.



Celery

Equivalents: 1 rib = 1/2 cup sliced

Substitutes: Carrots (for snacking) OR fennel stalks (takes longer to cook) OR [Chinese celery](#) (This is a good substitute if the celery is to be cooked; Chinese celery has a more intense flavor than conventional celery.) OR [bok choy](#) (raw or cooked) OR cardoon (for cooking) OR [jicama](#) (for snacking or crudités)

Celery Cabbage - See [Napa Cabbage](#)

Cellophane Noodles - See [Bean Threads](#).

Celtuce - Also called Asparagus Lettuce, Stem Lettuce. This is a kind of lettuce that's grown for its stalk, which can be peeled, sliced, and stir-fried. Look for it in Asian markets.



Celtuce

Substitutes: Celery

Chee Hou Sauce - Also called Che Hau Sauce and Chu Hou Paste. This braising sauce is made from soybeans, garlic, and ginger. Look for it in the condiments section of Asian markets.



Chee Hou Sauce

Substitutes: Hoisin sauce (Very similar, but less spicy.)

Cherrystone Clam - See [Hard-Shell Clam](#).

Chestnut - Also called Marron. These sweet, starchy, low-fat nuts are quite common in southern Europe, where people eat them hot from the roaster, or add them to soups, stuffing, and desserts. They appear fresh in the fall and winter, but you can find them dried, vacuum-packed, or canned throughout the year. Before you can eat them, fresh chestnuts need to be boiled or roasted, and then shelled and peeled. To roast them, cut an X into each shell (to allow steam to escape) and bake them in a 400F oven for about twenty minutes. While they're still warm, peel off both the shell and the furry skin surrounding each nut. Alternatively, boil the chestnuts for about 15 minutes, then remove them from the water with a slotted spoon. Peel off the shells and put the nuts back in the boiling water for another minute, then remove them again and peel off the skins. Select fresh chestnuts that are shiny and heavy for their size. Store them in the refrigerator and use them within a week or so. Don't confuse chestnuts with water chestnuts, which are completely different.



Chestnut

Substitutes: Breadnuts OR jackfruit seeds OR chufa nuts OR hazelnuts (for stuffing poultry)
OR pecans (for stuffing poultry)

Equivalents: One pound in the shell = 2 1/2 cups shelled whole nuts

Chili Bean Sauce - Also called Chile Bean Paste, Chili Bean Paste, Chile Bean Sauce, Bean Paste with Chili and Hot Bean Paste. This reddish-brown sauce is made from fermented soybeans and hot chilies. It's very hot. Regional versions include Sichuan (Szechuan) hot bean paste, and Korea's kochu chang (kochujang).



Chili Bean Sauce

Substitutes: Bean sauce + chile paste OR bean sauce + chopped chile peppers

Chilli Leaf - Also called Chile Leaf, Chili Leaf, La Ot and Rau Ot. This herb isn't nearly as hot as the chile that comes from the same plant. It's sometimes used as a cooking green in Southeast Asia.



Chile Leaf

Substitutes: Spinach (not as pungent)

Chilli Oil - The oil is made by frying small red chillies slowly in oil. The oil is reddish in color and very hot.

Chilli Paste - Also called Asian Chile Paste, Chili Paste and Chile Paste. This is a blend of hot chile peppers, garlic, oil, and salt that's commonly used in Asian cuisine.

Includes: Chinese chile (or chili) paste = Szechuan chile (or chili) paste = Sichuan chile (or chili) paste = chile paste with garlic, Korean chile paste, and Vietnamese chile paste = tuong ot toi Vietnam = prik kaeng, which is hotter than the Chinese chile paste.

Substitutes: Hot sauce OR harissa OR crushed red pepper flakes (to taste; start with 1/4 as much) OR dried red chili peppers.

Chili Paste With Garlic - A tangy hot bean sauce with an extra shot of tasty garlic. A bit warmer than Hot Bean Sauce (above). SM can never decide whether this or the regular hot bean sauce is his favorite, so he uses either as the mood strikes.

Chili Sauce (sweet or hot) - A sweet or hot-tasting sauce made from red chili.

Chinese Almond - Also called Apricot seed, Hang Yen and Dried Almond. These aren't really almonds at all, but apricot kernels. They taste a lot like bitter almonds, and have a rich, heavenly almond-extract fragrance. They're mildly toxic if eaten raw, so they should always be roasted or blanched before using. Look for plastic bags of them in Chinese markets.



Chinese Almond

Substitutes: Bitter almonds (These are also mildly toxic if eaten raw, so they aren't available in the United States.) OR oil of bitter almonds (just a few drops) OR almonds plus a few drops of almond extract OR almonds (not as flavorful, more oily)

Chinese Aromatic Pepper - See [Szechwan Peppercorn](#).

Chinese Artichoke - Also called Crosne, Japanese Artichoke and Chorogi. These look a bit like caterpillars, and they taste like Jerusalem artichokes. They're popular in France but hard to find in the U.S. Your best bet would be an Asian market.

Substitutes: [Jerusalem artichoke](#) OR salsify

Chinese Barbecue Sauce - A combination of hoisin sauce, vinegar, sesame oil or paste and bean sauce. Used in marination.

Chinese Black Mushrooms - See Mushrooms, Chinese Black

Chinese Black Vinegar - Also called Black Vinegar, Black Rice Vinegar, Chinese Brown Rice Vinegar, Brown Rice Vinegar, Chinkiang Vinegar, Chekiang Vinegar, Chenkong Vinegar and Zhejiang Vinegar. The best Chinese black vinegars are produced in the province of Chinkiang (or Chekiang or Zhejiang--there are many spellings). Black vinegar is more assertive than white rice vinegar, and it's often used in stir-fries, shark's fin soup, and as a dipping sauce. Gold Plum is a well-regarded brand.



Chinese Black Vinegar

Substitutes: Balsamic vinegar (similar, but more expensive) OR red rice vinegar (Add a bit of sugar to sweeten it.) OR apple cider vinegar OR wine vinegar OR Worcestershire sauce (as a dipping sauce)

Chinese Broccoli - Also called Chinese Kale, Gai Lan, Gai Lum and Kai Lan. Like rapini, Chinese broccoli has small stems, green heads (flowers to a botanist) and lots of leaves. But Chinese broccoli is leafier and less bitter than rapini. It's a great vegetable to stir-fry, but you can also steam or boil it, as you would broccoli.



Chinese Broccoli

Substitutes: Rapini OR broccoli OR bok choy

Chinese Cabbage - This name is used for both [Napa Cabbage](#) and [Bok Choy](#).

Chinese Celery - Also called Khuen chai, Kinchay and Xi Qin. This has a stronger flavor than ordinary celery, and it's often used in stir-fries and soups. Look for it in Asian markets.



Chinese Celery

Substitutes: [Celery](#)

Chinese Celery Cabbage - See [Napa Cabbage](#).

Chinese Chard - See [Bok Choy](#).

Chinese Chives - Also called Gow Choy, Garlic Chives and Ku Chai. Unlike regular chives, these have flat leaves and a distinct garlicky flavor.



Chinese Chives

Substitutes: Garlic shoots OR chives (not as pungent as Chinese chives) OR flowering chives

Chinese Cooking Wine - Flavorful rice wine in the Chinese style is often hard to find. We are happy to have some for you. Use in stir frying or other types of cooking.

Chinese Date, dried - Also called Chinese Red Date, Red Date, Senjed, Chinese Jujube (dried) and Jujube (dried), Zao (Chinese name). When fresh, these fruits are crisp like apples and have a mild, sweet flavor. In the United States, they're most often available dried.



Chinese Date

Substitutes: Dates (sweeter) OR dried apples OR prunes OR raisins.

Chinese Date, fresh - Also called Jujube. These are usually dried, but you can sometimes find fresh dates in late summer and fall. When you get them home, let them ripen on the counter for awhile until they become soft and sweet.



Chinese Date, fresh

Substitutes: Apples OR prunes

Chinese Dried Mushrooms - Widely used for their flavor and aroma. Soak them in warm water for 20 minutes before using. [Buy Chinese dried mushroom.](#)

Chinese Duck Sauce - See [Plum Sauce.](#)

Chinese Eggplant - Compared to the familiar [American eggplant](#), Chinese eggplants have thinner skins, a more delicate flavor, and not as many of the seeds that tend to make eggplants bitter.



Chinese Eggplant

Substitutes: [Japanese eggplant](#) (This is similar, but it tends to be a bit more bitter than the Chinese eggplant.) OR small Italian eggplant.

Chinese Egg Noodles - Also called Dan Mien. These wheat noodles are made with eggs, which add flavor, color, and body. They're often used to make chow mein (in which the cooked noodles are formed into a pancake and fried on both sides) and lo mein (in which the noodles are stir-fried along with the other ingredients). Chow mein noodles are usually cut a bit thinner

than lo mein noodles, but the two can be used interchangeably. Chinese egg noodles are available both fresh and dried; and some are flavored with shrimp. Cook fresh noodles in boiling water for about 3 minutes, dried for about 5 minutes. Don't confuse these with fried chow mein noodles, which are used in Americanized Chinese dishes, particularly Chinese chicken salad. Some brands are labeled "imitation noodles"; these aren't made with eggs, but have yellow food coloring added.



Substitutes: Egg roll wrappers (slices into noodles) OR [Chinese wheat noodles](#) (more delicate) OR crispy chow mein noodles (Americans often use these to make chow mein.) OR fettucine OR linguine OR spaghetti (round, not square) OR rice

Chinese Ham - This category includes the well-regarded Yunnan ham (Xuanwei ham). Chinese hams are dry-cured and resemble American country hams.

Substitutes: Smithfield ham (very close substitute) OR fatty prosciutto OR Westphalian ham OR Ardennes ham OR Serrano ham OR Bayonne ham

Chinese Jujube - See [Chinese Date](#).

Chinese Kale - See [Chinese Broccoli](#).

Chinese Leaf - See [Napa Cabbage](#).

Chinese Long Bean - Also called Yard-Long Bean, Asparagus Bean, Dow Gok, Dau Gok, Long Bean, Bodi and Boonchi. These beans usually aren't a yard long--half a yard is more typical. Asians like to cut them into smaller pieces and add them to their stir-fried dishes. You can also boil or steam them like green beans, though they're not as sweet and juicy. They don't store well, so use them within a few days of purchase.

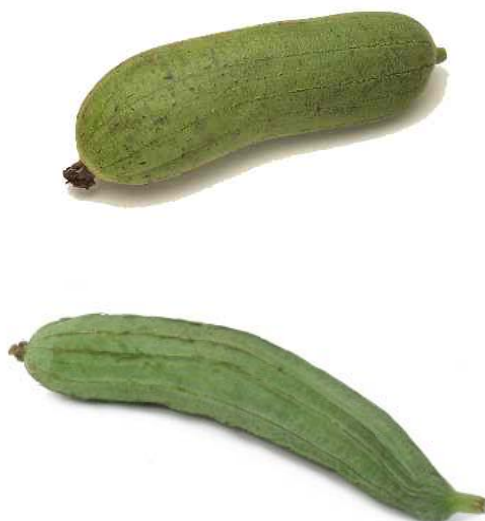


Chinese Long Bean

Substitutes: Thailand long bean OR green bean (smaller and sweeter)

Chinese Mustard Cabbage - See [Bok Choy](#).

Chinese Okra - Also called Silk Squash, Silk Melon and Taiwanese Okra. There can either have a smooth surface or one with deep ridges. The ridged version is sometimes called Angled Luffa, Angled Loofa and Angled Loofah.



Chinese Okra

Substitutes: Zucchini

Chinese Parsley - See Also [Cilantro](#).

Chinese Pepper - See [Szechwan Peppercorn](#).

Chinese Pickle - Includes preserved Sichuan mustard greens, preserved Sichuan kohlrabi, snow pickle (red-in-snow), and salted cabbage (winter pickle).

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Chinese Potato - See [Arrow Root](#) or [Jicama](#).

Chinese Red Date - See [Chinese Date](#).

Chinese Sausage or Lop Cheong - Smaller (up to six inches in length) and thinner than western sausages, Chinese sausages are usually made from pork or liver. The taste varies somewhat depending on the ingredients used, but they generally have a sweet-salty flavor. Chinese sausages can be purchased in Asian markets, either fresh or prepackaged.

Chinese Scallops - See [Bay Scallops](#).

Chinese Spinach - This is similar to spinach, only it's prettier, tastier, and more nutritious. Look for it in Asian markets.



Chinese Spinach

Substitutes: Spinach (This isn't as delicate as Chinese spinach) OR callaloo.

Chinese Star Anise - See [Star Anise](#).

Chinese Sugar - Also called Chinese Rock Sugar and Rock Sugar. This includes Yellow Rock Sugar (Yellow Lump Sugar) or Clear Rock Sugar.



Yellow Rock Sugar (Yellow Lump Sugar)

Substitutes: Granulated sugar (sweeter; substitute 1 tablespoon for each Chinese sugar crystal).

Chinese Wheat Noodles - Also called Chinese wheat starch noodles, Gan Mien (Chinese name). These delicate noodles are mostly used in soups. They're available fresh, dried, or frozen, and they come in various sizes, some as thin as vermicelli, others as thick and wide as fettuccine. Before using, the Chinese boil the noodles (about 3-4 minutes for fresh, 5-10 for dried) and then rinse them in cold water.



Substitutes: Chinese egg noodles (not as delicate) OR Japanese noodles (These usually cook faster than Chinese noodles. Don't stir-fry udon noodles--they're too soft.) OR crispy chow mein noodles (Americans often use these to make chow mein.) OR pasta rods (starchier) OR pasta ribbons (starchier) OR wonton noodles OR ramen OR rice.

Chinese White Cabbage - See [Bok Choy](#).

Chinese White Radish or Lo Bak or Luo Bo - Also known simply as White Radish, and in Japan as Daikon, this popular Asian vegetable has no resemblance to the round red radishes we are used to. Instead, Chinese radish, or *Raphanus sativus* to use its scientific name, resembles a large white carrot. In Japanese cooking, Daikon is a popular ingredient in relishes and salads, while Chinese cooks use it more for soups and stir-fries. Daikon makes an interesting alternative to potatoes or turnips in soups and stews, as it can withstand long periods of cooking without disintegrating. Nutritionally, it is rich in vitamin C and calcium.



Chinese White Radish

Chinese radish is usually peeled and sliced prior to cooking, although some recipes call for it to be grated. Store in the vegetable crisper section of your refrigerator. Wash before using.

Chinese Winter Melon - See [Winter Melon](#).

Chinkiang Vinegar - See [Chinese Black Vinegar](#).

Choi Sum or Choy Sum - A relative of bok choy, choi sum is recognizable by its small yellow flowers and medium green leaves. Also known as Chinese flowering cabbage, it has a sweet, mustardy flavor. Nutritionally, it is rich in calcium. While the stems of choi sum are generally preferred, you can eat the leaves as well. Stored in the vegetable crisper section of the refrigerator, choi sum should last at least a few days. It makes a nice alternative to broccoli.

Chowchow - Mustard-flavored Chinese relish of vegetables and pickles.

Chowder Clam - See [Hard-Shell Clam](#).

Chow Mein Noodles - These egg and wheat flour noodles are used to make chow mein, in which the cooked noodles are formed into a pancake and fried on both sides.



Substitutes: Hong Kong noodles OR Chinese egg noodles OR Chinese wheat noodles

Choy Sum - This is a general term in Chinese for the tender inner stalks and flowers of green vegetables. White choy sum usually refers to [bok choy](#), while green choy sum refers to yau choy.

Chrysanthemum Leaves - Also called Chop Suey Greens, Tong Ho (Chinese name), Garland Chrysanthemum and Shungiku. This Asian potherb is used to flavor salads, soups, sukiyaki and other dishes. The leaves are usually blanched briefly to soften them and deepen their color, but young leaves can be served raw. Add them to cooked dishes at the last minute, as they become bitter if overcooked.



Chrysanthemum Leaves

Substitutes: Spinach

Chuka Soba Noodles - These are Japanese ramen noodles that are dyed yellow and usually lower in fat. You may see them in Chinese recipes.

Substitutes: ramen OR soba OR saimin

Cilantro - Also called Coriander Leaf, Chinese Parsley, Culantrillo, Koyendoro, Mexican Parsley, Pak Chee, Yuen-Sai, Green Coriander and Coriander Green. Cilantro is the leaves of the coriander plant. Featured prominently in Asian and Latin cuisines, Chinese cooks use cilantro in soups, stir-fries, and frequently as a garnish. Although a member of the parsley family, cilantro has a much stronger flavor, which its detractors have described as "soapy." (Like bitter melon, it is definitely an acquired taste). When choosing cilantro, look for leaves that have a bright green color with no yellow spots, and no evidence of wilting. You can store cilantro in a plastic bag in the vegetable crisper section of the refrigerator where it will last a few days. However, if you want the cilantro to last longer, try placing it in a cup of water with the stems down, cover with a plastic bag and refrigerate. If you change the water every two days, the cilantro should last for up to two weeks.



Cilantro

Substitutes: Italian parsley (If you like, add some mint or lemon juice or a dash of ground coriander.) OR equal parts parsley and mint OR parsley + dash lemon juice OR papalo (similar flavor, but more pungent) OR parsley + dash ground coriander OR celery leaves OR dill (especially in Thai seafood dishes) OR basil.

Cinnamon - With its warm, sweet flavor, cinnamon is one of the biggest workhorses on the spice shelf. Cooks often use it to flavor baked goods and drinks, but cinnamon also works wonders in stews and sauces. The best cinnamon is Ceylon Cinnamon (also called Canela, Sri Lanka Cinnamon, True Cinnamon). Indonesian Cinnamon has a similar taste, but larger quills. Much of the cinnamon sold in the United States is [cassia cinnamon](#), which isn't as well regarded.



Cinnamon

Substitutes: Nutmeg OR allspice

Equivalents: One cinnamon stick yields 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon.

Citrus Peel, dried - Also called Fruit Peel, dried. *To make your own:* Begin with orange, lemon, tangerine, or grapefruit peels, scrape off and discard as much of the bitter white pith as possible, and dry what's left in the sun until hard.

Substitutes: Grated zest from a fresh peel (Fresh peels are better than dried peels since they have more aromatic oils.)

Clam - See [Soft-Shell Clam](#), [Razor Clam](#), [Manila Clam](#), [Hard-Shell Clam](#), [Bar Clam](#), and [Geoduck Clam](#)).

Substitutes: Mussel OR cockle OR abalone (tenderize first) OR scallop

Storage: Unopened canned clams can be stored for up to a year in a dry, cool place. Once opened, it will keep for up to two days if you wrap it well and refrigerate it.

Cloud Ears - Cloud ear is actually a type of fungus. Also known as black fungus, tree ears, and jelly mushroom, it has been featured in Chinese cooking since the sixth century A.D. Like tofu, cloud ear has no flavor of its own, but soaks in the flavors that it is cooked with. The delicate, crinkly fungus is also valued for its crunchy texture. Cloud ear is often added to hot and sour soup, and stir-fry dishes. Cloud ears are sold mainly in dried form, in plastic bags. If stored in an airtight container, they should keep for up to a year. Before using, soak the fungus in warm water for at least fifteen minutes. It will puff up to several times its normal size. Then, rinse the fungus and trim the stem where it was attached to the wood of the tree (cloud ears grow on trees such as the mango and kapok). Once the cloud ears have been cut up into an appropriate shape and size, add them to a dish near the end of stir-frying, so that they do not lose their crunchy texture.

Clove - Cloves are nail-shaped dried flower buds that have a sweet, penetrating flavor. They can be ground and used to flavor baked goods or sauces, or left whole and poked into roasted hams or pork. Use cloves sparingly--a little goes a long way.



Clove

Substitutes: [Allspice](#) (as a substitute for ground cloves)

Clove Pepper - See [Allspice](#).

Coconut, grated - Bags of grated coconuts are usually stored among the baking supplies in larger markets. Varieties include dried or desiccated coconut, flaked, angel flake, moist, sweetened and unsweetened, toasted and untoasted, and macaroon coconut.



Coconut, grated

To make your own: To grate, peel off the brown skin, then grate the white flesh with a grater, food processor, or vegetable peeler. To toast, spread unsweetened grated coconut on a baking sheet and bake in a 350°F oven until coconut is golden (about 5 minutes).

Substitutes: Chopped nuts

Comino - See [Cumin](#).

Conch - Also called Lambi and Lambie. This is popular in Florida and the Caribbean. In other regions, your best bet is to look in Asian or Italian markets.

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Conch

Substitutes: Whelk OR clams (stronger flavor, firmer texture) OR abalone (more expensive)

Converted Rice - Also called Parboiled Rice. This is a good compromise between nutritious brown rice and tender, fast-cooking white rice. Converted rice is steamed before it's husked, a process that causes the grains to absorb many of the nutrients from the husk. When cooked, the grains are more nutritious, firmer, and less clingy than white rice grains. Uncle Ben's is a well-known brand.



Converted Rice

Substitutes: Brown rice (more nutritious, takes longer to cook) OR white rice (less nutritious, stickier, takes less time to cook)

Coriander Leaf - See [Cilantro](#).

Coriander Seeds - Coriander seeds are a common ingredient in the cuisines of India, the Middle East, Latin America, North Africa, and Southeast Asia. The popular herb cilantro comes from the same plant, but it's not a good substitute for the seeds. You can buy the seeds

already ground, but for better flavor and shelf life, buy coriander seeds and grind them yourself. To enhance the flavor, toast the seeds in a pan for a few minutes first.



Coriander Seeds

Substitutes: Caraway seeds OR cumin

Cornflour - See [Cornstarch](#) below.

Cornstarch - Also called cornflour or corn flour. A powdery "flour," nearly all starch that is obtained from the endosperm of corn. Mixed with water to form a paste, it is often added to stir-fries as a thickening agent - near the final stages, as overcooked cornstarch loses its power as a thickener. If necessary, cornstarch can be used as a substitute for tapioca starch.
[Buy cornstarch](#)

Cornstarch Noodles - Also called Pancit Luglug (Tagalog) and Pancit Lug-Lug (Tagalog). These Filipino noodles are made with cornstarch. Before using, soak them in hot water until they're soft.



Cornstarch Noodles

Substitutes: [Bean Threads](#)

Country Ham - Also called Dry-Cured Ham. These are made by rubbing salt over a fresh ham and then hanging it out to dry. They're often smoked as well. They tend to be salty, but gourmets often prefer them over city hams. You cook them either by simmering them in water or frying them. Some people soak them in water first to leech out some of the salt. Mold often forms on country hams, but it's harmless and should simply be scrubbed off. Country hams are common in the Southeast; elsewhere you can get them by mail order, or at Chinese markets. Varieties include Virginia ham and Smithfield ham.



Country Ham

Substitutes: Prosciutto

Crab - A Kind of seafood. There are many varieties: [Blue Crab](#), [Dungeness Crab](#), [Jonah Crab](#), [King Crab](#), [Peekytoe Crab](#), [Snow Crab](#) and [Stone Crab](#).



Crab

Substitutes: Monkfish OR scallops OR shrimp (firmer texture) OR lobster (firmer texture) OR imitation seafood (less expensive) OR cod OR sole OR flounder

Storage: Eat fresh crab the day you buy it. Unopened canned crab can be stored for up to a year in a dry, cool place. Once opened, it will keep for up to two days if you wrap it well and refrigerate it.

Crab Cake



Crab Cake

Crab Sticks - Also called Surimi, Imitation Seafood and Sea Legs. This is not real crab meat.



Crab Sticks

Substitutes: Crab (tastier, more expensive)

Craisins - See [Cranberries, dried](#).

Cranberries, dried - With their flashy color and tangy flavor, dried cranberries are a good alternative to raisins in many recipes. [Craisins](#) is a well-known brand.



Cranberries, dried

Substitutes: Raisins (not as tart) OR dried cherries OR currants

Crawdad - See [Crayfish](#).

Crawfish - See [Crayfish](#).

Crayfish - Also called Crawfish, Crawdad and Ecrevisse. Crayfish are very popular in Louisiana, where restaurants serve them on large platters along with bowls of melted butter. Buy live ones if you can; if not, large supermarkets sometimes stock frozen whole crayfish or crayfish tails. Get the whole crayfish if possible--most of the flavor resides in the shells. Allow one to two pounds per person.



Crayfish

Substitutes: Rock shrimp OR Dublin Bay prawns (larger) OR shrimp OR spiny lobster OR lobster OR walleye pike OR sheepshead OR crab

Equivalents: Six pounds live crayfish = one pound peeled tails; 15 large crayfish = one pound.

Crispy Chow Mein Noodles - Also called Crunchy Chow Mein Noodles, Fried Chow Mein Noodles. These fried noodles add crunch to Chinese chicken salad. They're also used, improbably enough, to make chocolate haystack cookies. Don't confuse this with Chinese wheat noodles, which are also sometimes called chow mein noodles.



Substitutes: rice vermicelli (Deep fry these until crunchy. These are often used in Chinese chicken salad.) OR Cook spaghetti, then deep-fry a few noodles at a time until golden.

Culantrillo - See [Cilantro](#).

Cumin - Also called Comino, Cummin and Jeera. Cumin is a key ingredient in Southwestern chili recipes, but it's also widely used in Latin America, North Africa, and India. Freshly roasted and ground cumin seeds are far superior to packaged ground cumin.



Cumin

Substitutes: Caraway seeds (use half as much) OR black cumin seeds (smaller and sweeter) OR caraway seeds + anise seeds OR chili powder

Equivalents: 1 oz. = 4 tablespoons ground = 4 1/2 tablespoons whole seed.

Cummin - See [Cumin](#).

Currant - These berries are too tart for most people to eat out of hand, but they make terrific preserves and garnishes. They come in three colors: [red](#), [white](#), and [black](#). If color's not important, you can use them interchangeably in most recipes, though red and white currants aren't as tart as black. Don't confuse these berries with the dried fruit of the same name that looks like a small raisin. You can sometimes find fresh currants in specialty produce markets in the summer. If not, frozen currants are a good substitute.



Currant

Substitutes: Gooseberries OR raspberries

Currants - Also called Zante Currants, Zante Raisins and Dried Corinth Grapes. These dried Zante grapes look like tiny raisins. Don't confuse them with the fresh sour berry that also called a [currant](#).



Currants

Substitutes: Raisins (larger) OR golden raisins (for baking)

Cuttlefish - Also called Sepia. This is a close relative of squid and octopus. You can sometimes find dried cuttlefish in Asian markets.

Substitutes: [Squid](#) (smaller and less tender, but otherwise a fairly close substitute) OR baby octopus OR octopus (A large octopus is much tougher than a cuttlefish, and needs to be tenderized before you cook it. Simmer it in salted water for 20 minutes before adding it to stews, soups, or sauces. Before sautéing or grilling it, remove the suckers and ends of the legs and beat it with a mallet--or against some rocks, as they do in Greece.)

D

Daikon - See [Chinese White Radish](#)

Date, dried - If you plan to chop them, look for cooking dates, date pieces, or pressed dates--they're a lot cheaper than the exquisite dessert dates that are intended to be eaten whole.



Date, dried

Substitutes: Dried figs OR raisins OR fresh dates (crunchier and not as sweet).

Deep-fried Tofu - Also called Deep-fat Fried tofu and Fried Bean Curd. Frying tofu makes it a chewier and tastier. Both the Japanese and Chinese have their own ready-made versions of deep-fried tofu, and you can find them in cellophane bags and cans in Asian markets. You can also make deep-fried tofu yourself by frying thin slabs of firm tofu in hot oil.



Deep-fried Tofu

Deep-frying - Deep-frying, in which the food is completely covered in hot oil and cooked, is an important Chinese cooking technique along with [stir-frying](#) and steaming. The objective is to brown the outside of the food, but not so fast that the inside is not thoroughly cooked. A wok is

normally used for deep-frying Chinese food, although if you prefer you can use a deep-fat fryer instead. Kung Pao Chicken, a popular restaurant specialty made with diced chicken, peanuts, and red chili peppers, is a deep-fried dish.

Dong Gwa - See Winter Melon

Dried Bean Curd Sticks - Made from soy beans and water, bean curd sticks resemble long yellowish colored icicles. They feel like thin plastic and break apart quite easily. Stored in a cool, dry place, they will keep for months. Most books call for dried bean curd sticks to be soaked overnight in cold water before use, but breaking them up and boiling them for 20 minutes or soaking in warm water for 1 - 2 hours works also.

Dried Chestnuts - Soak overnight in cold water then simmer in fresh water for 20 minutes or add to the dish you are preparing and simmer.

Dried Lily Buds - Also known as golden needles and tiger lilies, dried lily buds are the unopened flowers of day lilies. The lily, *Hemerocallis* to use its scientific name, has been used in China as both a food and medicine for over 2,000 years. Dried lily buds are yellow-gold in color, with a musky or earthy taste. Two dishes featuring lily buds are Muxi Pork, a stir-fried dish, and Hot and Sour Soup.

When purchasing lily buds, look for ones that are pale in color, and not brittle. At home, store them in a jar in a cool and dry place. Before using, you may need to cut off about a quarter inch at the bottom to get rid of the woody stem. Like many other "woody" Chinese vegetables, lily buds must be soaked in warm water (in this case for about thirty minutes) before use. They can then be left whole or cut in half crosswise as called for in the recipe. Or, for better flavor, try tying them in a knot.

Dried Mushrooms - Widely used for their flavor and aroma. Soak them in warm water for 20 minutes before using. [Buy dried mushroom](#).

Dried Seaweed - Sold in wads. When deep-fried in oil it becomes crisp and has a toasted fragrance.

Dried Shrimps - Widely used to flavor savory dishes. Soak in warm water for 30 minutes before use.

Dried Squid - Tastes quite different from fresh squid and is regarded highly as a delicacy. Used to give extra flavor to dishes. Soak before use in a solution of bicarbonate of soda, to soften it.

Dried Szechuan Chilies - Small, reddish-brown and sizzling. Use in stir fries to flavor the oil for dishes like Kung Pao Chicken. Grind or crush to add sizzle where needed.

Dried Tangerine Peel - Dried tangerine peel has been a popular ingredient in Chinese cooking for hundreds of years - chicken with orange peel is a popular Szechuan dish. You can use dried tangerine peel in braised dishes, stews, and soups. Unfortunately, it is rather expensive, but you can also make your own - just leave the tangerine peel to dry naturally, and then store it in an airtight container for several months. One note: there is some disagreement over whether or not you should remove the white pith. While it has a bitter taste it does contain healthy bio-flavonoids. Tangerine peel purchased from an Asian grocer should also be stored in an airtight container.

Before using, soak the tangerine peel in warm water to soften it. You can leave the peel whole, tear it into smaller pieces, or cut up as desired. It is thought to be good for improving digestion and treating infections. The peel of unripe, green tangerines is also used by herbalists to treat stomach and liver problems.

Dry-Cured Ham - See [Country Ham](#).

Dry Sherry - Traditional fortified wine. Largely used in cooking, marinating and its sweet version is used in making desserts.

Dublin Bay Prawn - Also called Dublin prawn, Norway Lobster, Langoustine and Scampi.



Dublin Bay Prawn

Substitutes: Spiny lobster (larger) OR lobster (larger) OR crayfish (smaller) OR large shrimp

Dumpling Wrappers - Also called Dumpling Skins, Shao Mai Skins, Shu Mai Skins, Siu Mai Skins, Su My Wrappers and Shiu Mai Wrappers. These thin round wrappers are used to make the delicate dumplings that are so popular at dim sum restaurants. They're made to be stuffed and steamed, but they're not sturdy enough to be fried. While assembling the dumplings, keep the stack of wrappers moist by covering them with a damp towel. You can seal the dumplings with a "glue" made with cornstarch and water. Look for fresh or frozen wrappers in Asian markets. Store them in the refrigerator or freezer, but let them come to room temperature before using.



Dumpling Wrappers

Substitutes: Wonton skins (These are thicker. Trim off square corners before using.) OR egg roll wrappers (These are thicker. Cut into quarters and trim off square corners before using.) OR pasta sheet

Dungeness Crab - Found on the Pacific coast, the Dungeness is a large crab highly prized for its sweet meat.



Dungeness Crab

E

Egg Noodles - Made from wheat flour and eggs, can be round, like spaghetti, or flat ribbons. They can be bought fresh or dried in Chinese supermarkets. Italian pasta can be used as a substitute. Fresh noodles need a very short cooking time -- 3-4 minutes.

Eggplant - While there are many varieties grown in Asian, the term Chinese eggplant refers to the narrow, purple variety that can be streaked with white (it looks somewhat like a purple zucchini). Interestingly, Asian recipes don't normally call for eggplant to be salted and degorged, as is the custom in western and European cooking.

Egg Roll Wrappers - Also called Egg Roll Skins, Eggroll Wrappers and Eggroll Skins. The Chinese use these dough squares to make deep-fried egg rolls. While assembling the egg rolls, keep the stack of wrappers moist by covering them with a damp towel. You can seal the rolls with a "glue" made with cornstarch and water. Look for fresh wrappers in Asian markets and many supermarkets. Store them in the refrigerator or freezer, but let them come to room temperature before using.



Egg Roll Wrappers

Substitutes: Rice paper (larger and thinner; yields a crispier roll) OR phyllo (Bake the eggroll instead of frying it.) OR pasta sheet

E-Fu Noodles - Also called Yee-Fu Noodles, Yi Noodles, Yifu Noodles, Yi Mien (Chinese name). These are flat Chinese egg noodles that are formed into round 8"-diameter patties, fried and then dried. Before using, cook them in boiling water briefly, then drain. The noodles can then be added to stir-fries, soups, or salads.



Substitutes: pancit Canton OR Chinese egg noodles OR Chinese wheat noodles

Empanada Wrappers - Hispanic cooks wrap these six-inch diameter rounds of dough around sweet or savory fillings, and then bake or fry them. Look for them among the frozen foods in Hispanic markets.



Empanada Wrappers

Substitutes: Wonton wrappers OR pasta sheet

Emu - Emus are Australia's answer to the ostrich. Like ostriches, they're low in fat and taste like beef.



Emu

Substitutes: Ostrich OR rhea OR beef (similar texture, beef is higher in fat) OR chicken OR turkey

Extra-firm Tofu - This isn't as moist as firm tofu, so it holds its shape better and absorb more flavors. Store tofu in the refrigerator, changing the water daily, and use it within a week. Freezing it will make it chewier and give it a meatier texture. Look for cakes of it in plastic tubs in the refrigerated sections of supermarkets and health food stores.



Extra-firm Tofu

Substitutes: Firm tofu (Before using, wrap it in cheesecloth and put a weight on it to press out some of the liquid) OR pressed tofu OR atsUAGE

F

Fennel Seed - Aromatic anis-scented seeds. Fennel seed is the dried fruit of the *Foeniculum vulgare*, which has numerous variants. The vegetable called fennel, or finocchio, comes from the plant known as Florence fennel, which develops bulbous stalks that are eaten like celery. There also is a bitter fennel, the seeds of which sometimes are used in liqueurs. However, the spice fennel seed comes from sweet, or garden, fennel, and is identified easily by its anise-like flavor and aroma. [Buy fennel seed](#)



Fennel Seed

Fermented Bean Curd - Also called Fermented Bean Cake, Preserved Bean Curd, Wet Bean Curd, Bean Cheese, Fu Yu, Foo Yi, Foo Yu and Fu Ru. This looks innocent enough, like cubes of tofu immersed in a broth, but it has a very pungent aroma and strong, cheesy flavor. It comes in two colors. The white version is often served with rice or used to flavor soups and vegetable dishes, while the red often accompanies meats. Look for it in jars or crocks in Asian markets. Store it in the refrigerator after you've opened it, keeping the cubes immersed in liquid or oil to prevent them from drying out and discoloring.



Fermented Bean Curd

Firm Tofu - Choose this style of tofu if you want to cut it into cubes for stir-frying or crumble it into salads. Rinse and drain the tofu before you use it. Tofu will absorb more flavors and hold its shape better if you press out some of the water before marinating or cooking it. To do so, place the tofu on several layers of paper towels or cheesecloth, cover it with plastic wrap, and put something heavy on it. Do this for at least an hour, or put the whole assembly in a pan and set it in the refrigerator overnight. Store tofu in the refrigerator, changing the water daily, and use it within a week. Freezing firm tofu will make it chewier and give it a meatier texture. Look for cakes of it in plastic tubs in the refrigerated sections of supermarkets and health food stores.



Firm Tofu

Substitutes: Extra-firm tofu OR regular tofu OR pressed tofu OR atsu-age OR paneer OR meat (in stir fries) OR feta cheese (in salads).

Fish Maw - Comes from the shark. Dried, it looks like a small yellow sponge, and has to be soaked for 2 hours before use.

Fish Sauce - Fish sauce is a thin, salty liquid that is used in place of salt as a seasoning in many Asian recipes. Although associated primarily with Vietnamese and Thai cuisine, it is also used in parts of southern China and occasionally in Cantonese cooking. Made from salted fish, it is rich in Vitamin B and protein.

Fish sauce is used both in cooking and as a dipping sauce. Depending on where it was made, you'll find it sold under a number of names. Chinese brands are often labeled "fish gravy" or "fish sauce," while it is called "nuoc mam" in Vietnam and "nam pla" in Thailand. However, they are all basically the same product, although the Thai and Vietnamese brands are considered superior. Fish sauce can be stored indefinitely without refrigeration in a dry place.

Five Spice Powder - A common ingredient in Chinese cooking, this delicious mixture of five ground spices usually consists of equal parts of cinnamon, cloves, fennel seed, star anise and Szechwan peppercorns. Prepackaged five-spice powder is available in Asian markets and most supermarkets. [Buy five spice powder.](#)

Flowering Cabbage - See [Flowering Kale.](#)

Flowering Cole - See [Flowering Kale.](#)

Flowering Kale - Also called Ornamental Kale, Flowering Cabbage, and Flowering Cole. This is a beautiful cabbage used more often as a garnish than as a vegetable.



Flowering Kale

Substitutes: Kale (tastier, but not as pretty) OR collard greens (tastier, but not as pretty)

Flower Pepper - See [Szechwan Peppercorn](#).

Foo Gwa - See [Bitter Melon](#)

Frog - The French love frog's legs, but it's hard for some of us to get past the eerie resemblance between a frog's anatomy and our own. Fresh frog's legs are easy to find in Chinese markets, but they only show up sporadically in other markets. If you can't find them fresh, frozen frog's legs are an acceptable substitute.



Frog

Substitutes: Scallops OR white chicken meat

Equivalents: 4 pairs = 1 pound

Fuzzy Melon - Also called Hairy Cucumber, Hairy Melon, Moqua and Mu Gua (Chinese name). Not to be confused with the drink, fuzzy melon or mo gwa looks like a zucchini covered with fuzz. However, while zucchini is a type of squash, fuzzy melon is a gourd, related to winter melon. Fuzzy melon is used in a number of dishes such as soups and stir-fries. It can also be filled and steamed. Peel off the skin or scrub well to remove the "fuzz" before using.

Substitutes: Zucchini

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Fuzzy Melon

G

Gai Choy - Also called Kai choy. Asian cooks like to pickle this, or else use it in soups or stir-fries. If you find gai choy too pungent to stir-fry, blanch it first in salted water.



Gai Choy

Substitutes: Mustard greens (more pungent) OR broccoli raab.

Gai Lan - See [Chinese Broccoli](#).

Gai Lum - See [Chinese Broccoli](#).

Garlic - The pungent aroma of fresh garlic - *Allium Sativum* to use its scientific name - probably comes second only to [ginger](#) in its importance to Chinese cooking. Used in China since ancient times, it is particularly important to northern Chinese cooking, where harsh winters and a short growing season mean residents rely on members of the onion family (such as garlic and spring onions) to season their food. However, you'll also find garlic used in highly spiced Szechuan dishes and in Cantonese cuisine. In addition, along with [ginger](#), it's regularly used to flavor oil before frying.

Garlic has long claimed our fascination. Ancient cultures valued its medicinal qualities; the Egyptians fed the slaves garlic to give them enough energy to continue building the pyramids. Despite the smell, garlic was reputed to be an aphrodisiac. Interestingly, despite its widespread use in China, ancient Buddhist doctrine forbids the eating of garlic. Along with leeks, it is one of the five strong-flavored foods that Buddhists must avoid, or else "in their present life they will find foul sores breaking out on their bodies, and in the next life they will fall into the hell of incessant suffering".

When shopping for garlic, look for firm bulbs without any dampness and no dark or broken spots on the skin. Store in a cool, dry place (not the refrigerator). When it comes time to cook, use the side of a knife or cleaver to smash the garlic - this will make it easier to peel.

Geoduck Clam - Also called Goeyduck Clam.



Geoduck Clam

Substitutes: Other large clam OR abalone

Ginger - The roots of the ginger plant, or *Zingiber officinale* to use its scientific name, are an indispensable ingredient in both Chinese and Indian cuisine. Thought to have originated in South-east Asia, the plant's name, "zingiber" means horn-shaped, after the irregular shapes on the rhizomes or roots. Valued for its clean, sharp flavor, ginger is used in soups, stir-fries, and marinades. It is especially good with seafood, as it can cover up strong fish odors.

When purchasing ginger, look for a firm, smooth body and a nice tan color, without any darkening or wrinkled skin. At home, wrap the ginger in a paper towel and store it in a plastic bag in the vegetable crisper section of the refrigerator. If a portion becomes discolored, simply slice that part off. It should keep for several weeks. A more long-term storage method is to peel, slice, and then store the ginger in a sealed glass jar filled with rice wine or dry sherry in the refrigerator. It will last for up to a year. [Buy Ginger](#)

Ginger Root - Sold by weight. It should be peeled and finely sliced or chopped before use. See [Ginger](#).

Ginseng - Sweet licorice-flavored Chinese root with medicinal properties.

Glass Noodles - Long, thin and brittle noodles which are usually soaked in hot water for about 20 minutes and drained before using.

Glutinous Rice - Also called Sticky Rice, Sushi Rice, Sweet Rice, Chinese Sweet Rice, Waxy Rice, Botan Rice, Mochi Rice, Japanese Rice and Pearl Rice. Despite its name, this rice isn't sweet and it doesn't contain gluten. Instead, it's very sticky, short-grain rice that is widely used by Asians, who use it to make sushi and various desserts. You can buy this as either white or black (actually a rust color) rice.



Glutinous Rice

Substitutes: Risotto rice (works well in sushi) OR short-grain rice (This also works well in sushi, as long as you use white rice. Brown short-grain rice doesn't stick together as well.) OR medium-grain rice (Also good for sushi)

Equivalents: One cup dried rice yields two cups cooked rice.

Goat - Goat meat is widely consumed in North Africa and the Middle East, but many Americans have never tasted it. It's quite lean, and if cooked correctly, it can be surprisingly good. As with sheep, the best meat comes from a young animal, or a baby goat (also called capretto and cabrito). Meat from older goats is tougher, like mutton.



Goat

Substitutes: Lamb OR beef brisket

Golden Needles - Also called tiger lily buds. They have a musky, slightly acrid flavor. Soak for 30 minutes in hot water before use.

Golden Raisin - Also called Sultana. These are tarter than ordinary raisins.



Golden Raisin

Substitutes: Raisins (Ordinary raisins are darker, but very similar to golden raisins.) OR muscat raisins (These are larger and sweeter than golden raisins.) OR currants (smaller) OR dried apricots.

Granulated Sugar - Also called Sugar, White Sugar, Sucrose, Refined Sugar and Table Sugar.



Granulated Sugar

Equivalents: 1 pound = 2 1/3 Cups

Green Bean - Also called String Bean and Snap Bean. These are meant to be cooked and eaten, pods and all. They're best if they're steamed or stir-fried just until they're tender but still crisp. Select bright green beans that snap when broken in half. Their peak season is in the summer.



Green Bean

Substitutes: Wax bean (different color; wax bean is yellow) OR Italian flat bean (fatter pods, excellent flavor) OR dragon tongue bean OR winged bean (less flavorful).

Equivalents: One pound = 3 to 3.5 cups

Green Cabbage - Cabbage is quite versatile. You can cut it into chunks, boil it, and serve it with corned beef or other fatty meats. You can also use cooked leaves as wrappers for meat fillings, or shred raw ones for cole slaw. Select heavy heads of cabbage that have shiny leaves.



Green Cabbage

Substitutes: Red cabbage (This can discolor other foods if combined with them in a salad or cooked with them, but it tastes just like green cabbage.) OR [napa cabbage](#) (milder flavor and more delicate texture) OR savoy cabbage (great in slaws).

Equivalents: One head yields about 8 cups shredded cabbage.

Green Mussel - Also called Green Shell Mussel, New Zealand Green Mussel, Greenshell Mussel and Greenlipped Mussel.



Green Mussel

Green Onion - Also called Scallion, Bunching Onion, Shallot (in Australia), Spring Onion (in Britain), Chinese Onion, Stone Leek and Cibol. A green onion is an immature onion with a white base (not yet a bulb) and long green leaves. Both parts of the scallion are edible. Available in Asian market.



Green Onion

Substitutes: Spring onions OR leeks OR shallots OR chives (if used raw)

Equivalents: 1 bunch = 1/4 pound = 1/2 cup sliced

Green Pepper - Also called Green Peppercorns



Green Pepper

Substitutes: Pink peppercorns OR (as a substitute for brine-cured green peppercorns) capers

Grill - A dry-heat method where food is cooked directly over hot coals.

Groundnut Oil - Peanut oil. (Groundnut is another word for peanut).

H

Hair Seaweed - Fine black dried seaweed. A traditional ingredient of some vegetarian Buddhist dishes. It should be soaked for at least 20 minutes before use.

Hair Vegetable - Also called Black Moss, Hair Seaweed, Hair-Like Vegetable and Fat Choy. The Chinese add this to soups and use it as a garnish. Look for it in Chinese markets and pharmacies.



Hair Vegetable

Hairy Cucumber - See [Fuzzy Melon](#).

Hairy Melon - See [Fuzzy Melon](#).

Hakusai - See [Napa Cabbage](#).

Hard-Shell Clam - Also called Hardshell Clams. Littleneck Clams are smaller than Cherrystone Clams which are smaller than Quahog Clams (also called Quahaug Clams and Chowder Clams) which are smaller than Ocean Quahog Clams (also Ocean Quahaug Clams, Mahogany Clams and Black Clams).



Hard-Shell Clam

Substitutes: Bar clams OR soft-shell clams

Haricot Verts - Also called French Bean, French Green Bean and French Filet Bean. This is a very thin variety of green bean that's crisp, tender, and expensive. Don't confuse this with the haricot bean, which is a dry bean.



Haricot Verts

Substitutes: Green beans (as thin as possible; consider cutting thicker green beans in half lengthwise)

Hen Clam - See [Bar Clam](#).

Hoisin Sauce - A thick sauce valued for its unique combination of sweet and spicy flavors, hoisin sauce is made from soybean paste and flavored with garlic, sugar, chillies, and other spices and ingredients. It is used in cooking, as a dipping sauce, and is a key ingredient in many Chinese barbecue sauce recipes. In addition, it is also used to glaze roasted meat. Hoisin sauce is available in both jars and cans. If purchased in a can, transfer to a closed container and refrigerate. If purchased in a jar, refrigerate after opening. [Buy Hoisin Sauce](#)

Hong Kong Noodles - These egg and wheat-flour noodles are used to make chow mein. Cook them first in boiling water, drain, and then fry.



Substitutes: Chow mein noodles

Hot Bean Sauce - Add to any recipe that yearns for extra zip. Made from Soy and Kidney Beans, fresh Szechuan Chillies, Sesame Oil and seasonings, this spicy condiment offers a delightfully complex flavor. Our brand has the best balance of flavors of any SM has tried. Any

unused portion of this or any of the other sauces can be kept in a jar in the refrigerator for several months.

Hot Chili Oil - Also called Chili Oil. Chinese cooks sometimes add a drop or so of this to dishes in order to heat them up. Look for small bottles of this in Asian markets and large supermarkets.



Hot Chili Oil

Substitutes: Sesame chili oil OR 2 parts salad oil + 1 part cayenne pepper

Hot Mustard - A popular condiment served with Chinese appetizers; you'll also often find it added to sauces in Japanese dishes. It is made by mixing dry mustard powder with water, causing a chemical reaction that produces a sharp, hot taste. Some recipes call for the addition of cooking or vegetable oil, which reduces the effect somewhat. Sesame oil and rice vinegar may also be added.

Hot Pepper Oil - Bits of fiery hot chilies in vegetable oil used with abandon in many regions of China. Serve at the table to add life to any dish. Very hot.



Imitation Seafood - See [Crab Sticks](#).

Indian Bitter Melon



Indian bitter melon

Indian Nut - See [Pine Nut](#).

Instant Rice - Also called Precooked Rice. This is white rice that's been precooked and dehydrated so that it cooks quickly. It's relatively expensive, though, and you sacrifice both flavor and texture. White instant rice cooks in about five minutes, brown in about ten. Minute Rice is a well-known brand.



Instant Rice

Substitutes: Long-grain rice (less expensive, more nutritious, takes longer to cook)

Italian Flat Bean - Also called Romano Bean and Runner Bean. These green or yellow beans are like ordinary green beans, but they're flatter. Select small, brightly colored beans that snap when you break them in half.



Italian Flat Bean

Substitutes: Green bean (Green beans have a rounder pod than Italian flat beans, but they can be used interchangeably in most recipes.)

J

Japanese Eggplant - Also called Like other Asian eggplants, Japanese eggplants have thin skins, and a sweet, delicate flavor.



Japanese Eggplant

Substitutes: Chinese eggplant (This is similar, but it's quite as bitter as the Japanese eggplant.)
OR small Italian eggplant.

Japanese Pepper - See [Szechwan Peppercorn](#).

Jasmine Rice - Also called Thai Basmati Rice = Thai Jasmine Rice. Jasmine rice is a long-grain rice produced in Thailand that's sometimes used as a cheap substitute for basmati rice. It has a subtle floral aroma. It's sold as both a brown and white rice.



Jasmine Rice

Substitutes: Basmati rice (Basmati rice has a longer grain, isn't as sticky, and takes slightly longer to cook.) OR popcorn rice OR patna rice OR other long-grain rice

Equivalents: One cup dried rice yields three cups cooked rice.

Jerusalem Artichoke - Also called Sunchoke, Sunroot, Topinambour and Girasole. These look like small, knobby potatoes, but they have a crisp texture and an interesting earthy flavor. You can eat them raw, stir-fry them, or bake them like potatoes. It's best not to peel them, but
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you'll want to scrub off the dirt. If you slice them, dunk them immediately in acidulated water to keep them from discoloring.



Jerusalem Artichoke

Substitutes: Artichoke hearts (Artichoke hearts are less crunchy, but their flavor is somewhat similar flavor to Jerusalem artichokes.) OR potatoes (This is a good substitute if the recipe calls for the Jerusalem artichokes to be baked.) OR water chestnuts (These have a similar texture to Jerusalem artichokes.) OR jicama (This is less expensive than Jerusalem artichokes. The texture is similar, but the flavor is completely different.)

Equivalents: One cup sliced = 150 grams

Jicama - Also called Yam Bean, Mexican Yam Bean, Ahipa, Saa Got, Chinese Potato (this name also is used for [Arrow Root](#)), Mexican Potato and Chinese Turnip (this name also is used for [Lo Bok](#)). Pronunciation: HIH-kuh-ma. This tan-skinned tuber has a mild, nondescript flavor, but a nice crunchy texture. It's a good, cheap substitute for water chestnuts in stir-fries. Since it doesn't discolor, it's also a great vegetable to serve raw on a crudit platter. Peel it before using.



Jicama

Substitutes: Water chestnuts (These are more expensive and sweeter than jicama. Like jicama, water chestnuts retain their crispiness when stir-fried.) OR Jerusalem artichoke (Like jicama, these can be eaten raw and they stay crunchy even when stir-fried. They're more expensive than jicama, but they have an earthier, nuttier flavor.) OR tart apples OR turnips OR daikon radish

Equivalents: One jicama, cubed = 2 cups

Jonah Crab - These are found in the coastal waters of New England.



Jonah Crab

Julienne - This is a type of cut, where the ingredient to be julienned is cut into very thin, "matchstick" strips usually 2 - 3 inches long, and about 1/8 inch thick. Recipes may call for the ingredient to be julienned or into matchsticks.

K

Kai Lan - See [Chinese Broccoli](#).

Kecap Manis - Kecap manis is a sweetish, thick soy sauce made with palm sugar and seasoned with star anise and garlic. A popular tool of Indonesian cooks, it can be used as a dip, and some people like to substitute it for dark soy sauce in recipes.

Khuen Chai - See [Chinese Celery](#).

Kinchay - See [Chinese Celery](#).

King Crab - Also called Alaskan King Crab, Japanese King Crab, Russian Crab and Red King Crab. These have long, spindly legs and are found off the coast of Alaska and Japan.



King Crab

Kohlrabi - Also called Cabbage Turnip, Stem Cabbage and Turnip Cabbage. A kohlrabi resembles a turnip, only it's sweeter and more delicately flavored. It's light green and sometimes sold with its edible greens attached. It can be eaten raw or cooked. Choose small ones, and peel before using.



Kohlrabi

Substitutes: Broccoli stems OR celeriac (especially in remoulades) OR turnips OR parsnips.

Koyendoro - See [Cilantro](#).

L

Laichee - See [Litchi](#).

Lambi - See [Conch](#).

Lambie - See [Conch](#).

Langouste - See [Spiny Lobster](#).

Langoustine - See [Spiny Lobster](#).

Leechee - See [Litchi](#).

Leechee Nut - See [Lychee Nut](#).

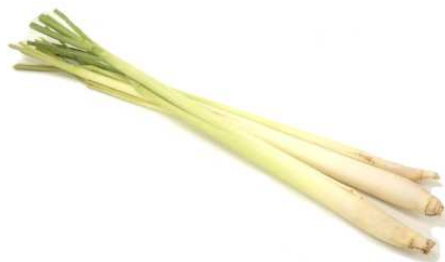
Leek - Leeks look like large green onions, and they have a more complex onion flavor. They're often cooked as a vegetable side dish, or used in soups. Be sure to wash them thoroughly before cooking as the leaves are notorious for collecting dirt.



Leek

Substitutes: Yellow onion OR asparagus (as a side vegetable) OR ramps

Lemon Grass - Also called Lemongrass, Citronella, Fever Grass, Serai, Sereh and Takrai. Thai cooks use these grayish green stalks to impart a lemony flavor to their dishes. Remove the outer leaves, then use about six inches of the base, discarding the top and the very bottom. It's best to cut lemongrass into large pieces that can be easily removed after the dish is cooked. Frozen lemongrass is a good substitute for fresh, but dried lemongrass (soaked in hot water) is only a fair substitute. Use powdered version (called sereh powder) only in a pinch.



Lemon Grass

Substitutes: Lemon zest (zest from 1 lemon = 2 stalks lemon grass) OR lemon verbena OR lemon balm OR lemon leaves

Equivalents: 1 small, trimmed stalk = 1 teaspoon sereh powder = 1 tablespoon dried lemon grass

Lemon Rind - Lemon peels with the inner white membrane removed can be used, grated or julienned, to garnish dishes both sweet and savoury.

Lettuce - There are three varieties of lettuce - crisp-head, romaine butter-head or cabbage. All are mainly used raw and in salads.

Lichee Nut - See [Lychee Nut](#).

Lichi - See [Litchi](#).

Lichi Nut - See [Lychee Nut](#).

Litchi - Also called Lychee, Lichee, Lichi, Leechee and Laichee. This popular Chinese fruit is about the size of a walnut, with a bumpy red shell encasing white translucent pulp that's similar in texture to a grape. The flavor is sweet, exotic, and very juicy. Don't eat the shell or the seed. Fresh litchis are available from May to July. If you can't find them, canned litchis are a good substitute. Don't confuse fresh litchis with [litchi nuts](#), which are sun-dried litchis that have a much different texture.



Litchi

Substitutes: Rambutans (slightly larger) OR longans (smaller and sweeter, but not as juicy) OR grapes

Litchi Nut - See [Lychee Nut](#).

Littleneck Clams - See [Hard-Shell Clam](#).

Lo Bak - See [Chinese White Radish](#).

Lobster - A kind of seafood.



Lobster

Substitutes: Spiny lobster (no claws, otherwise very similar) OR Dublin Bay prawns OR large shrimp OR crab (more delicate texture) OR monkfish (firmer texture) OR sheepshead OR walleye pike

Loco - See [Abalone](#).

Lo Mein - In this dish, boiled and drained noodles are added to the other ingredients and stir-fried briefly during the final stages of cooking. This gives the noodles more flavor than is the case with chow mein, where the meat and vegetables are served over noodles that have been cooked separately. Italian pastas such as fettucine work well in lo mein recipes.

Lo Mein Noodles - Also called Cantonese noodles. These popular Chinese egg noodles are often used to make lo mein, in which the noodles are stir-fried along with the other ingredients. They come in various sizes; use the flat ones for stir-fries and the round ones for soups. They're available fresh, dried, and frozen in Asian markets.



Lo Mein Noodles

Substitutes: Chinese egg noodles OR fettuccine OR Chinese wheat noodles

Longan - Also called Lungan and Dragon's Eyes. Longans are very similar to [litchis](#) and rambutans. You can buy them fresh (in the summer), dried or canned.



Longan

Substitutes: [Litchis](#) (larger and juicier, but not as sweet) OR rambutans

Long Bean - See [Chinese Long Bean](#).

Long-Grain Rice - Long-grain rice has slender grains that stay separate and fluffy after cooking, so this is the best choice if you want to serve rice as a side dish, or as a bed for sauces. American long-grain rice (which includes Carolina rice) has a somewhat bland flavor, and is what cookbooks usually have in mind when they call for long-grain rice. Patna rice is a mild rice grown in India. [Basmati rice](#), another Indian import, has a nutty taste and goes well with many Indian and Middle Eastern dishes. [Jasmine rice](#) is also aromatic, and usually less expensive than Basmati. It often accompanies Thai and Vietnamese dishes. Americans have crossed Basmati with American long-grain rice to get [popcorn rice](#), which is milder and less

expensive than basmati. Another hybrid is wild pecan rice, which retain most of the bran for a nutty, chewy flavor.



Long-Grain Rice

Substitutes: Medium-grain rice (less fluffy, stickier)

Lop Cheong - See Chinese sausages.

Lotus Leaves - These leaves open up like butterfly wings, each about two feet high. They're often wrapped around rice and other fillings, to which they impart an earthy aroma when the bundles are steamed. The leaves are available either fresh or, more commonly, dried in Asian markets. Soak them for at least an hour in warm water before using, and keep fresh leaves in a cool, dry place or else freeze them.



Lotus Leaves

Substitutes: Banana leaves OR parchment paper brushed with oil (for wrapping food)

Lotus Nuts - Available dried or canned in syrup. If dried, they should be soaked for 24 hours before use.

Lotus Root - Crunchy and gourd shaped, lotus roots grow underwater, four to five together strung like sausages and often one to one and half feet long.

Lungan - See [Longan](#).

Luo Bo - See [Chinese White Radish](#).

Lychee - See [Litchi](#).

Lychee Nut - Also called litchi nut, lichee nut, lichi nut and leechee nut. These are sun-dried litchis. The outer shells are brown and the meat inside looks like a large raisin. Look for them in Asian markets.



Lychee Nut

Substitutes: Prunes (not as crunchy) OR cashews

M

Mahogany Clam - See [Hard-Shell Clam](#).

Mangetout - The French word for snow peas, which means "eat it all." See also snow peas.

Mango, dried - These are sometimes coated with sugar.



Mango, dried

Substitutes: [Dried papaya](#)

Mangosteen - Along with durian, mangosteen is one of the two most popular Asian fruits. However, unlike Durian, which is a yang or hot food, mangosteen is thought to have cooling, yin properties. The fruit of an evergreen tree native to Malaysia and Indonesia, the mangosteen is often available in Asian markets when in season. The ripe mangosteen is roughly the same size as a mandarin orange, with a reddish-purple rind. An interesting fact about this fruit is that there is always a type of scar at one end. This is a remnant of the flower, and the number of remnant flower parts contained in the scar will tell you precisely how many segments of fruit are inside. Besides containing more fruit, those with the most segments will have fewer seeds. The fruit itself is sweet, with a texture that has been likened to a ripe plum. The flavor is sweet with a hint of acidity.

When purchasing mangosteen fruit, look for ones that are dark purple or reddish purple but not blue-black in color. At home, store mangos at room temperature and eat within a few days. Also, it's important to remember that unlike mangos, the mangosteen can't be frozen. Mangosteens are commonly eaten raw as a dessert.

Manila Bean - See [Winged Bean](#).

Manila Clam



Manila Clam

Substitutes: Other small soft-shelled clams

Medium-Grain Rice - Medium-grain rice is shorter and stickier than long-grain rice. It's great for making paella and risotto.



Medium-Grain Rice

Substitutes: Risotto rice (for making risotto) OR Spanish rice (for making paella) OR short-grain rice (for making puddings, rice balls, or sushi)

Mexican Parsley - See [Cilantro](#).

Michihli - See [Napa Cabbage](#).

Microwave - High-frequency energy which is converted into heat when it is absorbed by food; these energy waves are especially attracted to water, liquid, sugar, and fat in foods, and cook more quickly than most other methods.

Mint - Mint is used throughout the world to flavor everything from lamb to candy. It's also a great garnish and breath freshener. Spearmint is the variety you're most likely to encounter in markets, and it's the best choice for savory dishes. Peppermint (brandy mint) has a stronger flavor and is best suited to dessert recipes. Used dried mint only in a pinch--it's not nearly as flavorful as fresh.



Mint

Substitutes: Fresh parsley + pinch of dried mint OR basil (especially in Thai cuisine) OR shiso.

Equivalents: 1 tablespoon fresh = 1 teaspoon dried

Mochiko - Japanese for glutinous rice flour. You'll frequently find references to mochi, mochi flour, or mochiko flour in Hawaiian recipes.

Monosodium Glutamate - Please refer to [MSG](#).

Moon Cake - During their Harvest Moon Festival each fall, Chinese families decorate their homes with lanterns and eat moon cakes from beautiful lacquered boxes. The cakes come in different flavors, but they're all rich and subtly sweet.



Moon Cake

Morel Mushrooms - These are the most expensive of the dried mushrooms. But only a few should be used as they add quite a lot of flavor.

MSG - MSG stands for Monosodium Glutamate. It is a white crystalline compound used to enhance flavor.



MSG

*** Please note that MSG may not be suitable for everyone. Please visit [FDA for more information](#). Whenever we mention MSG in our ingredients, it is always optional.*

Muscat Raisins - These are large and very sweet.

Substitutes: [Raisins](#) (smaller and less sweet) OR [golden raisins](#) (golden color, smaller, more tart) OR dried dates.

Mushrooms - Chinese mushrooms called Shitake are a beautiful pale gold colored when fresh and have a pleasantly firm texture and a haunting flavor. Available dry and should be soaked before cooking.

Mushrooms, Chinese Black - These are the dried mushrooms you'll often find sold in bins in Asian markets. The name is a bit of a misnomer, since Chinese black mushrooms can be light brown, dark brown, and even grey. They are frequently speckled. Chinese black mushrooms (also known as shiitake mushrooms) range in price from moderate to quite expensive. The more costly are often called "flower mushrooms" as they have a thick cap and a nice curl. However, the cheaper brands are perfectly acceptable for use in soups and stir-fries.

While fresh black mushrooms may be available, dried black mushrooms are preferred for use in Asian recipes, as the drying process gives them a stronger flavor. At home, store the dried mushrooms in a container at room temperature. They will last indefinitely. Before use, soak them in warm water for between twenty and thirty minutes, and remove the stems. You might also want to strain them through a sieve to remove any sand or dirt. The Chinese believe black mushrooms may be helpful for persons with high blood pressure.

Mushroom Soy Sauce - [Soy sauce](#) that has been infused with the flavor of straw mushrooms.

Mussels - A seafood, closely related to the clam. Mussels are generally sold fresh in their shells and eaten raw or steamed or used in salads or soups.



Mussels

Substitutes: Oysters OR (steamed) soft-shelled clam (firmer texture; best served warm) OR littleneck clams (best served warm) OR other shellfish OR bluefish

Storage: Unopened canned mussels can be stored for up to a year in a dry, cool place. Once opened, it will keep for up to two days if you wrap it well and refrigerate it.

Mutton - After lambs are a year old, their meat is sold as mutton. Mutton is cheaper than lamb, but it's tougher, fattier, and less delicately flavored. It's more popular in Europe than in the United States.

Substitutes: Lamb

Muttonfish - See [Abalone](#).

N

Napa Cabbage - Also called Nappa Cabbage, Celery Cabbage, Chinese Celery Cabbage, Peking Cabbage, Chinese Cabbage, Wong Bok, Petsai, Shantung Cabbage, Hakusai, Chinese Leaf (Leaves) and Michihli. *Brassica Pekinensis*. While several types of Chinese cabbage exist, the variety we most commonly associate with Chinese cabbage is Napa Cabbage, the large-headed cabbage with the firmly packed, pale green leaves that you'll usually find next to bok choy in western supermarkets. It is also known as Peking Cabbage and celery cabbage. More healthful than western cabbages, Napa Cabbage is rich in Vitamin C and other nutrients. Look for firm green leaves that are not wilted or eaten by bugs. Store in a plastic bag in the crisper section of the refrigerator. Like tofu, Napa Cabbage absorbs the flavors of the foods around it. It is eaten raw in salads, and often added to stir-fries and soups in the last stages of cooking. *Cooking Tip* - Lining a bamboo steamer with Napa Cabbage helps prevent food from sticking to the bottom. See also *Chinese Cabbage*.



Napa Cabbage

Nappa Cabbage - See [Napa Cabbage](#).

Noodles - Noodles is a Chinese staple food. Mein is the generic term after which the popular dish Chow Mein is named.

Norway Lobster - See [Dublin Bay Prawn](#).

O

Ocean Quahog Clam - See [Hard-Shell Clam](#).

Octopus



Octopus

Substitutes: Squid (no need to tenderize, milder flavor) OR cuttlefish (no need to tenderize, milder flavor)

Oil Poaching - A "trade secret" used by many restaurants to give the meat a more tender texture, oil poaching (also called velveting) seals in the juices of the meat. After marinating, heat between 2 - 4 cups of oil in the wok to a temperature of about 325 degrees Fahrenheit, and immerse the marinated meat in the hot oil for several seconds. Remove the meat from the wok, drain, and cook further as called for in the recipe.

Olive Oil - Extra Virgin Olive Oil has a full, fruity flavour and the lowest acidity. Virgin Olive Oil is slightly higher in acidity and lighter in flavour. Pure Olive Oil is a processed blend of olive oils and has the highest acidity and lightest taste.

Opo Squash



Opo Squash

Orange Rind - Dry peels of oranges, julienned, used for garnishing in various sweet and savory dishes.

Ormer

Substitutes: [Abalone](#) (larger) OR other clams

Ornamental Kale - See [Flowering Kale](#).

Ostrich - Ostrich looks and tastes like a cross between beef and chicken, and it's relatively low in fat.



Ostrich

Substitutes: [Emu](#) OR rhea OR beef (similar texture, beef is higher in fat) OR chicken OR turkey

Oyster - The French like to serve these raw in the shell, with just a squirt of fresh lemon juice, but they can also be fried, grilled, or gently poached. If you eat them raw, you'll need to shuck them first; an oyster knife comes in handy for this.



Oyster

Substitutes: Mussel OR (served raw) littleneck or cherrystone clam OR (deep-fat fried) soft-shell clam

Storage: Unopened canned oysters can be stored for up to a year in a dry, cool place. Once opened, it will keep for up to two days if you wrap it well and refrigerate it.

Oyster Sauce - A rich sauce made from boiled oysters and seasonings, oyster sauce does not have a fishy taste at all (boiling the oysters takes care of that). This rich sauce with a savoury flavor is used in meat and vegetable dishes, and is an important ingredient in Cantonese cooking. Oyster sauce brands have a wide price range; steer clear of the cheaper brands if possible, as they usually contain MSG.

Although the Buddhist vegetarian diet does permit the eating of oysters, vegetarian brands, often using mushrooms as a substitute, are available. Oyster sauce is normally sold in bottles; refrigerate after opening. If purchased in a can, transfer to a closed jar and refrigerate.

Recommended Brand: Hop Sing Lung.

P

Pak Chee - See [Cilantro](#).

Pak Choi - See [Bok Choy](#).

Pak Choy - See [Bok Choy](#).

Pan-Fry - A dry-heat method where food is cooked over high heat with little or no fat (preparation starts with cold skillet, and any accumulated fat is poured off during cooking).

Papaya, dried - These are sometimes coated with sugar.



Papaya, dried

Substitutes: Dried cantaloupe OR dried mango

Paper-Wrapped Deep-Frying - Small pieces of meat or fish are seasoned, then wrapped in cellophane paper to form little parcels, and deep-fried until tender. The food is served in its paper wrapping and opened by the diner with chopsticks. The paper is of course discarded. Cellophane paper is obtainable from large stationers.

Peanut Butter - A paste made from crushed peanuts, used mainly as a spread. Sometimes it is also used to thicken sauces.

Pecan - This North American nut is like a walnut, only sweeter and milder. It's used widely in the South to make pralines, pecan pie, ice cream, and nut breads. They're high in fat, so it's best to store shelled pecans in the refrigerator or freezer to prevent them from turning rancid. To roast, put shelled pecans on a baking pan and in bake them in a 325° oven, stirring occasionally, until they're slightly golden, about ten minutes.



Pecan

Substitutes: Walnuts OR hickory nuts (similar, but harder to shell)

Equivalents: 1 pound in the shell = 1/2 pound shelled = 2 cups shelled

Peekytoe Crabs - Also called Maine Crabs, Mud Crabs, Sand Crabs and Rock Crabs. These small, highly prized crabs resemble Dungeness crabs, only they're much smaller. It's hard to find whole crabs, but many seafood shops in New England sell peekytoe crab meat.



Peekytoe Crabs

Peking Cabbage - See [Napa Cabbage](#).

Periwinkle - Also called Bigaros, Sea Snails and Winkles. These marine snails are better known in Europe and Japan than in the United States. They're great in any clam chowder recipe, though they tend to get tough if overcooked. Look for them in Asian markets.



Periwinkle

Substitutes: Whelks OR conch OR clams OR escargot

Petsai - See [Napa Cabbage](#).

Pignolia - See [Pine Nut](#).

Pine Nut - Also called Pinoli, Pinyon, Pinolea, Pignolia, Indian Nut, Pignolo, Pignoli, Snoober and Pine Kernel. These expensive and delicate seeds are harvested from pine trees in different parts of the world. Italians like to grind them into pesto or sprinkle them on pasta dishes. There are two main varieties: the triangular Chinese pine nuts sold in Asian markets, and the slender Italian pine nuts, which are more expensive and subtly flavored. All pine nuts are high in fat, so store them in the refrigerator or freezer to keep them from getting rancid. Before you use them, toast pine nuts in a 325F oven, stirring occasionally, until they're slightly golden, about five minutes.



Pine Nut

Substitutes: Walnuts (this is a common variation in pesto) OR almonds (this is a common variation in pesto) OR hazelnuts (this also works in pesto) OR cashews (raw, unsalted) OR peanuts (unsalted) OR sunflower seeds

Pink Peppercorns - Also called Red Peppercorns



Pink Peppercorns

Substitutes: Green peppercorns

Pinolea - See [Pine Nut](#).

Pinoli - See [Pine Nut](#).

Pinyon - See [Pine Nut](#).

Pismo Clam

Substitutes: Other clams (pismos are highly regarded)

Plum Sauce - Also called Chinese Duck Sauce, Chinese Plum Sauce and Duck Sauce. A thick, rich, spicy fruit sauce it is used in savory braised dishes or in dips. It is available bottled. [Buy plum sauce.](#)



Plum Sauce

Poach - A moist-heat method where food is cooked over low heat in liquid.

Popcorn Rice - Also called American Basmati and Della Rice. This rice is a cross between basmati and American long-grain. Common brands include Texmati, Delta Rose, and Cajun Country Popcorn Rice.

Substitutes: Basmati rice (nuttier) OR long-grain rice (bland)

Potsticker Wrappers - Also called Potsticker Skins. These small, thick wrappers are stuffed with meat fillings, and then pan-fried and steamed. While assembling the potstickers, keep the stack of wrappers moist by covering them with a damp towel. You can seal the potstickers with a "glue" made with cornstarch and water. Look for stacks of them wrapped in plastic in the refrigerator cases of Asian markets. They freeze well.



Potsticker Wrappers

Substitutes: Suey Gow wrappers OR dumpling wrappers (thinner) OR wonton wrappers (thinner) OR eggroll wrappers (cut these down to size) OR pasta sheet

Pressed Tofu - Also called Nigari Tofu and Dow Fu Kon. With much of the moisture pressed out of it, this kind of tofu holds its shape and absorbs marinades better than firm tofu. It's the best choice for grilling.



Pressed Tofu

Substitutes: Extra-firm tofu (Wrap it in cheesecloth and place weights on it to press some of the moisture out before using.) OR atsu-age.

Pressure Cook - A moist-heat method where food is cooked in a special air-tight, covered pan which creates pressure and steam to cook foods more quickly than most other methods.

Prince Edward Island Mussel - Also called PEI Mussel and Island blue Mussel. These farmed-raised mussels are sweet and beardless.



Prince Edward Island Mussel

Princess Pea - See [Winged Bean](#).

Prune - Dried plum. In a marketing makeover, producers are starting to call these dried plums instead of prunes. Whatever you call them, they're sweet and just loaded with dietary fiber, iron, and other nutrients. You can eat them whole, chop them into sauces and stews, or make compote out of them.



Prune

Substitutes: Raisins OR dried figs

Q

Quahog - Also called Quahog Clam, Quahaug Clam and Chowder Clam - See: [Hard-Shell Clams](#).



Quahog

R

Rabbit - Rabbit is low in fat and similar in taste and texture to chicken.



Rabbit

Substitutes: Chicken (takes less time to cook)

Raisins - Dried grapes. The common raisins we see on supermarket shelves are usually dried Thompson seedless grapes. [Golden raisins](#) are amber in color and somewhat tart--many cooks prefer them over ordinary raisins for baking and cooking. [Muscat raisins](#) are dark and very sweet, and they work well in fruitcakes. [Currants](#) are about one-quarter the size of ordinary raisins, and are typically used in baked goods. Store raisins in the refrigerator after you open the package.



Raisins

Substitutes: Prunes OR dried cranberries OR dried apricots OR dried dates OR dried cherries OR chocolate chips OR nuts OR dried figs (stronger flavor)

Razor Clam



Razor Clam

Substitutes: (for chowder) chopped geoduck OR quahogs

Red Cabbage - Red cabbage tastes just like green cabbage, so your choice between them depends largely on which color you prefer. One problem with red cabbage, though, is that the color tends to bleed and discolor surrounding foods. Select heavy heads of cabbage that have shiny leaves.



Red Cabbage

Substitutes: Green Cabbage (This tastes just like red cabbage.) OR [Napa Cabbage](#) (milder flavor, more delicate texture) OR [Savoy Cabbage](#) (great in slaws).

Equivalents: One head yields about 8 cups shredded cabbage.

Red-Cooked - A term used in Chinese cooking. Meat or poultry is cooked in dark soy sauce resulting in a deep, rich, red glazed exterior. See also *Red Cooking*.

Red Cooking - This is a unique Chinese method, used primarily for cooking large cuts of meat or poultry. Dark soy sauce is used, which imparts a rich flavor and dark reddish-brown color to the food. See also *Red-cooked*.

Red Currant - With their brilliant coloring, red currants make terrific garnishes. They're also pleasantly tart, and often used to make jellies, syrups, and wine. Fresh ones are available in

some markets during the summer, but frozen currants are acceptable substitutes for fresh in many recipes.



Red Currant

Substitutes: blueberry OR black currant (for preserves) OR white currant (for eating raw) OR gooseberry (tarter) OR cranberry (as a garnish) OR blackberries OR red currant jelly (for sauces; sweeter than whole fruit)

Red Date - See [Chinese Date](#).

Red Rice Vinegar - Also called Red Vinegar, Chinese Red Vinegar and Chinese Red Rice Vinegar. This Asian vinegar is a bit salty. It's sometimes used in seafood or sweet and sour dishes, or as a dipping sauce.



Red Rice Vinegar

Substitutes: [Chinese black vinegar](#) (sweeter) OR cider vinegar OR red wine vinegar

Regular Tofu - Also called Medium Tofu. This is halfway between the custard-like consistency of silken tofu and the denser texture of firm tofu. It's a good choice if you want to scramble it like eggs, or use it in place of ricotta cheese in a casserole. Store tofu in the refrigerator, changing the water daily, and use it within a week. Freezing firm tofu will make it chewier and give it a meatier texture. Look for cakes of it in plastic tubs in the refrigerated sections of supermarkets and health food stores.

Substitutes: Firm tofu OR soft tofu

Rhea - Rheas are the South American version of [ostriches](#). Rhea meat resembles ostrich meat, but it's even leaner.

Substitutes: [Emu](#) OR [ostrich](#) OR beef (similar texture, beef is higher in fat) OR chicken OR turkey

Rice - Rice is the most important food crop in Asia. It can be cooked whole and served with stir-fries, sauces, and curries, or made into flour, wine, cakes, vinegar, milk, flakes, noodles, paper, and tea.



Rice

Rice is classified mostly by the size of the grain. [Long-grain rice](#) is long and slender. The grains stay separate and fluffy after cooking, so this is the best choice if you want to serve rice as a side dish, or as a bed for sauces. [Medium-grain rice](#) is shorter and plumper, and works well in paella and risotto. [Short-grain rice](#) is almost round, with moist grains that stick together when cooked. It's the best choice for rice pudding and molded salads. Other specialty varieties include [Spanish rice](#) for paella, [glutinous rice](#) for sushi and rice balls, and [risotto rice](#) for risotto. Most varieties are sold as either brown or white rice, depending upon how they are milled. [Brown rice](#) retains the bran that surrounds the kernel, making it chewier, nuttier, and richer in nutrients. [White rice](#) lacks the bran and germ, but is more tender and delicate. It's less nutritious than brown rice, but you can partially compensate for that by getting enriched white rice. Brown rice takes about twice as long to cook as white rice. [Converted rice](#) is beige. It tastes a lot like white rice, but it has more nutrients. [Instant rice](#) is white rice that's been precooked and dehydrated. It's convenient, but expensive and bland.

Rice Noodles - Also called rice stick noodles rice flour noodles. Rice noodles are made with rice flour, and are especially popular in Southeast Asia. It's easy to find dried rice noodles in large supermarkets, but you'll probably have to visit an Asian market to find them fresh. Rice noodles should be soaked in hot water before using. When they're soft and transparent, drain them.



Rice Noodles

Equivalents: Four ounces fresh rice noodles = 1 ounce dried

Rice Paper - See [Spring Roll Wrappers](#).

Rice Sticks - Also called Rice Stick Noodles. They come in many shapes and sizes, but they can be roughly classified as thin, medium, and wide. Thin rice noodles are used in soups, salads, and spring rolls. Medium noodles are the most versatile, and can be used in soups, stir-fries, salads, or as a bed for meat or fish. Wide noodles are best used in soups, stir-fries, and braised dishes. Before using rice noodles, soften them in hot water. This will take anywhere from a few minutes to a half hour, depending upon the thickness of the noodles. After they've softened, boil or stir-fry them briefly, usually not more than a minute. It's easier to stir-fry noodles if you break them into shorter lengths.



Rice Sticks

Rice Stick Noodles - See [Rice Sticks](#).

Rice Vermicelli - Also called Mi Fen, Mei Fun (Chinese), Mai Fun (Japanese), Pancit Bijon (Tagalog), Banh Hoi (Vietnamese) and Bee Hoon (Malay). These are used throughout Asian in soups, spring rolls, cold salads, and stir-fries. They're similar to bean threads, only they're longer and made with rice flour instead of mung bean starch. Before using, soak the dried noodles in hot water until they're soft (about 15 minutes), then boil them briefly (from 1 to 3 minutes) and rinse with hot water. You can also deep-fry the dried noodles until they're crunchy and then use them in Chinese chicken salad, or as a garnish or bed for sauces.



Rice Vermicelli

Substitutes: Thin rice sticks OR bean threads OR flat rice noodles (wider) OR vermicelli

Rice Vinegar - Also called Rice Wine Vinegar. Rice vinegars are popular in Asian and they're sweeter, milder, and less acidic than Western vinegars. They're sometimes called "rice wine vinegars," but they're made from rice, not rice wine. Most recipes that call for rice vinegar intend for you to use [white rice vinegar](#), which is used in both China and Japan. The Chinese also use [red rice vinegar](#) with seafood or in sweet and sour dishes, and [black rice vinegar](#) in stir-fries and dipping sauces. [Buy rice vinegars](#)



Rice Vinegar

Substitutes: Apple cider vinegar (also add a pinch of sugar if you like) OR white wine vinegar OR 3 parts white vinegar + 1 part water

Rice Wine - Known colloquially as "yellow wine," rice wine is a rich-flavored liquid with a relatively low alcohol content that is made from fermented glutinous rice or millet. Aged for ten years or more, rice wine is used both in drinking and cooking. Since ancient times, the best and most famous rice wines have come from Shaoxing in the Zhejiang province. (If you can't find rice wine listed in the ingredients section of a Chinese cookbook, try checking under "S"). Rice wine can be found at Asian markets - steer clear of the ones marked "cooking rice liquor" or "wine for cooking" as these do not have the sweet taste of authentic rice wine. If you do need a substitute, pale dry sherry is acceptable, and preferable to either sake (the Japanese rice wine) or any other cooking wines. At home, store the rice wine at room temperature, preferably out of the light. [Buy rice wine](#)

Risotto Rice - Also called Piedmont Rice. *Varieties:* This plump white rice can absorb lots of water without getting mushy, so it's perfect for making risotto. The best comes from Italy. Arborio is very well-regarded, but Carnaroli, Roma, Baldo, Padano, and vialone nano = nano are also good. The highest Italian risotto rice grade is superfino. Lesser grades are (in descending order) fino, semi-fino, and commune. You can sometimes find brown risotto rice, which has more fiber and nutrients, but it isn't nearly as creamy as white risotto rice. Never rinse risotto rice--you'll wash off the starch that gives it such a creamy consistency.



Risotto Rice

Substitutes: Granza rice (shorter grain, works fine in risottos or paellas) OR short-grain white rice OR pearl barley (works well for risotto, but gives it a chewier texture) OR medium-grain white rice (may make risotto mushy)

River Rice Noodles - Also called Rice Ribbon Noodles, Vermicelli Sheets, Sha He Fen, Kuay Taew and Hu Tieu. These chewy rice noodles are popular in southern Vietnam, where they're often served with seafood. They're usually sold as fresh sheets, which are either left whole or sliced into various widths. Rinse them in warm water before using, then add them to stir-fries or soups, or use the sheets to wrap meat fillings before steaming them.



River Rice Noodles

Substitutes: Medium rice sticks

Roast - A dry-heat method done (uncovered) in an oven; generally refers to meats, poultry, fish and vegetables.

Rock Lobster See [Spiny Lobster](#).

Romano Bean - See [Italian Flat Bean](#).

S

Sake - Also called Saki and Rice Wine. This is a Japanese rice wine, or more correctly, beer. It's usually served warm in tiny porcelain cups, but some trendy American restaurants served it chilled like white wine. Sake doesn't age well in the bottle and should be consumed within a year of bottling.



Sake

Substitutes: Shaoxing wine (not as smooth and sweet) OR vermouth (dry) OR white wine OR sherry (dry).

Salted Black Beans - These are very salty indeed and need to be soaked for 5-10 minutes before use. They are added (can be mashed) into the cooking oil or sauce over high heat.

Savoy Cabbage - Savoy cabbage is like ordinary cabbage, but with a milder flavor. It can often be used in place of green cabbage, and your dish will probably be the better for it.



Savoy Cabbage

Substitutes: Cabbage (This has a stronger flavor and isn't as tender as savoy cabbage.) OR [Napa Cabbage](#) (This has a milder flavor.)

Scallions - See [Green Onion](#).

Scallops - (See also [Bay Scallop](#), [Calico Scallop](#), and [Sea Scallop](#))



Scallops

Substitutes: shark meat (Note: Unscrupulous restaurants sometimes palm off shark meat as scallops to unsuspecting customers.) OR cod cheeks OR monkfish OR skate OR lobster OR crab OR sole OR flounder OR shrimp (firmer texture)

Scampi - See [Dublin Bay Prawn](#)

Sea Clam - See [Bar Clam](#).

Sea Cucumber - Also called Sea Slug. The sea cucumber is a gelatinous creature that is indeed shaped like a cucumber. Like tofu, it is flavorless, but has the ability to soak up the flavors of the foods and seasonings it is cooked with. In Chinese cooking it is used in soups, stir-fries, and certain braised dishes.



Sea Cucumber

Other names for the sea cucumber include beche de me, sea rat and sea slug (the latter is somewhat confusing since the real sea slug is another animal entirely). The Chinese name for [Get FREE Recipes & Cooking Tips in Your Email Weekly:](#)
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the sea cucumber translates roughly into "sea ginseng" - it's unclear whether this is in recognition of the sea cucumber's reputed aphrodisiacal qualities, or because it is considered to be quite healthful. (It has been used to treat everything from high blood pressure in humans to joint pain in pot-bellied pigs.) It may also have something to do with its slippery feel, as the texture of food weights more heavily in Chinese cuisine than is generally the case in western cooking.

Freshly caught sea cucumber requires an extensive amount of preparation before making the transition from the ocean floor to your dinner plate. The complicated procedure takes place over several days and involves slitting open the belly and removing the guts, as well as washing and boiling the animal several times. Fresh sea cucumber that has already been cleaned and soaked is sometimes available in Asian markets, usually in the cold foods section or in containers of water. Many Asian stores also carry dried sea cucumber, which looks and feels almost exactly like a piece of cement, albeit not as heavy. It also must be soaked for several hours before cooking.

Sea Legs - See [Crab Sticks](#).

Sea Scallop



Sea Scallop

Substitutes: [Bay scallop](#) or [calico scallop](#) (these are smaller than sea scallops, and more sweet and delicate) OR shark meat (Note: Unscrupulous restaurants sometimes palm off shark meat as scallops to unsuspecting customers.) OR cod cheeks OR skate OR monkfish

Sea Slug - See [Sea Cucumber](#).

Seasoned Rice Vinegar - Also called Seasoned Rice Wine Vinegar and Sushi Vinegar. Accomplished Asian cooks who find this in your pantry are likely to purse their lips, just as Italian cooks would over a packet of spaghetti sauce mix. So keep it well hidden. It's lightly flavored with sugar and salt, and saves time when making sushi. You can also use it to dress salads, vegetables, and other dishes.



Seasoned Rice Vinegar

Substitutes: 3/4 cup white rice vinegar plus 1/4 cup sugar plus 2 teaspoons salt.

Seaweed Noodles - Also called Seaweed Threads, Chinese Seaweed Noodles.



Seaweed Noodles

Substitutes: [Bean threads](#) (shorter and thicker) OR vermicelli

Senjed - See [Chinese Date](#).

Sesame Oil - This amber colored, aromatic oil, made from pressed and toasted sesame seeds, is a popular ingredient in Chinese cooking. Not for use as a cooking oil, however, as the flavor is too intense and it burns quite easily. Instead, sesame oil is normally added as a flavoring agent in the final stages of cooking. Sesame oil has been used since ancient times; the Babylonians cultivated sesame seeds for their oil, and the Persians used it as both a food and medicine. It is still used in holistic preparations for everything from treating infections to stimulating brain activity. (It is also believed to contain antioxidants).

One note: the nonroasted sesame oil you sometimes find in supermarkets and health food stores is not a good substitute for the sesame oil used in Oriental cooking. Sesame oil will keep for several months if stored in a cool, dark, and dry place. *Recommended Brand: Kadoya sesame oil from Japan.*

Sesame Paste - Paste made from sesame seeds - very similar to peanut butter. Extremely rich and aromatic.

Sesame Seed - Also called Benne Seed and Goma. These nutritious seeds have a mild, nutty flavor. They're commonly used in baked goods, Asian stir-fries, and Middle-Eastern candies. European recipes for sesame seeds are usually referring to white sesame seeds, but Indian and Asian recipes sometimes intend for you to use the more pungent black sesame seeds.



Sesame Seed

Substitutes: Pumpkin seeds

Shallot - See [Green Onion](#). Americans use the term shallot to refer to a small, mild dry onion.

Shallow Frying - This is a slower method of cooking than [stir-frying](#). A wok or frying pan is used. More oil is used and the cooking is done over moderate heat.

Shanghai Bok Choy - See [Bok Choy](#).

Shanghai Noodles - These thick noodles are often used in stir-fries or soups.



Substitutes: Perciatelli OR spaghetti

Shantung Cabbage - See [Napa Cabbage](#).

Shao Mai Skins - See [Dumpling Wrappers](#).

Shaoxing Wine - Also called Shaohsing Wine, Shao Hsing Wine, Hsao Shing Wine and Chinese Rice Wine. Chinese rice wine varies in quality, so cookbooks often specify Shaoxing rice wine (Shaoxing is a city in China), which is quite good. The Chinese drink it from small porcelain cups, in the same way that the Japanese drink their sake. Shaoxing cooking wine may be salted.



Shaoxing Wine

Substitutes: [Sake](#) (smoother and sweeter) OR sherry (dry)

Sherry Vinegar - Also called Sherry Wine Vinegar, Vinagre De Jerez, Jerez Vinegar, Vinagre De Xeres and Xeres Vinegar. Sherry vinegar is Spain's answer to balsamic vinegar. It's

assertive yet smooth, and great for deglazing pans and perking up sauces, especially those that will accompany hearty meats like duck, beef, or game. The most expensive sherry vinegars are aged for a long time in wood casks.



Sherry Vinegar

Substitutes: Balsamic vinegar OR red wine vinegar (Also add a little sugar if you wish.) OR rice vinegar

Short-Grain Rice - Also called Round Grain Rice and Pearl rice. This is sticky, though not as much as glutinous rice. It's a good choice if you're making sushi or rice pudding, and it also works pretty well in a risotto or paella. Brown short-grain rice isn't as sticky.



Short-Grain Rice

Substitutes: Medium-grain rice (fluffier, less sticky) OR long-grain rice (even fluffier, even less sticky)

Shrimp - Also called Prawn. There are many different species of shrimp, but generally speaking, the larger the shrimp, the tastier. In the US and Britain, large shrimp are called prawns; in India, all shrimp are prawns. Bay shrimp are very small. You can buy shrimp raw (sometimes called green), or cooked. Don't buy cooked shrimp if you plan to serve it warm--they turn rubbery when reheated. Unopened canned shrimp can be stored for up to a year in a dry, cool place. Once opened, it will keep for up to two days if you wrap it well and refrigerate it.



Shrimp

Substitutes: Dublin Bay prawns OR crayfish OR lobster OR scallops (more delicate texture) OR crab OR imitation seafood (less expensive) OR chicken

Equivalents: One pound shrimp in shell will roughly yield 1/2 pound or one cup cooked shrimp.

Shrimp Paste - Often used in dishes of vegetables and soups, it is salty in taste and should be used sparingly. Sold in jars and cans, should be refrigerated once opened.

Shu Mai Skins - See [Dumpling Wrappers](#).

Sichuan - A province in China. Sichuan food is famous for its spicy flavor. See also Szechuan, Szechwan.

Sichuan Pepper - This spice is not a species of pepper, though it does have a peppery taste.

Silk Melon - See [Chinese Okra](#).

Silk Squah - See [Chinese Okra](#).

Silken Tofu - Also called Kinu-Goshi. This Japanese tofu is soft and creamy and it's the preferred tofu for shakes, dips, custards, puddings, and dressings. It's available either fresh in tubs or in aseptic packages that don't need refrigeration. When working with silken tofu, it's a good idea to make a dish ahead of time so as to allow the tofu to absorb other flavors. Don't freeze it.



Silken Tofu

Substitutes: Soft tofu (This is firmer and sweeter than silken tofu.) OR sour cream (in dressings, dips, or sauces) OR mayonnaise (in dressings, dips, or sauces) OR yogurt (in smoothies).

Silver Pin Noodles - Also called Mee Tye Bak, Nen Dzem Fen, Loh Shee Fun and Rat-tail Noodles. These are thick, round rice noodles that are usually homemade.

Substitutes: Laksa noodles

Simmer - To cook food gently in liquid that bubbles steadily, just below boiling point, so that the food cooks in even heat without breaking up.

Siu Mai Skins - See [Dumpling Wrappers](#).

Snap Bean - See [Green Bean](#).

Snow Crab - Also called Rock Crab, Tanner Crab and Queen Crab. This is an East Coast version of the king crab.



Snow Crab

Snow Peas - Also known as mangetout, which is French for "eat it all," snow peas cooked with a bit of [ginger](#) and garlic are a frequent addition to stir-fry dishes. Their sweet flavor also goes well with seasoned (often salted) meat or poultry. The French name comes from the fact that the whole pea - including the pod - is eaten. Other names include edible-podded peas, and Chinese sugar peas.

Snow peas are available in supermarkets - look for crisp pods with small peas. This means that they were picked when young and have not sat in the store for too long. They can be stored in the crisper section of the refrigerator for 2 - 3 days.



Snow Peas

Substitutes: Sugar snap peas, another pea with an edible pod, can be substituted, but they won't have the same flavor.

Snow Pea Shoots - The tips of the vines and the top set of leaves of the pea plant are an Oriental delicacy. They can be served raw in salads, quickly cooked in stir-fries, or blanched and used in soups.

Snow Pickle - This is salted mustard greens. It is greenish in color and has a mildly sour flavor.

Soft-Shell Clam - Also called Steamer. Highly regarded Maine steamers and Long Island steamers, and less esteemed Maryland Steamers.



Soft-Shell Clam

Substitutes: Razor clam OR littleneck clams OR manila clam OR mussels

Soft Tofu - Also called Sui Doufu. This is the Chinese version of Japan's [silken tofu](#). Like silken tofu, it's good for making shakes, dips, custards, puddings, and dressings. Look for plastic tubs with cakes of tofu in the refrigerated sections of supermarkets and health food stores. Don't freeze this kind of tofu.



Soft Tofu

Substitutes: Silken tofu (This has a smoother consistency and isn't as sweet as soft tofu.) OR sour cream (in dressings, dips, or sauces) OR mayonnaise (in dressings, dips, or sauces) OR yogurt (in smoothies)

Soy Bean Curd - See [Tofu](#).

Soy Sauce - Invented by the Chinese approximately 3,000 years ago, soy sauce is made from fermented soy beans, wheat flour, water, and salt. The two main types of soy sauce are light and dark. As the name implies, light soy sauce is lighter in color, and also more sweet than dark soy sauce. In Chinese cooking, it is used more often than dark soy - always use light soy in a recipe unless dark is specifically called for. Aged for a longer period of time, dark soy sauce is thicker and blacker in color. It is also less salty than light soy. It is used in certain recipes to add color, and as a dipping sauce. Storage: Store soy sauce at room temperature.

[Buy soy sauce](#)



Soy Sauce

Substitutes: Tamari (thicker) OR Maggi seasoning OR black bean sauce thinned with water OR kecap manis (much sweeter) OR Worcestershire sauce

Soya Bean Paste - Ground soya beans are seasoned and flavored with chillies, peppers, sugar and salt. It is very hot and aromatic.

Soya Sauce - Also as [soy sauce](#). Please refer to [soy sauce](#).

Spanish Rice - Also called Paella Rice. This is medium-grain rice that's perfectly suited to making paella. Varieties include Granza rice, and the highly regarded (but difficult to find) Valencia rice.



Spanish Rice

Substitutes: Risotto rice (This is very similar and is a good choice for making paella.) OR short-grain rice

Spare Rib Sauce - Ready-to-use sauce makes delicious ribs. A careful blend of tomatoes, sesame seeds, rice wine and garlic and exotic seasonings.

Spinach - Spinach is packed with nutrients, and it's quite versatile. You can toss it raw into salads, or cook it briefly to make a side dish or soup. Of the two main varieties, smooth leaf spinach (flat leaf spinach, salad spinach) is more delicate and better suited to salads than **curly leaf spinach**. Look for spinach with small, narrow stems--they're younger and tenderer. And always use fresh spinach if you can; it's much more palatable than frozen or canned spinach.



Spinach

Substitutes: Chinese spinach (more delicate) OR Swiss chard (more flavorful, but takes longer to cook) OR beet greens (more flavorful, but takes longer to cook) OR sorrel (color fades when cooked; consider adding parsley for color) OR kale (especially in casseroles; takes longer to

cook) OR turnip greens (discard stems; takes longer to cook) OR escarole (especially with hot bacon dressings)

Equivalents: One pound fresh = 1 cup cooked = 5 ounces frozen

Spiny Lobster - Also called Rock Lobster and Langouste

Substitutes: Lobster (has claws, otherwise very similar) OR Dublin Bay prawns (smaller) OR large shrimp OR monkfish (firmer texture)

Spring Onion - Some people use the name spring onion as a synonym for [Green Onion](#), while others use it to refer to a green onion with a partially formed bulb.



Spring Onion

Substitutes: Green onions OR ramps OR leeks

Spring Roll Wrappers - Also called Rice Paper = Vietnamese Rice Paper = Banh Trang Wrappers. These thin, fragile sheets are used to make spring rolls, but they also make good all-purpose wrappers, baking pan liners, and even lasagne noodles. The sheets are brittle, so you need to moisten them with water before wrapping foods in them. Keep them moist while you work with them by covering the stack with a damp towel. Rice paper doesn't need to be cooked, but it's sturdy enough to be steamed or deep-fried. Look for it in Asian markets. It can be stored in a cool, dark place for many months.



Spring Roll Wrappers

Substitutes: Phyllo dough (moisten and seal with peanut oil or melted butter) OR egg roll wrappers (These need to be cooked, and they're smaller and thicker than rice paper. When fried, egg roll wrappers aren't as tender and crisp as spring roll wrappers.) OR yufka (moisten and seal with peanut oil or melted butter) OR puff pastry (Roll it thin before using.)

Squid - Also called Calamari. This seafood is found world wide in temperate waters, they are available fresh or frozen.



Squid

Substitutes: Cuttlefish (under 8" long) OR octopus (stronger flavor; simmer first for 20 minutes in salted water to tenderize before adding to stews, soups, and sauces; remove suckers and ends of legs and beat before sautéing or grilling) OR shrimp OR chicken breast.

Star Anise - Also called Anise, Whole Anise, Chinese Star Anise and Chinese Anise. Dried, star-shaped seed head with a pungent, aromatic smell like fennel. One of the ingredients of 5-spice powder. Asian cooks use star anise to give a licorice flavor to savory dishes, particularly those with pork and poultry. It's available whole or ground. Use it sparingly--a little goes a long way.



Star Anise

Substitutes: Anise seed + pinch of allspice (weaker flavor; 1 crushed star anise = 1/2 teaspoon crushed anise seed) OR Chinese five-spice powder (contains star anise and other spices) OR anise extract (use just a few drops)

Steam - A moist-heat method where foods are placed on a rack or special piece of steaming equipment over boiling water, or in a covered pan with boiling water. The Chinese use bamboo

steamers which stack on top of each other, so that four or five dishes can be steamed simultaneously. Dishes requiring most cooking are placed on the bottom layer, near the boiling water, while those requiring less are placed on the top "floor".

Steamer - See [Soft-Shell Clam](#).

Steaming - See [Steam](#).

Stem Lettuce - See [Celtuce](#)

Stewing - Stews are usually composed of meat cooked on its own with herbs and spices, rather than with vegetables. In China, stews are usually cooked in an earthenware pot (called a sand pot) over a slow charcoal fire. The stew is cooked for a very long time - up to four hours - producing meat almost jelly-like in tenderness.

Sticky Rice - Despite its name this rice, widely used in Chinese cooking, is completely gluten free. When boiled it becomes sweet and sticky.

Stir-frying - Stir-frying is usually done in a wok. A Chinese method of cooking food quickly over high heat in very little oil. The food to be cooked is finely sliced or shredded into similar sized pieces, using a very sharp knife or Chinese cleaver.

Straw mushrooms - Completely different to other Chinese mushrooms in flavor and texture. They are only available canned.

Stock - It is an aromatic and nutritive liquid extracted by boiling bones, spices and/or vegetables with water.

Stone Crab - Also called Moro Crab and Morro Crab. This is found on the East Coast, especially in Florida. Just the claws are harvested.



Stone Crab

Substitutes: Claws of blue crabs

Stone Leek - See [Green Onion](#).

Straw Mushrooms - Also called Paddy Straw Mushrooms. These are a common ingredient in Chinese stir-fries. They're hard to find fresh, but canned straw mushrooms work well and are sold in many supermarkets. Better yet, but harder to find, are dried straw mushrooms, which have a more intense flavor than canned.



Straw Mushrooms

Substitutes: Enoki mushrooms OR white mushrooms

String Bean - See [Green Bean](#).

Suey Gow Wrappers - Also called Soi Gow Skins. These are similar to potsticker wrappers, but they're intended to be used in soups. While assembling the dumplings, keep the stack of wrappers moist by covering them with a damp towel. Seal the dumplings with a "glue" made with cornstarch and water. Look for stacks of these wrappers in the refrigerator cases of Asian markets. Store them in the refrigerator or freezer, but let them come to room temperature before using.

Substitutes: Potsticker wrappers OR dumpling wrappers (thinner) OR wonton wrappers (thinner) OR eggroll wrappers (cut these down to size) OR pasta sheet

Sugar - Used in sweetish dishes. Adding some sugar can save your dish when you have put too much salt.

Sugar Snap - Also called Snap Pea, Sugar Snap Pea and Sugar Pea. This cross between an English pea and a snow pea is sweet and crisp, and is eaten whole, pod and all. Sugar snaps can be served raw, briefly stir-fried, pickled, or steamed as a side dish.



Sugar Snap

Substitutes: Snow pea (flatter, not as sweet) OR asparagus OR carrots (for a crudite platter)

Su Choy - This is just like napa cabbage, only elongated.



Su Choy

Substitutes: [Napa Cabbage](#)

Sui Choy - See [Su Choy](#).

Surf Clam



Surf Clam

Surimi - See [Crab Sticks](#).

Sweet and Sour Sauce -Used in popular Chinese dishes like Sweet and Sour Chicken and Sweet and Sour Pork. [Buy Sweet and Sour Sauce](#).



Sweet and Sour Sauce

Sweet Bean Sauce - Use this intriguing sauce along with or in place of Hoisin sauce for a similar but more subtle flavor. Mix it with Hot Bean Sauce in Szechuan dishes to cool things off a bit. Sweet Bean Sauce is also typically used in Peking style foods.



Sweet Bean Sauce

Substitutes: Hoisin sauce (milder)

Szechuan - A province in China. Szechuan food is famous for its spicy flavor. See also Szechwan, Sichuan.

Szechuan Peppercorns - Also called Szechwan peppercorn, Sichuan Peppercorn, Szechwan Peppercorn, Anise Pepper, Brown Peppercorn, Chinese Aromatic Pepper, Chinese Pepper, Flower Pepper, Sancho, Japanese Pepper, Japan Pepper, Wild Pepper, and Fagara Pepper. Reddish-brown peppercorns, native to [Szechuan](#). Much stronger and more fragrant than normal peppercorns. These aren't true peppercorns, but rather dried flower buds. You're most likely to encounter them as part of a mixture, like the Chinese five-spice powder or the Japanese shichimi togarashi. Toast Szechwan peppercorns briefly in a hot pan before using.



Szechuan Peppercorns

Substitutes: Lemon pepper OR black peppercorns OR equal parts black peppercorns and aniseed

Szechuan Pickle (Szechwan Pickle) - is hot and salty, with a peppery flavour. Often used to intensify the spiciness of a dish.

Szechwan - A province in China. Szechwan food is famous for its spicy flavor. See also Szechuan, Sichuan.

Szechwan Peppercorns - See also [Szechuan Peppercorns](#).

Szechwan Pickle - See [Szechuan Pickle](#)

T

Taisai - See [Bok Choy](#).

Tapioca - Made from the starch of the cassava root, tapioca comes in several forms, including granules and flour, as well as the pellets that are called Pearl Tapioca. Tapioca starch is often used to make dumpling dough, or as a thickening agent. If necessary, it can be used as a substitute for [cornstarch](#). Store tapioca in a cool dark place.

Tempeh - Also called Tempe. This Indonesian meat substitute is made from soybeans and other grains that have been injected with a mold and allowed to ferment. It's rich in protein and fiber and has a chewy texture and salty, nutty flavor. Before using it, steam or simmer it for about twenty minutes. Then use it just like tofu or meat--either by marinating it and grilling or by crumbling it into pieces and frying them. Look for tempeh among the frozen foods in supermarkets or in health food stores. It will keep in the freezer for a few months or in the refrigerator for about a week.



Tempeh

Substitutes: [Tofu](#) (This isn't as nutritious, chewy, or flavorful as tempeh) OR hamburger OR TVP OR seitan.

Thin Rice Sticks - Also called Thin Rice Stick Noodles, Thin Sticks, Bun (Vietnamese), Pancit Palabok (Tagalog) and Sen Yai (Thai). These are used throughout Asian in soups, spring rolls, cold salads, and stir-fries. They're similar to bean threads, only they're longer and made with rice flour instead of mung bean starch. Before using, soak the dried noodles in hot water until they're soft (about 15 minutes), then boil them briefly (from 1 to 3 minutes) and rinse with hot water. You can also deep-fry the dried noodles until they're crunchy and then use them in Chinese chicken salad, or as a garnish or bed for sauces.



Thin Rice Sticks

Substitutes: Bean threads OR flat rice noodles (wider) OR vermicelli

Tiger Lily Buds - Also called golden needles. They have a musky, slightly acrid flavor. Soak for 30 minutes in hot water before use.

Turnip Cabbage - See [Kohlrabi](#).

Tofu - Also called Bean Curd, Soybean Curd, Doufu and Soya Cheese. Tofu is cheap, high in protein, low in fat, and very versatile. You can eat it raw or cooked, but it's bland by itself and tastes best if it's allowed to absorb other flavors. There are several varieties of raw tofu, each with different moisture contents. Silken and soft tofu are relatively moist, and best suited for making shakes, dips, and dressings. Regular tofu has some of the moisture drained away, and it's best for scrambling or using like cheese in casseroles. Firm, extra-firm, and pressed tofus are even drier, so they absorb other flavors better and hold their shape in stir-fries and on the grill. Tofu is also available smoked, pickled, flavored, baked, and deep-fat fried.



Tofu

Substitutes: Tempeh OR seitan OR TVP OR chicken.

Tofu Noodles - Also called Soybean Curd Noodles, Tofu Shreds, Gan Si, Beancurd Noodles, Bean Curd Noodles, Soy Noodles and Soy Vermicelli. These chewy noodles look like a pack of rubber bands, but they're made from compressed tofu and packed with protein and nutrients. They're usually served in salads, soups, or stir-fries. Look for them in the refrigerated

or frozen foods section of Asian markets. Dried tofu noodles are also available; before using, soak them in water mixed with baking soda until they soften, then rinse. Don't confuse these with bean curd skin noodles, which are darker and chewier.



Tofu Noodles

Substitutes: [Tofu](#) (cut into small cubes)

U

N/A

V

Vinegar - Sour liquid consisting mainly of acetic acid and water, produced by the action of bacteria on dilute solutions of ethyl alcohol derived from previous yeast fermentation. Vinegar is used as a salad dressing, a preservative, a household remedy to allay irritations, a mild disinfectant, and, in cooking, as a fiber softener. [Read more](#)

[Buy vinegar](#)

W

Walnut - Walnuts are rich and flavorful, and cooks like to use them in everything from fudge to salads. Markets usually carry English walnuts (also called royal walnuts and Persian walnuts). Less common are black walnuts, which are much more flavorful but harder to shell. To roast, put shelled walnuts on a baking pan and in bake them in a 325F oven, stirring occasionally, until they're slightly golden, about ten minutes. After you remove the nuts from the oven, rub them vigorously with a towel so as to remove as much of their bitter skins as possible. Fresh walnuts are available year-round, but they're best in the fall. Since they're high in fat and therefore prone to rancidity, it's best to store them in the refrigerator or freezer.



Walnut

Substitutes: Butternuts OR pecans (not as crunchy or flavorful) OR hazelnuts (not as rich) OR pine nuts (especially in pesto)

Equivalents: 1 cup chopped = 4 1/2 ounces; 1 cup halves = 3 1/2 ounces; 1 pound unshelled yields 1 1/2 cups shelled

Water Chestnuts - Also called Chinese Water Chestnuts. The knobby vegetable with the papery brown skin is a staple in Chinese cooking. However, the water chestnut is not a nut at all, but an aquatic vegetable that grows in marshes. This is why the ones that you purchase in the store may have a bit of muddy coating. The name "water chestnut" comes from the fact that it resembles a chestnut in shape and coloring. Indigenous to Southeast Asia, the water chestnut is valued both for its sweetness and its ability to maintain a crisp texture when cooked. It is believed to sweeten the breath.

At the store, look for firm water chestnuts devoid of any soft spots. Unpeeled, water chestnuts will keep for up to two weeks in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Prior to cooking, you'll need to cut off the top and peel the skin. If peeled ahead of time, store them in cold water in the refrigerator, with the water changed daily. Fresh water chestnuts are worth hunting for, as they have a sweeter flavor and are quite crisp. However, canned water chestnuts work fine as a

substitute. Drain and rinse the canned water chestnuts before using. You may also want to rinse them briefly in boiling water to get rid of any canned or "tinny" taste. They can be eaten raw or added to stir-fries. As with fresh, store the unused water chestnuts in the refrigerator in cold water. Change the water daily, and they should last for up to a week.



Water Chestnuts

Substitutes: [Jicama](#) (less expensive, but less flavorful) OR [Jerusalem Artichokes](#) OR lotus roots (especially if you don't have access to fresh water chestnuts; canned lotus roots are more crisp and flavorful than canned water chestnuts)

Wax Bean - These are similar to green beans except for the color, which can be yellow or purple. Don't confuse these with lima beans, which are sometimes called wax beans.



Wax Bean

Substitutes: Green bean (different color)

Wax Gourd - See [Winter Melon](#).

White Asparagus - Growers make asparagus white by shielding it from the sun, thus stifling the production of chlorophyll. The result is daintier looking and a bit more tender than green asparagus.



White Asparagus

Substitutes: [Asparagus](#)

White Celery Mustard - See [Bok Choy](#).

White Currant



White Currant

Substitutes: [Red Currant](#)

White Pepper - Also called White Peppercorns



White Pepper

Substitutes: [Black pepper](#) (more pungent than white pepper, leaves black specks in white sauces)

White Rice - Also called Polished Rice and Pearled Rice. Most varieties of rice are processed into white rice at the mill, where the grains are scoured to remove the husk, bran, and part of

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the germ. This processing strips some of the nutrients, but make the rice tender and fast-cooking. Many producers sell enriched white rice, which restores some of the nutrients. If well-sealed, white rice can be stored almost indefinitely in a cool, dry place.



White Rice

Substitutes: Converted rice (more nutritious, takes longer to cook) OR brown rice (nuttier flavor, chewier, less fluffy, more fiber and nutrients, takes longer to cook)

White Rice Vinegar - Also called Su. This Asian vinegar is milder and sweeter than Western vinegars. It's used in Japan to make sushi rice and salads, and in China to flavor stir-fries and soups. Western cooks often use it to flavor delicate chicken or fish dishes, or to dress salads or vegetables. Japanese brands tend to be milder than Chinese, but they can be used interchangeably.



White Rice Vinegar

Substitutes: Champagne vinegar OR seasoned rice vinegar OR white wine vinegar

White Vinegar - Also called Distilled Vinegar, Distilled White Vinegar and White Distilled Vinegar. This cheap vinegar gets all the mundane jobs, like making pickles, cleaning out coffee pots, and washing windows. Distilled from ethyl alcohol, it's a bit too harsh for most

recipes, but it does a great job with pickles. Be careful if you're substituting another vinegar in a pickle recipe--to adequately preserve, vinegar should have an acidity level of at least 5%.



White Vinegar

Substitutes: Cider vinegar (This can be used for pickling if the acidity is at least 5%--check the label. Cider vinegar may darken light-colored fruits and vegetables.) OR malt vinegar (If you're pickling with it, check the label to make sure it has at least 5% acidity. This may discolor light-colored fruits and vegetables.)

White Wine Vinegar - Wine vinegars are ideal for mayonnaise and all kinds of salad dressings. They are also used in many sauces that can be served with fish. [Buy vinegar and cooking wine.](#)

Whole Anise - See [Star Anise](#).

Wide Rice Noodles - Also called Jantaboon (Thai), Chantaboon (Thai), Sha He Fan (Chinese). These thick rice noodles are popular both in Southeast Asia and China. Soak the noodles in hot water until soft, then either boil them or add them along with some broth to your stir-fry.



Wide Rice Noodles

Substitutes: Medium rice noodles

Winged Bean - Also called Winged Pea, Goa Bean, Asparagus Pea, Asparagus Bean, Four-Angled Bean, Manila Bean and Princess Pea. These pods have deep ridges, and attached leaves that open up like wings. Young ones are best. Don't confuse this with the yard-long bean, which is also sometimes called an asparagus bean.

Substitutes: [Asparagus](#) OR [Green Beans](#) (more flavorful)

Winter Gourd - See [Winter Melon](#).

Winter Melon or Dong Gua - Also called Ash Pumpkin, Winter Gourd, Chinese Winter Melon, Dong Gua (Chinese name), Dong Gwa (Chinese name), Wax Gourd and *Benincasa Hispida* (scientific name). Resembles a large watermelon with its dark green skin. The flesh inside is white, looking much like it has been lightly covered with snow, and the seeds are white as well. Grown during the summer, it lasts a long time and thus can be eaten during the winter.

Winter melon has a very mild sweet taste. It is used in soups and stir-fries, where it absorbs the flavors of the ingredients it is cooked with. A famous Chinese dish is winter melon soup, where slices of the melon are simmered in a broth with Chinese dried mushrooms, ham, and seasonings. At banquets the soup is cooked inside a whole carved out melon, which then serves as both steamer and serving bowl. Winter melon is also used in sweets, such as Wife Cake and the Indian treat Petha.

You may be able to buy a whole winter melon, but normally you would purchase cut pieces. Placed in a plastic bag in the crisper section of the refrigerator, the melon slices will last for a couple of days.



Winter Melon

Substitutes: Bitter melon (much smaller; salt and let stand for 30 minutes before cooking to reduce bitterness)

Winter Pickle - Salted cabbage, brownish green in color, is savory and mildly salty. Sold in earthenware jars

Wok - The most important piece of Chinese cooking equipment, a wok can be used for stir-frying, deep-frying, steaming, and roasting. While a frying pan can be used in place of a wok for stir-frying (cast iron is particularly good), a wok has numerous advantages in shape, design, and material. While there are several types of wok on the market, from stainless steel to aluminum, carbon steel is best. [Buy wok](#).

Wong Bok - See [Napa Cabbage](#).

Wonton Noodles - Also called Won Ton Noodles Chinese Soup Noodles. These are thin Chinese egg noodles of various widths. They're usually served in soups. They're available both fresh and dried in Asian markets.



Substitutes: Chinese egg noodles OR angel hair pasta

Wonton Wrappers - Also called Wonton Skins. Wontons are the Chinese answer to ravioli--small packets of meat encased in a thin noodle wrapper. The wrappers are made of flour, eggs, and water, and, once filled with meat, can be easily folded and pinched into shape. While assembling the wontons, keep the stack of wrappers moist by covering them with a damp towel. You can seal the dumplings with a "glue" made with cornstarch and water. The wrappers come in different thicknesses. The thin ones work best in soups, while the thicker ones are best for frying. Look for stacks of them wrapped in plastic in the refrigerator cases of Asian markets. Store them in the refrigerator or freezer, but let them come to room temperature before using.



Wonton Wrappers

Substitutes: Eggroll skins cut into fourths OR dumpling skins (these have rounded, not square, corners) OR potsticker wrappers (thicker) OR pasta sheet

Wood Ear - See [Wood Ear Mushroom](#).

Wood Ear Mushroom - Also called Wood Ear, Woodear Mushroom, Black Fungus and Tree Ear Mushroom. Dried gray-black fungi which should be soaked in warm water for 20 minutes before use. They have a crunchy texture and a mild flavor. Often confused with cloud ears, wood ears are actually a distant relative of the cloud ear fungus. Larger and somewhat tougher, they lack the delicate taste of cloud ears. Storage and preparation of wood ears is virtually identical to cloud ears, except that they can be soaked in cold instead of warm water. They are used in soups and stir-fries. Available in most Asian markets.



Wood Ear Mushroom

X

N/A

Y

Yao Choy - See [Yau Choy](#) below.

Yau Choy - Also called Yao Choy, Yow Choy, Yu Choy, Edible Rape, Green Choy Sum and You Cai. Yau choy is tenderer and delicately flavored than other Asian cabbages.



Yau Choy

Substitutes: [Bok Choy](#)

Yee-Fu Noodles - See [E-Fu noodles](#).

Yellow Bean Paste or Sauce - Often used instead of soy sauce when a thicker sauce is required. Available in jars or cans in Chinese food stores. See also [Bean Sauce](#).

Yellow Chinese Chives - Also called Yellow Garlic Chives and Yellow Chives. These are Chinese chives that have been shielded from the sun in order to stifle the production of chlorophyll. Use them just like ordinary [Chinese chives](#).

Substitutes: [Chinese chives](#)

Yi Noodles - Also called Yifu Noodles, Yi Mien. See [E-Fu noodles](#).

Yuen-Sai - See [Cilantro](#).

Z

N/A