

# FUCHSIA DUNLOP

## A taste of the scintillating flavours of Sichuanese cuisine

### Numbing-and-hot flavour (*ma la wei*)

The most infamous Sichuanese flavour, this combines aromatic, piquant chilli heat with the lip-tingling, citrusy taste of Sichuan pepper

- **Typical ingredients:** dried chillies and whole Sichuan pepper sizzled in oil *OR* chilli oil and ground, roasted Sichuan pepper
- **Key dish:** poached fish in a sizzling cauldron of chillies
- **Uses:** aromatic oil topping for various dishes, stir-fries, Sichuan hotpot, sauces for cold dishes, dry-spice mixes

### Homestyle flavour (*jia chang wei*)

A heartwarming combination of mellow chilli heat with the umami richness of fermented seasonings

- **Ingredients:** Sichuan chilli bean paste, fermented black beans, sweet fermented wheat paste
- **Key dish:** twice-cooked pork, mapo tofu (pock-marked old woman's tofu)
- **Uses:** stews, stir-fries, dipping sauces

### Sour-and-hot flavour (*suan la wei*)

A piquant, refreshing combination of spicy heat with sour, fermented tastes

- **Ingredients:** chilli oil and vinegar/pickled chillies and mustard greens/ground white pepper and vinegar
- **Key dish:** Sour-and-hot silken tofu
- **Uses:** dressings for cold dishes, stews and soups, particularly good with fish

### Hot-and-garlicky flavour (*suan ni wei*)

This irresistible dressing combines spicy, savoury and garlicky tastes with an undercurrent of sweetness

- **Ingredients:** spiced, sweetened soy sauce, chilli oil, crushed garlic (sometimes also toasted sesame oil, sugar)
- **Key dish:** Zhong dumplings
- **Uses:** sauce for boiled dumplings, dressing for cold meats and salads

### **'Fish-fragrant' flavour (*yu xiang wei*)**

A particularly appealing combination, with its bright scarlet colour, punchy aromatics, gentle spiciness and sweet-and-sour flavours

- **Ingredients:** mild red Sichuan pickled chillies, ginger, garlic, spring onion, sugar, vinegar
- **Key dishes:** fish-fragrant pork slivers, fish-fragrant aubergines
- **Uses:** stir-fries, braised dishes, sauces for deep-fried foods; sauces for cold dishes

### **Gong Bao flavour (*gong bao wei*)**

The flavour of the classic dish Gong Bao (or Kung Po) chicken, this combines sweet, sour and savoury tastes with the spicy aromas of scorched chillies and Sichuan pepper

- **Ingredients:** dried chillies and Sichuan pepper, sugar, vinegar, ginger, garlic, spring onions
- **Key dishes:** Gong Bao chicken, Gong Bao prawns
- **Uses:** Stir-fries

### **Black bean and chilli (*dou chi la jiao*)**

One of the mainstays of Hunanese cooking, this combines the savouriness of fermented black beans with chilli heat

- **Ingredients:** fermented black beans with fresh, dried or pickled red chilli, or chilli oil
- **Key dish:** Fish with black bean and chilli
- **Uses:** stir-fries, sauces for cold dishes, steamed fish

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*Fuchsia Dunlop trained as a chef at the Sichuan Institute of Higher Cuisine in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, and has spent the past 20 years cooking, researching and writing about Chinese food. She is consultant to the Barshu Group of restaurants in London, leads gastronomic tours of China, and lectures and demonstrates all over the world. Fuchsia is the author of four critically-acclaimed books about Chinese cuisine, and has won 11 awards for her writing.*

*Fuchsia's latest book is **Every Grain of Rice: Simple Chinese Home Cooking** (Bloomsbury, 2012)*

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