

The **reclusive** food celebrity Li Ziqi is my quarantine queen

Like so many home cooks in quarantine, after I've used up the green tops of my **scallions**, I drop the white, hairy roots into a glass of water to regenerate, feeling pleased with my own sense of thrift and **pragmatism**.

reclusive 隐居的

scallion 葱

pragmatism 实用主义

But last week, after Chinese internet star Li Ziqi posted a new cooking video to YouTube called "The Life of Garlic, " I wished I could graduate from scallions on the windowsill.

In the 12-minute video, Li pushes garlic cloves into a patch of earth outside her home. A time lapse shows the sprouts growing, reaching up toward the sky.

Li sautéed the young, fresh green garlic shoots with pork. When she harvests the bulbs, she plaited the stems, hanging them up to finish the drying process, pickling and preserving the rest, and using some to **season** chicken feet and dress salad.

season 调味

Li, who lives in a village in Sichuan province and rarely speaks to press, looks not unlike a Disney princess in her crown braids, wearing a silvery fur cape, **trudging** gracefully in the snow.

trudge 跋涉

For a worldwide audience in isolation, her DIY **pastoral** fantasies have become a reliable source of escape and comfort.

pastoral 乡村的; 田园的

Her videos are deeply **soothing**. But it's not just that — they reveal the intricacy and intensity of labor that goes into every single component of every single dish, while also making the long, **solitary** processes of producing food seem meaningful and worthwhile.

soothing 安慰的

solitary 孤独的

In isolation, watching Li gather rose petals and ripe tomatoes, I catch myself thinking, is this sequence set in the past, or the future? Are these videos a record of the collective food knowledge we've already lost, or an idealized vision of its recovery?