

# 养生

*cultivate your soul*

an everyday handbook on Chinese dietary therapy

中药手册

养生 (yang sheng, or ‘nourishing life’), refers to the 5000 year old Chinese art of self-healing and is a core aspect of traditional Chinese medicine. The majority of ingredients in Chinese health are naturally cultivated herbs and plants, along with some uses of minerals and animal products.

The culture of Chinese health follows the emphasis on prevention and identifying root causes of bodily issues, rather than curing and treating symptoms. Thus, the philosophy of 养生 is to enhance health and prevent illness, and to practice nurturing the body on a day-to-day basis.

When I was growing up, it was common for my relatives to incorporate Chinese herbs in cooking and to make herbal soups for the whole family as an expression of love. Dried herbs were a constant presence in the pantry, and I quickly learned the names of them all. **Cultivate Your Soul** serves as a short and playful introduction to some of my favorite herbs, complete with recipes that allow me to share my fondest childhood memories.

甜品

*dessert*

## Jujube and Longan Soup

### Ingredients

- ~ Jujube (also called: red date)
- ~ Longan, dried
- ~ Rock sugar or brown sugar, to taste
- ~ Water

### Cooking instructions

1. Combine longan and red dates and water, bring to boil in a medium heat.
2. Add rock sugar to taste.
3. Cook for at least 30 mins, serve hot or chilled.



红枣 | Jujube (*Ziziphus jujuba*)

- ~ Small, chewy and sweet
- ~ Rich in vitamin C
- ~ High in fiber content and low calorie count



龙眼 | Longan (*Dimocarpus longan*)

- ~ Literal meaning in Chinese is "dragon eye"
- ~ Sweet tasting fruit, lychee-like
- ~ High in vitamin C and other nutrients



白木耳、银耳 | Snow fungus (*Tremella fuciformis*)

- ~ Primarily used in desserts
- ~ White and nearly translucent in appearance
- ~ In Chinese medicine, is known to:
  - ~ Clear heat and moisten dryness
  - ~ Nourish the brain (promotes nerve growth, improves learning and reducing memory deficits)
  - ~ Enhance beauty (anti-aging) by maintaining skin health
- ~ Support for the cardiovascular system
- ~ Protection from radiation
  - ~ Helps immune system by maintaining white blood cell counts

\* Its (savory) companion is the Wood ear mushroom



蓮子 | Lotus seed (*Nelumbo nucifera*)

- ~ Slightly sweet taste, used in Chinese cooking and baking
- ~ Packed with protein and vitamins (C, A, E) and minerals like magnesium, potassium, and sodium
- ~ Prevents cancer
- ~ Boosts immunity
- ~ Relieves depression, stress, and anxiety

## Snow Fungus and Lotus Seed Soup

### Ingredients

- ~ Snow fungus (also called: white wood ear, silver ear mushroom)
- ~ Lotus seed, dried or fresh
- ~ Rock sugar or brown sugar, as desired
- ~ Water

### Optional ingredients

- ~ Jujube
- ~ Goji berry
- ~ Lily bulb
- ~ Lotus root
- ~ Papaya

### Preparation

Snow ear fungus: usually comes in dried form. Soak in cold water until soft, which ususally takes half an hour or longer.

Lotus seed: also comes in dried form. Rehydrate the same way as snow ear fungus, unless using fresh lotus seeds.

### Cooking instructions

1. After all ingredients are rehydrated, combine in a pot with water, covering at least the herbs.
2. Simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Add sugar to taste, and enjoy chilled or warm.

炒

*stir-fry*



黑木耳 | Wood ear mushroom (*Auricularia auricula-judae*)

- ~ Mild taste, soft and crunchy texture, neutral in temperature
- ~ Regulates blood circulation, clears heat
- ~ Decreases risk of heart disease



百合 | Lily bulb, Bulbus Lilii (*Lilium brownii* var. *viridulum*)

- ~ Bitter in taste, mild in nature
- ~ Often dried and used in soups and stews
- ~ Supports heart and lung health: is known to moisturize the lungs, relieving cough from lung-dryness, clears heart-fire



淮山、山药 | Chinese yam (*Dioscorea polystachya*)

- ~ Can be eaten raw or cooked
- ~ Mild taste with hint of sweetness, crispy
- ~ Supports stomach, spleen, lung, and kidney health

## *Stir-fried wild Chinese yam (huai shan)*

### Ingredients

- ~ Huai shan (also called: shan yao, wild Chinese yam)
- ~ Wood ear mushroom, dried
- ~ Lily bulbs, fresh
- ~ Carrot
- ~ Celery
  
- ~ Cooking oil
- ~ Oyster sauce
- ~ Salt

### Other ingredients

- ~ Shredded pork (rou si)
- ~ Snow pea
- ~ Goji berry

### Preparation

Huai shan: peel the skin off and cut into bite-sized pieces.

Wood ear mushroom: Usually comes in dried form. Place dried wood ear mushrooms in hot water until softened, remove hard bits of stem.

Lily bulbs: separate and rinse. If it's dried, rehydrate.

Carrot: peel the skin off and dice as desired. Use a vegetable shape cutter, perhaps...

Celery: cut into small sticks as desired.

### Cooking instructions

1. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil over high heat. Add the snow peas and fry for 20 seconds.
2. Add the wood ear mushrooms and fry for 20 seconds.
3. Add the fresh lily bulbs and fry for 20 seconds.
4. Add the celery sticks and fry for 15 seconds.
5. Add the huai shan cook until softened but crunchy on the inside.
6. Season with oyster sauce and salt.
7. Fry for 30 seconds.
8. Add the wolfberries and fry for 15 seconds.

炖煮

*slow-cooked*



## Silkie Chicken Soup

### Ingredients

- ~ Silkie chicken (also called: black chicken)
- ~ Goji berry
- ~ Ginger

### Optional ingredients

- ~ Jujube (also called: red date)
- ~ Mushrooms
- ~ Corn (on the cob)
- ~ Scallions, to taste

### Preparation

Silkie chicken: usually comes ready to eat (plucked and cleaned).

Lotus seed: also comes in dried form. Rehydrate the same way as snow ear fungus, unless using fresh lotus seeds.

### Cooking instructions

1. Combine everything in a dutch oven that's just large enough to hold the chicken.
2. Add water to cover the chicken. It's OK if some of the chicken is above the water.
3. Cook over medium-high heat. After bringing to a boil, turn to medium low heat. Skim the surface with a fine sieve to remove the brown bits for 10 minutes or so, until the chicken broth is clear.
4. Simmer covered for at least 1.5 hours, up to 2 to 2.5 hours, until the chicken turns tender and almost falls off the bones.
5. The soup is now ready to serve.



枸杞子 | Goji berry (*Lycium barbarum* or *Lycium chinense*)

- ~ Has a sweet and sour taste
- ~ Well-known for its antioxidant properties
- ~ Anti-cancer, supports liver, kidneys, eyes and lung health



生姜 | Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)

- ~ A popular plant that is eaten in many forms and is commonly used as a spice
- ~ Improves body circulation by regulating digestion and reducing nausea
- ~ In Chinese medicine, is known to have warm characteristics that help improve the spleen and digestive systems

*@GARDENIAS\_ROOM*