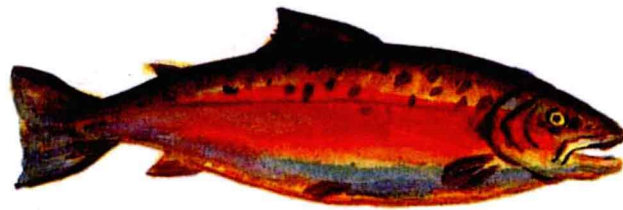
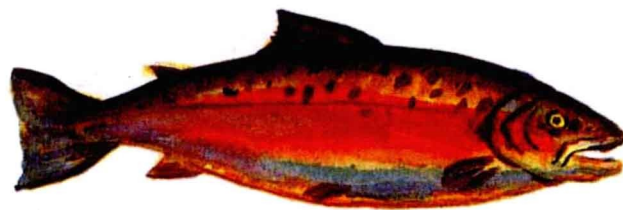


Exotic Cuisines



**Exotic
Cuisines**



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藏书章



E*xotic* **C***uisines*

**Over 250 delicious recipes
from 20 of the most exciting cuisines
of the world**

Edited by Diana Vowles



(Apple Press)

A QUINTET BOOK

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C*ontents*

Introduction	7
Soups	11
Starters, Snacks and Salads	25
Meat	43
Poultry	71
Fish and Shellfish	97
Vegetables, Pulses and Rice	129
The Baker's Oven	147
Desserts	159
Index	174



Introduction



Once upon a time, the meals found in British households were composed of a limited number of ingredients. The lamb might have come from New Zealand and fruit such as bananas and pineapples certainly weren't found in British orchards, but most of the produce was home grown. Reassuringly British veg (always two) accompanied meat that was roasted, fried or grilled in its natural state, a stranger to marinades, sauces and seasonings save perhaps a dusting of salt and pepper.

It wasn't always thus. In the days before there was refrigeration, herbs and seasonings were used extensively to try to preserve the meat for longer (and to disguise the aroma when the attempt failed). Old cookery books prove that British food was once rich, varied and inventive. So what happened? Perhaps it was the two world wars, the first of which removed the domestic staff from the majority of British households and left the housewife suddenly in charge of meals which would once have been the responsibility of the professional cook. The second introduced strict food rationing and an austerity diet where hedonism was an ounce of butter per week. Maybe it was the arrival of the fridge in most homes, which meant that meat could safely be kept without spicing. Whatever the reason, the British diet suffered, for the native ingredients of which we were once so proud began to lose their quality as factory farming got under way and produce that could once have held its own naked and unadorned now badly needed a helping hand with the spice jar.

While London and other major cities were more cosmopolitan in their outlook, it was not until the Sixties that exotica such as green peppers and courgettes made their appearance in provincial towns. They were the thin end of the wedge. As package holidays took off and Brits began to sample foreign food as a yearly treat, a whole new world of gastronomy presented itself. Dishes were discovered to contain wine, fresh herbs, strange flavours. People who were afraid of garlic ate it in Majorca, Paris, Rome and Benidorm and lived. Was there any reason why we couldn't dine like this at home?

Just as we were adjusting to the idea of continental food, Indian restaurants began popping up like mushrooms all over the land. As a nation, we fell upon the idea of curry and poppadoms as an alternative to fish and chips with unbridled enthusiasm. Chinese takeaways became part of daily life, too. And it didn't stop there – supermarkets rose to the challenge of our new-found cosmopolitanism and before long star fruit, mangoes and papayas shouldered Cox's orange pippins and hot pepper, soya and hoisin sauces stood in neat ranks on the shelves alongside good old Branston pickle.

Now we can choose our meals from all over the world, but it's not always easy to know how to use this bewildering array of produce. We eat at ethnic restaurants and return home wondering how we can reproduce a particularly delicious dish in our own kitchens. Now, more than ever, we need the aid of cookery books, for this is not the kind of cooking that we could have learnt from our mothers.

This book has been compiled to trawl a range of dishes from our global village. Within it you will find classics such as Chicken Kiev, Peking Duck and Gazpacho, along with a variety of probably unfamiliar dishes which are nevertheless easy to master. It celebrates the hot, spicy food of Mexico, the endlessly inventive cuisine of China, the delicate flavours of Vietnam. It is also a testament to the way in which national cuisines are inextricably linked with history – for example, in the food of the Caribbean there are to be found Indian, Chinese, French, British and African influences; many Spanish dishes bear the imprint of the Moorish invaders who ruled the country for three centuries; and Lebanese cuisine encompasses ingredients and styles drawn from France, Syria, Iraq and Italy.

Many exotic ingredients are now a familiar sight – any self-respecting supermarket stocks the ground cumin, cardamom, coriander, turmeric and chilli powder essential to Indian food. However, some of the recipes contained in this book do use more uncommon ingredients which require a bit of explanation.

SPECIAL INGREDIENTS

Bamboo shoots There are several kinds of canned bamboo shoots available in the West. Try to obtain the Winter ones, which are particularly tender and flavoursome. Once the can has been opened the shoots may be kept in the refrigerator, covered with water, for several days. Bamboo shoots sold as braised should be eaten cold without any further cooking.

Banh Pho These are short, flat Vietnamese rice stick noodles about 4 mm/1/8 in wide. They cook in minutes when placed in boiling water or soup and should not be overdone.

Banh Trang This is round, semi-transparent rice paper used as a wrapping for Vietnamese spring rolls and grilled meats. The dough is made from finely ground rice, water and salt, with tapioca flour as a binding agent.



Bean curd (tofu) Bean curd is made from soaked yellow soya beans ground with water. It has a mild, slightly nutty flavour and is a good source of vegetable protein. Sold in blocks in supermarkets, health shops and Oriental groceries, it can be kept in the refrigerator for a few days if covered with water. Dried bean curd skin is sold either in thick sticks or thin sheets. It should be soaked in cold water overnight or in warm water for an hour before use.

Bean sauce There are two types of bean sauce, black and yellow. The former is very salty, while the latter has a sweet flavour. Bean sauce is made from beans, flour and salt. Once the container is opened it must be stored in the refrigerator, where it can be kept for months.

Bean sprouts Yellow soya bean sprouts are available from Chinese groceries, but the most commonly used type are mung bean sprouts, which are widely available. Do not use canned bean sprouts, as the attractive crunchy texture is lost. Bean sprouts will keep for two or three days in the refrigerator.



Chinese dried mushrooms There are two main types of Chinese mushrooms: those that grow on trees, known as fragrant or winter mushrooms, and those grown on straw, called straw mushrooms. Fragrant mushrooms are sold dried and should be soaked in warm water for 20–30 minutes then squeezed dry before use. The hard stalks should be discarded. Straw mushrooms, available in cans, have a very different flavour and texture. Western mushrooms can be used as a substitute.

Coconut milk Coconut milk is frequently used in Oriental, Asian and Caribbean dishes. It is not the liquid contained in the coconut itself. To make it, combine the grated flesh of a coconut with 500 ml/18 fl oz very hot water. Pass the liquid through a sieve, squeezing the pulp to extract all the liquid, called thick coconut milk or coconut cream. If the recipe calls for thin coconut milk, add a further 500 ml/18 fl oz water to the same pulp and repeat the process. A quick method of making coconut milk is to blend 75 g/3 oz creamed coconut with 500 ml/18 fl oz hot water. Creamed coconut is available from supermarkets and Asian grocers in 200 g/7 oz slabs.

Dried shrimp These small shrimp are sold cleaned, shelled and whole. They give a salty, savoury seasoning to dishes.

Five spice powder This blend of anise, fennel, cloves, cinnamon and pepper is a staple seasoning in Chinese cookery. It is highly flavoured, so use sparingly.

Ghee Clarified butter, made by heating the butter over a low heat until all the white residue turns golden and settles at the bottom. Strain, pour into an airtight bottle and store in a cool place. Alternatively, ghee can be bought in tins from Asian grocers and some general supermarkets. It is useful in cooking as it can be heated to a high temperature without burning.

Ginger See root ginger.

Hoisin sauce A sauce made from soya beans, sugar, flour, vinegar, salt, garlic, chilli and sesame seeds which is frequently used in Chinese cookery. It is available in Chinese groceries and many supermarkets.

Mirin Mirin, a sweet cooking wine with a very low alcohol content, is an essential item in Japanese kitchens. It gives a distinctive mild sweetness to simmering liquids, glazes and dipping sauces. It is to be found in Japanese food shops and some health shops. If you are unable to obtain it, simply substitute 1 tsp sugar per 1 tbsp mirin.

Nuoc Mam A pungent fish sauce used extensively in South-East Asian cooking. It is made by layering fish and salt into large barrels and leaving the fish to ferment for three months. The accumulated liquid is then drawn off and bottled.

Oyster sauce A thick sauce made from oysters and soya beans, used in Chinese cooking. It is available in Chinese groceries and supermarkets. Stored in the refrigerator, it will keep indefinitely.

Pigeon peas These small round peas are also known as gunge or gungo peas, congo peas, arhar dah and channa peas. They are obtainable in most Asian and West Indian grocers. They are very popular in the West Indies and generally are used for the classic dish of rice and peas, though some of the Caribbean countries favour red kidney beans instead.

Plantain This is a member of the banana family, but it is not for eating raw. The flesh can be yellow, ivory or pink. Plantains are sold both green (in which case they are usually boiled) and ripe, when they are yellow and brown. If the recipe calls for ripe plantains and you can only find green, place them in the oven at 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2 until the skin turns black and begins to split.

Ponzu sauce A sauce used in a variety of Japanese dishes. It is made by combining lemon juice, mirin, sake, soy sauce, seaweed and bonito flakes and can be bought ready-made from Japanese food shops.

Rice wine A Chinese wine made from glutinous rice, also known as Shaoxing wine. Sake or medium or dry sherry can be substituted.

Root ginger Fresh root ginger is widely used all over the world. It is easily available, particularly in shops selling Oriental, Asian, African and West Indian produce. Dried or stem ginger is not a substitute. Peel off the hard brown skin with a knife before chopping or grating. To obtain ginger juice, squeeze freshly grated ginger.

Sake A Japanese wine made from fermented rice. If it is unobtainable, use medium or dry sherry instead.

Sesame seed oil In China, this is used as a garnish rather than for cooking. It is widely available in Chinese groceries and supermarkets.

Seven-spice pepper Used in Japanese cooking, this is a mixture of chilli pepper, black pepper, dried orange peel, sesame seeds, poppy seeds, slivers of nori seaweed and hemp seeds. The proportions of the ingredients are variable. It is available in Japanese food shops.

Sichuan peppercorns These reddish-brown peppercorns are much stronger than the black and white peppercorns used in the West. They are usually sold in plastic bags.



Tamarind A fruit sold squashed into bricks. Its tart, citric flavour is not unlike lemon, which can be used as a substitute. To make tamarind juice, soak 75 g/3 oz tamarind in 250 ml/8 fl oz hot water for about 30 minutes. Squeeze the pulp to extract all the juice, strain and use as required.

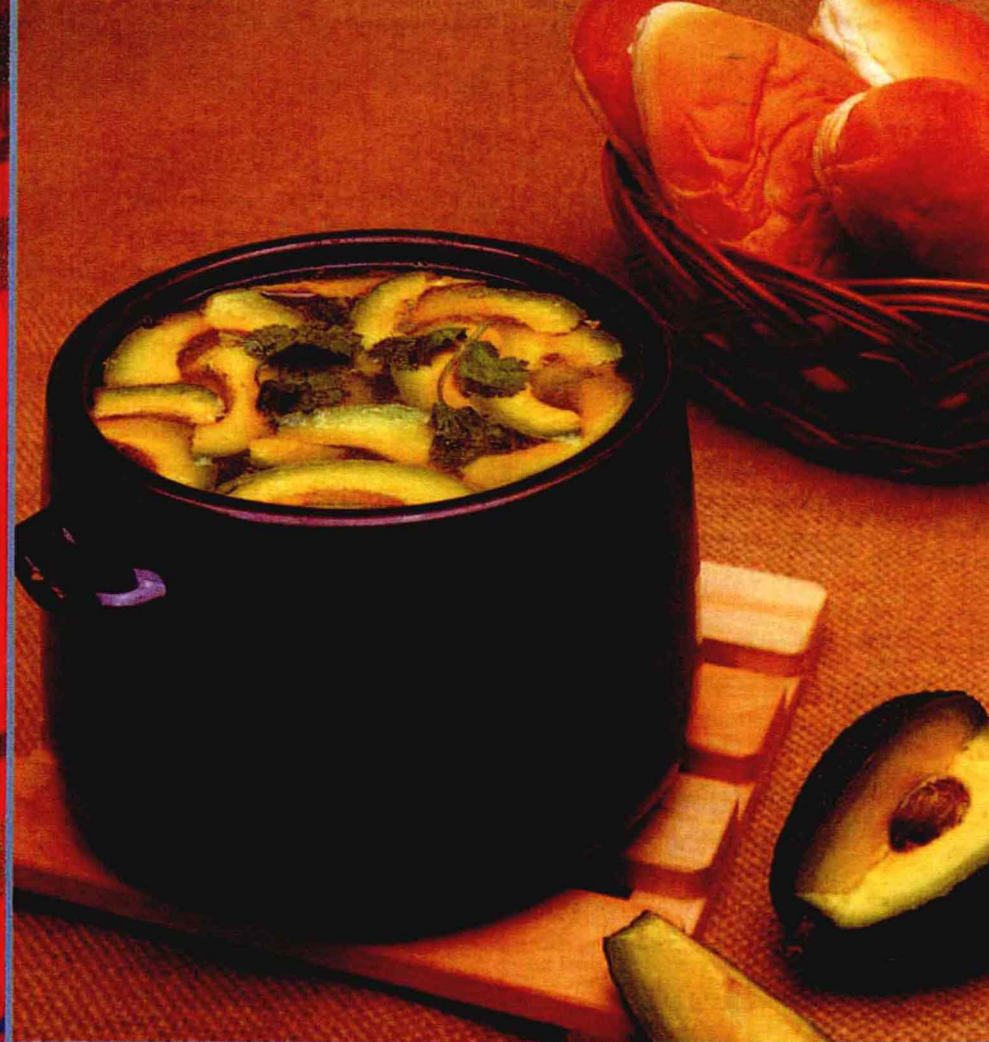
Wasabi This is the Japanese equivalent of horseradish and is the grated root of a riverside plant that is native to Japan. It is sold in Japanese groceries ready made in tubes and in powder form, to be mixed with a little water to form a paste. It is usually used as an accompaniment to raw fish dishes.

Water chestnuts These do not in fact belong to the chestnut family – they are a root vegetable. They are available both fresh and in cans; the fresh ones have a much better flavour and texture. They will keep for about a month in the refrigerator.

Wood ears Dried tree fungus, also known as cloud ears. Soak in warm water for 20 minutes, discard hard stems and rinse before use. They have a crunchy texture and a mild, subtle flavour.

Yuca Also called cassava, this is a starchy tuber with a bark-like skin. It is used extensively in Cuban and Caribbean cooking. If it is unobtainable, substitute potatoes.







Soups

Soups feature in cuisines all over the world. They may be clear, delicate and elegant, hot, spicy and enlivening or thick and filling, a meal in themselves. In this chapter you'll find a soup to suit every occasion.



CHINESE

GOOD STOCK

SERVES 12

1.5–1.75 kg/3–4 lb chicken or duck
carcass or spareribs

2 litres/3¼ pt water
3–4 slices root ginger

◆ Remove the breast meat and the legs from the chicken. Boil the remaining carcass of the chicken in 1.75 litres/3 pt water for 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the remaining water. (The adding of the cold water causes the fat and impurities to cling together, making them easier to remove.) Skim the surface of all scum which rises to the top. Add the ginger and continue to simmer gently for about 1 hour.

◆ Remove the chicken carcass from the stock. Mince the leg meat and the breast meat separately. Add the leg meat to the stock. Simmer for 10 minutes, then add the breast meat and simmer for about 5 minutes. Strain the stock through a fine sieve or muslin.



CHINESE

BEANSPOUT SOUP

SERVES 4–6

225 g/8 oz fresh beansprouts
1 small sweet red pepper, cored and
seeded
30 ml/2 tbsp oil

2 tsp salt
600 ml/1 pt water
1 spring onion, finely chopped, to
garnish

◆ Wash the beansprouts in cold water, discarding the husks and other bits and pieces that float to the surface. It is not necessary to top and tail each sprout. Thinly shred the pepper.

◆ Heat a wok or large pot, add the oil and wait for it to smoke. Add the beansprouts and red pepper and stir a few times. Add the salt and water. When the soup starts to boil, garnish with finely chopped spring onion and serve hot.



NUEVO CUBANO

SPLIT-PEA SOUP WITH
CHORIZO

The chorizo in this classic soup gives it a modern twist. It makes a spectacular lunch for company.

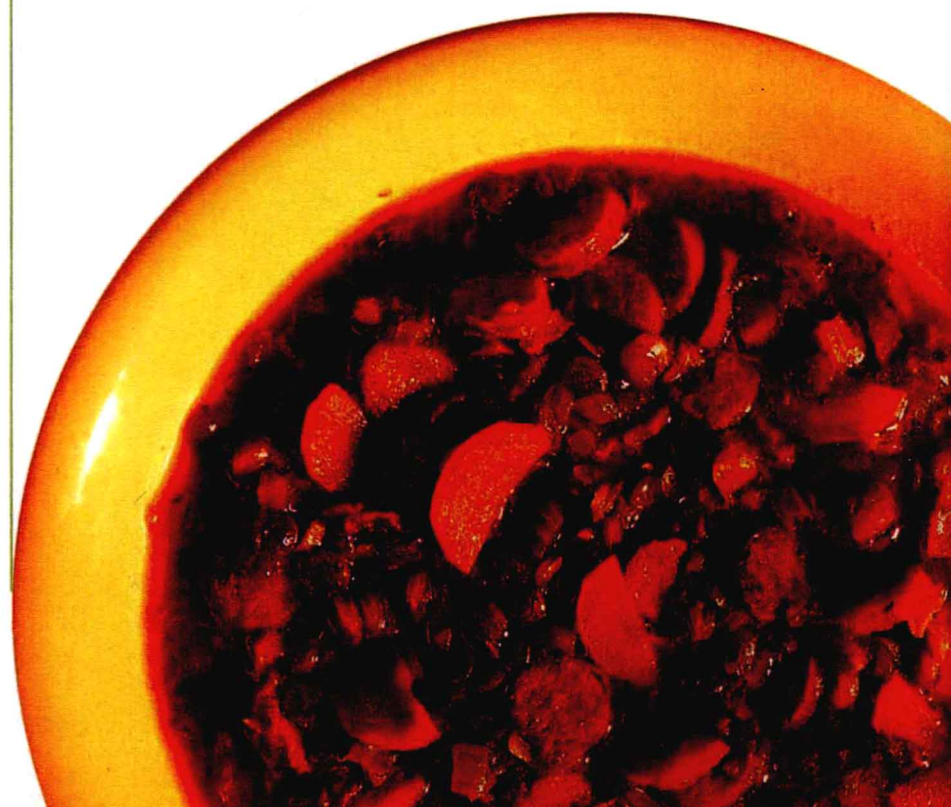
SERVES 4–6

675 g/1½ lb cured chorizo, casing
removed and thinly sliced
1 onion, chopped
1 stick celery, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
450 g/1 lb split peas, picked over
1 litre/1¾ pt chicken stock

1 litre/1¾ pt water
½ tsp dried thyme
1 bay leaf
3 carrots, halved lengthwise, and
thinly sliced crosswise
salt and freshly ground black pepper
croûtons, to garnish

◆ In a heavy-based saucepan over moderate heat, brown the chorizo, stirring constantly. Transfer with a slotted spoon to absorbent kitchen paper to drain, and pour off all but 1 tbsp fat. In the remaining fat, cook the onion, celery and garlic over moderately low heat, stirring until the celery is softened. Then add the split peas, stock, water, thyme and bay leaf, cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 1¼ hours.

◆ Stir in the carrots and simmer, covered, until the carrots are tender, 30–35 minutes. Discard the bay leaf, add the cooked chorizo, season with salt and pepper, and serve with croûtons.





ITALIAN

BEAN SOUP WITH PARSLEY, GARLIC AND CHILLI



SERVES 4

350 g/12 oz dried white kidney beans	60 ml/4 tbsp tomato purée
4 cloves garlic, crushed	2 tbsp finely chopped fresh parsley
60 ml/4 tbsp olive oil	25 g/1 oz fresh chillies
	salt and pepper to taste

- ◆ Soak the kidney beans in double their volume of water overnight. Leave the pot near a low heat source such as a radiator or pilot light if you can.
- ◆ At least 90 minutes before you wish to serve the soup, drain the beans, cover them with more water and set them to boil over a low heat. Cook them for 40–60 minutes, until they are tender. If you are using them immediately, let them stand in their cooking water. Otherwise, drain and store covered in the fridge.

- ◆ Soften the garlic in the olive oil over a low heat. As it begins to colour, drain away as much of the oil as you can and set it aside.
- ◆ Add the cooked beans, the tomato purée, the parsley and no more than 300 ml/½ pt of water. Bring the mixture to the boil then lower the heat to simmer.
- ◆ As the soup is cooking, slice and seed the fresh chillies and stew them very gently in the garlic-flavoured olive oil until they are very soft. Pour the chilli oil into a small serving bowl.
- ◆ Take half the quantity of the bean soup and liquidize it. When the consistency is completely smooth, stir the two parts of the soup together thoroughly.
- ◆ Check the seasoning. The soup is now ready to serve.



NUEVO CUBANO

WHITE BEAN AND YUCA VICHYSOISE

Toss some leftover bits of chorizo, ham or flank steak into this concoction after it's puréed and you have a Nuevo version of Galician Bean Soup, so beloved by Cubans. This potage is a variation on the authentic dish, which contains turnip, collard or mustard greens and none of the gentle seasoning.

SERVES 4–6

10 ml/2 tsp plus 30 ml/2 tbsp olive oil divided	450 g/1 lb yuca or potatoes, peeled and cut into 5 cm/2 in sections
4 tsp white wine	900 ml/1½ pt chicken stock
4 cloves garlic, crushed	2 tsp chopped fresh rosemary
25 g/1 oz butter or margarine	2 tsp chopped fresh thyme leaves
2 leeks, sliced and rinsed	2 tsp chopped fresh sage
2 sticks celery, sliced	2 bay leaves
2 x 500 g/19 oz tins cannellini (white kidney beans), drained and rinsed	salt and freshly ground white pepper to taste
	2 tbsp snipped fresh chives, to garnish (optional)

◆ In a small pan, heat 2 tsp olive oil and the white wine. Add the garlic and sauté over a low flame for about 10 minutes.

◆ Meanwhile, heat the remaining olive oil and the butter in a large saucepan. Add the leeks and celery and sauté until wilted, about 10 minutes. Add the beans and yuca to the leeks with the chicken stock, herbs and bay leaves. Add the garlic mixture and simmer until the yuca is soft, about 30 minutes. Remove the bay leaves. Add salt and pepper to taste. Purée in a blender or food processor. Garnish with chives and serve.



CAJUN

YELLOW SQUASH AND POTATO SOUP

A smooth, thick broth is poured over bits of browned potato in this rich, yet inexpensive, soup. If you want to make ahead, refrigerate after puréeing, then reheat and add the cream just before serving.

SERVES 4

25 g/1 oz butter	pinch of cayenne pepper
100 g/4 oz onion, chopped	pinch of freshly ground black pepper
1 clove garlic, finely chopped	1 tsp paprika
2 baking potatoes, cubed but not peeled	½ tsp thyme
2–3 yellow courgettes, sliced	½ tsp basil
750 ml/1¼ pt chicken stock	175 ml/6 fl oz single cream
	salt to taste

◆ In a frying pan over medium heat, melt the butter. Sauté the onion and garlic until wilted, about 5 minutes. Add the potatoes and sauté for 8–10 minutes. (You may need to add another 15 g/½ oz butter at this point.) Remove 100 g/4 oz potatoes and keep warm. Add the squash to the frying pan and sauté for about 3 minutes.

◆ In a saucepan, mix together the chicken stock and seasonings, then add the sautéed vegetables. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for about 40 minutes. Purée the soup in batches in a blender or food processor.

◆ Return the puréed soup to the saucepan and heat through. Add the cream and salt to taste and heat through but do not boil. Divide the reserved potatoes among serving bowls and ladle the soup over the potatoes.





SPANISH

CREAMY CHESTNUT SOUP

Chestnuts replace beans in the cooking of Galicia and they are used in the same way as potatoes are elsewhere in Europe. Here they make a delicious, creamy winter soup, delicately flavoured with a little cinnamon.

SERVES 4

450 g/1 lb unshelled chestnuts (or 350 g/12 oz peeled)	60 ml/4 tbsp olive oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper	30 ml/2 tbsp red-wine vinegar
1 thick slice bread	about 700 ml/1 1/4 pt light stock
	1/8 tsp cinnamon

◆ Slash the chestnut shells across the fat part of the nut, drop into a pan and cover with cold water with a little salt. Bring to the boil and cook for 20 minutes. Let them cool (but leave under water). When cool, peel the chestnuts, removing the brown skin too.

◆ Fry the bread in the oil then put it in a blender or food processor and purée with the vinegar. Reserve a handful of coarsely chopped nuts to add texture to the soup and add the rest to the blender, a little at a time, with some of the stock. Purée to a cream. Return the creamed soup to the pan, taste and season with salt and pepper. Flavour discreetly with the cinnamon. Add the chopped nuts, heat through and serve.



CHINESE

SWEETCORN AND ASPARAGUS SOUP

SERVES 4-6

175 g/6 oz white asparagus	1 tsp salt
1 egg white	100 g/4 oz sweetcorn
1 tbsp cornflour	1 spring onion, finely chopped, to garnish
30 ml/2 tbsp water	
600 ml/1 pt water	

◆ Cut the asparagus spears into small cubes. Beat the egg white lightly. Mix the cornflour with 2 tbsp water to make a smooth paste. Bring 600 ml/1 pt water to a rolling boil. Add the salt, sweetcorn and asparagus. When the water starts to boil again, add the cornflour and water mixture, stirring constantly. Add the egg white very slowly and stir. Serve hot, garnished with finely chopped spring onion.



Above: Red Gazpacho