



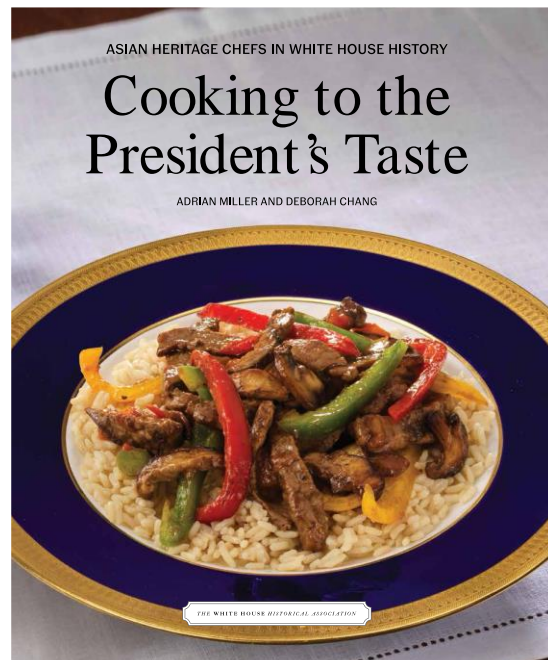
ASIAN HERITAGE CHEFS IN WHITE HOUSE HISTORY: COOKING TO THE PRESIDENT'S TASTE

Now on presale, Official Release May 8, 2025

[Buy the book](#)

March 21, 2025 (Washington, D.C.) – Asian heritage chefs have served presidents for more than a century—from navy stewards to Executive White House Chefs—yet many of their names are largely unknown. A new book by **Adrian Miller and Deborah Chang**, brings to light the hidden history of the many Asian heritage chefs who have prepared meals for the presidents at the White House, at State Dinners, on Presidential Yachts, and at Camp David: **ASIAN HERITAGE CHEFS IN WHITE HOUSE HISTORY: COOKING TO THE PRESIDENT'S TASTE.**

Two-time James Beard Award-winner, Adrian Miller became inspired to write this book after discovering a long out-of-print memoir of Lee Ping Quan, a Chinese born U.S. Navy steward who served President Warren G. Harding and then President Calvin Coolidge aboard the presidential yacht USS *Mayflower*. Quan's book, *To a President's Taste*, was published in 1939 and gives the reader a real feel for Quan's life and mindset as a chef as well as his interactions with various first families, but has been lost to history. Adrian Miller knew he wanted to bring the story to a larger, contemporary audience as part of his commitment to telling the unsung stories of those who helped shape American cuisine and nourish our country's leaders. As he delved into his research on Lee Ping Quan, he came across more unknown Asian heritage cooks in presidential food service and decided to not only make Quan's stories and recipes available again, but to expand the story to include the experiences of many Asian heritage chefs who have served the presidency. With this book,



Miller identifies presidential chefs with roots in China, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand from the 19th century to today.

With a representative, rather than a comprehensive approach, Miller draws out the unique stories of the Asian heritage chefs whose culinary accomplishments and devotion to service combine to create a powerful chapter in America's culinary history. Miller opens the book with chapters on immigrants who entered the U.S. Navy and were assigned to the culinary operations on presidential yachts and continues to an in-depth focus on Lee Ping Quan's life story. He then explores the stories of Asian heritage chefs who cooked at presidential retreats, the Vice President's residence, and the Navy Mess in the West Wing and concludes with profiles of Asian heritage executive, guest, and staff White House chefs who bring the story to the present day. Miller's research is enriched by the biographies, memoirs, cookbooks, and news coverage of the early chefs, and by his own interviews with former and current White House chefs. With this book, readers learn that each chef took a unique path to the American dream, but they share remarkable talents, a devotion to excellence, and a pride in their service.

The second half of the book follows with a more traditional cookbook format compiled by Deborah Chang, who selected and shaped sixty recipes that can be made in a 21st century home kitchen. These recipes include some from Quan's original cookbook as well as recipes from other Asian heritage presidential cooks such as White House Fried Shrimp, President Coolidge's Rice and Curry, Chicken Chow Mein, and Apple Fritters. Through the recipes, readers learn that the featured chefs specialized not only in Asian dishes, but also in creative approaches to fusion cuisine, healthy meals, and American classics such as fried chicken and chocolate cream pie.

With **COOKING TO THE PRESIDENT'S TASTE**, Miller and Chang demonstrate that White House culinary history is about much more than food. The journeys of these chefs to the kitchens of presidential yachts, retreats, and the White House and the monumental events they witnessed firsthand are not just culinary history; they are also social history, cultural history, human history, military history, and American history.

The White House Historical Association has published more than 175 titles since its first book, *The White House: An Historic Guide*, in 1962 at the request of First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy. As Stewart McLaurin, President of the White House Historical Association, explains: "Each book opens a window, in many cases for the first time, on the vast and rich subject of White House history. Just such a new window is opened in **ASIAN HERITAGE CHEFS IN WHITE HOUSE HISTORY: COOKING TO THE PRESIDENT'S TASTE**. It is an extraordinary example of the White House history that has been waiting to be discovered."

Some of the Chefs Featured in the Book:

- **Ah Loy:** Chinese born chef who served President Theodore Roosevelt on the USS *Mayflower*.

- **Irineno Esperancilla:** Born in the Philippines and served Presidents Hoover, FDR, Truman, and Eisenhower at sea and at their presidential retreats.
- **Chef Shiro Tsurusaki and Chef Lee Ping Quan:** Served Presidents Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge on the USS *Mayflower*.
- **Ariel De Guzman:** Born in the Philippines, he worked in the Vice President's Residence, the White House, and as a private chef for President George H. W. Bush.
- **Chef Cristeta Comerford:** Born in Manila, Philippines, came to the White House in 1995 and served 10 years as assistant chef before becoming the first woman to serve as executive chef in 2005, a position she retired from in 2024.
- **Susan Limb:** Born in the United States to South Korean parents, Chef Limb served as a service by agreement pastry chef in the White House from 1998 to 2005. She now co-owns the multi-site Praline Bakery & Bistro.
- **Anita Lo:** a first generation Chinese-American, Chef Lo was the guest chef for the State Dinner hosted by President and Mrs. Barack Obama for China in 2015.
- **Edward Lee:** Born in Brooklyn to immigrant parents from South Korea, Lee owns 610 Magnolia in Louisville, and is culinary director of Succotash in Washington, DC. He was the guest chef for the State Dinner hosted by President and Dr. Joe Biden for South Korea, in 2023.
- **Tommy Kurpradit:** Of Thai descent, Chef Kurpradit joined the White House Kitchen in 2005. He is currently the acting Executive Chef.

About Adrian Miller

Adrian Miller is a food writer and attorney. A two-time James Beard Award winner, his books include *Soul Food: The Surprising Story of an American Cuisine, One Plate at a Time*, *The President's Kitchen Cabinet: The Story of the African Americans Who Have Fed Our First Families, From the Washingtons to the Obamas* and *Black Smoke: African Americans and the United States of Barbecue*. He received his A.B. in International Relations from Stanford University in 1991, and a J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center in 1995. In 2022, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Denver Institute for Urban Studies and Adult College. From 1999 to 2001, Adrian served as a special assistant to President Bill Clinton with his Initiative for One America and went on to serve as a senior policy analyst for Colorado Governor Bill Ritter Jr. Miller is also the co-project director and lead curator for the "Proclaiming Colorado's Black History" exhibit at the Museum of Boulder. A certified barbecue judge, Miller lives in Denver, Colorado.

About Deborah Chang

After graduating from the Napa Valley Culinary School, Deborah Chang cooked at numerous Bay Area restaurants, created award winning recipes for Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt and the National Peanut Board. She was born and raised in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan, where she remembers routinely heading over to Windsor, Canada, to enjoy jing du pork chops, lugging Chinese groceries back across the border, and wondering why almond chicken was the most popular dish at her parent's restaurant, Dragon Inn. She is a graduate of Stanford University and the Michigan Law School. Her expansive career has included being an attorney, a tech executive, and most recently a career counselor. Her writing has been published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Hill*, and Bridge Eight Literary Press. She now resides in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband and two daughters.

ASIAN HERITAGE CHEFS IN WHITE HOUSE HISTORY: COOKING TO THE PRESIDENT'S TASTE retails for \$45.00. Purchase online at shop.whitehousehistory.org.

About the White House Historical Association

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy envisioned a restored White House that conveyed a sense of history through its decorative and fine arts. In 1961, the White House Historical Association was established to support her vision to preserve and share the Executive Mansion's legacy for generations to come. Supported entirely by private resources, the Association's mission is to assist in the preservation of the State and Public Rooms, fund acquisitions for the White House permanent collection, and educate the public on the history of the White House. Since its founding, the White House Historical Association has contributed more than \$115 million in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit www.whitehousehistory.org.