

# Just desserts

Traditional Chinese desserts are different – high on flavour and rich in health benefits

A dessert that's actually good for you? Now there's a novel concept. The Chinese have been on to it for generations, figuring ways to create delicious sweet treats that are not only low in fat and sugar, but also promote health. Wholesome ingredients, such as fruits, nuts, beans and seeds, are staples. Many Chinese desserts are designed to balance a body's yin and yang. Hence natural ingredients are preferred, and they change with the seasons.

Recipes are created around key ingredients chosen for their health benefits. Water chestnut, for example, is said to lower blood pressure. Chrysanthemum flowers are good for eyesight. Lily bulbs are nourishing. Red dates promote blood circulation. Young coconut helps the throat. Pears are soothing and rehydrating. Aloe vera hastens healing and improves skin conditions. It is no coincidence that many of the high-quality ingredients used in expensive desserts also feature in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Some long-held beliefs also prevail. It's been said black sesame soup will keep grey hairs away, while durian promotes happiness and elevates mood. During the chill winter months of Hong Kong, certain desserts can help counter coughs and sore throats. In the energy-sapping humidity of summer, recipes change to promote rehydration and lower body temperature.

The Chinese enjoy desserts not only after a meal, but as a mid-afternoon snack. Local dessert shops have long been a favourite gathering place in Chinese communities. Even today, traditional shops draws crowds of youngsters who can't get enough of the simple, old-fashioned desserts made from recipes their grandmothers might use at home: desserts like mung bean soup with kelp, almond milk with lotus seeds, or velvety egg-white pudding, whose smooth, pale appearance is comparable to white jade.

One of Hong Kong's most famous and historic shops is Yuen Kee Dessert in the Island Crest neighbourhood, Mid-Levels West. Ever since it opened decades ago, the shop has been serving up consistently high quality, traditional desserts. Famous menu items include a huge collection of sweet cream soups (walnut, almond and sesame being among the many flavours), loranthaceae tea (a kind of sweetened Chinese herbal tea) with boiled egg, taken to balance a body's yin yang. Much loved as a true Cantonese classic, the shop is also renowned for its pastries. Its aromatic sponge egg cake, a signature dish, stays true to the recipe handed down through generations, and not easily found today.

In the Chinese restaurant kitchens of leading five-star hotels, desserts are viewed as a gastronomic triumph. It is a chef's job to see guests leave fully sated, their senses and their health heightened by his latest creation.

Diners feel the thrill of anticipation. What special dessert will delight them this time? It might be a modern interpretation of a traditional favourite, or something completely new. Perhaps a pudding made with honey at Aberdeen Marina Club. Or nourishing sweet lily bulbs with blood-enriching longan from Island Shangri-La. Who could resist a refreshing green tea and aloe vera pudding at Kowloon Shangri-La, the ultimate sweet treat for summer?

The saying about saving the best for last is certainly true when it comes to the dessert course of a Chinese meal. Best of all, we know that by enjoying these delicate sweet sensations, we're also doing our health a favour.

## 享甜品 談養生

傳統的中式甜品既美味又滋補，叫人刮目相看

甜品能促進健康？

當真？

當真！

中國人自古就懂得融合養生之道與口腹之樂，把水果、堅果、豆類、瓜子仁等健康食材，炮製成低脂低糖的甜品，不單對人體有益，還能平衡人體陰陽。

中式甜品所講究的是材料是否天然、合時，每一種材料都有特定的食療作用。舉例說，荸薺據稱能降低血壓，菊花可明目，百合清毒，紅棗活血，椰青潤喉，梨子滋潤，蘆薈有助傷口愈合及改善膚質，黑芝麻糊能預防頭髮早白，榴槤令人精神愉快等。

很多名貴甜品所採用的材料，也是傳統的中藥材。坊間的甜品食方也有根有據地採用特定的食材，因時制宜，在寒冬服用能除痰止咳的滋潤甜湯，在盛夏則多吃有助補充身體水份及消暑的甜點，以收實際食療效用。

西方人一般在飯後才享用甜品，中國人則不然，除了飯後，下午茶也是甜品時光。往日，人們愛三五成群把臂前往甜品店聊天，如今，年輕一輩也嚮往海帶綠豆沙、蓮子杏仁茶、幼滑雙皮奶等懷舊甜品，樂於在甜品店重溫祖母煮的甜湯帶來的甜絲絲感覺。

位於西半山繒城峰附近的源記是在香港享譽數十年的甜品老字號，核桃露、杏仁露、芝麻糊、桑寄生蛋茶等都是招牌甜品，還有鎮店之寶雞蛋糕，用代代相傳的獨門秘方炮製，香滑鬆軟。

除了街坊甜品店外，五星級酒店的中式餐廳大廚，也勇於推出改良版的健康甜品或全新概念的創作，務求令顧客耳目一新。

各大餐廳的座上客也熱切期待品嚐不同的創作，例如深灣遊艇會的蜜糖菊花蓮子糕、港島香格里拉大酒店的鮮百合銀杏燉圓肉，和九龍香格里拉大酒店的蘆薈綠茶凍布丁等。

可見，壓軸好戲這個美名，甜品當之無愧，因為甜品不單令人垂涎，更是養生之秘訣。

High quality natural ingredients are used in Chinese desserts as many of them are designed to balance the body's yin and yang. 中式甜品採用高品質的天然材料，以達到養生之效。

The executive chefs at the Aberdeen Marina Club, Island Shangri-La and Kowloon Shangri-La in Hong Kong have devised these wholesome, healthy and delicious dessert recipes to nourish your body and keep you cool during the spring/summer months

深灣遊艇會、港島香格里拉大酒店及九龍香格里拉大酒店的總廚，為今個春夏設計了三款具營養價值、美味又保健的甜品，讓大家感覺口味一新



From Aberdeen Marina Club, HK  
深灣遊艇會推介

#### Honey and chrysanthemum lotus seed pudding

Cooling chrysanthemum, soothing honey and lotus seeds eaten to increase energy and vitality make a perfect pick-me-up dessert for the summer months.

##### Ingredients (36 pieces):

Water	3.04 kg
Honey	760 g
Lotus seeds (can)	1 can (430g)
White chrysanthemum	40 g
Gelatin powder	170 g
Ice cubes	910 g

##### Method:

1. Melt honey and gelatin powder in hot water, mix well.
2. Steam lotus seed until soft, shred chrysanthemum, mix well with honey and gelatin mixture, add ice and stir until melt.
3. Keep in fridge for 90 minutes until set.

#### 蜜糖菊花蓮子糕

菊花清熱，蜜糖滋潤，蓮子補中益氣。把各種材料混合，便成為一道清熱滋補的夏日糕點。

##### 材料 (36件)：

清水	3.04千克
蜜糖	760克
罐頭蓮子	1罐 (430克)
白菊花	40克
魚膠粉	170克
冰粒	910克

##### 做法：

1. 將蜜糖及魚膠粉加入熱水拌勻。
2. 蒸軟開邊蓮子，白菊花切成絲，加入步驟一的混合物拌勻，最後加入冰粒攪拌至全溶掉。
3. 放入雪櫃冷藏90分鐘即成。



From Island Shangri-La, HK  
港島香格里拉大酒店推介

#### Double-boiled fresh lily bulbs with ginkgo and dried longan

Sweet lily bulb, good for the heart, lungs and throat, combines with ginkgo (for memory and brain aging) and blood-enriching longan in a dessert created to nourish the body and calm the spirit.

##### Ingredients (1 portion):

Water	604 g
Rock sugar	160 g
Fresh lily bulbs	3 qing (a little bit)
Dried longan	2 pieces
Ginkgo	3 pieces
Red dates (no pit)	2 pieces

##### Method:

1. Soak the dried longan for 30 minutes.
2. Boil the rock sugar in water and filter the sugar water.
3. Double-boiled all ingredients in sugar water for 1 hour to 1½ hours.

#### 鮮百合銀杏燉圓肉

百合滋陰安神，補中益氣；銀杏能改善心腦血液循環，增強記憶力，延緩腦部退化；圓肉補血。配合使用，可達到滋補、寧神的功效。

##### 材料 (一位用)：

清水	604克
冰糖	160克
鮮百合	三錢 (少許)
圓肉	兩粒
銀杏	三粒
去核紅棗	兩粒

##### 做法：

1. 將圓肉用水浸半小時。
2. 把冰糖用水滾至溶透，然後隔渣。
3. 把全部材料放進冰糖水燉60-90分鐘。



From the Kowloon Shangri-La, HK  
九龍香格里拉大酒店推介

#### Chilled green tea and aloe vera pudding

Believed to have more health benefits than any other food or drink, green tea has been used in Chinese traditional medicine since ancient times. Here, it is teamed with aloe vera, another health-giving "miracle" plant, in a delicious new taste.

##### Ingredients (12 portions):

Water	380 g
Castor sugar	190 g
Whipping cream	190 g
Green tea powder	8 g
Aloe vera	300 g
Gelatine powder	19 g
Ice cube	190 g

##### Method:

1. Mix the green tea powder, castor sugar and gelatine powder. Add boiled water and stir well.
2. Pour whipping cream and aloe vera into the mixture and stir. Add ice cube and mix well.
3. Chill for 90 minutes and serve.

#### 蘆薈綠茶凍布丁

綠茶的食療作用據說比任何食材都豐富，中國人自古便懂得以之作為中藥材料。這道甜品用綠茶配合另一種天然「補品」蘆薈，不單令味道層次更豐富，而且更收雙重保健功效。

##### 材料 (12人份)：

清水	380克
砂糖	190克
奶油	190克
綠茶粉	8克
蘆薈粒	300克
魚膠粉	19克
冰粒	190克

##### 做法：

1. 將綠茶粉、砂糖及魚膠粉和勻後，加入熱開水，拌勻。
2. 於步驟一的混合物加入奶油及蘆薈粒，拌勻。最後，加入冰粒拌勻。
3. 放入雪櫃冷凍90分鐘即成。