



# BITE by BITE

Conquering My Culinary Bucket List One Dish at a Time  
By Emily Banks Wooten

*“Asian food is very easy to like because it hits your mouth very differently than European food does. In European food, there may be two things to hit – maybe sweet and salty, maybe salty-savory, but Asian kind of works around, plus you have that distinct flavor that’s usually working in Asian food.”*  
- TOM COLICCHIO



## Easy, flavorful Asian-inspired fare

I recently made two Asian-inspired dishes that I really enjoyed. Not only were they both packed with flavor, they were also quick and easy to prepare.

We had a couple pounds of thawed ground beef we needed to use that was left after Hubby made tacos one evening when I worked late. Wanting to do something a little different with it, I ran across a recipe called “Easy Korean Ground Beef” that looked interesting. One of the ingredients was called sweet chili sauce which was something I was not familiar with.

After Googling it and a variety of pictures appearing of bottles that all said sweet chili sauce, I felt assured that I would be able to find some at HEB. I first looked on the aisle with the sauces and found some but then I went to the Asian section and found more. The thing that was curious about it though was that the two sauces looked so different. One was a thin brown liquid and the other was a much thicker

*“Chinese food tries to engage the mind, not just the palate. To provoke the intellect.”*

- NICOLE MONES

red sauce. I ended up buying both, thinking that when I got home I would taste them both and determine which one I liked better. I ended up using the thin brown one for this dish, but I know I’ll use the other at some point in the future.

I served the “Easy Korean Ground Beef” over a bed of white rice, with some fresh roasted asparagus on the side. Hubby and I enjoyed it, but Daughter didn’t care for it, claiming it was too sweet and that she doesn’t care for “sweet meat.” Oh well.

A few evenings later, I prepared “Egg Roll Skillet,” a recipe I’d recently found online that was a one-pan dinner chock full of veggies and protein that really intrigued me. It was

basically supposed to be like the filling of an egg roll. It had received a number of glowing reviews and several people mentioned liking the dish but missing the crunch factor that comes with the wonton wrapper that is the outside of a traditional egg roll. I knew that I had seen wonton strips before on the aisle with the croutons and other various salad toppings so I picked up a package of those to sprinkle on top for the crunch factor. Knowing that if this one-pan dish wasn’t liked by my family I would be in quite a fix, I picked up a few other things at HEB to accompany it. I got a couple of selections of fresh sushi, as well as some microwavable dumplings from the freezer section. I also mixed a little wasabi into some soy sauce for dipping.

The “Egg Roll Skillet” ended up being quite the hit, with all three of us going back for seconds. And truth be told, it’s actually a very healthy meal too. Both of these dishes were quick and easy to make and really had lots of flavor. I would recommend either if you find yourself hankering for some Asian-inspired fare. ■

*“Food is our common ground, a universal experience.”*

- JAMES BEARD



### Easy Korean Ground Beef

From [ohsweetbasil.com](http://ohsweetbasil.com)

- 1 tablespoon canola or vegetable oil
- 2 lbs. ground beef, or ground chuck
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup soy sauce
- ½ cup orange juice
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup sweet chili sauce
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 green onions, sliced, plus more for garnish

• Heat the oil in a cast iron pan over medium high heat. Add the ground beef and garlic, using a meat chopper to break up, cook until browned all the way through, about 3-5 minutes, then drain grease.

• Whisk together the remaining ingredients. Pour the ingredients all over the beef and simmer until thickened slightly. Serve over rice with steamed veggies and garnish with green onions.



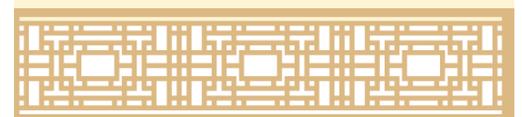
### Egg Roll Skillet

From [thekitchn.com](http://thekitchn.com)

- 1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
- 1 pound ground pork
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
- 1 (14-ounce) bag coleslaw mix
- 2 tablespoons tamari, soy sauce, or coconut aminos
- ¼ cup thinly sliced scallions
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon rice vinegar

• Heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add the pork and onion, and season with the salt and pepper. Cook, breaking up the meat into small pieces with a wooden spoon, until the meat is cooked through and the onion is tender, about 8 minutes.

• Add the garlic and ginger and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the coleslaw mix and soy sauce and cook, stirring occasionally, until the cabbage is crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat, add the scallions, sesame oil and vinegar, and stir to combine. Taste and season with salt and pepper as needed.



## SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR SENIOR WITH A FOREVER KEEPSAKE FROM POLK COUNTY ENTERPRISE



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE EMAIL  
[KEITHA@POLKENTERPRISE.COM](mailto:KEITHA@POLKENTERPRISE.COM)  
[CHERYL@POLKCOUNTYPUBLISHING.COM](mailto:CHERYL@POLKCOUNTYPUBLISHING.COM)

*Class of 2024*