

Recipes For Living



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Section 1

Introduction

Food is important in our lives.

Food makes our body healthy.

Food brings people together.

Food helps us celebrate.

We are a group of refugee and asylum seeker women living in Darwin, Australia that love to cook, eat and share food. In this book, we share food recipes and stories that are dear to us. These stories have a rich history that can be traced back many years and sometimes centuries. Our stories are connected to countries where we have lived, special places and important people in our lives. Sometimes our memories are about festivals, ceremonies or other events where food was shared. Many of us grew food that we cooked with!

Recipes are also a way of thinking and talking about the things that help us get through hard times. As women that are working hard to find a new life in Australia, we have documented some of the ingredients that have been important to us. These are stories about our strengths, skills, knowledge, abilities and values we hold precious in our lives.

Our hopes

In recording our Recipes of Life, our hopes are that this book will be a resource for other people seeking safety and a new life in Australia. For those facing hard times in the future, may your mind, body and soul be nourished by the recipes we share.

Acknowledgements

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Section 2:

Remembering Food



Smelling or tasting different ingredients can remind us about special times in our lives. Like when we learnt to cook. Or where we ate a special meal. Or who was there when we ate together.

Here are some things we remember about ingredients we use in our cooking.

Monmaya likes the smell and taste of garlic and ginger. "You always smash these together first when cooking. It goes into a hot pot with oil and cumin seeds added. Then you add turmeric, salt, masala, chilli, tomatoes, coriander, vegetables or meat. Everything is served with rice and dahl." Monmaya learnt to cook sitting inside watching her mother and grandmother. She was about 11 years old when she started helping her mother, every morning and afternoon.

She remembers eating together with the family, when her father and brother come home from working. There was a big family, 9 people.



Ma Aye remembers tasting lime for the first time. It was bitter. Lime is used in soup.

Ma aye's grandmother used to mix lime with 1.25 kilograms of sugar to make medicine. It was very good for gas. Salt and lime mixed together makes medicine called Ragu.

Another mix of lemon, ginger, galangal, tamarind and a bit of alcohol was put in a glass jar and left out in the sun for 3 months. This mix was put on the skin and massaged over painful areas of the body or on broken bones, covered with a bandage and followed with morning prayers. All Burmese know this recipe. When Ma Aye was in Year 3 at school she remembers her grandfather lying in pain for a long time. He was paralysed. She watched her grandmother mix this medicine, put it on his skin and wrap it in leaves. He was sick a long time, he started eating slowly and eventually recovered. It can be used for stroke too.



Whenever Thlay smells fish paste or fermented fish it reminds her of her grandmother. Grandma would go to the market to buy fish paste and use it to cook soup. Water, chicken powder, red onion, chilli and lemon grass would be added. Some people don't like it. Thlay laughs about how the big smell would take over the whole village.

Just like the smells that fill our kitchen, our stories will always be with us.

Food Recipes

Vegetable Curry & Dahl (Bhutan/Nepal) - Monmaya

Ingredients

Curry

- 1 cup vegetable oil
- Garam masala
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp cumin seed
- 2-3 onions, sliced thinly
- 2 zucchini, chopped
- 2-3 cm piece ginger
- 4 cloves garlic
- 2-4 red hot chilli, chopped finely
- 2 red capsicum, chopped
- 1 kilo Potatoes, chopped into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch pieces
- 2 cans Tomatoes
- 1 bunch fresh coriander
- 2-3 eggplant, halved then thinly sliced
- 1 head Broccoli, chopped into small florets
- 1 cauliflower, chopped into small florets

Method

Curry

1. Smash garlic and ginger together in mortar and pestle.
2. Put oil in large pot. When hot add, onion and cumin seeds.
3. Stir until soft
4. Add capsicum and ginger/garlic mix.
5. Add potatoes and chilli.
6. Cook through until soft.
7. Add tomatoes, capsicum, zucchini, cauliflower, broccoli and eggplant. Simmer until cooked through.

Dahl

1. Soak lentils in water for around 20 minutes.
2. Smash garlic and ginger together in mortar and pestle.
3. In hot pot with small amount of oil, add cumin seed and stir for one minute.
4. Add sliced onion.
5. Add garlic and ginger mix.
6. Add 1/3 bunch coriander.
7. Add turmeric powder and stir.
8. Add soaked lentils.
9. Add 3 tablespoons of salt.
10. Add 5 times the height in water and boil for 25 minutes.
11. Add tablespoon of salt before serving.



Dahl

- 1 packet green lentils
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2cm piece fresh ginger
- 1 onion sliced
- 1/3 bunch fresh coriander
- 1 tsp cumin seed
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 3 tbs salt



Monmaya was born in Bhutan and as a young girl moved to Nepal, living in Golhap Refugee Camp for 20 years. Monmaya remembers learning to cook by watching her mum as a little girl. Rabi her husband, learnt to cook when he was 5 or 6 from his grandparents. Before that it was too dangerous for children to be near the open fire.



Rabi said that everyone grew up with this dish and everyone cooked it. It's standard food in Nepal and Bhutan. It is a good source of energy because it's mostly vegetables. You can add meat if you have it. But the recipe is always the same.

Monmaya said this dish is always cooked in their house using whatever vegetables are available. They grew many vegetables back in Nepal in their garden, including chilli, garlic and ginger. Most other things were available from the market including chicken, fish and oils. They used to make oil too from mustard. Rabi shared that sometimes he went fishing at a nearby river to catch barramundi or salmon.



Tip

Add extra chilli if you like it hot.

Serving Suggestion

Drinks are often served at meal time. Rabi said their family drank black tea boiled in a pot with milk added or sometimes red tea with lemon and sugar. Many different teas were available at the market.



Fish Bowl (Burma – Mon State) -

Ma Aye



Ingredients

- Cooking Oil
- 2 kilograms of fresh barramundi
- 1 bunch fresh Thai coriander
- 2 large tins tomatoes
- ½ kilo onions
- 4 inches Fresh ginger
- 4 nobs Garlic
- Turmeric
- Chicken stock
- Fish sauce
- 2 tins coconut milk (optional)
- salt

Method

1. Crush ginger and garlic in mortar and pestle.
2. Blend fish in food processor and put in large bowl.
3. Add turmeric (turmeric stops the fish smell) and half the garlic/ginger mix to the fish bowl.
4. Add 1 tsp chicken stock and mix.
5. Dip fingers in tomato and roll fish into balls.
6. Fry in hot oil and set aside.
7. Using same oil, sauté onions.
8. Add rest ginger/garlic mix and turmeric for colour and fragrance. Stir constantly.
9. Add fish sauce, tins of tomatoes, chicken stock, salt and stir.
10. Add fish balls. (Fried or raw fish balls can be added to the pot).
11. When cooked, garnish with coriander leaves to serve.
12. Option: Add Coconut milk to pot before serving with rice.



Tips:

Turmeric stops the fish from smelling.
Fish balls can be eaten as is after frying.
Look at salt when chopping onion, to stop watery eyes.

Serving Suggestions

Ma Aye said in their family they would often have a rice noodle soup with their meal made with vegetables, chicken or goat. Lemon grass was used too. Dhal might also be served.



Ma Aye learnt to cook from her mother. She's been cooking and helping out in the kitchen since she was eleven. They would cook fish a lot in their house to feed the whole family. They would walk to get their ingredients from the market.

Family used to come every day to her house to cook. One day when Ma Aye was about 18, her mother's sisters daughter came. This is how Ma Aye learnt to cook chicken liver and eggplant, another one of her favourites.



Chicken and Pumpkin (Burma – Karen State)

Thlay

Ingredients

- 2 kg chicken legs, skin off and cut twice across flesh
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup oil
- salt and pepper
- pumpkin chopped into 2 inch chunks, leave skin on
- bunch fresh coriander, chopped
- bunch parsley chopped
- 1 onion, sliced
- 2 inch piece of fresh ginger, chopped
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 3 tomatoes, cut and quartered
- 2 lemon grass stems, chopped
- 1 inch piece of galangal, chopped
- 2 tabs salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ chicken stock cube
- 1 bunch shallots chopped



Method

1. Mix and crush in mortar and pestle: lemongrass, ginger and galangal
2. Add to cooking pot along with chicken, tomatoes, turmeric, salt, oil, stock cube onion and garam masala.
3. Bring to simmer 20 minutes
4. Add pumpkin, coriander, parsley and shallots.
5. Simmer extra 10 minutes.
6. Serve with rice.



Thlay was born in Karen state, Burma. She lost her mother when she was young and travelled with her grandmother and grandfather to a Thailand refugee camp near Pha Pong when she was 11 years old.

Grandma taught Thlay everything she knows about cooking including this 'Chicken and Pumpkin' dish when she was about 13. They lived in a poor country, so everyone grew their own vegetables and animals like rice, corn, beans, pumpkins, chicken and pigs. They had dogs and cats too. Meals were always eaten inside the house. Sometimes they ate together as a family, sometimes they ate when they were hungry. There were often other family there too, sharing food together with Aunty, Uncle and cousins.

Thlay followed her grandmother everywhere as she worked on the farm with grandpa. While it was a difficult life, Thlay's happiest memories are of feeding and caring for sick pigs, chickens and goats. She would make medicine using a mixture of clothes washing powder and thick oil to put on the injury. Otherwise, the animal would be killed and eaten.

Chinese Dumplings (Tientsin, China)

Xue Ying

Ingredients

- 2 kilograms wheat flour
- Sesame oil
- 12 eggs
- 1 packet shrimp (Chinese shop)
- Chinese pepper (Chinese shop)
- Salt
- Oil, vegetable
- 2 bunches garlic chives
- 1 kg potatoes
- Small block tasty cheese
- Spinach



Xueying has been in Darwin just two months and loves the beautiful beaches. Chinese dumplings are her favourite meal. Xueying has fond memories of the Spring Festival when every Chinese family cooks dumplings. It's the celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year. The time of year when winter has passed, it is warming up and new life starts. "Even if you are away from home, you must return back home". It is an important festival for the Chinese people. The dumpling reminds them of this change in seasons.

Xueying started learning to cook this dish in Tientsin when she was 10 years old. She would help by washing the dish, putting wood on the fire, and pressing the skins. Finally her father let her cook and by the time she was 15, she could prepare the meal for the family. Xueying and her mother, father and brother would eat together.

Xueying has fond memories of her grandmother. She shared many stories with Xueying about the Spring Festival, a tradition which dates back 2000-3000 years in Chinese history. "I remember my grandmother loved me very much". Living until she was 86 years old, grandma holds a special place in Xueying's heart along with the memories of Chinese dumplings.

Green Papaw Salad (Burma – Karen state)

Ma Aye and Mie Mie

Ingredients

- 1 medium sized green paw paw, peeled and grated
- 2 potatoes cubed and boiled
- 1 handful glass noodles, prepared
- 1 handful egg noodles, cooked
- 1 onion
- Garlic
- Turmeric
- Sweet paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
- 1 tablespoon dried shrimp, crushed in mortar and pestle
- 2 teaspoons stock powder
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 2 tablespoons tamarind



Method

1. In large bowl mix all ingredients together except tamarind.
2. Squeeze tamarind in hand over the mix, using juice only.

Tip

Use disposal gloves to mix.
Adjust to taste.



Vege Lasanga (Australia)

Cindy

Ingredients

- 500g pumpkin
- 2 bunches English spinach or young silver beet
- 500g ricotta
- 6 spring onions
- half cup parsley
- 12 sheets instant lasagne
- 425g jar of tomato pasta sauce
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsps plain flour
- 2 cups milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup parmesan cheese
- Pepper



Method

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees.
2. Steam the pumpkin for 3 minutes, then cool.
3. Plunge spinach into boiling water until wilted and drain well to remove excess liquid.
4. In a large bowl combine ricotta, onion and parsley.
5. Arrange 3 sheets of lasagne on the base of an ovenproof pan (33cm x 23cm).
6. Top with 1/3 each of pumpkin, tomato sauce and spinach ricotta mixture.
7. Repeat twice and top with remaining lasagne sheets.
8. To make topping, break eggs into flour and mix well to remove lumps. Whisk milk, pour into a saucepan and bring to the boil, whisking until smooth and thickened. Add pepper to taste.
9. Pour over top of lasagne and sprinkle with cheese.
10. Bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown.
11. Cut into squares and serve with green salad.



Vegetable Frittata (Australia)

Cindy

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 500g sweet potato, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup water
- 420g can sweet corn kernels
- 2 cups of broccoli, cut into florets
- 60g grated cheddar cheese
- 6 eggs
- 1/2 cup milk

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees and grease a 20 cm square baking tin with oil.
2. Steam the onion and sweet potato and then the broccoli.
3. Layer baking tin with half the sweet potato and top with corn, broccoli and onion and remaining sweet potato.
4. Whisk eggs and milk, pour over vegetables, top with cheese and bake for 30 minutes or until firm in the centre.

Variation

Substitute 5 cups of any cooked vegetables for those listed.



Tip

We used a mix of normal chicken eggs and bantam eggs in our recipes. Ma aye said drink a raw bantam egg mixed with a small amount of honey "to make you strong".

Banana Flower in Banana Leaf (Burma -Karen State)

Ma Aye

Ingredients

- pkt bamboo shoots, scored and hard sections removed, and chopped
- 1 tsp turmeric
- banana leaves – cut into small sections
- fresh young leaves from Great Morinda tree, seperated from stem
- 4 stems long lemongrass, sliced finely
- 3 small banana flowers, older parts removed, sliced finely
- 2 knobs garlic, chopped
- 750 gms marinara mix
- 2 tsp chicken stock
- 1 1/2 cups rice flour
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 3 onions
- 4 heaped tsp sweet paprika
- 2 tsp salt
- small chillies, chopped



Preparation:

1. Cover bottom of large pot with water. Add 1 tsp turmeric and banana flower. Leave to soak.
2. Place bamboo shoots in water in small saucepan. Soak 10 minutes.
3. Mix rice flour with water – mix.
4. Prepare banana leaves in boiling water. Soak for one minute and remove with tongs. Set aside.

Method

1. Sauté onions in oil in large saucepan.
2. Add 2 tsp turmeric and paprika.
3. Squeeze water out of banana flower and add to pan.4. Add bamboo shoots, chicken stock, chilli, salt, quartered onion and flour mix. Stir well.
5. To prepare banana leaf parcels, take one banana leaf. Lay Morinda leaf on top and brush with oil. Scoop on two tablespoons of banana flower mix. Top with few pieces of marinara mix. Cover with another Morinda leaf.
6. Fold over top, bottom and sides. Keep in place with tooth picks.
7. Steam 13 minutes.
8. Serve parcels with rice.

Tip:

The Great Morinda tree is commonly known as the Cheese Fruit tree or Smelly Cheese tree. It can be found growing on the beachside parklands in Rapid Creek. To assist with stomach problems, boil the leaves in water and drink.



Banana Flower Wrap and Sticky Rice (Burma – Karen State)

Thlay

- 1 nob garlic
- 4 lemongrass, chopped
- 12 banana leaves softened and cut
- 8 small chillies
- 2 onions - finely chopped
- 2 banana flowers chopped
- Oil
- 1 tsp tumeric
- 1 1/2 tblsp chicken powder
- 200g sticky rice flour'
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tsp salt



Method

1. In mortar and pestle, crush chilli, garlic, lemongrass and onion together.
2. Place banana flower in large bowl.
3. Add flour, salt and turmeric. Mix well.
4. Add chilli, lemongrass mix a handful at a time and mix.
5. Add chicken powder, flour, oil and water. Mix well.
6. Place 1/2 cup of mix on a banana leaf and fold.
7. Place wraps layered in steamer and steam for 30-35 minutes.



Sticky Rice

- 1kg sticky glutinous rice flour
- 250 gms rice flour
- 1 cup sugar
- pinch salt
- 3 cups fresh shredded coconut mixed with 1/2 tsp salt
- 3 cups water + 1 cup extra to get right consistency
- 1 cup oil
- Softened banana leaves.

Method

1. Mix flours, sugar, salt water and oil together by hand to smooth dough-like consistency.
2. Knead in bowl.
3. Add more water or oil as necessary – should not be sticky or hard.
4. Place tongue shaped piece (about 2 tblsp) on banana leaf and fold.
5. Place in steamer, steam for 30 mins
6. When cooked, unwrap parcels and roll in coconut to coat.

Tip

To soften her banana leaves, Thlay waves them over an open flame for about a minute.



Section 3

Recipes of Life

These are the Recipes that we have developed for surviving hard times and staying happy in life!

Just like Food Recipes, they include Ingredients (the skills, knowledge and values we draw on) and a Method (how it is all mixed together).

Due to the diverse range of languages in our group, sometimes it was difficult to communicate in words. So when it came to making a Method for our Recipe of Life, we decided to draw an image to show how our ingredients come together. In other words, this is what our Recipes of Life look like!

In the Method you will find some clues, as to the sources of our ingredients (or how we came to have them in our lives). Sometimes these Ingredients came from special places, things we have learnt or experienced along the way, or gifts we have been given from special people in our life.

We hope these Recipes might be of benefit to others who might experience hard times and are trying to stay connected to the things that are important to them.



Ma Aye's Recipe For a New Life

Ma Aye surrounds herself with the things that are important to her to stay strong.

Ingredients

Family

Fun

Friendship

Hope

Kindness

Respect

Hardwork

Community

Prayer



Method

This is what staying strong looks like to Ma Aye. She and her family are walking and having fun on the beach. The sun represents hope. In the distance, there are lots of people representing the Burmese community in Darwin.

This is where Ma Aye finds friendship, kindness and respect.

Behind them is the temple, where Ma Aye uses prayer to draw strength and show respect for her culture.

The boats on the water remind Ma aye of her culture. Round boats in Burma are used for fishing and racing. A huge shell is blown to signal the start of cultural celebrations. Other cultural symbols are the 'pasi', a wooden drum and flute, used to make music for dancing.



Monmaya's Recipe for Good Family Life

When Monmaya first arrived in Australia her husband was sick in hospital for a month. She was worried and had small children to look after. These are some of the things that help her get through difficult times such as this.

Ingredients

Support

Language

Rest

Kindness

Love

Respect

Friendship

Culture

Method

Right at the very top of this picture, Monmaya placed her family and friends. This is where love and kindness is found.

Monmaya says it is important to have "the love of my family and my children around me." Monmaya also values support from organisations like Melaleuca Refugee Support Centre.

Monmaya said it is important to rest and have a break from caring and being able to look after the children.

In the middle is the garden where trees and food is grown. Food is an important part of the culture.

The men in the bottom of the picture symbolise the importance of culture, language and respect. In October, Monmaya celebrated an important day for men. Her Uncle was there. There was lots of food and it was a celebration.



Thlay's Recipe for Happy Life

During hard times, these are the things that help Thlay.

Ingredients

Children

Culture

Love

Friendship

Respect

Method



Thlay's drawing represents the memories that she has carried with her from Burma to Australia. In the top half of the picture is her family and friends in Darwin. Her children are important to her and she keeps them close. This is where love is.

Friendship is also important for making her home in Australia. Thlay's cousins offer friendship and support by helping her and looking after her children. In the bottom half of her picture, she is singing and dancing with grandma and grandpa. This is where Thlay first learnt about culture back in Burma.

There are other family coming to join them. A buffalo horn is used to call extended family together to start cultural celebrations. There are always lots of people there eating together, wearing special clothes, dancing and singing. The 'clo' is a special wooden drum used to make music.

Respect is important to Thlay and so these family traditions continue in her new home.



Xue Ying's Recipe for Life

Xue was able to draw on a recent situation in which she felt unsafe to identify the things she has drawn strength from before to get through hard times.

Ingredients

Safety	Religion/Faith	Regular exercise.
Friends	Healthy food & vegetables	Hope
Truth		Family

Method

A feeling of safety is the most important ingredient for Xue. This can be created by having supportive friends around who can help you move out of unsafe situations.

Truth comes from a strong belief in doing the right thing and is sourced from the Buddhist scriptures. Xue has a strong connection to her religion. By living out the truth of her faith, Xue creates for herself a strong mind. She has a strong sense of "The Buddha – he protect me". Healthy food and vegetables and regular exercise are mixed together to create a strong body. Strength in living comes from the strong mind and strong body working together.

Hope is inspiring Xue to write a book that would be titled 'How to Become Auspicious'. There is not direct translation in context, but roughly means how to become wonderful, good or lucky. Her target audience is 1.3 billion Chinese people, so they "become nice people, nice world, whole world peaceful".



Xue misses her family back in China but knows that she can call and reconnect with them anytime.

Where our Ingredients come from

In our group we noticed that we shared some ingredients that were important to all of us. They included **friendship** and **culture**.

Here are some of the stories of how we came to value these Ingredients in our lives.

When Monmaya was a small girl living in Bhutan there were not many opportunities for friendship. People lived far away from each other and were too busy working not playing. But Monmaya did have a brother and sister for company.

Monmaya moved to a refugee camp in Nepal when she was 10 where she met a special friend. She developed more friends because houses were nearer to each other. Monmaya and her special friend would often go to the market, plant together in the garden and do everything together.

In Darwin, Monmaya has one special friend in Millner. It's not too far to travel.



Ma Aye has many happy memories of friends growing up in Burma, playing, cooking, sleeping over and eating together. School was very important for developing friendships, from the day she started as a five year old. She had so much fun and happy times with her friends she would sometimes not go to school. She would go to the beach and not tell the teacher. This seems funny now.

Ma Aye still has lots of friends in Australia today including many from the Burmese community.

Thlay knows the value of having a friend who can help in difficult times. When she arrived in Australia five years ago, her husband's cousins were a great help and talked with her. People from Melaleuca Refugee Support Centre are like friends too, helping with practical things like finding a house.

Today, Thlay's cousins still help with looking after Rosie.



Culture

Monmaya was just seven years old when she learnt about the importance of culture. Her mother taught her about the 'tika' used to decorate the forehead.

Monmaya says the last day of the Deepawali Festival (Festival of Lights) is an important time for men when women put a tika on their brother's forehead. It's a big big celebration in Nepal. Family gathering is more significant with lots of family coming to the house. Monmaya grew up watching her mother cook, eating together with family, lots of dancing, brightly coloured decorations and having to go to another house because there was too many people.



Ma Aye can remember back when she was two, when her mother, father, grandparents and other family gathered at home during religious celebrations. In Arakan culture they celebrate the special Buddhist retreat with WarWin at the beginning of the 4 month rainy season and WarHtwet at the end. Ma Aye would watch her grandmother make pots out of green bamboo to hold a special plant. These pots are used to pay their respects on the alter in the corner of the house. Other offerings were put there too, like money wrapped up and sticky rice. All the family would come to the house to pray.

Thlay was four when she remembers learning about culture. She was living with grandma and grandpa in the hills of Burma. It was a poor area where they worked hard growing rice.

The full moon each month is always a special day when the family stay home and friends come to celebrate. Thlay's grandma and grandpa would cook a meal of corn, chicken and sticky rice in banana leaf. It was made on the open fire with rocks and wood. They made alcohol from rice and this was shared. There was always lots of singing and dancing holding each other, when grandma and grandpa were around.

Thlay also watched her grandma weave cloth to make bags and clothing. These are special Karen clothes that are worn to church. Thlay still wears these clothes today as her father sends them to Australia.



Even though we live in a different country now, we will always hold our traditions and special memories to keep us strong.

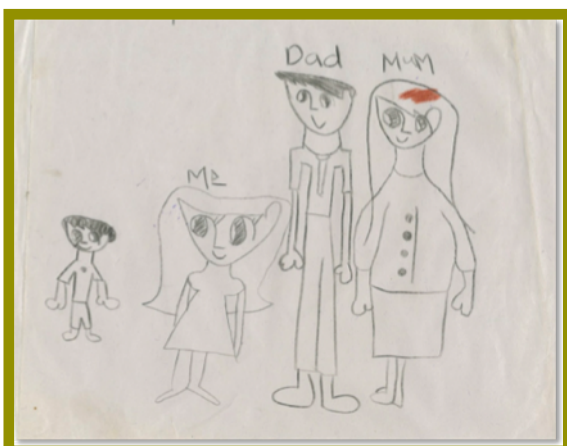
Budhiman drew a picture of himself kicking a football in Bhutan when he was a boy.

This drawing includes his baby son and the house they lived in together as a family.

In the left hand corner is a 'shankha', a special shell that was blown to signal the start of cultural ceremonies.



Now we are passing on the special ingredients that we use in our lives to our children.



My Family
by Myo Thingi Kyaw (8yrs)

Special Recipe Tips in hard times

When life gets hard, we have different ways of coping and making ourselves feel better. These are like Special Tips when your Recipe needs something extra!

If feeling upset, Monmaya goes for a walk to clear her mind and see things better. Sometimes she goes to the shopping centre to take a rest and make her mind good. Other times, she does things to keep busy, like washing clothes, cleaning the house or playing with the baby.

Sometimes we feel sad when we think about loved ones we have lost. Last week Thlay remembered her grandma who died in America at the age of 96. She was a very special person to Thlay. But it helps to think about the good memories.

We like to do things that make us happy like spending time with our children or singing and dancing. Thlay's husband plays guitar and her children and cousins love to sing. This makes Thlay feel happy. It reminds Thlay of the times when she would sing and dance together with grandma and grandpa in a circle and the clo playing.



We also have special festivals that are fun times. Ma Aye looks forward to the Water Festival in April. This is when the women can pick which man they like and offer them water. The men give money. Festivals are an important part of our culture and keep us strong.

Sometimes life in Australia can be challenging. Even though Rabi worked very long days in Nepal, he says that working in Darwin is harder because of the mix of cultures and language groups. As a security guard he often has to deal with drunk or angry people. Once he was assaulted and had his phone broken. Despite this, Rabi treats everyone with respect. He tells himself "I'm doing my job and doing my best". He always smiles even when people look aggressive. Rabi says he learnt to teach people with respect from his grandparents. They were the kind of people who sorted out conflict non-violently. With these values, Rabi became a respected leader in the temple. It is his faith which gets him through hard times.

Our special Tips are practices and rituals we've learned over time
that work for us when life gets hard.

Serving Up our Recipes of Life



We are grateful for the skills and knowledge that we have been given. These pictures are our way of honouring the important people and places that have contributed to our lives.

In memory of the good times Thlay shared growing up with her grandpa and grandma.

Grandpa worked hard and carried around on his head, this bamboo basket which he had made. It was used to collect and carry wood for the fire and vegetables from the farm to the house. Grandma was always weaving on this loom, to make shirts and skirts for the family. There were lots of children in her family. Thlay values the many friends she had at school and the church where she would go to pray.



Ma Aye created this butterfly. It represents being able to fly with freedom and happiness.

We serve up these pictures as a way of acknowledging where our Ingredients have come from.

Our Collective Recipe for Starting Life in a New Country

It can be a very scary thing arriving in a new country. You cannot speak English. You don't have a home. And you may not know anyone else. You might be used to living in a small village, not a big city. You might be used to cooking on a fire, not an electric stove.

Or you might have to travel in a car, not ride a bike to get around.

We have all had to learn new things that seemed strange and scary. This can be very hard. But we have been able to use the skills, knowledge and things that are important to us to get through these hard times. By overcoming our fears, we have also developed new skills. As a group of refugee women who has started a new life in Australia, we've come up with the Ingredients that were important to us. Our Method shows how to mix them together to get the best result.

We hope this Recipe for Starting Life in a New Country helps others that are just arriving in Australia.



Ingredients

Hard work. This has been in our family for a long time. It is helpful when I tell myself "I don't know everything". It helped me keep busy, learning new language, working in a job and to think about my future.

Perseverance. This is something we have learned to do. It goes along with Hard Work. It helps us to keep going.

Courage. We didn't know we had this until we had to do things that were scary. Like travel in a lift to go up to the top of the big hospital. Or get into a car, something I had never seen. Darwin is a place of many languages, many cultures, and many skin colours. Courage has helped us find new life in a new place. It grows with time.

Kindness. This is a gift from other people that have helped us. Organisations like Melaleuca Refugee Centre and Anglicare have helped us find a house, sort out rent problems, go to English classes, Centrelink and doctor's appointments.

Family. Some of us have family in Australia that helped us and looked after our children when we arrived. My parents have now come to Australia and I am helping them settle here.

Friendship. This has been important to us since starting school. Now we have developed new friendships in Australia; some of these are with neighbours and our children walk to school together.

Connection. We have come from countries where there is a strong sense of belonging in the community. So we have created new connections with neighbours, visitors and the Burmese community in Darwin.

Support. This is a gift from our family, friends, organisations and the people we have made connections with in our community.

Culture. Back in our home countries, we had many cultural traditions that were special to us. Like going to the temple with an Uncle. And the giving of a necklace to my mother when I got married. And the baby naming ceremony with the Buddhist monk 100 days after the birth on my baby. We have been able to hold onto our culture, by continuing to practice the traditions that are important to us.

Faith. This comes from the religious traditions we have grown up with or learnt from family members. There are many different religions and places to worship in Australia. For me going to the temple is like drinking cold water. I do not feel angry; I feel happy... peace.

Method

Start with a big bowl. Add a big heap of Hard Work. And the same amount of Perseverance. Mix these two ingredients together. Even when life gets hard this mix will help you keep going and never give up. Add a small pinch of Courage. No matter how scary this new life seems, Courage will grow bigger over time.

Do not be afraid to add Kindness and Support when it is offered from organisations that are there to help you. This is a good time to add Family and Friendship to the mix. Courage should be growing now, so add a sprinkle of Connection by meeting a neighbour or joining the community from your cultural background. Give it a good stir.

Put in a good dose of Faith. Like a drink of cold water, it will bring happiness and peace. Finally, add in Culture. This trusted ingredient has been around a long time and will continue to serve you well.

Whenever things feel a bit scary, eat more of your Recipe for Starting Life in a New Country.

Serve it with music, dancing, singing, drums, special clothes or sari's, bright lights and coloured paper, or whatever the tradition is in your country for celebrations and ceremonies.



We picked ingredients from the Mulch Pit Community Garden...



...and shared our meal with the women from the NUC Op Shop

