

Susanna Foo

Susanna Foo was born in Inner Mongolia, China, but spent most of her childhood and adult life in Taiwan. While studying at the National Taiwan University, she met, and later married E-Hsin Foo. She and her husband migrated to the United States, and moved to Philadelphia in 1979 to help run the Center City branch of Hu-Nan, a neighborhood Chinese restaurant owned by her husband's family.



Although Susanna had no experience working in a professional kitchen, it was at Hu-Nan that she began her culinary journey. At Hu-nan, she met Jacob Rosenthal, the founder of the Culinary Institute of America, who introduced her to various cuisines and was a major influence in her life and career. With Mr. Rosenthal's recommendation, Susanna studied at the Culinary Institute of America where she learned French cooking techniques that she would later adapt to Chinese cuisine. Susanna's cooking style has changed the paradigm of Chinese food –where she sought to meld authenticity and improvisation with the use of the best and freshest ingredients, unhemmed by national or regional boundaries.

In 1987, she opened Susanna Foo Chinese Cuisine, a restaurant that served Chinese and French fusion cuisine, which Esquire Magazine named best new restaurant of that year. In 1989, Susanna was recognized as best new chef by Food & Wine magazine. Her first book, "*Susanna Foo Chinese Cuisine: The Fabulous Flavors and Innovative Recipes of North America's Finest Chinese Cook*", which she dedicated to Mr. Rosenthal, was published in 1995. It also awarded the best international cookbook by the James Beard Foundation. In 1997, Susanna received her second James Beard Foundation Award as best chef in the Mid-Atlantic region.

She opened a new restaurant in Atlantic City in 2003, and published a second book in 2005. In 2009, she decided to sell Susanna Foo Chinese Cuisine after husband fell ill. After her son, James, died from ALS in August 2019, Susanna decided to retire and spend her time doing consulting work, conducting cooking classes, and fund raising for ALS and the Philadelphia Free Library.