

Flavors of China



Sichuan Cuisine

Sichuan cuisine is one of the 8 regional cuisines found in China. If you have ever eaten at a Chinese restaurant in the U.S. you have probably eaten Sichuan cuisine! Food from this area is famous for its' numbing, tingling, and spicy flavors. Even though Sichuan is more known for its' "hot" dishes, sweet and sour flavors are added to dishes for a softer touch of the palate. The most commonly used spices in Sichuan are "The Five Fragrances": fennel, aniseed, cinnamon, and clove, as well as chili and Sichuan pepper.

Sichuan cuisine is also known for its' deep and rich flavors. It is the pepper of this area that really makes the Sichuan cuisine special and different from other Chinese regional cuisines, thus adding rich and spicy flavor to the dishes. Located in southwestern China, Sichuan province's climate is humid, damp, and steamy in the summer and damp and chilly in the winter. This helps explain why people from Sichuan are so fond of spicy food. These peppers help drive out the dampness through perspiration, which in turn helps promote a healthy balance in the body.

In addition to hot and spicy cuisine, Sichuan cuisine can also be prepared salty, sweet, sour, bitter, or smoky. These flavors will stimulate your senses from head to toe and leave you with an incredibly fulfilled both physically and spiritually! You will never become bored eating in Sichuan once you begin to understand why this Chinese treat cuisine as a "philosophy of the tongue."

Before you try Sichuan cuisine, make sure you have the following seasonings: Sichuan pepper, black pepper, chili, shallots, ginger, and garlic. These are the seasonings that bring out the intense flavors the dishes are renowned for. The other fresh produce used ranges widely from pork to beef, fish, vegetables, and even tofu.

Depending on your personal preference, the cooking methods of Sichuan cuisine vary according to the texture and bite-size required for each specific dish. The common cooking methods used includes stir-frying, steaming, braising, baking, and the popular fast-frying.

Tofu and a bit of ground meat are dressed up with spicy seasonings in this popular dish. The name, Mapo Doufu, means "Old Pockmarked Grandmother Bean Curd" in honor of the old woman who is reputed to have invented the dish. Feel free to substitute ground beef for the ground pork if desired.

STUDENT CONTEST

HOST YOUR OWN COOKING SHOW!

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/yaq2wx2f> and choose a recipe for one style of Chinese cuisine. Create a video of you mastering the art of Chinese cuisine. Submit footage of yourself creating the recipe of your choice for a chance to win. Submissions are due April 30, 2018.

All students who submit a video will be entered into a semester drawing to win a \$250.00 Visa Gift Card!

Teachers, if your student wins, you get a \$500 Visa Gift Card!



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