

Flavors of China



Hunan Cuisine

“Without chilies you can’t eat rice.” This is a popular Chinese saying from Hunan Province. If you’ve experienced the numbing spiciness of Sichuan food, see how you will react to Hunan food which is even spicier by its pure chili content.

Hunan is a province located in the middle reaches of the Yangtze watershed in South Central China. The name Hunan actually means “south of the lake” taken from its geographical location. Hunan cuisine, also known as Xiang cuisine, has earned a place among the Eight Great Cuisines in China because of its combination of chili, sour, and hot flavors as well as its fresh aroma and deep colors.

The history of Hunan cuisine dates back to the 1600s when chilis first found their way to China from the Americas. Hunan cuisine assimilated a variety of local forms and eventually evolved into its own distinct style.

The cooking techniques of Hunan cuisine comprises stewing, frying, smoking, braising and pot-roasting. Also it is considered to be even spicier than Sichuan food by its pure chili content which provides a purely hot flavor.

Chilies are a whole class of flavorings in Hunan province and spicy food has long been a great predilection for local people. You may wonder why Hunan Cuisine is mostly chili-based. The reason lies in the hot humid summers and chilly wet winters which drive the people to have spicy foods in order to release extra dampness from the body according to Chinese medicinal concepts.

One of the most well-known Hunan dishes you should know is General Tso’s Chicken which was actually created by a Hunanese Chef, Peng Chang-Kuei and the original recipe was way more tart and spicy than the oily sweet version commonly found in America. There are some other common examples of Hunan cuisine like shredded pork with fresh peppers, “dry-wok” chicken, stir fried tofu in chopped chili sauce and smacked cucumbers.

For those who don’t like very spicy food, a helpful hint: You can adjust the amount of chili in order to get the amount of heat that you want.

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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