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**CHINATOWN NEW YORK CITY IS THE MAIN COURSE FOR
DIVERSE ASIAN DINING**

More Than 10 Original Asian Cuisines Make Chinatown a Food Lover's Heaven

NEW YORK, NY -- In Chinatown, deciding what kind of Asian cuisine to eat might take you longer than actually *eating*. Not that window-browsing past dozens of tempting restaurants, all located within blocks of each other, is so unpleasant a way to work up an appetite.

Cantonese, Shanghainese, Szechuan.... and those are just the *Chinese* cuisines! Thai, Korean, Japanese, Indonesian, and others round out a list of fares representing a gastronomic dream for lovers of Asian food. More than 10 distinct Asian fares grace Chinatown's bustling streets. The plethora of cuisines reflects the myriad of regions from which people have migrated to Chinatown, a neighborhood that has been steadily growing for some 150 years.

Another great aspect of dining in Chinatown is the value. Most menus are as inexpensive as they are diverse, perfect for an impromptu, casual dinner for two, for four or for the whole family, leaving diners as pleased with the check as they were with the food.

Following is a sampling of various cuisines that can be found in Chinatown, including examples of restaurants serving that particular cuisine.

- ? **Cantonese:** Cantonese cuisine is the one most familiar to most Westerners. Cantonese cooking is known for its fresh and simple approach to a diverse array of food, including seafood, chicken, beef and vegetable dishes. Steaming and double boiling are used more often than frying to prepare food, with vegetables cooked in the shortest time in order to retain the natural crispness and flavor.

In Chinatown, there are restaurants that specialize in four categories in Cantonese cuisine, which includes Cantonese seafood restaurants that specialize in fresh seafood such as fish, crab and lobster; Dim Sum restaurants that feature increasingly popular a la carte-style lunch specialties such as *dumplings*, *shui mai*, *turnip cakes* and *sticky rice*; barbeque restaurants that offer dishes such as *roasted suckling pig*, *roast pork* and *soy sauce chicken* and last but not least, the "snack and noodle" restaurants that feature dishes such as *dumpling soup*, *wonton noodles* and *lo mein*.

Cantonese restaurants in Chinatown include:

Seafood: *Ping's Seafood* – 22 Mott Street (b/t Worth & Mosco Streets), 212-602-9988
Oriental Garden Restaurant – 14 Elizabeth Street, 212-619-0085

Dim Sum: *Golden Unicorn* - 18 East Broadway, 212-941-0911. One of the most popular spots for *dim sum*
A&B Lobster King House - 1 Mott Street, 212-566-0930

Barbeque: *Big Wong* - 67 Mott Street (b/t Bayard & Canal Streets), 212-964-0540
Hon Wong Restaurant – 244 Canal Street, 212-966-8832

Noodles: *Chanoodle* - 79 Mulberry Street, 212-349-1495
New York Noodle Town – 28 Bowery, 212-349 0923

- ? **Fujianese:** There are three branches of Fujian cuisine - Fuzhou, South Fujian and West Fujian. Fuzhou dishes are common in the eastern, central and northern parts of Fujian Province and flavors of the dishes tend to be sweet and sour; South Fujian dishes are served in Xiamen, Quanzhou, Zhangzhou and the golden triangle of South Fujian, are spicy with a tangy taste, and hot sauces, custard, and orange juice are used as flavorings; West Fujian dishes are more savory, prevailing in the Hakka region with strong local flavor.

Fujianese cooks are experts when it comes to preparing seafood, a point which is not surprising considering the 167 varieties of fish and 90 kinds of turtles and shellfish found in the Fujian province. The cuisine also produces delicacies such as *bird's nest*, *cuttlefish*, and *sturgeon*.

Many Fujianese restaurants are located along East Broadway in Chinatown between Grand and Canal Streets.

One such notable Fujianese establishment is the *Ming Dynasty Restaurant* on 75 East Broadway, (Phone: 212-732-8889). *Ming Dynasty Restaurant* also serves Cantonese dishes.

- ? **Shanghainese:** Shanghai has blended and refined the cuisine of its surrounding provinces. Its flavors are heavier and oilier than Cantonese cuisine, featuring preserved vegetables, pickles and salted meats. Lime-and-ginger-flavored "*1,000-year-old*" eggs are perhaps Shanghai's best-known culinary creation. *Steamed soup dumplings* are the most popular examples of Shanghainese cuisine today. Another favorite is *beggar's chicken*, which is wrapped in lotus leaves, covered in clay and oven-fired to steamy, tasty perfection; in olden times, it was baked in the ground. Other popular dishes include *hairy crab*, "*eight treasure*" duck, "*drunken*" chicken, *braised eel* and *yellow fish*. Dumplings, breads and noodles are served more often than rice.

Shanghainese restaurants in Chinatown include:

Evergreen Shanghai: 63 Mott Street (b/t Bayard & Canal Streets), 212-571-3339

Joe's Shanghai: 9 Pell Street (b/t Bowery and Mott Streets), 212-233-8888

New Green Bo: 66 Bayard Street (b/t Elizabeth & Mott Streets), 212-625-2359

- ? **Szechuan:** Originating in the Sichuan province of western China, Szechuan cuisine has an international reputation for being spicy and flavorful. Common preparation techniques in Szechuan cuisine include stir frying, steaming and basting. Beef is more common in Szechuan cuisine than it is in other Chinese cuisines, due to the widespread use of oxen in its native region. Stir-fried beef is often cooked until chewy, while steamed beef is sometimes coated with rice flour to produce a rich gravy.

Some well-known Szechuan dishes include "*kung pao chicken*" and "*twice cooked pork*." Although many Szechuan dishes live up to their spicy reputation, often ignored are the large percentage of recipes that use little or no spice at all, including recipes such as "*tea smoked duck*."

The aptly named *Grand Sichuan* on 125 Canal Street (at Bowery) is a good place to sample some Szechuan dishes (Phone: 212-625-9212). Also, try the *Peking Duck House* on 28 Mott Street for a different variety of dishes (Phone: 212-227-1810).

- ? **Chiuchow:** Chiuchow (also spelled Chaozhou or Teochew) cuisine originates from Chiuchow, a city of China in the Guangdong Province, not far from Canton. Therefore, this style of cooking is similar to Cantonese cuisine in many aspects. There are, however, several unique dishes in Chiuchow cuisine not found its Cantonese counterpart. Examples include *steamed goose*, *shrimp balls*, and *Fun Goh*, a steamed dumpling filled with dried radish, peanuts and ground meat.

Chiuchow cuisine is also known for serving rice soup, in addition to steamed rice with meals, which is quite different from Cantonese porridge or congee. The Chiuchow rice soup is very watery with the rice sitting loosely at the bottom of the bowl.

Chiuchow restaurants in Chinatown include:

243 Grand Restaurant: 243 Grand Street, 212-334-3886

Bo Ky Restaurant: 80 Bayard Street, 212-406-2292

- ? **Taiwanese:** Taiwanese food tends to be simple and light, with most of the flavors of the ingredients preserved. Regional snacks like *Chiayi mushrooms* and *shark-fin stew* abound. Pork and poultry are widely used in Taiwanese cuisine; beef and lamb are becoming popular too.

Not surprisingly given Taiwan's island locale, fresh-water fish and other forms of seafood are also abundant in Taiwanese cooking. A popular side dish is raw clams soaked in a mixture of soy sauce, rice wine, vinegar, and hot pepper. Oysters have multiple uses in dishes from oyster soup to *O-a-chian*, an omelet made of oysters, eggs, and corn starch mixed, fried, and served with sweet and sour sauce.

Taiwanese restaurants in Chinatown include:

Sogo Restaurant: 11 Mott Street, 212-566-9888

Jobee's Orient: 3 Howard Street, 212-941-0400 / 212-941-8285

- ? **Vietnamese:** Vietnamese chefs like to refer to their cooking as "the nouvelle cuisine of Asia." And indeed, with the heavy reliance on rice, wheat and legumes, abundance of fresh herbs and vegetables, minimal use of oil, and treatment of meat as a condiment rather than a main course, Vietnamese food has to be among the healthiest on the planet.

Vietnam is a large country of some 70,000,000 people, and its broad cuisine reflects the diversity of its people. Cuisine deriving from northern Vietnam, much of which is relatively inhospitable to agriculture, exhibits fewer herbs and vegetables, with beef by far the most popular meat. Vegetables are more prevalent in central Vietnamese cuisine, and are often served as smaller, multiple dishes to accompany a meal. Southern Vietnamese cuisine uses hot chilis for spice and often infuse fruit into meat and vegetable dishes, which are larger than portions in the central region and are served more like a traditional main course.

Vietnamese restaurants in Chinatown include:

New Pasteur: 85 Baxter Street (b/t Bayard & Canal Streets), 212-608-3656

Pho Viet Huong: 73 Mulberry Street (b/t Bayard & Canal Streets), 212-233-8988

Nha Trang: Two locations – Restaurants on 87 Baxter Street and on 148 Center Street, 212-233-5948 / 212-941-9292

Thai Son Restaurant: 89 Baxter Street, 212-732-2822

There is a small strip of Vietnamese restaurants located along Baxter Street between Canal and Bayard Streets, as well as several restaurants along Doyers Street in Chinatown.

- ? **Malaysian:** Malaysian cuisine reflects the mix of cultures of Malaysia itself with influences from Malay, Indonesian, Chinese and Indian ethnic groups. Rice, noodles, bread, curry, fruit, coconut, seafood and chicken tend to dominate the dishes of this Southeast Asian nation. Peanuts are also readily utilized, often in the form of spicy, flavorful paste sauces.

The Malaysian dish best known to most Westerners is *satay* – meat kebabs in spicy peanut sauce. Another popular Malaysian dish is *nasi lemak*, which literally means rice cooked in coconut milk. This is generally served as a platter with curry chicken, cucumber, small dried anchovies, hard-boiled egg and hot spicy sauce, among others. Other notable dishes include *fried soybean curd in peanut sauce*, *sour tamarind fish curry*, *fiery curry prawns* and *spiced curried meat in coconut marinade*.

Malaysian restaurants in Chinatown include:

Jaya Malaysian Restaurant: 90 Baxter Street, 212-219-3331

New Malaysia Restaurant: 48 Bowery Street, 212-964-0284

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Nyonya: 194 Grand Street, 212-334-3669

Penang: 41 Elizabeth Street, 212-431-8722. Restaurant serves Indonesian and Malaysian fusion dishes

Soho Eastanah – 212 Lafayette Street, 212-625-9633

Taste Good II Malaysian Cuisine: 53 Bayard Street, 212-513-0818

- ? **Indonesian:** As would be expected from a cuisine originating from a country that consists of some 13,000 islands, Indonesian cuisine is quite diverse. Indonesian cooking is rich with coconut milk, or *santen*, which is used to prepare beverages, sauces, soups, and even rice. Traditional spicing builds on a base of coriander, pepper, and garlic, and added to these are turmeric, bay leaf, lemon grass and cassia, a local tree bark whose flavor closely resembles cinnamon. Scallion, shallots, and peanuts also find their way into many Indonesian recipes, as do dried anchovies and prawns.

Highly spiced curries, often diluted with coconut milk, are a mainstay of Indonesian cuisine, and are served with vegetables and bite-size pieces of meat or fish. Rice is the primary staple dish and is served with most meals.

A great place to sample some of these delights is the *Penang Restaurant* on 41 Elizabeth Street, (Phone: 212-431-8722), which serves Indonesian and Malaysian fusion dishes

- ? **Singaporean:** Singaporean cuisine can be broken down into two main subdivisions: Singaporean-Malaysian/Indonesian food and Singaporean-Chinese food. The first category Singaporean-Malaysian/Indonesian, tends to be dominated by spices, herbs and chilies. Basil, lemongrass and ginger are commonly used, as are various curry spices. *Mee rebus*, a dish of egg noodles served with potatoes and egg in a thick sweet sauce falls under this category. *Rojak*, a salad of vegetables, pineapple, bean sprouts and cucumber in a sweet sauce, is another example of this type of cuisine.

The cuisine of the Singaporean-Chinese fusion tend to be extremely rich, with spices and peanuts often flavoring the dishes. *Chicken rice* is a common dish, with roasted or poached chicken served in a broth with rice.

The *Singapore Café* on 69 Mott Street, (Phone: 212-964-0003) offers authentic Singaporean and Malaysian dishes to savor.

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- ? **Thai:** Thai cuisine is known for its blend of fundamental flavors in each dish -- hot (spicy), sour, sweet, salty and bitter. Rice or noodle dishes are accompanied by highly aromatic curries, stir-fries and other dishes, incorporating large quantities of chilies, lime juice and lemon grass.

An important ingredient in Thai Cuisine is *nam pla*, a very aromatic and strong tasting fish sauce made from dried anchovies that have been fermented in brine. Another is fresh kaffir lime leaves; its characteristic flavor appears in nearly every Thai soup, such as hot and sour tom yam, stir-fry and curry.

By far, the most popular Thai dish among Westerners is *Pad Thai* - pan-fried rice noodles with various ingredients. Other dishes include various *satay* and sweet green curries.

Thai restaurants in Chinatown include:

Kobma Thai: 23 Pell Street, 212-406-4259

Pongsri Thai: 106 Bayard Street (at Baxter Street), 212-349-3132

Thailand Restaurant: 106 Bayard Street, 212-349-3132

- ? **Japanese:** Traditional Japanese cuisine is dominated by white rice, and few meals would be complete without it. Anything else served during a meal -- fish, meat, vegetables, pickles -- is considered a side dish. The most common Japanese meal is called *Ichiju-Sansai*: soup, rice, and three side dishes, each employing a different cooking technique. The three side dishes are usually raw fish (sashimi), a grilled dish, and a simmered dish, although steamed, deep fried, and vinegared dishes are also prevalent.

As Japan is an island nation, the ocean is a main food source of Japanese cuisine. Fish, shells, octopus/squid, crabs/lobsters/shrimp and seaweed, much of which is often served raw. By not cooking the seafood, its natural flavor is preserved, as are all of its natural nutrients.

Japanese restaurants in Chinatown include:

Mikata Japanese Cuisine: 150 Center Street, 2nd floor, 212-925-9984

Ajisen Noodle: 14 Mott Street, 212-267-9680

Win 49 Japanese Restaurant: 205 Allen Street, 212-353-9494

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- ? **Vegetarian:** Asian cuisine offers an incredibly wide variety of vegetables and dish preparations, making it particularly popular with vegetarians. Vegetarian cuisine, of course, is free from ingredients like meat, meat broth, cheeses that use animal rennet, and even certain sugars. Various Asian cuisines are especially adroit in utilizing special ingredients and plants as “meat substitutes” — the most popular examples being tofu and eggplant. Spices and curries are used to give vegetarian cuisine a heartiness that it otherwise may have lacked.

Vegetarian eateries in Chinatown include:

Vegetarian Paradise III: 33 Mott Street (off Canal), 212-406-6988

House of Vegetarian: 68 Mott Street (b/t Bayard & Canal Streets), 212-226-6572

Vegetarian Dim Sum House: 24 Pell Street, 212-577-7176

18 Arhans: 227 Center Street, 212-941-8986

- ? **Asian fusion:** Aside from the traditional Asian cuisines, there has been an emergence of Asian fusion cafes and restaurants in Chinatown and these establishments serve a wide variety of dishes, snacks, drinks and the ever so popular *bubble tea*. Some of these establishments serve a mix of cuisines that might include Cantonese snacks and appetizers, Shanghainese noodles and dumplings, Japanese salads, Malaysian barbeque dishes and Vietnamese spring rolls.

Asian fusion cafes and restaurants in Chinatown include:

Bingo Seafood Restaurant: 104 Mott Street, 212-941-7228. Serves Cantonese as well as Taiwanese dishes

Green Tea Café: 45 Mott Street, 212-693-2888

Sweet ‘n’ Tart Restaurant and Café: Restaurant on 20 Mott Street and café on 76 Mott Street, 212-964-0380 / 212-334-8088 – offers both Hakka and Cantonese cuisines.

Silk Road Café: 30 Mott Street, 212-566-3738

XO Café & Grill: 48 Hester Street, 212-965-8645. Restaurant that features both Cantonese and Hunan dishes

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About Chinatown New York City

Chinatown New York City, combines authentic Asian-American culture with the energy and influence of the most exciting city in the world. With over 200 restaurants, numerous Asian bakeries and tea houses, jewelry shops, arts and antique stores, an active nightlife and dozens of cultural attractions and landmarks, Chinatown stands as a world within a city. Whether dining, shopping, or strolling down the charming, narrow streets, visitors to Chinatown New York City, will find virtually limitless opportunities for new experiences and added insight.

Located on the east side of Lower Manhattan, Chinatown New York City, is the largest in the United States. The neighborhood has been growing steadily since the mid-1800s, and today stands as a vibrant community offering the opportunity to enjoy and explore Asian-American culture. Chinatown New York City is easily accessible via many New York City MTA subways and buses, as well as several convenient area parking garages. For more information, visit www.ExploreChinatown.com.

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