



All About Cantonese Cuisine

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Traditional Chinese

燒賣
蝦餃
油條
魚蛋
叉燒
深井燒鵝

Jyutping

siu1 maai2
haa1 gaau2
jau4 tiu2
jyu4 daan2
caal siu1
sam1 zeng2 siu1 ngo2

English

pork and mushroom dumplings
shrimp dumplings
fried breadstick
fish balls
Chinese roast pork
Sam Jeng roast goose

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is Cantonese Cuisine

The most familiar Chinese dishes originated from the Cantonese cuisine. As most

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residents originate from the Guangdong Province where Guangzhou ("Canton") is located, Hong Kong is the world capital for this style of cooking. The Cantonese people are very finicky when it comes to the freshness of their food. Even the amount of time taken for a live, swimming fish to be placed on a plate is kept to a minimum.

Cantonese cooking is somewhat lighter than most regional Chinese cuisine. Preparation methods usually involve stir-frying in shallow water or oil in a wok. As cooking time is short, the flavors and nutrition of the food is preserved. Vegetable and fish dishes are often steamed without the use of too much oil. Sauces made from ingredients like ginger, garlic, onion, vinegar, and sugar are complemented to enhance flavors.

Cantonese menus are long and can often confuse the diner in making a decision. There are a wide variety of dishes made from meats, poultry, fish, seafood, and vegetables for you to choose from. Chicken is a celebrity food among Cantonese eaters. A single chicken can be used to prepare several dishes. Chicken blood is cooked and solidified for soup, and its liver is used in a wonderful delicacy called Golden Coin Chicken. The livers are skewered between pieces of pork fat and red-roasted until the fat becomes crispy, and the liver is soft and succulent. This specialty is then eaten with wafers or orange-flavored bread.

Seafood is the next best delicacy in Hong Kong. Some of the popular dishes include fresh-steamed fish with ginger and onion topped with a dash of soy sauce and sesame oil, prawns and crabs cooked or steamed in black-bean sauce, and shark's fin soup. Cantonese barbecuing methods are unsurpassed. When in Hong Kong, do not miss the barbecued goose, duck, or slices of pork with a golden and honeyed skin served on a bed of anise-flavored preserved beans. Also, experience the taste of double-boiled soup with duck, mushroom, and tangerine peel.

There are specialty foods that are only served during particular seasons. In winter, a traditional winter dish would be cooked snake. "Monk Jumping Over the Wall" is the name for a dish made from a blend of abalone, chicken, ham, mushroom, and herbs that are so irresistible that monks are said to break their vows of vegetarianism if its fragrance is within smelling distance. Another tempting dish is the casserole of chicken and Chinese smoked pork sausage that is served steamed on a bed of rice. Autumn also has its share of dishes that you can order at restaurants. Examples of autumn dishes include ricebirds and paddy chicken or frogs cooked in a crunchy batter mixed with crushed almonds and served with sweet-and-sour sauce.



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Dim sum is without a doubt a trademark food in Cantonese cuisine. It is usually consumed in the mornings and afternoons. Dim sum is a delectable palate of little snacks, which come in wicker baskets that are placed on trolleys and pushed around by waiters or waitresses. Diners have the opportunity to choose the baskets of their choice from the trolley when it reaches the table. However, more restaurants are beginning to provide dim sum order forms for diners to tick the required items rather than congesting the restaurants with trolleys. The most popular dim sum items are:

1. haa gaau ("shrimp dumpling")
2. siu mai ("prawn and pork dumpling")
3. paai gwat ("steamed spareribs")
4. cun guen ("spring roll")
5. caa siu baau ("steamed barbecued pork buns")
6. ceung fen ("steamed rice flour rolls with barbecue pork, beef, or shrimp")

