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Food Face-Off: Dan Dan Noodles

Cathy Chaplin | November 9, 2011

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An expertly made bowl of dan dan noodles will leave your tongue tingling and your heart singing. A staple of Sichuan cuisine, dan dan noodles are an unbeatable combination of heat, spice, and savorines. Every bowl begins with a tangle of wheat noodles; the best ones have a bit of bite to 'em. The dish's bold flavors come courtesy of a saucy mix of dried chili peppers, sesame paste, chili oil, preserved vegetables, and Sichuan peppercorns. Lastly, the noodles are garnished with a smattering of ground pork and finely chopped scallions.

Here in Los Angeles, regional Chinese cuisines can be found in abundance along the boulevards of Alhambra, San Gabriel, Monterey Park, and Rosemead. Although restaurants specializing in dishes from Sichuan Province are a rarer breed than the ubiquitous dumpling shacks, a solid option is still easier to find in the area than an English-speaking waitress.



Dan Dan Noodle #1: Lucky Noodle King's owners previously ran Chuan Yu Noodle Town, home of the most famous dan dan noodles in town. They're carrying on the tradition of excellence at their new restaurant, where the fresh noodles and the biting, yet creamy sauce make for an extra special version of the dish. The sauce is served atop the noodles, so before digging in, be sure to thoroughly coat every last strand.



Dan Dan Noodle #2: At one point in the history of great Chinese restaurants in the San Gabriel Valley, Chung King was considered to be the very best Sichuan act in town. These days, there's competition from all directions--up the street, down the street, and in neighboring communities. The noodles here have a spaghetti-like charm, while the sauce is well-balanced and thoughtful. Crushed peanuts top every bowl.

The Final Verdict: You'll get lucky at Lucky Noodle King. The dan dan noodles here are an event. Not only do they taste tongue-searingly delicious, but they make you feel warm and tingly inside. It's a bowl of noodle that hugs you back.

Lucky Noodle King

534 East Valley Blvd. #10, San Gabriel, 626-573-5668

Chung King Restaurant

1000 South San Gabriel Blvd., San Gabriel, 626-286-0298



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CATHY CHAPLIN

Cathy Chaplin is the founder of [GastronomyBlog.com](#), an LA-based website focused on travel, restaurant reviews, and recipes. The site has been featured in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Saveur.

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