

# New Eastern Spice in San Gabriel has traditional *jian bing* savory Chinese crepes



A traditional Chinese crepe from Eastern Spice in San Gabriel. (Cathy Chaplin)

By **Cathy Chaplin**

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**N**ame of restaurant: Eastern Spice. Characteristic of the Chinese restaurants in this part of town (the San Gabriel Valley), the restaurant's name provides little insight as to what's on the menu. Hint: It's Northern Chinese-style food.

**Where you are:** A busy strip of San Gabriel Boulevard, south of Valley Boulevard and north of the 10 Freeway. Eastern Spice is housed in the site of a former Wienerschnitzel; the building's A-frame roof is intact and painted bright orange.

**Concept:** After two decades of working as a masseuse, Yu Xin Hou, also known as Wendy, is thrilled to be back behind the stove. She previously owned a restaurant that specialized in similar dishes in Shiyan, her hometown in northwestern Hubei province, China.

The small restaurant features two windows: one to order and one to pick up your food. Most diners grab and go, but some dine "in" at the shaded outdoor picnic area to the side of the building.

**What you're eating:** The *jian bing* (\$5.99), called “savory Chinese crepes” on the menu. A street food staple in China, the hefty parcel is made of eggs spread over the surface of a wheat and mung bean flour crepe with cilantro, a fried cruller and as little or as much chile sauce as you'd like. Add Spam or braised beef shank for an additional dollar.

Eastern Spice's scallion pancake is also of note — flaky and light in all the right places with a deep green onion flavor that lingers in a good way.

**What else you're eating:** Stewed and surprisingly spicy duck parts (head, wing, neck, tongue, gizzard and feet) sold by the pound, as well as braised ground pork served over steamed white rice or noodles topped with a halved soy sauce egg.

**What you're looking at:** Located on a busy strip of San Gabriel Boulevard, in the shadow of the San Gabriel Superstore, Eastern Spice doesn't offer much of a view.

**What you're drinking:** Canned sodas and bottled teas, unless Yu Xin Hou has warm soy milk to share.

**Info:** 1811 S. San Gabriel Blvd., San Gabriel, (626) 872-6199.

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