

The Chinese Restaurants in America

Karen in America

By Karen Zhang



Hey *Crazy English Speaker* fans,

I hope you had a wonderful Chinese New Year just as I did. This holiday, I returned home from America to visit my family and friends in China. I ate a lot, making up for the dishes that I missed the most. While I was in the States, I tried cuisines^[佳肴] from various countries. Like everyone says, the U.S. is like a salad bowl^[碗]. In big American cities in particular, you'll find restaurants specializing in food from the five continents. But do you know Chinese food is considered one of the cheapest and most popular cuisines to many Americans?

I guess that is where Americans learn about the Chinese dishes, such as Sweet and Sour Pork, Kung Pao Chicken and Mapo Tofu. These dishes are the best known to Americans, who may think all Chinese restaurants should serve these three dishes. That's certainly a false impression. I wish there were more distinctions of regional Chinese foods in America.

Having eaten out in America, I realize Americans can't live without ice. Almost every

drink is icy cold. The Chinese restaurants in America also "do as the Americans do." After a guest is seated, the waitresses always serve big glasses of *ice water*, whether or not the guests want them, whether it's summer or winter. Fortunately, ice water is free. If you like ice, you won't be disappointed, because the ice cubes usually fill the whole glass.

After the meal, guests will have a check with fortune cookies—an Americanized Chinese dessert. The fortune cookie looks like a mini croissant^[新月形面包], which contains a piece of paper with words of faux wisdom or a vague prophecy. On the other side of the paper are some lucky numbers and a Chinese phrase in characters with Pinyin. I always wonder why such a distinctive^[有特色的] dessert has never appeared in Chinese restaurants in China.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy my brief introduction of the Chinese restaurants in America. If you ever have a chance to visit one, don't forget to pay a tip after your meal. It's another polite gesture that Americans always make.

Until next,

Karen
in Guangzhou, China 🇨🇳

