

Fine China

Just in time for the New Year: An insider's short list of where the locals eat, from a lifelong (since Mayor Lindsay!) Chinatown resident. By **Michael P. Mol**



Eat Out



Family-style Hop Lee

Situated just off the former Five Points intersection, this three-decade-plus Mott Street mainstay is worth frequenting for its consistently delicious home cooking. An affable waitstaff serves shareable classics such as hearty beef chow fun; fresh pea shoots sautéed with garlic; crispy, plum-flavored Peking pork chops; and decadent egg-and-minced-pork-sauced lobster Cantonese. The panfried whole flounder (with its edible bones) is all delicate meat and addictive crunch. *16 Mott St between Chatham Sq and Pell St (212-962-6475)*



Noodle soups New Bo Ky Restaurant

Generous, fragrant bowls of Vietnamese noodle soup arrive with fresh herbs, sprouts and condiments on the side for diners to season as desired. A rich pho *dac biet*, hearty with brisket and rice pasta, mixed seafood soup and a plate of barbecued pork chops is my personal formula for contentment. *80 Bayard St between Mott and Mulberry Sts (212-406-2292)*



Multicultural New Malaysia

Hidden in a dank alleyway between the Manhattan Bridge and a police station is a Southeast Asian epicurean gem. I come here for the house specialties, including a richly satisfying curried beef brisket, char-grilled beef and chicken satays served with a crunchy peanut dipping sauce and spicy Singapore seafood

noodles. *Chinatown Arcade, 46-48 Bowery between Bayard and Canal Sts (212-964-0284)*



No-frills eating Super Taste

I never tire of watching the skinny cook behind the counter magically transform water and wheat flour into pleasingly chewy hand-pulled noodles. Though they're served in frumpy disposable plastic bowls, the beefy, aromatic broth and choice of meats such as duck, mutton, eel, tendons, tripe and "beef feet" (\$4.50-\$6) more than make up for it. Remember to order the thinly sheathed steamed-pork-and-chive dumplings—or take home a bag of frozen ones and gorge yourself in the privacy of your own home. *26 Eldridge St at Canal St (212-625-1198)*



Quick snack Singapore Malaysian Beef Jerky Inc.

My go-to place for a speedy mid-afternoon protein boost, this slim storefront resembles its narrowly sliced, freshly grilled stock-in-trade. Available in pork, beef and chicken varieties, ranging from mild to spicy in flavor, these playing-card-size snacks are worth traveling for if you're not a local. *95A Elizabeth St between Grand and Hester Sts (212-965-0796)*



Dim sum (big venue) Golden Unicom Restaurant

Red walls festooned with dragons greet diners in the frenzied ballrooms, where a steady parade of dim sum-

filled steam carts patrol two floors of seating. I've learned to hustle to get my fill of the impressive variety of meat or vegetable stuffed dumplings, sweet and savory buns, bowls of rice congee, crisp turnip cakes and clams in black-bean sauce. The restaurant is family-friendly—I like to go with a group of four or more to properly sample the wide selection. *18 East Broadway at Catherine St (212-941-0911)*



Dim sum (small venue) Chatham Restaurant

Even though neighborhood diners around the city continue to vanish, I'm grateful that this dirt-cheap dim sum institution endures, providing old-timers with hot pots of tea; freshly baked 80¢ roasted pork buns; shrimp-filled rice rolls; lotus-leaf-wrapped rice bundles packed with sticky-sweet rice; *don tot* (flaky, egg-custard pastry); and many more delicacies from its roving carts. *9 Chatham Sq between East Broadway and Mott St (212-267-0220)*



Café Mee Sum Cafe

This throwback Hopperesque joint has been open since 1963, and I'm happy to report that I can still enjoy its potent, fresh-brewed java for under a buck. Other favorites—hot lemony tea, a pillowy-soft pork sausage roll (just 75¢) and an oil-slicked ham-and-egg rice box—trump any value meal. *26 Pell St between Bowery and Mott St (212-349-5260)*

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