

Chinese Dining: Gluten-Free

There are many ways to make your dining out experiences safe and enjoyable. Remember to always understand the menu, make special requests, and ask the wait staff questions.

When dining out at Chinese restaurants, what are some common menu items and how can you order them gluten-free?

Steamed Chicken/Shrimp or Seafood: Chicken, shrimp, or seafood usually steamed with aromatics or other ingredients

- ✓ Ensure the chicken or seafood is steamed in fresh water (not water used to cook wheat noodles). Ensure the other ingredients added to the water are gluten-free. If not, ask for it to be steamed in water only. Avoid the soy sauce (unless labeled gluten-free).

Egg Drop Soup: Beaten eggs in boiled chicken broth with condiments (pepper, scallions)

- ✓ Ensure it's prepared with corn starch or potato starch and not wheat flour. Ensure the chicken stock used to make the soup is fresh and not canned. Ask for fried wontons or fried noodles (often used to garnish) to be omitted.

Fried Rice: White rice, egg, scallions, carrots, and usually meat, pork, or tofu

- ✓ Ask for it to be made with labeled gluten-free soy sauce. Avoid fried tofu.

Steamed Vegetables: (usually called Vegetarian Delight) A variety of vegetables, mushrooms, bamboo, corn, pea pods, water chestnuts, etc.

- ✓ Ensure the vegetables are boiled or steamed in fresh water (not water used to cook wheat noodles).

Steamed Rice: white or brown rice steamed

- ✓ Make sure that the water used to steam the rice is fresh and steamed in a clean pot.

When dining at a Chinese restaurant, it is important to be aware of hidden sources of gluten. Most dishes and sauces contain soy sauce, which is brewed with wheat (unless it is labeled gluten-free).

Noodles: Some noodles may be made from 100% rice flour but some may also have wheat flour added, and are often prepared in soy sauce. Only select noodles made with 100% buckwheat flour if you can ensure they are labeled gluten-free.

Batter: Chicken, shrimp, and pork are frequently prepared in a wheat-based batter. Egg rolls and Crab Rangoon (crab puffs) may also be prepared with wheat flour. These items are also at risk for cross-contact due to shared fryer space with other gluten-containing items.

On The Menu	Why You Should Avoid It
Anything with the word "Teriyaki"	Soy sauce
Hot and Sour Soup	Soy sauce
Kung Pao Chicken/Seafood/Beef/etc.	Soy sauce
Mongolian Beef	Soy sauce
Fried Tofu	Fried in non-dedicated fryer

Dishes/Ingredients to Avoid or Request a Gluten-Free Substitution:

Avoid: soy sauce (unless labeled gluten-free), oyster sauce, hoisin sauce; dumplings, egg roll or wonton wrappers (made of wheat flour); chow mein, lo mein, or other noodles made of wheat. Ask if the dish has been prepared on a clean surface, in a clean pan, using fresh utensils. Ask for the specific ingredients used in each dish. Though cornstarch is generally used as a thickening agent for sauces, ask if wheat flour has been used. Check to make sure that there is no wheat flour in other spices used.

To avoid gluten, choose simply prepared dishes, such as steamed vegetables, poultry, meat, seafood, or tofu. Ask questions about how the food is prepared, and make sure that there are no hidden sources of gluten added to the dish. Make sure that the food is prepared on a clean surface, and cooked in a clean pan. Bring your own gluten-free soy sauce or other gluten-free sauces to add flavor to the dish.

Always identify your needs. Consider carrying a [gluten-free restaurant card](#) in different languages or a [gluten-free restaurant card in English](#).

Bring your own salad dressing or dessert with you to the restaurant.

If a utensil, preparation area, or cooking surface is used for foods that must be avoided, ask for it to be cleaned before cooking your meal. To be safe, ask staff to use disposable tin foil.
