

KNOW YOUR CHINESE CUISINE



**Yuxiang qiezi 鱼香茄子** By Hailey Meng

**F**ish-flavored eggplant. An unappetizing sounding translation, admittedly. But don't be put off; this is one of the greatest dishes to come out of Sichuan. Yuxiang sauce is said to impart a subtly pleasant fish flavor to the eggplant. To

be honest, we can't really taste it, but we don't care. It's tasty, regardless. What's not to love about tender, succulent deep-fried eggplant slathered in a sauce of red chilies, scallions, ginger, garlic, sugar and soy sauce? Here's where to grab a taste.

**Rongteng Yuxiang**

荣腾渔乡

RMB12

Portions at this Sichuan-style fish house are gargantuan and their eggplant is especially tender. // Daily 10am-10pm. No cards. 218 Tianyaoqiao Lu, by Nandan Dong Lu (5406 0677) 天钥桥路218号, 近南丹东路

**Xingfu 131**

幸福131

RMB16

It's not much on appearances, but the flavor is there. Xingfu's recipe is very authentic – loads of Sichuan peppercorn and herbs and a slightly sweet and sour taste. // Daily 11.30am-2.30pm, 5.30-11.30pm. No cards. 131 Xingfu Lu, by Fahuazhen Lu (5254 0505) 幸福路131号, 近法华镇路

**Hunan Xiangcun Fengwei**

湖南乡村风味

RMB18

Xiangcun Fengwei offers a Hunanese variation on this dish by adding sautéed minced pork. We're wary of any deviations from tradition, but we'll let this one slide. Delectable.

// Daily 9.30-2pm, 4.30pm-12mn. No cards. 168 Wulumuqi Lu, by Anfu Lu (6437 0952) 乌鲁木齐路168号, 近安福路

SECOND COURSE

**Va Bene**

By Justin Fischer



Last summer we told you about a surprise we found way out in the Pudong hinterland at Milano, but you probably never went. We understand; it was a bit of a hike. But now you have no excuse. Chef Corrado Michelazzo and his Michelin cred have left Milano and crossed the river. You can now find him at Va Bene in Xintiandi. Michelazzo is seasoned in the old ways of Italian cookery. His squid ink pasta tossed with baby clams, finely sliced zucchini and fresh tomatoes (RMB148) is indisputable proof. But it's clear that he's happier when he's pushing the envelope. Sometimes he pushes it a little too far, mind you – a gritty parmesan ice cream comes to mind. At other times, though, he pulls it off beautifully with dishes like coffee risotto topped with a pat of foie gras and 'garnished' with a



billowy puff of apple wood smoke. It's bizarrely sublime and sophisticated. And if creating a few inventive dishes means a failure here and there, we'll gladly accept it. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, after all. // Daily 11am-2.30pm, 6-10.30pm. All cards. No. 7, Lane 181 Taicang Lu, North Block, Xintiandi (6311 2211) 太仓路181弄7号, 新天地



Rosa Chen

GOING NATIVE By Hailey Meng



Hailey Meng

**Wanjun BBQ Restaurant**

For months that meat stick man outside your apartment block has been your final port of call on a Friday night. Then suddenly, like that... he's gone. The Keyser Soze of kebabs has left you without the protection against hangovers you've come to rely on. But before you phone evil imperialist Ronald McDonald for reinforcements, we've got another option: Wanjun BBQ Restaurant. This DIY BBQ joint has been here for 15 years and, trust us, it's not doing a disappearing act. The menu contains all manner of meat, from lamb and chicken to erotic oysters and other exotic delicacies. It's all freshly cut, stuck on skewers and totally unseasoned. That's right, unseasoned – it wouldn't be DIY otherwise now, would it? Slather your skewers in white sesame, chili powder, cumin, salt, soy sauce and vegetable oil. We guarantee they'll be the best BBQ skewers you've ever had! And if not, well, it's your fault; that's how DIY works, folks. The prices aren't bad, either: skewers go for RMB1-15, plates around RMB30. But unless you want to be seen salivating at the front door, we suggest you reserve a table. // Daily 4.30pm-3am. All cards. 675 Xianxia Lu, by Anlong Lu (6291 2450) 仙霞路, 近安龙路

DISH OF THE MONTH By Justin Fischer

**Three flavor cod from Lapis Thai**

Cod. For centuries it's been a coveted commodity the world over. The Vikings, the Spanish and the British have built maritime empires with it. And we understand why. Any civilization that gets their hands on it manages to find yet another wonderful use for its beautifully buttery texture. Our latest discovery: the Thais and their 'Three Flavors' recipe. Lapis Thai's recipe is exemplary. A fresh fillet is pan-fried with finely chopped scallions, garlic, chilies, red peppers, chunks of pineapple, basil, tamarind pulp and coriander. The result is a beautifully complex intermingling of sweet, sour and spicy.



Rosa Chen

**Price:** RMB250 // Daily 11am-12mn. All cards. 285 Hunan Lu, by Wukang Lu (5466 3026) 湖南路285号, 近武夷康路

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