



# THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE

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## Restaurant Review

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Photo by John Anderson

### TC Noodle House

10901 N. Lamar Ste. B-203, 873-8235  
Monday-Sunday, 10am-9pm

When I first started enjoying dim sum in Austin, the place to go on a Sunday afternoon was Tien Hong to chow on crispy duck and pan-fried dumplings while sipping chrysanthemum tea. As time went by, Tien Hong slowly fell off the radar. Quality of food and service were also declining, and I started to frequent other places on Sunday mornings. Happily, on a recent visit to Austin's Chinatown Center, I discovered TC Noodle House, a haven for Asian noodle lovers that happens to be the newest venture from the same family that owns Tien Hong. In a brand-new, superclean space with very friendly and efficient service in addition to an interesting menu, I sense an upcoming resurgence for the longtime Austin restaurateurs.



The menu at TC features culinary specialties of the Teochew people native to the Guangdong province in southern China. Because of geographical proximity, their cuisine is highly influenced by that of Vietnam, so the menu features an incredible variety of both Chinese- and Vietnamese-style dishes. A house specialty, the Teochew spiced meats are braised and flavored with Chinese five-spice, star anise, garlic, and other exotic spices, then served atop a thick and spicy soy sauce. Cuts vary daily, and our choices were hard-boiled eggs, pig ear, stomach, and duck. We chose the latter, which was probably the best duck dish I've ever had. Another Teochew specialty is rice porridge, a "comfort" dish that can be garnished with a variety of ingredients, and at least four styles are represented at TC.

The emphasis, however, is on a mind-boggling array of egg noodle, rice noodle, and lo mein noodle dishes. Egg and rice noodles are found in deliciously nourishing soups, made with three different fragrant and rich broths. On a cold afternoon, I swooned over an egg-noodle soup with a whole braised duck leg so tender I took it apart with chopsticks. The broth was redolent of five-spice with just a hint of star anise that did not overpower. Garnished with a slice of fresh tomato, a whole plump shiitake mushroom, stalks of crisp Chinese broccoli, and a pickled plum, the soup combined every texture and flavor profile – sweet, salty, bitter, and tart. As I write this plagued with cedar fever, I sure wish someone would bring me a bowl of that stuff *right now*. Another excellent soup combines egg noodles, homemade wontons, and big, plump shrimp in a flavorful chicken broth, perfect for less adventurous diners.

There's also a wide assortment of pan-fried and stir-fried noodles with a variety of meats, seafood, and veggies, which make hearty and satisfying one-dish meals. Among the rice dishes, the outstanding boneless chicken thigh stuffed with shrimp forcemeat and fried to a perfect crisp, served with hot steamed rice, homemade pickled vegetables, and fish sauce on the side, was the most pleasant surprise at TC and a dish that I'll be back to eat many times. Traditional desserts, exotic drinks, and pearl teas round out the menu at this inexpensive and authentic not-to-be-missed establishment.