

500 円



お酒
だし付

スタマゴ
スジ
糸コンニャク

おでん
1個 ¥150
1本

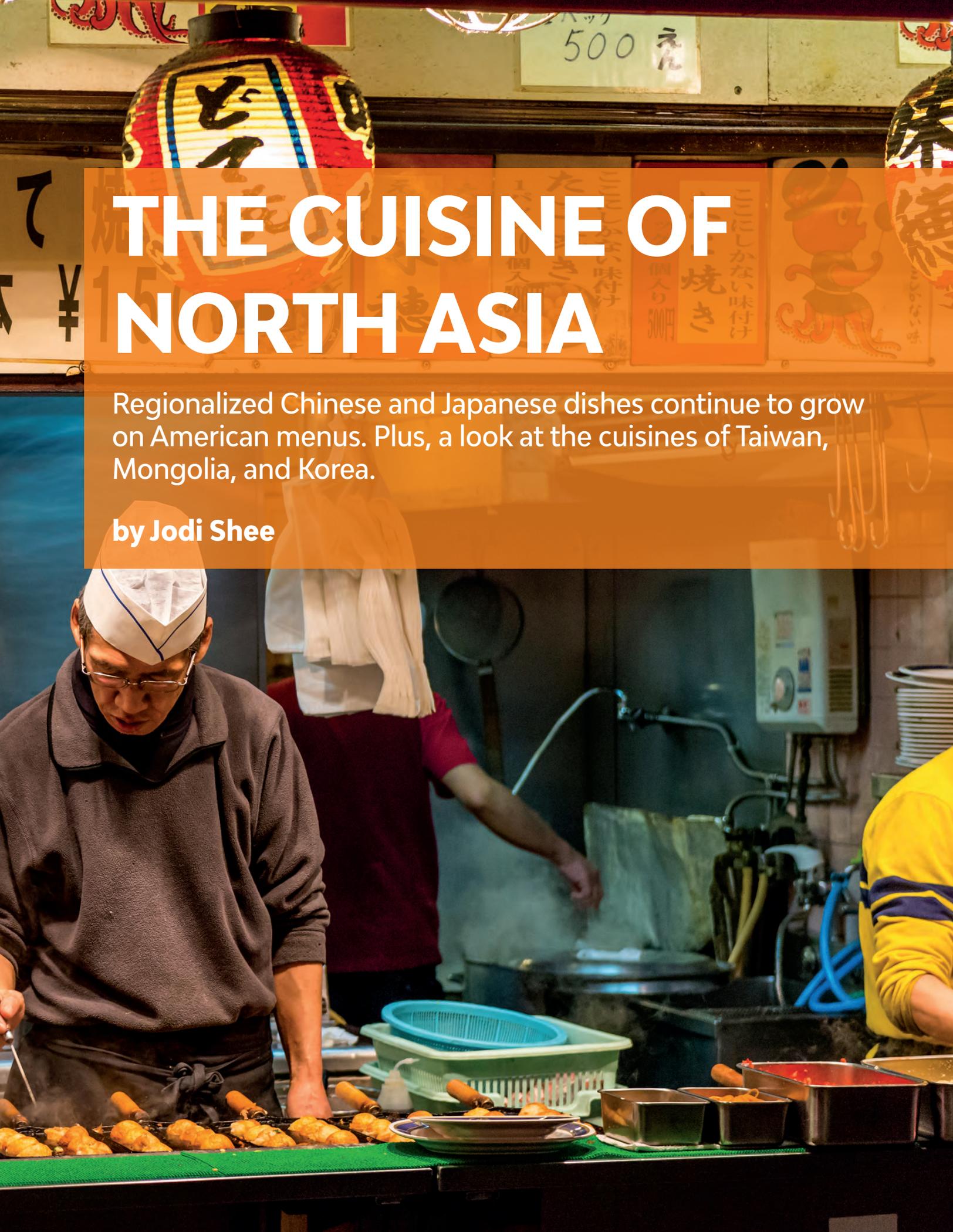


大阪名物
にしかな

お土産・味徳特製
あた
焼
10個



どうぞ
1F
2F



THE CUISINE OF NORTH ASIA

Regionalized Chinese and Japanese dishes continue to grow on American menus. Plus, a look at the cuisines of Taiwan, Mongolia, and Korea.

by Jodi Shee



Elements of North Asian cuisine have been popular on American menus for so long that many Chinese and Japanese restaurants, dishes and ingredients—one might argue—have become part of mainstream American dining. However, with a renewed drive for authenticity in all things food, chefs have begun to explore more regionalized North Asian dishes, from street food fare to comfort food favorites as well as dishes, ingredients and cooking techniques lesser-known to U.S. diners.

The similarities between Chinese and Japanese cuisines weave together only so far. It is true that both rely on rice and noodles as the starch and both use soy judiciously. Fermentation and pickling are common to the broad regional swath, as are chopsticks, says



Above: Katsu Sando, a popular sandwich made with deep-fried pork cutlet.

Willa Zhen, food anthropologist and professor of liberal arts and food studies at The Culinary Institute of America in New York.

Use of the whole animal is common in both China and Japan, but in different ways. China has a place for all animal parts, including intestines and congealed blood and brains, which offer a custardy appeal, according to Zhen.

In Japan, the innards are less of a focus compared to the hard-to-get-to pieces Americans would otherwise discard, such as chicken knees and windpipes. “When cooked properly, you get a snap and crunch like a crunchy potato chip because of the cartilage and tendons,” says Zhen, adding that this is a more conscious way of cooking—honoring the off-cuts and parts Americans often discard.

JAPANESE COMFORT FOOD

Katsu sando, the Japanese deep-fried pork cutlet sandwich, likely will have a future on American menus, similar to the way Cuban sandwiches and Vietnamese banh mi rose to fame years ago, says Maeve Webster, president of Food Matters, a Vermont-based food consultancy. With the upcoming Tokyo Summer Olympics, she expects interest in Japanese cuisine to spike in America in the same way that Brazilian cuisine did during the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Summer Olympics. A typical Katsu sando features the pork cutlet, along with cabbage, tangy Katsu sauce, and crustless milk bread. The sandwich is double-stacked and sliced in half for a mouthwatering presentation.

Webster also sees great potential for Japanese *karaage*, or deep-fried chicken,



Okonomiyaki from Gaijin in Chicago.

made distinct with its garlic, ginger and soy sauce seasoning. “Since the batter is flour mixed with potato or corn starch, the chicken is lighter and crispier,” Webster says. “Given the state of fried chicken right now, it will grow quickly.”

Okonomiyaki is another potential winner on the American menu. These cabbage and egg pancakes are typically fried on a flat grill and topped with meat and vegetables.

Okonomiyaki is the most popular dish on the menu at Xiao Bao Biscuit in Charleston, South Carolina, says Chef/Owner Joshua Walker. For easy identification, the menu describes it as a Japanese cabbage pancake “in a style we learned while farming in Japan.” For an extra charge, guests can add an

egg, bacon or crispy pork “candy” called *pork sung*, also known as pork floss or dried pork. He finishes it off with the popular, umami-rich Japanese seasoning furikake made with dried seaweed, sesame seed and salt. He makes his own sauce with Kewpie mayo to which he adds hot sauce.

In Chicago, Chef Paul Virant last year opened Gaijin, a concept dedicated solely to okonomiyaki. The Osaka-style version features a traditional, flat cabbage and egg pancake topped with combos like shrimp, creole butter and corn; sausage, bacon and bonito flakes, and octopus, honey gastrique and hot sauce. Everything gets a drizzle of Kewpie mayo. The Hiroshima-style okonomiyaki features layers of cabbage,



Left: Yu Xiang, topped with crispy pork "candy" from Xiao Bao Biscuit in Charleston, South Carolina.

Below: Bok choy and greens with sliced almonds at Xiao Bar Biscuit.

egg and other ingredients mixed together, along with the addition of yakisoba noodles for a thicker, slightly crunchy, omelet-like version.

REGIONAL CHINESE CUISINE

According to Webster, the popularity of authentic, regional Chinese dishes will only continue to flourish on U.S. menus.

The Southwestern province of Sichuan is known for its spicier dishes. Zhen points to the Sichuan peppercorn as a key ingredient worthy of further experimentation by U.S.-based chefs. Contrary to popular belief, Sichuan peppercorns are not actually related to peppercorn, but rather, they are a part of the citrus family. "The seed causes a tingling sensation in the mouth," she says.

The Sichuan peppercorn is one of the ingredients Walker came to appreciate when traveling for seven-plus months in China, Japan and Southeast Asia before opening Xiao Bao Biscuit in 2012. These



peppercorns create the heat in one of his favorite dishes on the menu, Mapo Dou Fu, which he describes as “a spicy, classic Sichuan pork and tofu dish with broad bean and chili oil atop short grain rice.”

The broad bean (or fava bean) and chili oil partly make up the common Sichuan sauce known as *doubanjiang*. The sauce also appears in Walker’s Yu Xiang dish with fried Brussels sprouts and eggplant. In China, the sauce was originally used for whole-fish cooking, but in the U.S., it is most commonly used as the sauce for Chinese eggplant dishes, he says.

CHINESE STREET FOOD

Jianbing, shortened in the U.S. to “bing,” is a Northern Chinese street crepe that has caught on in the U.S. Brian Goldberg, founder of Mr Bing (yes, that’s without the period) in New York City, fell in love with it while studying in Beijing

in 1998 and opened his first U.S. location selling the street food in 2015. The savory, egg- and mung-bean flour crepes, studded with sesame seeds, scallions and cilantro, are typically topped with Peking duck, other meats, tofu or vegetables. The crepe is then folded, rolled and wrapped up like a burrito. Bing is becoming so popular with young people that Goldberg says he plans to target more college and universities, and he is already working with contract management companies Compass Group and Aramark.

Within the past year, Mr Bing’s menu expanded to include bao, or Chinese buns, served open-style. “That way the bao is customizable, fresher and more familiar for Americans,” Goldberg says. “They are also less doughy, hold more protein and fillings and are more colorful, so they are more visually appealing.”

One of Goldberg’s bing breakout ingredients, Mr Bing Chili Crisp, is a lighter, crunchier version of the

flavoring typically used in Chinese bing and other dishes. He now bottles and sells this product, including a 64-ounce foodservice size, that can be used to top rice bowls, salads, burgers, pizza and more, he says. His spicy condiment is made with crispy garlic, onions, chiles, roasted soy nuts, spices and mushroom powder with no preservatives or MSG.

With so many flavor variations, ingredients and traditions throughout the countries and regions of North Asia, U.S. chefs have a battery of new dish possibilities at their fingertips. The path forward may be to marry authentic flavors with vegetarian, gluten-free and plant-based options for a modern approach.

Jodi Shee is a Kauai, Hawaii-based freelance writer and former food industry magazine editor with more than 20 years of food-writing experience. She blogs at www.sheefood.com.



Left: Jianbing from Mr Bing in New York. Right: Mr Bing Chili Crisp.





FUNKY AND FERMENTED IN THE FAR EAST

Mongolia:

- The Mongolian diet is largely influenced by its historic ties with China and Russia, and by its cold climate. The cuisine is meat-centric from a broad range of animals including horses, yaks, goat, camels, cows and sheep.
- In some Mongolian dishes, smooth stones are added to conduct heat and speed up the cooking process. The traditional Mongolian barbecue (*khorkhog*) uses hot stones nestled among lamb, onions, potatoes and carrots in a pot over an open fire.
- *Boodog* is a traditional Mongolian roast like no other. The stomach of a whole goat or marmot cooked in its skin is filled with hot stones, onions and potatoes.
- The Mongolian version of steamed dumplings (*buuz*) is intense and spicy—a flour dough filled with shredded meat, onion, garlic and pepper.
- Dairy has unique applications, including Mongolia's common, salted milk tea and *airag*—fermented mare's milk.

Taiwan:

- Waves of Chinese, Japanese and even American influence have helped shape this island nation's cuisine. Beef noodle soup is considered by many as the country's national dish. The slow-simmered soup usually includes pickled mustard greens and five-spice powder.
- While hot pot and bao are popular throughout Asia, Taiwan has its own versions. Hot pots host a wide range of ingredients, including seafood, stinky tofu, dumplings, leafy vegetables, pickled cabbage and more.
- Gua bao is considered the "Taiwanese hamburger." The steamed, bao-like bread is layered with braised pork belly, pickled mushroom, coriander and ground peanuts, and then folded to close.

- Taiwan lays claim to the famously popular bubble tea, however, more eyes these days are on cheese tea—hot or iced tea topped with a frothy blend of cream cheese and milk.

Korea:

- Korean cuisine is distinctive in several ways, beginning with little things—namely the little side dishes served with meals and the little cuts of meat that negate the need for table knives.
- According to the Korea Tourism Organization, pickling and braising are other trademarks of the national cuisine that is largely influenced by China, previous Japanese occupation and the historical influx of European traders, especially the Portuguese, who have been said to have introduced chili peppers to the country.
- Korea is the poster child for fermented condiments. Besides kimchi (*kimchee*)—which, here in the U.S., has become more ubiquitous on both restaurant menus and grocery store shelves—the country lays claim to other popular, fermented flavors, such as *gochujang* (sweet, savory and spicy red chili paste), *doenjang* (soybean and brine paste) and *kanjang* (traditional Korean soybean sauce).
- *Bibimbap*, a national Korean dish, continues to pop up on American menus. The rice bowl usually includes vegetables, a protein and a sunny-side-up fried egg, all topped with gochujang, Sriracha sauce and/or kimchi.
- Korea's version of barbecued beef, *bulgogi*, gets its flavor from the marinade that combines soy sauce, sugar, sesame oil, garlic, onion and sometimes pureed Asian pear.