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Chengdu Pt 4 – Appetite for Hot and Spicy



A lot of times you would see Sichuan Style in Chinese restaurants' menu in the United States. These dishes would most likely be labeled with a small red pepper indicating that it's just hot, hot, hot! ☺ If you're not familiar with Sichuan style, you must have heard of Ma Po Tofu. It's a very famous spicy dish created by a lady from Sichuan. As the capital city of Sichuan province, Chengdu's dishes can definitely challenge your taste buds wherever you go. Spicy noodles, chili dumplings, hot and sour noodle soup and many other spicy dishes. I'm not a big fan of spicy food, but I simply can't avoid the challenge while walking the streets of Chengdu.



One day we were window shopping at a very famous shopping street called Chun Xi Lu. (春熙路) It was crowded with visitors negotiating prices of their goods and foreigners getting a taste of the Chengdu menu. But what caught our attention was the enormous amount of people crowding the doorway of the pure Sichuan style dim-sum restaurant, Long Chao Shou. (龙抄手) This little restaurant is very famous and always jam-packed, so most of the time there are no empty tables. But they don't have any waiters or waitresses that take you to the table when it's available. So the customers had to rely on their own. Their solution? Search for a table of people that look like their done and... stand there, wait and watch. While you're eating, another party of customers takes over and does the same thing to you. It was a very awkward feeling having to watch over a table while someone is still slurping down their food. I didn't want to make eye contact with them (because I know that isn't manners) but I knew I had to watch tight on my table, because if I didn't... I'd have to do it a second time around! When we walked out of the restaurant we were all licking our lips with our numb tongues, I realized all the standing, waiting and watching was all worth it! Next time I visit Chengdu I will definitely come back to the one and only Long Chao Shou. (And with a tongue ready to conquer the challenge again☺)



The very first time I ate Sichuan style food in Sichuan itself, I wasn't very used to the tingle on my tongue. But after four days of "training," I slowly began to get used to the spiciness. Sichuan is a very humid and damp province. They say that eating spicy foods can get rid of the moist air in your body. That is how spice began settling itself into the majority of the Sichuan dishes.