



LET'S EAT

Let's Eat: A family pulls together a Chinese specialty at Ru Yi Hand Pulled Noodle

By Victoria Davis | Special to the Cap Times Feb 23, 2020

1 of 3





After two years of planning and a year of noodle-based study in China, Chaofu Lin and his wife Xia (Tina) Jia have opened their restaurant, Ru Yi Hand Pulled Noodle, on State Street.

It's been a month since Ru Yi's grand opening in January and the Chinese restaurant has already attracted a wide range of regular customers.

“We've gotten some students from the university who are originally from Lanzhou, and they say that the noodles taste like home,” said Lin through interpreter Holly Chen.

The restaurant allows Lin and Jia to show off the skills they learned while studying the art of hand-pulled noodles for a year in Gansu.

“Hand-pulled noodles are an art form in China,” Lin said. “When you're pulling on the noodles to shape them for the dish, it gives you a sensation that's hard to describe. Every day as you're pulling the noodles and your technique is getting better,

there's a sense of accomplishment.”

After allowing the dough to rise, Lin shapes it into long ovals and then quickly and carefully cuts out smaller sections. He then weaves the dough through his fingers and starts to pull in fluid strokes.

Once the doughy noodles are long, stringy and fine, he plops them into boiling water, later to be lifted out by Jia and put into a large soup bowl with meat, lettuce and shio (salt-based) broth.





Co-owner Xia (Tina) Jia prepares a beef hand-pulled noodle bowl at Ru Yi on State Street.

VICTORIA DAVIS

The whole process takes about four or five minutes. After the bowl is served, there's a condiment station with scallions and chili oil for those who want to add a kick.

Hand-pulled noodles originated from China's Gansu province, specifically from the area's city, Lanzhou. While Lin and his wife are both from Fujian, they grew up eating the dish during dinner outings with family to nearby shops that sold this type of noodle.

The ramen-style meal has been something they've sought out since moving to the U.S. 10 years ago. Lin and Jia have worked in the restaurant business their entire working lives, including being part owners of cafeteria-style Chinese restaurant Madison Cuisine.





Chef/owner Chaofu Lin makes hand-pulled noodles at his new noodle shop, Ru Yi, on State Street.

VICTORIA DAVIS



“Here in Madison, most people have never seen hand-pulled noodles being done,” said Lin, whose restaurant offers 12 meat and vegetable variations on the noodles. “The closest place to find that would be in Chicago. And even in Chicago, all the noodle pulling is done in the back where people can’t see. That’s what makes our restaurant different.”

Ru Yi’s location at 334 State St. was most recently Crandall's Peruvian Bistro, which closed last year. Crandall’s had a large mirror that blocked guests’ views of the kitchen.

That mirror was one of the first things to go in the remodel. Lin and Jia wanted those ordering noodles to be able to see how the noodles are made. In addition to the savory beef (\$10.95), chicken (\$10.95), duck (\$11.95) and shrimp (\$11.95) udon noodle bowls themselves, the spectacle has been one of the restaurant’s biggest attractions.



“A lot of people come and see my dad make the noodles,” said the Lin and Jia’s 17-year-old daughter Melody Lin, who hopes to learn the skill one day herself. “Everyone is really curious about how it’s done. They’ll often tip and take photos and videos. It’s nice that we can show how everything is made fresh.”

“Seeing the success we’ve had and the good reviews online makes us happy,” Melody added.

Ru Yi serves pan-fried pork (\$4.25) in a homemade dumpling-like bun, scallion pancakes (\$2.95) and crystal shrimp dumplings (\$8.95). But the shop is, first and foremost, all about the hand-pulled noodles. Their most popular and traditional dish is beef noodles, of which there are six styles ranging from spicy beef to braised beef.

“It’s nice to have a specialty we can master,” said Chaofu Lin. “Initially when you’re learning, the noodles you make are not very even, and after a year you still don’t get it completely uniform. But we’re getting better every day and we’re excited to share this part of Chinese food culture with Madison.”



Ru Yi Hand Pulled Noodle also serves pan-fried pork buns.

VICTORIA DAVIS

Ru Yi Hand Pulled Noodle

334 State St

298-7669

ruyihandpullednoodle.weebly.com

HOURS

Monday-Sunday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Tags [Budget Eats](#) [Madison Food](#) [Dining Out](#) [Let's Eat](#) [Noodle](#) [Melody Lin](#) [Food](#) [Gastronomy](#) [Jia](#) [Ru Yi](#) [China](#) [Beef](#) [Hand](#) [Crandall](#)

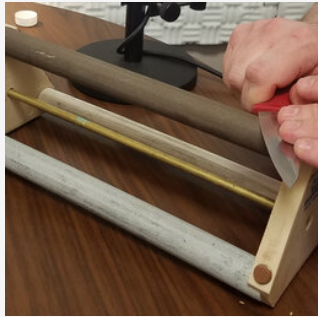
Sign up for Cap Times newsletters:

Email Address:

Newsletters:

- Morning Update: daily news update**
- Week in Review: weekly recap of top headlines**
- Madison Life: weekly arts and lifestyle update**
- Opinion Roundup: op-eds and columns sent three times a week**

SIGN UP



The Corner Table



Knives out

00:00 / 46:23



The Corner Table

[Subscribe to podcast](#)

A podcast about food and drink in Madison, Wis., produced by The Capital Times and hosted by food writer Lindsay Christians and Chris Lay.

Knives out

46:23

Championship cheesemaking

30:19

Related to this story

RESTAURANTS

Let's Eat: Hong Kong Station makes Cantonese-style noodles and soups for hungry expats

Jan 12, 2020

Hong Kong Station at 1441 Regent St. makes real Cantonese-style cuisine. Open since 2014, the restaurant is one of few in Madison that defines itself that way.



RESTAURANTS



Let's Eat: Tucked away off the Beltline, homey Dynasty Chinese tries to beat the odds

Dec 15, 2019

Sunny Hsu and Xue Liyang are using any free time they have to add more options, like stir-fried lamb and Mandarin crispy duck, to an already hefty menu.



RESTAURANTS

Let's Eat: By (mostly) staying the same, Mickie's only gets better

Feb 15, 2020

"People don't want Mickie's to change too much," owner Janet Thongnuam said. "Mickie's is a tradition in a lot of people's lives."



FOOD & DRINK

Grubhub hubbub: Restaurants fire back at delivery companies that post menus without consent

Feb 22, 2020 | 7 min to read

High fees, slow delivery and lack of control frustrate local businesses. "Does the client know they're not dealing with the restaurant at all?" asked one owner.



Let's Eat: With aromatic soups and a bright new look, Sunny Pho brightens South Park

Mar 1, 2020

Kim Khouch, the Cambodian and Chinese owner of the recently opened Sunny Pho at 602 South Park St., thought here was a place her pho could flourish.



More from the Capital Times



Q&A: Ahead of April primary, Katie Malloy works to get UW



Laundry day during a pandemic: Keep space in



For Madison musicians dealing with COVID-19 concerns, the

students voting

laundromats, use hot water

show must go on(line)

Subscribe to our newsletters

* indicates required

Email Address *

First Name

Last Name

Newsletters



Morning Update: top headlines from the Cap Times, delivered every weekday

morning

Opinion Roundup: op-eds, columns and letters to the editor. Sent Monday,

Wednesday, and Friday

Madison Life: a weekly email to help you navigate the Madison social scene

Week in Review: a weekly recap of top headlines

[View previous campaigns.](#)

SUBSCRIBE

THE CAP TIMES

[Our Story](#)

[Become a Cap Times member](#)

[Cap Times Events](#)

[Evjue Foundation](#)

[Send a Letter to the Editor](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Sites & Partners

[Madison.com](#)

[Wisconsin State Journal](#)

[Cap Times](#)

[WiscNews](#)

[Capital Newspapers](#)

[AmplifiedWisconsin](#)

[ApplyMadison](#)

[Wingra Printing Group](#)

Services

[Sign up for Cap Times email newsletters](#)

[Get Cap Times by mail](#)

[How to advertise with Cap Times](#)

[Place a classified ad](#)

[Submit a Celebration](#)

[Cap Times weekly e-edition](#)

