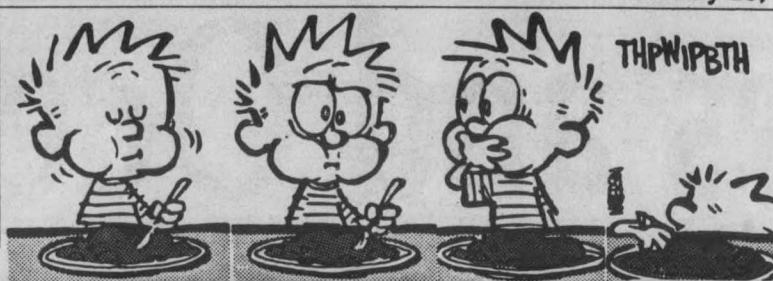


The Food Corner - with Allan Carter

Allan strays from his potato search in favor of egg rolls and won tons at the Mandarin Palace



Chinese food is always a nice change of pace and in Fredericton there are a number of Chinese restaurants to choose from. One of my most favorite Chinese restaurants in Fredericton is the Mandarin Palace. This restaurant has a large dining area which is divided into four small, yet comfortable and private sections with about four tables in each section.

There are many different dishes to choose from at the Mandarin. One can simply order a dinner for one: A simple combination of egg roll, rice, sweet and sour chicken and spare ribs. However, there is also an impressive number of specialty and house delight dishes which run from \$9.95 to \$12.95. One specialty dish which I have never been disappointed with at the Mandarin is the beef lo mien. This dish consists of a generous helping of rice noodles and tender beef. Each specialty dish includes fried rice. The beef lo mien is not on the menu, however it can be requested.

Unfortunately, the other evening I decided to try the butterfly shrimp. The menu describes this dish as: "shrimps wrapped in bacon, dipped in a special batter, fried to a golden brown with exotic oriental sauce and crushed almond." Sounds nice, doesn't it? And I felt confident in ordering it because I have eaten it at another Chinese restaurant in Chatham, the Cunard. But the Mandarin's butterfly shrimp dish was a big disappointment. The shrimp was fried too heavily in batter and the bacon was very fatty. When I tried this at the Cunard in Chatham it was cooked much better. Instead of encasing the shrimp and bacon in a heavy batter, at the Cunard the shrimp and bacon are dipped lightly in a batter. This cooking method is more appropriate, because I despise a thick batter which spoils the taste of the shrimp.

However, the evening meal was not a total lost. The appetizers were good and my friend enjoyed his rice vermicelli. This dish consists of rice noodles, pork, shrimp, currie chicken and lovely crisp vegetables. But because my friend is deathly allergic to shrimp, the waitress was nice enough to exclude it and instead add more pork to the dish.

The fried wontons, egg roll, and wonton soup were our choices for appetizers for the evening. The crispy fried wontons are served in generous portions and are accompanied with a sweet and sour sauce. While the wonton soup is unenergetic, it is an efficiently filling appetizer which consists of pork, lettuce and wontons wrapped in large noodles. The eggroll could have had more meat, but it was crisp and palatable. However, the plum sauce was too watery and tasteless.

For dessert, I tried the cheesecake. While the wafer crust was too moist the cake had a lovely rich creamy filling flavor and is not badly priced at \$2.75.

My bill which included the fried wontons, eggroll, butterfly shrimp, cheese cake, ice tea, and tea came to \$27.95 with taxes. My friend's bill which included the wonton soup, rice vermicelli, and tea came to \$15.67.

The Mandarin which is situated on Forest Hill Road is usually a trustworthy spot to dine if you are looking for a nice Chinese meal at a reasonable price. However, if you are like me and hate food fried too heavily, avoid the butterfly shrimp. Instead, perhaps try the beef lo mien or the rice vermicelli.

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