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Friday, October 8, 2004

# Friendly Chung Ching cooks up the real thing

[Julie Gaw](#) | WEEKEND editor

While living in Bangkok last year, I spiced up my life with great Thai food. But the Chinese food in Thailand was ho-hum. Thankfully, Chung Ching, a casual mom-and-pop shop in College Hill, dishes up genuine Chinese cooking to satisfy my cravings. And it's reasonable, making eating Chinese style - sharing a variety of dishes - a piece of cake.

For 22 years, Joyce Yang has been the public face of Chung Ching, greeting customers by name and keeping her secret weapon husband, Steve, behind closed doors in the kitchen, woking up a storm.

My standard order for two starts with mouth-watering hot and sour soup (\$2), chock-full of tofu, bamboo shoots, wood ear and the right amount of vinegar and spice. I rarely pass on the deep-fried governors chicken (\$7.95), a specialty with a slightly spicy sauce, and white rice.

For vegetables, ask Yang what's fresh. I alternate between the Sichuan string beans (\$6.75), crunchy baby bok choy (\$6.75) or smooth eggplant (\$7.95). (Texture is one of the hallmarks of Chinese cooking - think silken tofu versus crunchy bamboo).

Want to go native? Order the ginger chicken with Chinese vegetables (\$7.95, not on the menu). Or try the crunchy, melt-in-your-mouth Szechuan crisp



**Joyce Yang presents Governor's Chicken with stir-fried vegetables.**  
The Enquirer/MICHAEL SNYDER

**WHEN YOU GO**

**Chung Ching**

**Where:** 5842 Hamilton Ave., College Hill  
[Driving directions](#)

**When:** 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday, noon-10 p.m. Saturday, 5-9 p.m. Sunday.

**Dress:** Casual - from 'breakers to blazers

**What else:** Non-smoking section, though smokers are

shrimp (\$9.50), one of the house specialties. For veggies, consider shwe-di-hong with tofu (\$7.95) or chicken (\$8.95). It's a gorgeous green vegetable with an easy-to-forget name. Just ask for "chop-chop" - it requires lots of chopping - and Joyce will know what you're after. Various other Chinese vegetables come with each season; just ask. If dou miao is in stock, consider yourself blessed: it's my fave (\$6.75).

few and far between. Takeout is popular.

**Information:** (513) 541-1243

Be forewarned: You just might become a regular at Chung Ching.

During a recent visit, every table in the place seemed to be competing to find out who'd been visiting Chung Ching the longest. One table had been coming since before it was called Chung Ching. A nurse had tried to stay away all summer, but found herself ordering up her favorite meal - which Yang knows without asking - almost every week. I don't remember how long I've been eating here - but this one's a don't miss.

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