

# Dish Description Style Guide for Chinese Menus

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## Basic formula

Dish name + Chinese name/pinyin + main ingredient + cooking method + flavor + dietary signal.

## Good description

Mapo Tofu

麻婆豆腐 · má pó dòu fu

Soft tofu in Sichuan chile-bean sauce with numbing peppercorn. Traditionally contains minced pork.

## Avoid

- “Authentic and delicious”
- “Traditional food”
- Literal translations that mislead
- Long origin stories in the menu item line
- Unexplained poetic names
- Promising allergen safety the kitchen cannot support

## Useful words

Steamed

Pan-fried

Stir-fried

Braised

Roasted

Poached

Chile oil

Numbing

Garlicky

Savory

Sweet-sour

Fermented black bean

Ginger-scallion

Bone-in

Served cold

Served with rice

Best shared

## Item-level checklist

- Is the main ingredient clear?
- Is the preparation clear?
- Is the flavor clear?
- Is the spice clear?
- Are pork, shellfish, wheat, soy, sesame, peanut, egg, and cooking wine handled when relevant?
- Does the description help the customer choose?