

# Chinese Menu Section Architecture Template

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## Goal

Use menu sections to help guests order, not merely to list kitchen inventory.

## Primary section map

1. Start Here / House Recommendations
2. Appetizers / Cold Dishes
3. Dumplings / Small Plates
4. Soups / Broths
5. Regional Specialties
6. Proteins by type
7. Tofu and Vegetables
8. Rice, Noodles, and Breads
9. Family Meals / Group Sets
10. Desserts and Drinks

## Section decision rules

### House specialties:

- Use only for items that define the restaurant.
- Keep to 6 to 12 items.
- Include first-order cues.

### Protein sections:

- Use when the restaurant has a broad American Chinese or generalist menu.
- Avoid when the restaurant is strongly regional and technique matters more than protein.

### Technique sections:

- Useful for dim sum, hot pot, BBQ, noodles, dry pot, malatang, and seafood restaurants.

### Dietary sections:

- Vegetarian and mild-spice sections are useful if real kitchen execution supports them.
- Do not create a “gluten-free” section unless the kitchen can control cross-contact.

## Section audit

### Can a new guest find:

- one safe first order?
- one house specialty?
- one vegetable?
- one mild item?
- one vegetarian item?
- one item that travels well?