

Chinese food, due to the sheer size of China and its population, has many regional varieties. At the Family Chow Mein offered customers a choice of four types of Chinese cooking: Guangdong (or Cantonese), Szechuan (or Sichuan), Hunan, and Mandarin (Northern Chinese) Style (Peking Style.)

Guangdong Cuisine (better known as Cantonese) Style

Perhaps the most familiar type of Chinese cuisine internationally because of many Chinese emigration to America, Cantonese food hails from the southern Guangdong province, including Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Hong Kong. Cantonese cuisine tends to be mild, with less of an emphasis on chiles and more on the natural flavors of fresh ingredients. Due to Canton's proximity to the water, fresh seafood also features prominently. Most Americanized Chinese food is based on classic Cantonese cooking, due both to the large influx of immigrants from the region as well as the overall mildness. Simple stir fried-vegetables and shark fin soup are examples.

Szechuan or Sichuan Style

Typically encountered in China's Sichuan province of Chengdu and Chongqing, it revolves around hearty stews and mouth-numbing Sichuan peppercorns, which have a citrusy flavor and distinct aroma. These dishes have nuts, seeds, spices, garlic, air-dried meats, and of course the signature Sichuan peppercorns. An ingredient that can numb the entire mouth, the Sichuan pepper tastes especially good in soup noodles and some stir-fried dishes. Examples include Kung Pan chicken and oxen meat.

Hunan Syle

A land-locked agricultural hub in south-central China, the Hunan region might be known as *the Land of Fish and Rice*. Thought to be even spicier than Sichuan cuisine, Hunan food balances ubiquitous chilies (preferred fresh and fiery) with sour flavors, heaps of garlic, shallots, and a peppering of smoked meats. The taste of sweet and sour or hot and sound are common. Examples include Dogan chicken and Mao's braised pork.

Mandarin (Northern Chinese) Style or Peking Style

Mandarin style, also known as Peking (or Beijing) style can be generally categorized by its light, elegant, mildly taste and by the liberal use of garlic and scallions. Northern Chinese cooking style are oilier and richer in meat. The most popular seasonings used are soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, scallions, ginger, leeks, star anise, sweet bean sauces, chili peppers, and sesame oil. Peking duck and Sautéed Meat Shreds with Soy Bean Paste are examples.



Family Chow Mein was on the north side of First Avenue. The city raised the buildings and built a place with stores and apartments.



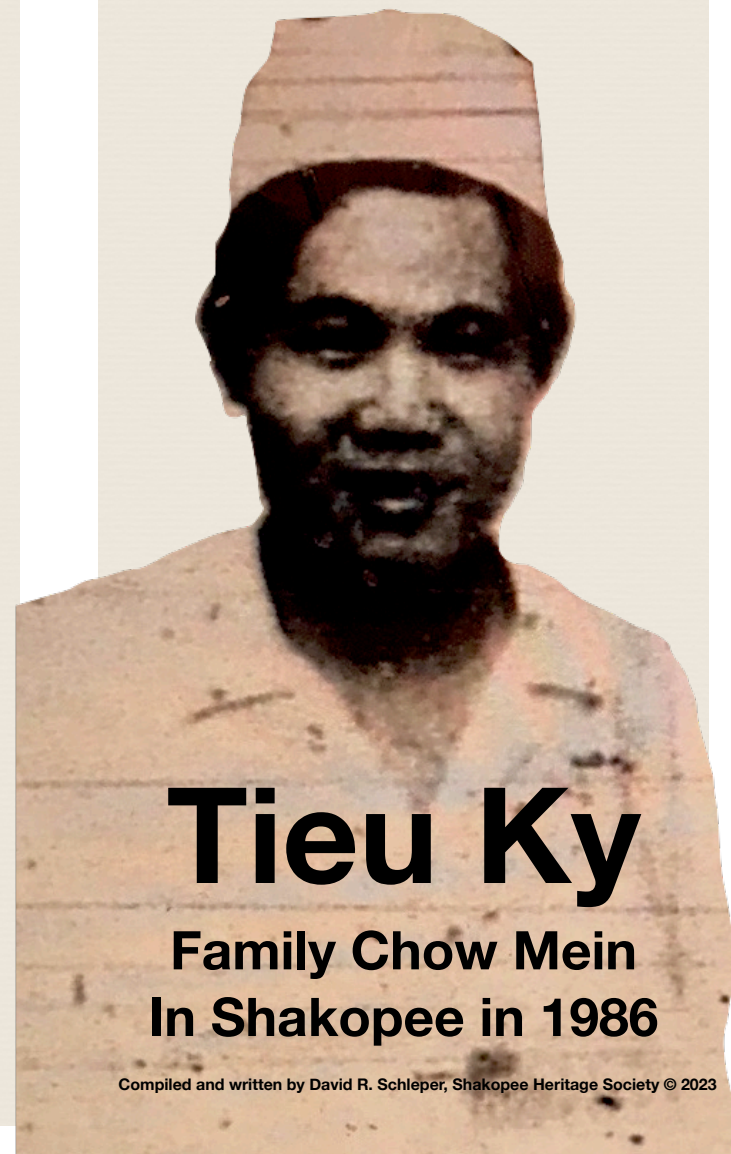
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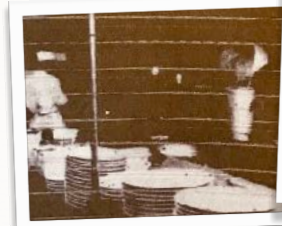


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Tieu Ky

Family Chow Mein In Shakopee in 1986



When the Family Chow Mein opened in 1986 in Shakopee, people had more than 105 dishes to try.

On September 22, 1986, the new owners, Tieu Ky, Sam Ky, Van Vuong, and Hong Khong open the restaurant on the north side of First Avenue. For the first two weeks, the four men closed the restaurant to do some remodeling. According to Sam Ky, one change was to expand the menu in order to pick from a much wider variety of dishes, according to the **Shakopee Valley News** on October 15, 1986.

The food gave the customers a chance to choose food that ranges from fairly mild to very spicy. "Some of the dishes are served on a hot plate in front of the the customers, which added a touch of elegance to the meat. Dishes served in front of the customers include chicken in orange flavor, seafood, combinations with sizzling sauce, and mandarin chicken," said the article.



The new owners of Family Chow Mein are ready to make their customers feel like friends. Some dishes have been made at the restaurant, including an all-you-can-eat buffet.

Family Chow Mein was opened in 1986 at 237 First Avenue East in downtown Shakopee. The four owners included Sam Ky, Van Vuong, Tieu Ky, and Hong Khong, according to the *Shakopee Valley News* on October 15, 1986. The location was on the south side of First Avenue, now next door to what is now Ca Nails.



Sam demonstrates how some of the dishes are now served to the customers. The sizzling sauce creates quite a show for diners, and the taste of the food is quite good.

The customers at Family Chow Mein still allowed buffet style at lunch, and it all cost only \$4.75 in 1986.

When remodeling the restaurant, the owners added a sparkling new high-power jet range which came from New York. Sam noted that it will give customers faster service. "The heat power is the key...the hotter, the better. The flavors can increase."

Tieu Ky, Sam Ky, Van Vuong, and Hong Khong believed that customers should feel at home when they are dining at Family Chow Mein. "Most customers like to feel at home, like 'that's my kitchen,'" said Sam Ky. "We do our best to create a service to satisfy the customers."

The owners wanted to get to know the people, and to greet them when they come in, just like neighbors. Sam Ky noted that he wanted to place to both be a business, as well as a place where friends can come.

He would help customers with any questions they have. Sam will explain the ingredients in the dishes as well as telling people how each dish is cooked. And, of course, the owners are also willing to tell how each dish will taste.

The owners also think communicating with the customers is very important. They want to customers to know that the staff at Family Chow Mein think of each others as friends and neighbors.

Takeout continued, with delivery in Shakopee and Chaska every evening.

The Family Chow Mein was torn down when the city of Shakopee tore down the two blocks of the north side of First Avenue, and business were added on the first level, while apartments were added to the top two stories.

