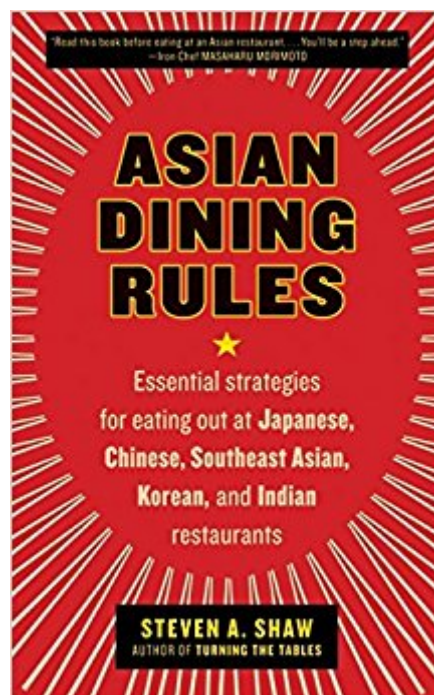


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# Asian Dining Rules: Essential Strategies For Eating Out At Japanese, Chinese, Southeast Asian, Korean, And Indian Restaurants



## Synopsis

Most Asian restaurants are really two restaurants: one where outsiders eat, and one where insiders dine. So how can you become an insider and take full advantage of Asian cuisines? In this indispensable guide, dining expert Steven A. Shaw proves that you don't have to be Asian to enjoy a VIP experience—you just have to eat like you are. Through entertaining and richly told anecdotes and essays, *Asian Dining Rules* takes you on a tour of Asian restaurants in North America, explaining the cultural and historical background of each cuisine—Japanese, Chinese, Southeast Asian, Korean, and Indian—and offering an in-depth survey of these often daunting foodways. Here are suggestions for getting the most out of a restaurant visit, including where to eat, how to interact with the staff, be treated like a regular, learn to eat outside the box, and order special off-menu dishes no matter your level of comfort or knowledge. Steven Shaw—intrepid reporter, impeccable tastemaker, and eater extraordinaire—is the perfect dining companion to accompany you on your journey to find the best Asian dining experience, every time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Read this book before eating at an Asian restaurant—you’ll be a step ahead.” (Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto) “With Shaw’s Dining Rules under your belt, you’ll be ordering like a regular.” (Martin Yan, cookbook author and host of the *Yan Can Cook Show*) “What impresses me about Steven Shaw is not that he’s mastered Asian decorum, but that he’s mastered almost everything in the

food world. Nobody should be that gifted. I'm twice his age, and I'm constantly learning from him. (Alan Richman) "Steven Shaw is the dining companion we all yearn for when eating unfamiliar foods in unfamiliar places: He is warm, wise, and goes out of his way to make us feel as informed (and well fed) as possible. (James Oseland, editor-in-chief, *Saveur*, and author of *Cradle of Flavor: Home Cooking from the Spice Islands of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore*) "As you order the shrimp fried rice and General Tso's chicken for the eight hundredth time, you eye the guests to your left. They have, apparently, seen a secret, far superior menu. Hungry reader, they read this book. (Phoebe Damrosch, author of *Service Included*)

Steven A. Shaw, aka "The Fat Guy," is the founder of the phenomenally successful eGullet website, a James Beard Award-winning food critic, and a contributor to *Saveur*, *Crain's New York Business*, and many other publications. He lives in New York City with his wife and son.

I love to read and I love to eat so I REALLY enjoyed this book! It's a treasure-trove of fascinating tidbits of the history, culture, customs, and culinary traditions all throughout Asia. I recently had lunch at a local Korean restaurant and was so overwhelmed and confused that I never actually knew what I had eaten. Now I look forward to going back and trying again, with a whole new appreciation of the food and the culture. I've also often seen Chinese families eating foods that looked a LOT more delicious than what was on my plate, and couldn't figure out what part of the menu they were ordering from. Now that I'm privy to a little inside information, I'll be sure to expand my culinary horizons the next time I'm out. Thank-you!

Generally good for anyone who wants more from their Asian dining experience. As an outsider learning from insiders, Shaw occasionally gets his facts wrong, but he's right more often than he's wrong and his advice on how to approach Asian restaurants is good. I would recommend this book to a friend.

Reading *Asian Dining Rules* is like spending time with a good (and funny!) friend who explains what food critics already know about how Asian restaurants really work and how to get the most out of your experience. He takes you through *Guerrilla Sushi Tactics*, explains "Thai spicy", and lets you in on the secret of the Two Menus in Chinese restaurants. The real stories about families who have started and run their own restaurants are great. I find myself thumbing through the book before

heading out to Asian restaurants now. I would recommend the book to both novice and experienced diners.

I learned a lot from this book, and I have already taken several tips from it. It is informative and very easy reading.

ok

Informative and fun read.

The book is in excellent condition, transport time was just a bit longer than usual, but I am very satisfied. I would prefer that a bill not be included in a gift.

In "Asian Dining Rules", food critic Steven A. Shaw, aka "The Fat Guy", encourages American diners to be more adventurous with Asian cuisines and offers a bounty of advice on how to go about doing that. The idea that "most Asian restaurants are two restaurants: the one where the outsiders eat and the one where the insiders dine" is a central theme. Shaw tells the reader how to find the good stuff on and off the menu in everything from hole-in-the-wall Chinese take-out joints to sumptuous upscale Indian restaurants. If I had to summarize Shaw's most-repeated morsels of advice, I'd say: Don't be shy! And don't judge an Asian restaurant by its location or décor. Shaw doesn't attempt to present a comprehensive guide to Asian eating in North America. Instead, he chooses what he thinks is useful, important, or interesting, especially to the person relatively inexperienced with Asian food. An Asian food aficionado may not get much out of "Asian Dining Rules", but the book does cover Japanese, Chinese, South Asian (Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian), Korean, and Indian restaurants. If you're knowledgeable about one Asian cuisine, you still might benefit from some advice about another. There is no coverage of Indonesian restaurants, as there are too few of them to be of broad interest. Too bad, as vegetarians flock to them in Europe. Each of the five sections dedicated to a different Asian nation or region includes some history of the cuisine in North America, description of the style of service in the restaurants and how best to navigate it, and advice for Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced (experienced) diners. Shaw talks about specific foods, what they are and how to eat them. He doesn't usually say which items might be suitable for vegetarians or any other diet, but he provides enough information about ingredients that readers can figure out what they might, or would not, like to try. Interspersed throughout the book

are interesting essays about specific restaurants and related topics, such as chopsticks or working conditions for deliverymen. Shaw has a reputation for rejecting any notions that foods might be harmful to one's health. Along those lines, "Asian Dining Rules" tries to convince readers that there is no significant risk in pregnant women eating raw fish and that adverse reactions to MSG are imaginary. He ignores studies that have found unacceptably high bacteria levels in most fish on the market and doesn't seem to understand that the risk is to the fetus, not the mother. MSG is a neurotoxin whose long-term effects are hotly debated. But there is no neurologist who doesn't acknowledge that it causes everything from dizziness to panic attacks in sensitive individuals. I found Shaw's willful ignorance obnoxious. But Steven Shaw's love of Asian food and adventurous spirit are infectious. "Asian Dining Rules" made me want to try some cuisines that did not appeal to me before. It alleviates the intimidation factor in Asian dining and encourages the timid or inexperienced to get out there and try the enormous variety of Asian food. While you do generally get better food at more expensive restaurants, Shaw covers all strata of restaurants in "Asian Dining Rules" and gives advice on how to get better food out of relatively inexpensive establishments. The book is very readable and a useful guide for those who might like more adventure in their dining but don't know where to start.

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