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The wheat noodles in the soup, chow mein and dry noodle dishes were brought to Taiwan by postwar USAID in the '50s and '60s. The sweet, hearty flavor of the Taiwanese minced pork is Fujian.

Huang, the chef at Tin Tin, is Taiwanese. (I was told that his second name doesn't translate well into English.) He is well acquainted with the Taiwanese flavor profile as he had opened several noodle houses in Taiwan. He had been working as a chef at the local Sora Sushi restaurants. The pandemic closed down the Sora Sushi restaurants for months. Restaurants such as Tomo Sushi were shuttered permanently. With the added challenge of sushi supplies, owners Shu Chen and Sky Deng saw this as an opportunity to use Huang's talent and experience in Taiwanese cooking to open a new restaurant. They could move into the Tomo Sushi space at the south end of Third Street (61160 S Highway 97, Unit C) with no construction and minimal decorative changes.

Tin Tin's decor is casual. A giant "Chinese waving cat" welcomes customers at the front of the counter. Several booths are wallpapered with pictures of giant chefs and noodle soup bowls. The booth dividers are printed with the menu so you can look above the seat across from you to choose your meal.

Until business returns to normal, the menu is limited and includes starters, soups, noodle soups, dry noodles and chow mein. The wheat noodles and sauces are made in-house. The pot stickers and other starters are brought in from a Portland distributor, as it is currently too labor-intensive to make the stuffed dumplings from scratch.

I dined in on my first visit to the restaurant, ordering enough food to bring home. Before I discovered the starters weren't created in-house, I ordered three starters and a main dish. Tin Tin's source makes excellent starters, and they are cooked to order.

The pot stickers were steamed then quick-fried in a flour-coated pan. This created a crispy pancake that held the five pot stickers together. The minced pork mixture stuffed into the crescent-shaped dumpling had a mild combination of flavors. Strong seasoning came from a soy-based dipping sauce that included garlic, ginger, onion and black vinegar. It was the perfect accompaniment.

The sesame balls were likewise tasty and

**Sesame Balls and Taiwanese Popcorn Chicken appetizers**

satisfying. Rice flour dough balls covered in sesame seeds surrounded sweet red bean paste. Some say it has a sweet potato flavor. I've loved good red bean paste since the days I lived in Southeast Asia. I was not disappointed.

My third starter was the Taiwanese Popcorn Chicken. This fried chicken dish

is a staple in the night markets of Taiwan. Bite-sized chicken tenders are dipped in flour and double-fried for a crunchy exterior. Its unique Asian flavor comes from five-spice powder and white pepper. The pepper and added chili flakes give the chicken bites a kick.

It's mixed with light, crispy flash-fried Thai basil leaves. The flavor is unique and addictive.

Of course, my visit wouldn't have been complete without noodle soup. The Szechuan Dan Dan Soup with spicy minced pork caught my eye. While not a traditional Taiwanese noodle soup, its flavor was strong and different from other Dan Dan soups I've tried. The herbs and spices were uniquely from Taiwan. Tsaoko or Chinese black cardamom gave the soup a barbecue, smoky overtone. It's also used medicinally to aid in digestion. All of the soup stocks are made in-house and sim-

**Spicy Shrimp Wontons with chili flakes****Tin Tin Taiwanese Noodle House**

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mered for over six hours. A generous serving of wheat noodles in the soup is topped with spicy, minced pork. While the spice lingers on the tongue, the soup's strong favors were satisfying.

On my return visit, I ordered food to go. Delivery is available through GrubHub, but \$9 items were almost \$12 through the app, so I instead ordered on the website for pickup.

This time I started with the Beef Shank Roll. Tender beef is rolled in a crispy fried pancake with a pickle, cucumber, and lettuce. Smear with a thick sauce made from black beans, it is reminiscent of Hoison sauce as it added a strong sweetness.

Spicy Shrimp Wontons seemed a good way to try seafood. Soft steamed wontons were generously filled with a minced shrimp mixture. As with the pot stickers, the stuffing was mild. This was offset by chili oil and chili flakes that brought strong spice and flavor. It was topped with fresh cilantro. It was a good appetizer to get the meal started.

For the main dish, I opted for the Satay Beef Chow Mein. As I had quickly learned, the flavors would not be as I expected. It was nothing like Thai Beef Satay. The meat

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was thin-sliced and tender, but there was no peanut flavoring with it. Instead, it had a mild black bean sauce. There were no strong flavors in this dish. It was a bit dull. I would take a pass on it in the future.

On the other hand, I picked up some Ja Dang Myeon "dry tossed noodles" with pork and vegetables. The noodles were not dry as the rich spices in the pork's sauce flavored the wheat noodles. Cucumbers and shredded carrot balanced the thick dark sauce with freshness.

Owner Sky Deng explained that they did not want to overwhelm the Western palate with the traditional strong Taiwanese spices. Nonetheless, the flavors come through, creating a unique, authentic dining experience that I imagine is similar to a casual noodle house in Taiwan.