

The Flying Chef

A banquet in the comfort of your own home. - By Hien Huynh, Jul 07, 07



No, The Flying Chef is not the latest character on "Heroes," nor is he the latest title from Marvel Comics. And no Jamie Oliver has not learned how to fly. **Flying Chef** is Shanghai's latest catering business with a twist.

When it comes to catering, most people automatically think canapés and buffets. So what is the twist here? The Flying Chef is your very own personal chef for a day.

We were invited along for a trial run at a friend's house and, not knowing much about the idea and what to expect, I was initially a little hesitant. However, after all the other mates arrived with bottles in hand, the friendly chatter and atmosphere soon blocked out the initial doubts in my mind. During the introduction, we learned that The Flying Chef was a local Shanghainese cook who had spent some time in Germany refining his trade. He has since returned to Shanghai and, finding few job opportunities, he has spent the majority of his time as a security guard in an apartment complex, moonlighting as a cook. Looking to turn his luck around, the concept of the "Flying Chef" was born.

Seeing Mr. Li prepare and cook the dishes, I was quickly convinced of his abilities and all doubts quickly vanished. After the first dishes were set down, the hungry Germans in our group made sure that there were to be no doggy bags after dinner.

Dish after dish was met with oohs and aahs by my fellow dining mates. Although the presentation was not particularly great as you might expect from a nice restaurant, the taste of the dishes themselves was definitely above par.

Presentation, of course, could have been better had the host provided a better set of cutlery to the Chef. After all, there is only so much ambiance you can create when working in the medium of paper plates.

The General consensus by all the guests was that it was a pretty good deal for all the dishes we had, all very much the standard Chinese affair, the exception being the salad (to my knowledge Chinese dishes rarely if ever consists of salads).

Here's how it works:

Mr. Li comes to your home and cooks up a banquet. If you're looking for a unique way to entertain your friends for those special occasions, or if you have guests or relatives visiting from overseas, or maybe its your birthday and you're too lazy to cook or maybe you don't even know the difference between a pot and a pan and still want to impress your guests with a unique night, The Flying Chef is available to cook for you and your guests in the comfort of your own dining room. You don't have to lift a finger and you can still enjoy the signature Chinese dishes you love.

It's all very simple; you order from the menu online, set a date and then you're done. The only thing you have to take care of is getting the invitations out to you mates and getting them to show up to your place on time.

The chef will do all the shopping for ingredients. As he is a local, he is able to get his hands on the best produce at local prices, leaving you with a reasonable bill without the extortion you might be subject to were you at the markets yourself. He will even bring over his cooking equipment as well as basic cutlery (mostly for cooking and serving purposes). You should, however, organize your own cutlery (plates and bowls and whatnot) for you and your guests.

Apart from the food itself the experience of having a professional chef working the stoves in your kitchen will leave your guests with fond memories.

We've all been there, starrng despondently into our fridges and cupboards, pulling ingredients down from the spice rack, setting a dirty pot on the stove. And then a nagging question flashes into our minds: "Can't I just pay someone to do this?" Well, with the Flying Chef you finally can.

For approximately 100rmb per head, it's a reasonable night in.

And cleaning up afterwards? That can be organized as well.