

# Chicken Feet & Clam Chowdah

## Dining in San Francisco: The Standouts

By [Courtney Vien](#), August 8, 2012, In [Dining Out](#), [Reviews](#)

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This August, we took a long-awaited trip to San Francisco, where we sampled as many of the city's myriad types of cuisine as possible in seven days. Here's part one of a series of capsule reviews about our gustatory experiences in the City by the Bay. Click here for parts [two](#) and [three](#).

Every foodie hopes for the holy grail: that once-in-a-lifetime meal that wows you at first bite and that you remember fondly years later. We were lucky enough to have one of those experiences on our trip to San Francisco, along with several other truly excellent meals.

Best. Crab. Ever.

The [R&G Lounge](#) in Chinatown makes salt-and-pepper crab carrying the imprimatur of none other than [Anthony Bourdain](#), so we figured it would be worth a try. Was it ever. The R&G Lounge fries live, giant Dungeness crabs in a batter plentifully seasoned with salt and pepper. These crabs are so exquisitely fresh that the meat is plump, sweet, juicy, and still redolent of the ocean. The batter, meanwhile, is sharp with salt, setting off the sweetness of the meat in much the manner of the salted rim of a margarita glass. It's a killer combination of salty, sweet, and oily — impossibly good.

R&G's other dishes are equally impressive, such as crispy roasted squab, served with the head

still on so hardcore foodies can nosh on the sweet, creamy brains and delicate eyeballs. A cold jellyfish-and-‘conch” (surf clam) plate makes a nice palate cleanser between bites of crab.



The world’s best crab. This is it. Right here.

### Amazing Dim Sum

**Yank Sing** doesn’t look like a great dim sum joint, and I mean that as a compliment. Most of the time, the best dim sum can be found in noisy, chaotic restaurants packed with clattering carts and boisterous Chinese families. Yank Sing, in contrast, is calm, elegant, quiet, and organized, its atmosphere resembling an upscale hotel’s. Maybe this serene ambiance is what’s given Yank Sing its undeserved reputation for being ‘Westernized” — that or the fact it serves egg rolls and walnut chicken alongside such standards as sui mai and chicken feet.

But chaos isn’t always a reliable indicator of dim sum quality. Yank Sing’s dim sum is impeccably fresh and well-crafted. The shrimp in its har gau are sweet and crunchy, while its chicken feet are plump and aromatic. The fried taro puffs are standouts: creamy, perfectly-seasoned taro cradled in a crispy coating so delicate it crumbles at the slightest touch.

And then there are the xiao long bao: wobbly, paper-thin pasta sacs filled with pork and hot soup. They’re best eaten in a single bite, the skin popping against your palate like oversized caviar while the savory soup fills your mouth. It’s a textural treat not to be missed.



Yank Sing’s xiao long bao

### Mooning Over Burma

**Burma Superstar** has a goofy name and a sterling reputation. San Franciscans are willing to wait outside this tiny restaurant for forty-five minutes for a table (fortified by complimentary tea), and it’s easy to see why. Burmese food is a flavor festival, combining sweet, salty, savory, pungent, and garlicky flavors, often in the same dish and sometimes in a single bite. Burma Superstar’s signature dish, the rainbow salad, is a case in point. This 22-ingredient beauty incorporates noodles, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, tofu, crackers, chili, roasted garlic, and tamarind sauce in an intriguing potpourri of flavors and textures. The restaurant’s pumpkin

shrimp dish is less zesty but equally flavorful, combining a sweet, pumpkin-like squash with spices and garlic oil for a unique taste sensation, while its Burmese chicken and shrimp casserole blends falling-off-the-bone chicken with aromatic cinnamon rice, almonds, and cardamom. Once again, the shrimp were large and crunchy-fresh: San Fran is a great city for shrimp.



Burma Superstar's chicken and shrimp casserole

We merely skimmed the surface of what San Francisco has to offer. One week's simply not enough time: You'd need years to do this great food city justice. And yet, what memories. Along with remembering Alcatraz and the Golden Gate Bridge, we'll be tasting that salt-and-pepper crab in our dreams.

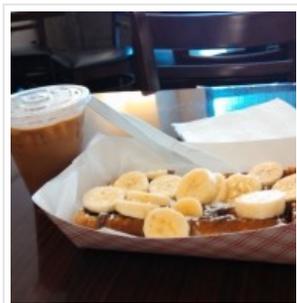
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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR: COURTNEY VIEN



Courtney Vien is a freelance writer and editor based in Durham, NC. She enjoys making food the hard way, trying new restaurants, and foraging for honeysuckle. Visit her portfolio at [courtneyvien.com](http://courtneyvien.com)

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## ABOUT US

We are neither chefs nor hardcore food critics. We are just an ordinary couple in the Triangle area in North Carolina who love eating and cooking good food. This blog follows us on our adventure through the culinary cosmos as we make and sample dishes from around the world.



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