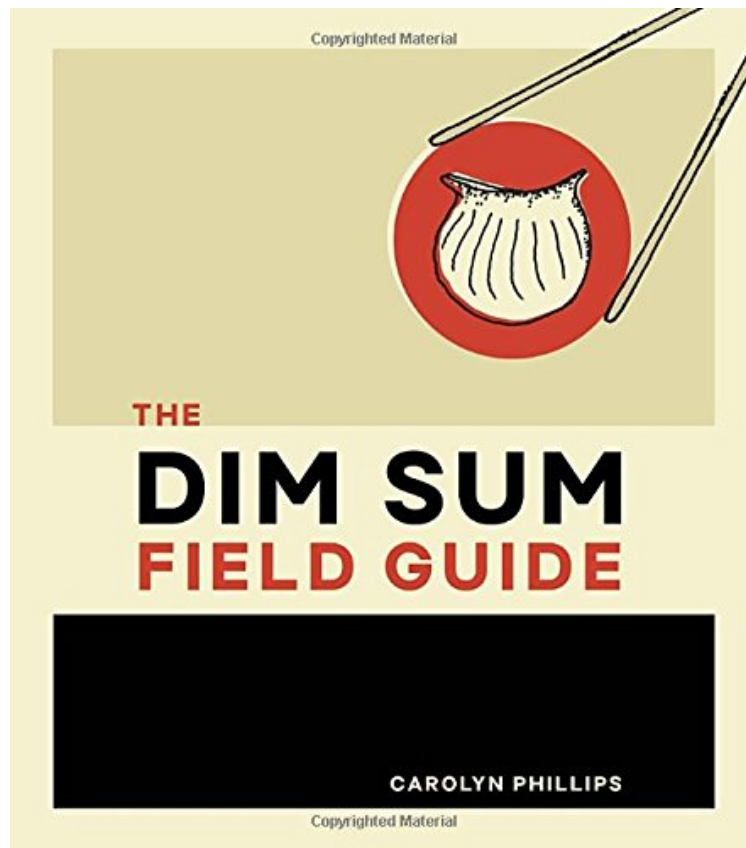


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# The Dim Sum Field Guide: A Taxonomy of Dumplings, Buns, Meats, Sweets, and Other Specialties of the Chinese Teahouse

Carolyn Phillips

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**Carolyn Phillips : The Dim Sum Field Guide: A Taxonomy of Dumplings, Buns, Meats, Sweets, and Other Specialties of the Chinese Teahouse** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dim Sum Field Guide: A Taxonomy of Dumplings, Buns, Meats, Sweets, and Other Specialties of the Chinese Teahouse:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great written informationBy edmund dyThe explanatory texts and details about each dish are excellent. Unfortunately the line drawings are not as helpful. Adding color or using photos would have been better.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I mistakenly thought this was a cook book, and ...By LouiseI mistakenly thought this was a cook book, and it's not. That's my own fault -but- there are no actual photos in this book so I'm not sure how well it would work as a "field guide" either. I'm donating this book to my local thrift store.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Needs Photographs.By Hyoronous SmithThough accurate, the sketches of dim sum are not adequate. Photographs of the various items are necessary.

A whimsically illustrated yet authoritative guide to the "taxonomy" of dim sum, based on a popular Lucky Peach story. Author and illustrator Carolyn Phillips demystifies the rich, nuanced culinary institution of teahouse snacks in *The Dim Sum Field Guide*, a pocket-size, definitive resource featuring 80 hand-drawn illustrations. With entries for all the dim sum classics—including siu mai, xiaolongbao, char siu, roast duck, and even sweets like milk tarts and black sesame rolls—this handy reference is perfect for bringing on-the-go to your next dim sum outing. Armchair travelers and Asian food enthusiasts alike will be delighted by this detailed yet accessible look at the distinctly Chinese art of eating well.—NPR's Best Books of 2016

NPR's Best Books of 2016 "Perfect for those who specialize in eating Chinese food, rather than making it." - T. Susan Chang, *The Level Teaspoon* "It is as erudite as it is darling. Whether exploring Buford Highway or boarding a plane for Guangzhou, it's as essential as your wallet and your passport." - *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* "Ms. Phillips's guide is extensive and satisfying. Her taxonomy is invariably brief, demanding only as much time as one will tolerate being delayed from reaching for a pair of chopsticks. Each item includes a short description, helpful tips on sauces, fillings and variations, plus some insightful history." - *Wall Street Journal* "Small enough to fit in a handbag, Carolyn Phillips' beautifully illustrated guide really can help a nervous diner navigate the sometimes intimidating realm of dim sum." - NPR

**About the Author** CAROLYN PHILLIPS is a scholar, author, and artist whose work has appeared in *Lucky Peach*, *Huffington Post*, *Alimentum*, and *Gastronomica*. She is the author of *All Under Heaven*, the first comprehensive cookbook on the 35 cuisines of China (with more than 300 recipes), which will be co-published by Ten Speed Press and McSweeney's in April 2015. Visit her at [MadameHuang.com](http://MadameHuang.com). Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

**INTRODUCTION** Welcome to the delicious world of dim sum. This is an exquisitely leisurely way to brunch, a meal that, when done right, can easily stretch out for a couple of hours into the afternoon. Each one- or two-bite morsel of dim sum is essentially a small packet of unique flavors—just enough to grab your attention and whet the appetite—but small enough that you can move on to the next tantalizing dish before your palate becomes bored. This book explores the Cantonese form of dim sum, which was born in the teahouses of Southern China—specifically, the capital city of Guangzhou that straddles the great Pearl River—about two centuries ago. Of course, the history of dim sum stretches back much farther than that (jiaozi-like dumplings, for example, were discovered in a Tang dynasty tomb dating from thirteen hundred years ago), and many other parts of the country boast of wonderful arrays of teatime snacks and petite sweets. However, I would have to agree with those who claim that the culinary art form known as dim sum reached its absolute pinnacle in Guangzhou. Perhaps the secret lies in the land. Located on the lush, fertile plains of southern Guangdong, this area has an almost endless selection of vegetables, starches, fruits, animals, crustaceans, and seafood. Or maybe it's the people, for Guangdong has been the destination for immigrants from all over the country who longed for more peaceful lives and who made Guangzhou synonymous with gracious living. Or maybe it's the tropical weather, the type of climate that encourages a person to laze in the shade with a hot pot of tea and some savory snacks, a trickle of water and the rattle of bamboo leaves in the warm wind coming together to form a natural lullaby. Or maybe it is because Guangzhou was a nexus between East and West, as well as North and South, a place where foreign culinary inspiration gave birth to marvelous ideas in the kitchen, while imperial and Muslim tastes added their own rich notes to this culinary symphony. Or maybe it is because all of these great food traditions eventually made their way down the Pearl River to Hong Kong, where ancient history crashed into the modern world, and many dim sum dishes evolved into their delicious, present-day incarnations. Whatever the reasons, dim sum remains one of the most delightful ways ever invented for whiling away a few hours in the middle of the day. And despite what some think, dim sum is a whole lot more than “dumplings,” a sort of catchall English term for anything vaguely starchy and small in the dim sum brigade. There's nothing inherently wrong, of course, with calling these dumplings, but it's sort of like labeling scarlet, chartreuse, and bronze simply “colors,” when they are so much more thrilling than that. The fact is that dim sum covers an intense spectrum of flavors, aromas, textures, and ingredients, and they are very much worth getting to know on a personal basis. Which is where *The Dim Sum Field Guide* fits in. My hope is that this book will inspire you to explore the many offerings in dim sum teahouses, whether you carry it with you on your next field excursion, or simply flip through it at home. If dim sum ends up giving you even half the pleasure it has handed to me, I know you will be a dedicated fan for the rest of your life.

**BRAISED CHICKEN GENUS** 白切鸡 • 1? j? • lou5 gai1 **IDENTIFICATION** A whole chicken is slowly cooked in broth seasoned with ginger, green onion, sand ginger, black pepper, and traditional Chinese herbs. The sauce may be slightly sweet or deeply savory. The bird is generally poached over very low heat to keep the meat tender and to prevent the skin from tearing. Unlike Roast Chicken, the fat and skin remain attached to the meat. It is often hung up to dry a bit and then chopped before serving. Exterior is slightly sticky and glossy; interior is juicy and contains bones. **DEFAULT SAUCE OR DIP** Savory meat juices for the dark varieties; lighter birds are often accompanied by bowls of shredded ginger and green onions bathed in hot oil and salt. **NESTING HABITS** A quarter, half, or whole bird is chopped into chunks and served on a plate; deeper-hued varieties will often be perched on a scattering of braised soybeans. **ORIGINS** Most probably traveled to Guangdong from Eastern China, where red-cooked and poached chickens are still enjoyed to this day. **SPECIES** Poached Chicken 白切鸡 • baak6 cit3 gai1

A bird cooked in a pale broth, this subgenus includes Consort's Chicken 贵妃鸡 • guìfēi jī • gwai3 fei1 gai1. Master Sauce Chicken 豉汁蒸鸡 • shí zhū zhēng jī • si6 jau4 gai1 The bright, dark skin and juicy flesh are courtesy of a rich, seasoned soy sauce broth. Crispy-Skinned Chicken 脆皮鸡 • cuì pí jī • ceoi3 pei4 gai1 Pale poached chicken is coated with a maltose mixture and then fried until reddish and crunchy; usually served with fried shrimp chips. Magistrate's Chicken 太爷鸡 • tài yé jī • taai3 je4 gai1 Smoked master sauce chicken.