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Real Chinese Food, No Fuss at Moscow's Kitaiskiye Novosti

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The informal atmosphere, great food and cheap prices draw a largely young crowd to China News, but you can find people of all ages at the communal table.

This fun, relaxed joint on Tverskaya Ulitsa is the second branch of Kitaiskiye Novosti (China News) to open this year. Spearheaded by restaurateur Stanislav Lisichenko, the new venue offers a pared down, self-service version of its big brother. The concept: to make authentic-style Chinese food easily accessible to Muscovites.

Head to the counter, select from the photo-menu and place your order. You are given a number which allows you to track the progress of your meal via the screen above the open plan kitchen. After a tantalizing wait as you watch fellow diners slurp their noodles, you will be called up to collect your food.

This unfussy restaurant has a modest menu, with around 25 items including sides, mains and the star of the show — dumplings. Served in a bamboo basket, these steaming, flavorful

bundles are indulgently comforting. Choose your desired filling and dig in.

Kitaiskiye Novosti

Then take your pick from crisp spring rolls with spicy, sticky sauce or the refreshing tiger salad made from greens, rice noodles and peanuts. Other offerings include the Chinese-style burger served with a pillowy steamed bun, and a variety of noodle dishes, served either in broth or with sauce and made with crispy beef, chicken or pork. The crunchy pickles served alongside many of the dishes can also be ordered separately — they are rather addictive — you have been forewarned.

The brightly-colored dining area seats about 50. There are some small tables, but most people sit elbow-to-elbow along the long, cafeteria-style benches that stretch the length of the room. This lends a pleasing intimacy to the dining experience, but leads to eavesdropping on strangers' conversations (like that's a problem, right?). It is a perfectly informal place for groups of friends to dine together, sharing dishes while passing around cheerfully-colored flasks of jasmine tea. Food is on trays, drinks are poured into plastic cups and lively chatter permeates the room. While China News has not opted for elegance, it does conviviality excellently.

The restaurant has the air of a Chinese shopping street, with colorful adverts, neon signs and newspaper lampshades. Dangling ceiling lights, wall murals and loud music add to the fun.

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