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Q & A With Cici Li From 'Food Paradise'

The TV host weighs in on where to find the best chocolate in NYC and the rich history of Chinese cuisine

By Channaly Philipp
Epoch Times Staff

Cici Li is the host of Cici's "Food Paradise" on NTD Television. The popular food program explores Asian and Western culinary cultures for a Chinese-language audience, including dining recommendations and food trends. We asked Cici about her New York experience. Answers have been edited for clarity and brevity.

What Are Your Favorite Food Memories of Eating Out?

New York City is a food paradise—hence why my show is called 'Food Paradise.' New York City is a huge melting pot and you can find the best of any cuisine here.

Luckily, for me there are many memorable bites, like the exquisite langoustine made by chef Eric Ripert from Le Bernardin, as well as the instantly melt-in-your-mouth wagyu beef shabu shabu from Momokawa.

Or the 20 layers of goodness of Mille Crêpe from Lady M. It's luscious and creamy, yet light and delicate. It's satisfying but not overly sweet. The caramel-

ization on the top adds a flavor of perfection to the cake. If Mille Crêpe were a person, I'd say I've fallen in love!

What Are Three Favorite Asian Dining Destinations?

Radiance Fine Asian Cuisine serves the most authentic Chinese Cantonese cuisine in New York City, in an elegant and distinguished setting. Executive chef Luo is a past winner of NTD's International Chinese Culinary Competition. Before moving to the United States, he was known as one of Beijing's top four chefs.

Miss Korea serves imperial Korean food. They believe that truthfulness, compassion, and beauty is the ultimate level of food. I can't agree more.

Royce' is from Hokkaido, Japan. Its maccha nama chocolate will simply blow your mind. It's truly the best chocolate I have ever tried.

If You Could Travel Anywhere in the World for a Specific Dish, Where Would It Be and What Would You Order?

I'd go to Taipei's night market for street food. It may be

hard to pick just one dish. I would order a ton of food, like stinky tofu, sausages, oyster pancake, beef noodle soup, and milk tea.

What Changes or Trends in the Asian Dining Scene Should We Keep Our Eyes On?

China has 5,000 years of culinary traditions. The knowledge, recipes, and techniques were passed down through generations of master chefs. The five most popular regional cuisines are Sichuan, Shandong, Huaiyang, Cantonese, and Northeastern.

I think people will start to see that the real Chinese food isn't that oily takeout fast food. Traditional Chinese is healthy and full of history.

What's Your Favorite Comfort Food Dish?

I love hotpot. You can enjoy it with your friends while cooking the food on the table.

The season premiere of Cici's "Food Paradise" is on June 25 on NTD Television. The show is in Mandarin and subtitled in English. www.foodparadisetv.com



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Cici Li

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"Food Paradise" host Cici Li during one of her episodes.

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