

Junzi Kitchen Comes to Greenwich Village
by Jackson Pacheco
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Odds are, if you live in Manhattan in 2018, you're but a short walk away from a restaurant peddling some variety of *the trendy bowl*. You know the place: an Apple Storian establishment that's almost too sleek to feel comfortable in, with a Square reader and ergonomic stools, surely playing that kind of nu-Chipotle music that's just a bit too loud to ignore (do all these places share a playlist or something?). A friendly fleet of screen printed American Apparel t-shirts swiftly scoop or tong your compostable bowl full of the diffused cuisine of some distant, spicy region. There's likely a smoothie/juice option and punchcard reward system for return customers.

The newest spot in Greenwich Village delivering this nearly-inescapable post-gentrification meal is Junzi Kitchen, on Sullivan and Bleecker. Opened earlier this July, the downtown Manhattan location marks chef Lucas Sin's third iteration of the northern Chinese eatery since he opened the original at Yale University in 2015. The menu is simple: either select one of several chef's recommendations or choose your own medley of braised meats (or tofu), stir-fried or pickled vegetables, garnishes, and sauces either wrapped in a thin flour-pressed dough, or scooped into a bowl with noodles.

The noodle bowls are filling and exhausting. Hearty, sauce-soaked portions of either thick, flat knife cut noodles or chewy, thin spring noodles prove themselves as veritable comfort carbs. The chun bing wraps are not as light as they appear, often hosting a larger portion of your choice protein than would a bowl. Side options are various mass-market Chinese snack imports and small pre-made containers of chilled spiced beef shank or pickled and seasoned smashed cucumbers. Fresh-brewed iced teas on tap are subtly sweetened and ripe for refilling on milder days when employees elect to open the floor-to-ceiling glass doors to let in the sounds of other Bleecker bowl joints. An always-filled bucket of White Rabbit vanilla chews near the door beckon you to fill your pockets on the way out, their mastic resilience a satisfying mobile dessert for the walk back home or on to class.

Say what you will about the potentially-blasé omnipresence of the millennial bowl joint, Junzi is not one of the trend's weaker links. Come prepared to spend ten to twenty immaterial bucks (they're cashless, because of course they are), and then again every time you're not in the mood to cook and remember how close by the place is.

Junzi Kitchen
170 Bleecker St.
Greenwich Village
Open 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. daily