A relaxed guide to enjoying a Chinese sharing plates brunch

Brunch has moved well beyond eggs and toast. In Birmingham, a new style has taken hold: a Chinese sharing plates brunch with unlimited drinks and weekend entertainment. The idea is simple, you sit down with friends, order a series of small dishes meant for the whole table, and let the meal unfold at a leisurely pace. It is social, it is flavourful, and it works brilliantly for a lazy weekend afternoon.

If you are new to the format, the key is knowing how to pace yourself and how to order. A Chinese sharing plates brunch is not like a standard Sunday roast where each person gets their own plate. Instead, every dish arrives in the middle, and everyone picks, dips, and passes things around. That shift in mindset is the first thing to get right. Once you embrace it, the whole experience becomes more relaxed and interactive.

Understand the rhythm of a sharing plates brunch

The beauty of a sharing plates meal is that it does not follow a strict starter-main-dessert order. Dishes tend to arrive when they are ready, and that is fine. The trick is to order a mix of textures and cooking styles so that the table always has something interesting to reach for. Think of it as building a sequence rather than a single dish.

Start with lighter items such as crispy duck rolls or a bowl of edamame. These are easy to eat while you settle in and decide what to order next. Then move toward more substantial plates like chilli wings or sanpei chicken. These dishes carry more heat and more sauce, so they pair well with a cold drink from the unlimited menu. End with something a little richer, perhaps a fried rice or a noodle dish, to round out the meal.

One common mistake is ordering everything at once. That can lead to a table crowded with dishes that go cold before you reach them. Instead, order in rounds. Start with two or three plates per person, then add more as you go. This keeps the food hot and gives you room to decide what you are in the mood for after the first round.

Know what to look for on the menu

Chinese sharing plates menus vary, but several dishes tend to appear again and again. Knowing a little about them helps you choose with confidence.

- **Crispy duck rolls**, a classic starter. The skin is crisp, the meat is tender, and they are usually served with a small dipping sauce. They disappear fast, so order an extra portion if you have a hungry table.

- **Chilli wings**, these can range from mild to seriously hot. If spice is not your thing, ask about the heat level before ordering. They are sticky, finger-licking good, and they work well as something to nibble between larger plates.
- **Sanpei chicken**, a dish with roots in Chinese cooking, often featuring a savoury soy-based glaze. The chicken is usually served in small pieces, making it easy to share. The flavour is rich without being overwhelming.

Beyond these, look for dishes that offer contrast. A plate of greens, for example, can cut through the richness of fried items. A bowl of steamed dumplings adds a soft, pillowy texture that balances crunchier plates. The goal is variety, not quantity. A well-chosen set of four or five dishes can feel far more satisfying than a table loaded with repeats of the same thing.

One more thing worth noting is portion size. Sharing plates are smaller than main courses, but they are not tiny. A good rule of thumb is to order three to four dishes per person if you plan to share generously. If everyone at the table has a big appetite, you can always order more. The opposite, having too much food that goes to waste, is harder to undo.

Pace your drinks alongside the food

An unlimited drinks package changes how you think about brunch. It is tempting to treat it as a free-for-all, but a little strategy goes a long way. Start with something light, such as a sparkling water or a simple cocktail, to ease into the afternoon. As the food arrives, move to drinks that complement what is on the table. A crisp lager or a citrus-forward drink works well with savoury, slightly spicy dishes. Sweet or creamy drinks are better saved for later, when the meal winds down.

Keep an eye on your own rhythm. Drinking too quickly on an empty stomach can spoil the rest of the meal. The best approach is to sip between bites, letting each drink course last as long as a plate of food does. That way, the drinks and the food finish around the same time, and you leave feeling satisfied rather than stuffed.

If the venue offers a cocktail menu, look for options that use ingredients like ginger, lychee, or jasmine. These flavours pair naturally with Chinese cooking. A drink that is too sweet or too heavy can clash with the savoury notes in the food, so balance is key.

Think about the table dynamic

Sharing plates only work if everyone at the table is on the same page. If one person is a very slow eater and another is very fast, the rhythm can feel off. It helps to agree on a few ground rules before the first dish arrives. Decide whether everyone will order together or take turns

picking dishes. Talk about spice tolerance and dietary preferences openly. That way, no one ends up with a plate they cannot eat or a dish that makes them uncomfortable.

Dietary preferences are especially important in a sharing format. Many Chinese dishes use soy, wheat, or shellfish, so if someone has an allergy or a strong aversion, make sure it is known before the order goes in. Most venues are happy to accommodate substitutions, but they need to know ahead of time. A quick check of a platform like luluwild1 | Profile can give you a sense of what is on offer and what the place is like before you book.

Once the food starts arriving, keep the plates moving. Pass dishes around, encourage everyone to try a bit of everything, and do not let one person hoard a favourite. The whole point is that no single dish belongs to anyone. That shared experience is what makes this style of brunch different from a standard meal out.

Watch for the little things that make a difference

Small details can elevate a sharing plates brunch from good to memorable. Pay attention to the temperature of the food. Dishes that arrive hot should be eaten first. If something sits on the table for too long, it loses its appeal. Do not be shy about asking for a fresh plate if something goes cold before you get to it.

Also, look at how the dishes are presented. A well-arranged plate shows care in the kitchen. Garnishes, sauces on the side, and clean plating all signal that the kitchen takes the food seriously. That kind of attention often extends to the rest of the experience, from service to the quality of the drinks.

Another thing to watch is how the staff handle the table. In a busy brunch service, good staff will check in regularly without hovering. They will clear empty plates quickly and bring new ones without needing to be flagged down. If the service is smooth, the whole meal feels effortless. If it is not, it can throw off the pacing. A quick look at luluwild1 | Profile can give you an idea of what the service is like, helping you choose a venue that matches your expectations.

End the meal on the right note

A sharing plates brunch does not have to end abruptly. Once the last dish is cleared, take a moment to enjoy the last of your drink and the atmosphere. Many venues have music or entertainment that continues into the afternoon, so there is no rush to leave. If you still have room, a light dessert or a pot of tea can be a nice way to finish.

The real measure of a good sharing plates brunch is how the table feels at the end. If everyone is full, happy, and a little bit fuller in spirit, it worked. The format rewards patience, curiosity, and a willingness to share. It is not about eating as much as possible in the shortest time. It is

about stretching a meal across an afternoon, trying things you might not order on your own, and leaving with a sense of having shared something worthwhile.