



Lunch Today: Good Vegan Cuisine at LuAnne's Wild Ginger

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[Photographs: J. Kenji Lopez-Alt]

I've made my stance on faux meat pretty clear in the past (hint: [I don't like it](#)) and I've never been to a pan-Asian restaurant I've liked. This made my choice of **Wild Ginger**, a vegan, pro-faux restaurant serving such enticing-sounding dishes as General Tsao's Soy Protein and Tofu Teriyaki Sizzling Platter a little suspect. What was I thinking?

Luckily, turns out that amidst all that nonsense, there are some tasty lunch options. The salad section is a good place to start. The **Watercress Salad** (\$8.50) is a gigantic bowl of fresh watercress (they describe her as the "mineral-rich queen of greens") with plenty of avocado,

sprouts, and hair-thin strands of shaved beets served with a gingery sesame dressing. I wished they'd have tossed the salad with the dressing, but glancing around the room, it seemed like most of the clientele were dressing-on-the-side types.



Crispy **Tofu Skin Wraps** (\$6.50) are like extra-crunchy versions of spring rolls, stuffed with shiitakes, bamboo shoots, and other shredded vegetables. The sauce—a sweet, ketchup-y concoction with a hint of spice—I could take or leave.



The best dish we tried was the **Moo-Shu Vegetable** (\$12), a fine take on the Northern Chinese dish that's been a staple of Manhattan Chinese-American restaurants since the late 60's. Their version eschews the traditional pork and eggs in place of cabbage, shiitake mushroom, bamboo shoot, carrots, and snow peas. It's stir-fried well, with each vegetable retaining their crunch while acquiring a nice smoky *wok hei*. Even the pancakes are great—super thin, stretchy, and moist—a step up from the average pancakes you get at even some of the better non-vegan Chinese restaurants in the area.

It's \$12 for the dish, but we found one order to be ample enough for two, with a little left over for a late afternoon snack.

If there's one great thing to be said about Wild Ginger, it's the atmosphere. Unlike your typical rushed Chinatown lunch with waitstaff whose only job seems to be to get you out of your seat as soon as possible, the service at Wild Ginger was relaxed, quiet, and gentle.* It's a welcome break that even a meat eater could enjoy.

*Cue "vegans are docile because they need more protein" joke here.

Wild Ginger

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About the author: J. Kenji Lopez-Alt is the Managing Editor of [Serious Eats](#) where he likes to explore the science of home cooking in his weekly column [The Food Lab](#). You can follow him at [@thefoodlab](#) on Twitter, or at [The Food Lab](#) on Facebook.

