

Rui Fu Yuan

A homey restaurant that serves pork shoulder and fish soup.

By CHRISTOPHER ST. CAVISH

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Location

132 Maoming Nan Lu, near Fuxing Zhong Lu, Huangpu District (茂名南路 132 号乙, 近复兴中路)
Shanghai, China

What to order

Yellow croaker soup with wontons (大黄鱼小馄饨汤, da huang yu xiao hun tun tang), red-braised pork shoulder (红烧蹄膀, hong shao ti...



The soul of Shanghainese food is home cooking; every woman with grandkids can make a killer *hong shao rou* (braised pork belly). So it's all the more telling that Rui Fu Yuan fills up with the aging set, who know how to cook and are famously thrifty. This place has granny cred, which is the best you can get in Shanghai.

The doors at Rui Fu Yuan open at five p.m., and by six it's usually filled. By seven, the most popular dishes—yellow croaker soup, hong shao pork shoulder—are probably sold out, and by eight it's all over.

Get there early, then, because the two main draws are that soup and that pork shoulder. There are only a few ocean fish Shanghainese people like (fish and crustaceans from the river are a lot more popular) and none more than the yellow croaker. It's a mild fish with a lot of fine bones, and Rui Fu Yuan turns it into a bowl of milky-white soup as wide as a tire, thickened with the flesh of the fish, spiked with white pepper, and then used as the cooking broth for a handful of tiny wontons. One order is enough for four people, as is the red-braised pork shoulder.

CHINA, FISH, PORK SHOULDER, SHANGHAI, SOUP
