# Eastern Palace Chinese Restaurant

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Photo courtesy: Thilak Seneviratne

A little bit of China goes a long way at Eastern Palace Chinese Restaurant. A menu list 169 items long brings specialities such as Ro ted Duck, Shark Fin Shop and Sliced Beef with Bamboo Shoots all the way from China’s Szechuan region, known for its chili garlie flavored cooking. Enhanced by Colombo’s plentiful supply of fresh seafood, vegetables and a local disposition for spicy food, and prepared by a Chinese cook trained and practiced in Hong Kong. Eastern Palace’s Szechuan fare complements the indigenous cuisine with a distinctive and tasty difference. A favorite adaptation to the traditional Chinese whole-fish plate is the Garoupa Fish with garlic or sweet and sour sauce-or both: an entire fish, rather ugly to look at but tender and flavorful to eat, half cooked in each type of sauce. Individual servings of sliced fish come with green peppers, onions or mushrooms, as do ringlets of cuttle-fish, better known as squid. Crab-steamed, baked or fried-and prawns, fried, stuffed, steamed and with various embellishments, compete with another island delicacy lobster which is priced by weight – Rs 170 per pound. These craggy crustaceans are guaranteed fresh and cooked to your liking. From the landward side come fowl and fillet – sliced, diced, peppered and smothered in celery, onion, chili and bamboo or with oyster sauce. Nearly twenty kinds of chicken dishes include one with a special sesame dressing, and an all time favorite in any tongue deep fried with a special

touch of spice. With beef pork and over a dozen vegetable plates, from braised spinach with crab to Chinese cabbage or asparagus with mushrooms, it’s clearly a place to share and sample around the table. Add a few rice and noodle dishes and a precursor of sweet corn, hot and sour or mushroom-based soups, and you’ve a genuine Chinese banquet with every color, taste and texture imaginable. None is a more welcome finale to this feast than a cooling dish of ice cream served with sweet and juicy lychees, peaches or pear; rich Bavarian coffee cream, a refreshing plate of tropical fruit, or a traditional Chinese cold bean curd. The Eastern Palace is open for lunch 11 :30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and dinner 6:30 p.m. to midnight, and for take-out meals during these same hours. An upstairs room is available for private banquets of up to 30 people. The newly renovated dining room sets the stage for an enjoyable meal. An extensive beverage menu features imported and domestic liquors, wines, aperitifs, beer and fruit and soda drinks. Menu prices generally ranging from Rs 40 to 90 per dish, add up to a full-spread meal for$6-7U.S. per person. Fora large selection of Szechuan specialities and a little bit of the Orient, try the Eastern Palace, one of Colombo’s popular dining spots.