

Top 5

Boba Tea Houses in LA

by LILLIAN MA on February 27, 2013

Have you ever been curious about those cold drinks with little black jellies inside? Those mysterious dots are called boba, which has become part of an indispensable drink for many people in Asia. Bobas were first invented in Taichung, Taiwan during the 1980s. Today one can find a teahouse at almost every corner in Taiwan. The drinks have spread to nearby countries such as China, Japan, and Korea. In Los Angeles, there are many teahouses that also serve authentic boba drinks.

If you are a young adult in Los Angeles with a Chinese background, there's no way you haven't heard about the famous Half and Half House, which is piously worshiped by the SoCal boba-lovers.



Rumor says Half and Half is the best boba chain in Los Angeles; and the Monterey Park store is the best of the chain. No wonder there is always a ridiculously long line queuing outside of the place on Friday and weekend night.

This place won the local market with its ice milk drink with honey boba, pudding, and caramel. I actually have never seen a thing like this in Taiwan and I still miss it when I fly back to Asia. Half and Half definitely lives up to the hype.

Their signature fatty cups don't usually fit into the cup holders of ordinary cars — but doesn't that make Half and Half more unique?



Half & Half Tea Express Serves Original Honey Boba & Ice Milk Drinks

September 2, 2012 by COURTNEY HONG

In 2008, the original Half & Half Tea House opened in San Gabriel, soon to forever change the boba milk tea landscape in Los Angeles with its signature honey soaked boba milk and ice milk drinks. After one chew of a mouthful of perfectly textured boba or a sip of a refreshingly creamy ice milk drink with your choice of two additions, you can never go back to cheaper quality alternatives. Not surprisingly, there is usually a long line of people trailing out the door to the café that serves Taiwanese entrees, snacks, and desserts along with a plethora of hot and cold drinks. Fortunately, the recently opened Pasadena express location, along with others in Monterey Park and Rowland Heights, has made the addictive drinks and a small menu of savory snacks more accessible.

"I always wanted to have my own business," said the friendly Taiwanese female owner, who wishes to remain anonymous. "I never imagined it would be so big. For two years it wasn't crowded. It wasn't busy. In a very short amount of time, we became famous. It was overwhelming."

Just 24-years-old when she arrived in the U.S., the owner chose the name "half and half" to honor her Taiwanese roots and new U.S. home.

"I just tried to have a little store," said the owner, who manages all four locations. "We want to make sure consistency is good [and] we don't want to disappoint our customers."

Upon getting many complaints about the long line at the original San Gabriel tea house, the owner's solution offers quicker service and slightly cheaper menu items. The express locations have their own cards (different from the San Gabriel one) that customers can have stamped after each purchase to earn a free drink or an Asian trinket. Unlike the San Gabriel location, the express locations do not offer gift cards, entrée menu items, free Wi-Fi, or drinks served in glasses (dine-in).

"I have confidence [that] my drinks are different," said the owner, who also designed the famously large to go drink cups. "We are the first to create honey boba and [the] ice milk drink. We have trademarked both."

Not sure what to order? Take a peek at the ever-changing list of most popular drinks at each tea house to get an idea of which masterpiece to try. Warning: you will probably become addicted.