

# Gong Cha in Annandale provides a great hang out spot

As the days become hotter and the sun comes out, grab a quick and tasty refresher at the newly opened drink shop, Gong Cha which means “tribute tea for the emperor.”

It is a global establishment with over 1500 locations around the world; including one near AMF Annandale Lanes. The cute, warming, interactive shop specializes in serving boba tea, also known as bubble tea.

Boba tea is a Taiwanese drink that has some flavor of tea, sometimes milk, and other flavors added. After the flavors are established, ‘toppings’ can be added, like their main distinguishing ingredient called boba, which are small, tapioca, jelly-like balls.

At Gong Cha, you can pick exactly what type of drink you want using their five-step process.

First, pick the type and flavor of drink. A few of their top ten flavors are pearl black milk tea, a taro drink, and purple sweet potato smoothie. Secondly, choose a size, and how much sugar you want- between none and 100%. Next, request an amount of ice; again it can be anywhere between none and 100%. Lastly, you get to finalize the drink with however many toppings you’d like from a variety of toppings from rainbow jellies to oreo crumbs to strawberry milk foam.

Gong Cha’s cheapest drinks are \$3.00 for medium sized brewed teas like winter melon tea, oolong tea, and a honey drink.

The priciest options on the menu are the large sized ice smoothies like chocolate smoothies, peach yogurt smoothies,

and milk foam peach green tea smoothie for only \$4.95 which is not a bad price at all.

Three friends, Duy Duong, Kevin Tran, and Khang Tran are the founders of the Annandale Gong Cha.

They were interested in starting a business for a while, so when they “found out Gong Cha opened up their first DMV location in Rockville, [they] contacted them to become a part of the franchise and luckily [Rockville] got back to [them]. The rest is history,” Duong said.

Although there are many boba tea shops in the area, the three friends from college created Gong Cha to be unique and different from the others. They have flavors that other shops don't offer, their drinks can be customized, and best of all, the environment is very welcoming.

“Our goal is to make it a fun environment for everyone, so they stay and have a good time,” Kevin Tran said. “It's a great place for not just kids, but teens and adults too.”

From the decorations to the comfortable seats to the games, Gong Cha is the perfect little hang out spot. They have leather couches customers can sit in while playing a game of Connect Four, Uno or Jenga.

Not only is the atmosphere refreshing, the drinks are too. The mango green tea from the creative mix series was light and sweet. Even without any toppings, the tang of the mango came through in every sip.

Also from the creative mix series, the passion fruit green tea surprised me with its non-traditional, but pleasant flavors. The added rainbow jellies at the bottom boosted the strength of the passion fruit essence and added a nice texture.

Unfortunately, the winter melon oolong tea from the brewed tea series was not well reciprocated by a fair number of people.

It tasted bitter and bland, but some sugar might have brightened it up a little bit. Some of the drinks and pairings are definitely an acquired taste, but others are perfect refreshers on a hot day.

“Drinking tea is safe and it’s not like alcohol, so everyone should definitely come in and try it,” Tran said.

Make sure to stop by at 4230 Annandale Road Suite 160, Annandale, VA 22003 for a flavorful and refreshing drink.