

# Free Lunch in Oakland, California

Edited by Adela Karliner (07/07/2020)

My friend upstairs, Angela, sent me a message that the World Central Kitchen will be supplying lunch free of charge to anybody in Oakland, California, at 11 am every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday between June 29th and July 31st. The distribution place is at 310 8th Street.

Angela told me that to help those seniors who can't stand in line for a long time; she suggested that the food coupon be distributed from seven o'clock, early in the morning. After the citizens receive the ticket, they can bring the voucher to the distribution center to receive real food accordingly. I think this is a brilliant idea of caring for the seniors. Otherwise, when the weather is sweltering, and the sun is scorching, the long queues are indeed too much for the elderly, so I sincerely praised her.

Eighth Street? I live on 10th Street in Chinatown, Oakland, California. It is only two blocks away. I, an elderly lady, can come downstairs to take a walk. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic's current outbreak, I stayed home every day, cooking and eating with nobody but myself. It isn't exciting after a long while. I am so bored that I can feel that the bird is flying out of my mouth. Maybe it would be better to get a free lunch cooked by somebody else and have a change of taste.

I usually get up and start to work at about five o'clock in the morning. On Monday, July 6th, wearing a mask, I went downstairs to find out the situation.

From Ninth Street, I saw two Asian women standing on 8th street outside the 310 building. They saw me walking over and immediately gave me a yellow lunch ticket with the number 11:10 am and number 49.

I came back home, got online, and checked. The World's Central Kitchen is a free kitchen initiated by a Latino, Jose Andre. They welcome volunteers and also donations. Although volunteer is the right choice, the elder's clumsiness may cause more problems than it's worth! I think that good deeds should be encouraged, so I filled in a gift within my ability.

At 11:10 am, at the corner of 8th street, there set up a table with lunch boxes. After 11:10 am, I was the 49th person to receive two black plastic boxes filled with food.

Back at home, I opened the lunch box to take a look. There were three sections in the food container; one part contained the yellow cheese macaroni. The second section was a mixed vegetable of various colors: the cauliflower was white, the broccoli is green, and the carrot is orange. It not only looked fresh and beautiful, but it also tastes refreshing and delicious. The third section was the beef short ribs sautéed with onion and bell pepper, which smelt appetizing and tasted incredibly delicious. Although the short rib beef was a bit chewy, if you take time to chew it patiently, it would be

fine.

After lunch, Ms. Marie, who lived upstairs in the next building, took a blank piece of paper and asked me to sign.

"Sign for what?" I asked.

"To complain that the beef short ribs are too tough! It is very hard for those who had bad teeth," was her answer.

"Come on! how can we complain about the food which was given to us for free? It was very ungrateful!" I flatly refused to sign my name.

"Tell them what's wrong, meant to give them the opportunity for improvement. It is good for them," she explained.

After hearing this, I had to admit that she was right. So I obediently signed the protest sheet.

I had decided to go early the next day, Tuesday, but unexpectedly got a light green 11:15 am No. 15 coupon ticket; you could interpret it as that everybody had the same idea; everyone liked the meals; many people had decided to arrive at the place to get the lunch ticket earlier. So I decided to leave the free lunch for those who need it more than I do and stay home to cook for myself.

On Wednesday, September 16th, about 11:30 am, my doorbell rang. During the pandemic prevention, I stayed at home most of the time and was bored to death, so I immediately rushed to open the door.

"Hello, this September and October, we are distributing free lunch to

the homebounds every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, do you want one?" asked my next-door neighbor who was pushing a food cart with a pleasant smile.

Ah, the seniors could get free lunch without standing in a queue, what a great idea!

P.S. . The World's food Programme has won the Nobel peace prize for the year of 2020, congratulation! WFP well deserves the honor and the money!