

## Great dining enjoyments in Qingdao

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Qingdao, a coastal city on the Yellow Sea on East China's Shandong Peninsula, is famous worldwide for its famed Tsingtao Beer, but another constant delight of locals and a beautiful memory for tourists is the city's excellent seafood cuisine.

Seafood choices abound in Qingdao, and its residents' cooking skills have been highly regarded for centuries. Trepang, abalone, sea snails, clams, oysters, squid, shrimp and crab dishes are common choices whether at a seaside snack bar, in one of the city's many excellent "ordinary" restaurants or fine dining at a luxury hotel. Clams are a local favourite, and many people like to cook at home. Clams can accompany cold dishes, be served in a hot soup, or prepared as spicy fried dishes. Delicious and nutritious soups are also highly recommended.

Because of Qingdao's rich seafood resources and its culinary legacy, there are special seafood fish dishes for each time of the day. Trepang is considered indispensable for local fine dining.

Some of the best places to sample the freshest seafood are found in fishing villages in the city's mountainous Laoshan District. The seafood there is often fresh-caught, good to eat and relatively inexpensive. Summer and autumn are the best seasons to visit Laoshan. Its scenery, temples and seaside amusements make this a place for unforgettable sightseeing and dining experiences.

Another delightful place well-worth visiting is the Yunxiao Lu Food Street. Seafood there is reasonably priced and comes in a wide variety. Dumplings (jiaozi) with tasty seafood fillings are quite popular.

Newcomers to the area and its cuisine, however, should take special care of their stomachs. Often, an appetite is easily satisfied, but such pleasures can come at a price; the stomach sometimes suffers. Since vinegar can help protect the stomach and make the seafood more delicious, remember not eat too much at once, and ask for some vinegar and vegetables with your meals. Try especially pucai, a vegetable grown in ponds. Pucai is crisp and nutritious, and it is treasured by local residents.

But, since Qingdao is an exceptionally diverse city, because of its unique history and culinary history, if you get bored with seafood, there are many other treats available. On May 1<sup>st</sup> each year snacks from home and abroad are featured for tasting on Qingdao's Huiquan Square; the 2007 instalment will be part of the Eighth China Food Festival. Chefs from more than 20 countries will show off their best dishes, and lectures on healthy dining will be given by experts.

Beer lovers look forward to August in this famed beer-producing city, because this is the time for the Qingdao International Beer Festival. Beer is a big part of life in Qingdao, and if you visit at other time of the year, the newly opened "Dengzhou Lu Beer Street" is ready to welcome you. The street is home to the original Tsingtao Beer Factory, established about a century ago by German residents in Qingdao. There are now about 40 beer bars and restaurants lining the nearly 1,000-metre-long street. Of special note, all the buildings on the street are in the late 19th century "Early 20th century European-style. Fresh beer produced in the factory is available daily in the area's bars, the freshest in the city. At the Tsingtao factory, the Tsingtao Beer Museum contains a detailed history of Tsingtao Beer and its production processes. Here you can sample the best in beer with others from around the world.

To prepare for your Qingdao adventure or if you are planning to visit Qingdao for the 29th Olympic Sailing Regatta in 2008, see: [www.qingdaocate.com](http://www.qingdaocate.com) and [www.meishi007.com](http://www.meishi007.com), which contain useful information that will enhance your stay.