



Host city crowned home of 'world's best Chinese food'

(China Daily)

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VANCOUVER: Pack your chopsticks and book a flight to Vancouver, a city where you can find the "best Chinese food in the world", even better than that of China!

Such a bold claim may be enough to make serious foodies choke on their mapo doufu. But in an article in this month's edition of Conde Nast Traveler, writer Mark Schatzker, with the help of local food scribe Stephanie Yuen, provides a list of reasons why Vancouver is "home to the best Chinese food in the world".

On a visit to the Winter Olympics host city, Schatzker packed away 38 Chinese meals (including visiting eight restaurants in one day) and categorized his findings according to his own ratings. He lists the best breakfast, dessert, soup, seafood, dumpling and even the best Asian mall - Yaohan Mall in Richmond, a Vancouver suburb, was deemed the winner.

"Think of it as a suburban reinterpretation of Hong Kong (without the jet lag!)," he wrote.

Schatzker raved about such delicacies as golden Dungeness crab at Ken's Chinese Restaurant, xiao long bao at Lin Chinese Cuisine and Tea House, and such unique only-in-British Columbia specialties as sauteed geoduck, a giant clam that can only be obtained by **sandblasting** it out from its traditional home on the Pacific Ocean floor.

Schatzker attributed the fine Chinese food to the new wave of immigrants who started coming to Vancouver in the mid-1970s. "Today, almost one in five of Vancouver's two million residents is ethnically Chinese," he writes.

While the Chinese have been in British Columbia since the late 1800s, when the first wave came to build Canada's national railway, Conrad Leung arrived in 1975.

As the head of the Asian culinary arts department at Vancouver Community College, the Hong Kong native every six months graduates 20 cooks capable of making more than 150 Chinese dishes. Leung said the majority found jobs with casinos, hotels, restaurants and supermarket chains.

"It's all about 'fusion' as Oriental tastes go into the mainstream," he said.

As someone who grew up in the restaurant business in Hong Kong's Sheung Wan district where his father owned the Silver Dragon, Leung said Vancouver's Chinese fare has improved a lot from the days when he first arrived and "Western Chinese food" was served to the masses.

Typically, such menus included sweet and sour pork, chow mein and dishes with such made-up names as "chop suey" (fried vegetables), egg foo young (an omelet with bean sprouts) and moo goo gai pan (stir-fried chicken, mushrooms and other vegetables drenched in soy sauce).

"Those type of restaurants were popular but they are fading away now. People here have tasted real Chinese food and they know what's good and what they want," Leung said.

He said one of the reasons Vancouver has such good Chinese food is because of the quality of the abundant seafood, meat and locally-grown produce.

"Number two is the environment," he said. "The rating is not just for the food but also the price as well in the portion, the quantity and the price."



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Kevin Wong, who has lived in Vancouver for the past 30 years, said the restaurant scene has exploded locally in recent years with lots of Chinese mainland restaurants opening up.

"There's more variety. Before it used to be primarily Hong Kong food, which is the prime population here. But now a lot of people are coming in from the Chinese mainland and it just makes sense that there are also some better chefs and more of them coming in and they do what they know. It's more authentic," he said.

Xinhua