

The Taste Of Travel

Chef And The City—Martin Yan's Hong Kong

(NAPSA)—Hong Kong may be the world's best place for an appetite. The dynamic, cosmopolitan city is filled with excellent restaurants, from everyday dim sum to six-star fine dining.



Chef Yan

One of Hong Kong's brightest stars is Chef Martin Yan. We caught our culinary concierge in a "Hong Kong state of mind" as he prepared for a whirlwind trip to Asia.

"This will be my fourth trip to Hong Kong—this year! I attended high school and learned the culinary trade in Hong Kong, so it's like going home for me," Chef Yan says.

"Hong Kong is perfect for North Americans because it is so 'East/West,'" Chef Yan explains. English is widely spoken; of course, there are a few things that travelers can do to be culturally impressive. "Learn how to use chopsticks, and learn to pronounce a few basic words like delicious, ice water, thank you. It makes a huge impression," the Chef says.

"Your first day in Hong Kong, the very best thing to do is take a walk around. If something smells good, looks good, then try it! Travel heightens your senses, and in Hong Kong you are on safari in the biggest food court on the planet!

"Dining out is a passionate way of life, an every day affair in Hong Kong. One reason for this is the availability of the best, freshest products and ingredients from across China.

"In most of the United States, fresh seafood means it wasn't frozen. In Hong Kong, fresh means fish jumping and swimming right before you eat them! The variety of seafood available in



Hong Kong

Hong Kong is the best in the world," Chef Yan continues. "Look for Cantonese-style preparation—very light, refreshing, and healthy."

Perched on the doorstep of mainland China, Hong Kong features cuisine from every mainland province—Cantonese, Chiu Chow, Peking, Shanghaiese, Szechuan—all deliciously different.

Hong Kong's food, like the rest of the city, is famous for its diversity. Visitors can enjoy fine cuisine from around the world in the trendy Lan Kwai Fong and SoHo districts. "One of the best Italian restaurants in the world is located in Hong Kong," Chef Yan opines, bringing up an interesting point—some of Hong Kong's finest restaurants are located in hotels.

For starters, Chef Yan suggests stopping at the Hong Kong Tourism Board's visitor information center upon arrival at Hong Kong International Airport for a free copy of the "Best of the Best Culinary Guide." Excerpts from the guide are also available online (see below).

Shopping for Culinary Gifts

"One of my favorite things to do in Hong Kong is walk around the Temple Street Night Market, it's the perfect nightcap after dinner," he says. Other areas where you might find Chef Yan hunting

for bargains are Tsim Sha Tsui and the renowned Stanley Market. What's he shopping for?

"A beautiful box of tea is one of the best gifts you can bring home from Hong Kong. Tea shops are everywhere, there's even a great one right at the airport."

For the chef in your life, authentic Hong Kong kitchenware is perfect. "The most important culinary tool in Hong Kong is the wok, and you can find truly unique, functional woks of any size and material in Hong Kong," suggests Chef Yan.

"Chopsticks are a traditional Chinese gift that can be very simple or very ornate, a great gift for any occasion."

Chef Yan's Perfect Day in Hong Kong

"I would get up early and take the ferry to Victoria Park for tai chi. Next to the park is a teahouse that's been there more than 100 years. Have some dim sum brunch, and then do some shopping. Personally I would go to the Western Market to shop for dried seafood ingredients, but I'm a chef!

"Afternoon tea at the Peninsula Hotel is world-class, with their traditional and lavish service. Maybe a quick rest, then on to dinner at one of the restaurants on Victoria Peak that overlook the city.

"After dinner, I head for a nightclub, have a drink, dance, and burn off all those calories—my perfect day in Hong Kong!"

Planning the Hong Kong Adventure

Now's the time to visit Hong Kong. Airfares are at their absolute lowest in years. Hotels are offering packages and amenities that boggle the mind. For information on the best deals going to Hong Kong, as well as travel information and tips, go to www.discoverhongkong.com/usa/, the official travel Web site.