



Tianjin reviews,
events and information

TIANJIN FOOD AND DRINK AWARDS

The City's Best Bars and Restaurants Revealed *See p2*

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TRANSPORT

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Damaged vehicles from last August's Port of Tianjin warehouse explosion are finding their way onto the black market – and into unsuspecting hands. In an incident reported last month, a buyer paid RMB625,000 for a 'brand new' Jeep Grand Cherokee only to discover that it was a refurbished vehicle that had been damaged in the explosion. According to a notice released by Jeep last December, its Jeep Grand Cherokees were in the open-air – although outside the blast radius – at the time of the event. As such, the company requires its dealers to inform customers of this before purchasing. Additionally, 1,300 severely damaged vehicles were given to an insurance company, which was directed to keep them. Since then, a black market of dealers and repair shops has been repairing the cars and selling them at reduced prices. A professor at the China University of Political Science and Law, Zhu Wei, told China Radio International that industry regulators need to "ensure the cars that are meant to be destroyed are indeed destroyed."

RANDOM NUMBER



...is the number of new A330 jets that will be delivered each year from Airbus China's Tianjin completion center from 2017. The figure will double in the following two years, according to comments made by Airbus China's President Eric Chen at the center's opening ceremony. The center's activities include A330 aircraft cabin decoration, painting, test flights and delivery.

EDUCATION

ROMANCE 101

Tianjin University is now offering classes in an unconventional – yet universally experienced – subject regarding matters of the heart. The course, titled 'Basic Theory and Experience of Love' has proved popular, with around 200 students attending the first lecture. Topics covered range from dating tips and etiquette to counseling, and are taught by teachers from the university and external experts. A professional at the mental health education center at Tianjin University, Yang Li, believes the course will give pupils the skills they need to maintain better romantic relationships. Similar programs have already been introduced at institutions such as Wuhan University and Renmin University of China.



That's 2016 FOOD & DRINK AWARDS TIANJIN

Awards season is always a favorite here at That's Tianjin. The reason is a simple one: we get to eat and drink at some of the finest establishments in the city. The number of new openings that we've had to visit in recent months is a testament to the pace of change in Tianjin's drinking and dining scenes. But old favorites are delivering the goods, too. Here's our round-up of the winners from our second Food and Drink Awards.



Best Local Dining Jincai Collection

Sure, Jiancai Collection is overblown, but it falls just the right side of ostentatious. In fact, the restaurant's grandiosity is part of its charm. The high-ceilinged Tianwei Lu branch – our favorite of the restaurant's three locations – features fountains, chandeliers and more marble than you can shake a deep-fried youtiao at. In addition to pan-China classics, the local specialties perfectly balance the sweet and salty flavors that Tianjin food is known for.

Outstanding Pick

Found by the waterside in Shuishang Park, **Lao Matou** offers nostalgic decor and a genuine taste of old Tianjin.

Best Chinese Shang Palace, Shangri-La Hotel Tianjin

Exquisite Cantonese fare is the order of the day at Shang Palace, where actual Guangdong chefs prepare authentic dim sum. But while the dumplings alone are worth a 'Best Chinese' award, we also recommend the perfectly cooked duck. The restaurant also offers a variety of Tianjin specialties – truly something for all palettes.

Outstanding Pick

You don't have to catch a train to Beijing to enjoy delicious Peking duck. **Xihe Yayuan Duck** makes a succulent variety of the dish right here in Tianjin.



Best Japanese Geba Geba

Tianjin is packed with great Japanese food, but our pick of the bunch is Geba Geba, a pokey gem of a restaurant in the heart of Wu Da Dao. Watching the masterful chefs at the teppanyaki grill is the main attraction, but be sure to save space for the sushi and sashimi, which is so good that we recommend you forgo soy and wasabi. Let the ingredients speak for themselves.

Outstanding Pick

As well as the freshest selection of sushi we've tried in Tianjin, **Uo-Mittsu's** sea urchin is some of the city's finest.



Best Casual Dining **Blue Frog**

Burgers. Need we say more? No, but we will anyway: Blue Frog is our favorite place in town to both kick back and dig in. A regularly updated burger menu keeps the options fresh, and a delightful variety of side dishes ranging from the deep-fried to the vegetal offers something for anyone in tow. We also love the specials (buy-one-get-one happy hour, anyone?) and the fact that, every time we visit, we get some serious grub for our money. We're not joking: Come hungry.

Outstanding Pick

Sizzler is an outstanding choice for laidback meals in Tianjin. Anything you get here, whether it's a salad, soup, steak or – why not? – all the above, is sure to please.





Best Southeast Asian **YY Beer House**

The opening of YY's new Wu Da Dao location marked a clear move toward beer (it's in the name, after all), and we certainly recommend that you try some of the new branch's locally made craft brews. But let us not forget the Thai food for which the original branch made its name. Authentic pad Thais, fresh papaya salads and no-nonsense curries have kept this place at the heart of expat life for over a decade.

Outstanding Pick

Not as well known among the expat crowd, **Du Du Hai Batik** serves up some of the city's most flavorful Thai cuisine.



Best Fine Dining **Riviera, The St. Regis Tianjin**

If we do in fact eat with our eyes first, then Riviera has the best appetizer of them all: a gorgeous river view. Let that not distract you, however, from the excellent cuisine on offer – elegant pan-European dishes using high-quality ingredients. The catch of the day is always freshly picked and finely cooked, and as for the dessert, who says you can't get great crême brulee in Tianjin? Riviera offers a fine dining experience you won't soon forget.

Outstanding Pick

For special occasions, you can't go wrong with a steak from **Fire House**, Renaissance Tianjin Lakeview Hotel.



Best Buffet **Café Yun, Shangri-La Hotel Tianjin**

We love Café Yun any time of day – its spreads for breakfast, lunch and dinner are all chock-full of fine international options. Our favorite part of this popular spot, though, is its live 'theater kitchens,' which allow you to watch chefs prepare food right in front of you. Café Yun is a feast for the eyes and belly.

Outstanding Pick

Serving everything from Thai-style noodles and Australian beef to fluffy tiramisu, **Pacific**, at Pan Pacific Tianjin, is a top-notch choice for buffet dining.

Best Dessert **Bella Milano**

'Bella Milano' is Italian for 'Beautiful Milan' – and Beautiful Milan is exactly where this dessert chain's owners got inspiration for their line of rich, creamy gelatos. We like to think the calorific cones are good as any in Italy – and with a selection of fun popsicles and milkshakes to go along with them, we know they are. Come for the mojito-flavored sorbet, stay for the rich chocolate gelato.

Outstanding Pick

Delightful cakes and pastries from **Best+ French Dessert** are practically guaranteed to satisfy your sweet tooth.





Best Italian Bene, Sheraton Tianjin Binhai Hotel

Bene's Italian offerings go way beyond spaghetti and meatballs. We love the assortment of grilled dishes, the freshly baked pizzas and the rich desserts. Stepping into Bene is like traveling to a quiet corner of Italy – but without the jetlag. Authentic Italian in Tianjin? Can do.

Outstanding Pick

The relaxed atmosphere and unpretentious food at **Prego** at The Westin Tianjin makes this dining experience anything but stuffy.



Best New Restaurant Wood Restaurant and Bar

With its sleek design, delicious steaks and extensive drink menu, Wood Restaurant and Bar is the perfect place to spend a Friday night with friends. Or a weekday afternoon. Or a Sunday brunch. Or a... well, you get it. There are also fantastic fresh salads and creamy pastas on offer – so no matter who you're dining with, they'll be pleased.

Outstanding Pick

Tasty pizzas, salads and other European entrees are the specialties of Sheraton Tianjin Hotel's **Cucina Mediterranean Restaurant**.



Best European Maison FLO Tianjin

As fine as any brasserie in Paris, Maison FLO brings French elegance to Tianjin. Every time we go, we're transported to Belle-Époque Europe... and we never want to leave. Finely executed French fare pairs perfectly with FLO's excellent wine selection. Prepare to spend a few hours savoring your meal – that's exactly how the French do it.

Outstanding Pick

The beautiful, historical ambience at **1863 Bistro & Terrace** at The Astor Hotel Tianjin makes for truly romantic meals.

Best Al Fresco Dining Qing Wang Fu

Designed by the emperor's chief eunuch and then built in the 1920s, the building which houses Qing Wang Fu is one of the most stunning relics of the British concession. Whether you opt for the excellent selection of Western and Chinese food or just grab a spot of afternoon tea, sitting in the shade of this artfully restored mansion is an absolute must for the summer. An oasis like no other.

Outstanding Pick

Outdoor seats at **Riviera**, The St. Regis Tianjin, are limited – but this only makes dining on the Hai even more special.





Restaurant Of The Year Riviera, The St. Regis Tianjin

The view. The cocktails. The service. All these are reason enough to name Riviera our Restaurant of the Year. But ultimately, our decision came down to one thing: the food. The extensive menu features dishes both from land and sea, a wide variety of salads and starters, plus some majorly kick-ass desserts. If you splurge on one dinner in Tianjin this year – make this it.

Outstanding Pick

Every time we visit **Maison FLO Tianjin**, we fall in love with it all over again. An absolute must for Francophiles.





Best Lounge Bar O'Hara's English Pub, The Astor Hotel Tianjin

Modeled on a classic English pub, O'Hara's has got it all, from the dark wood decor to the exhaustive whisky selection. Yet unlike a classic English pub, there are no rowdy football fans to be seen (though this is actually a great spot to watch live sports). With big, comfy chairs and an understated vibe, this concession throwback is one of the classiest spots in the city.

Outstanding Pick

A moment's walk from the Minyuan Stadium, **Oscar House** makes one of the best gin and tonics this side of the Bohai.

Best Sports Bar Dublin Irish Pub

Irish pubs are well-suited to the needs of sport enthusiasts, and Dublin hits the mark on all fronts. Beers on tap? Check. Friendly atmosphere? Check. The flags and decor of a country that is thousands of miles away and has no connection to Tianjin? Check. With big screens and a foosball table to use during the breaks, this remains our go-to place for sports in the city.

Outstanding Pick

Beijing institution **Luga's** has made its way to Tianjin just in time for this summer's European cup football. See you there.



Best Al Fresco Drinks River Lounge, The St. Regis Tianjin

Summer in Tianjin doesn't really begin until the River Lounge opens for business. On paper, it doesn't take much for The St. Regis to set up – they just bring out some comfy chairs and extend service from the hotel bar. But what emerges is the most picturesque outdoor drinking spot in the city. It's great for daytime drinking, though the fabulous river views take on new life at night.

Outstanding Pick

Opening out onto a pleasant pedestrian street in Aocheng, **Buddies** is an airy summer spot to take your, well, buddies.



Best New Bar Gal

Creative, charming and – above all – classy, Gal has majorly raised the stakes for Tianjin's bar scene. Inspired by the top-notch mixology bars of Shanghai, Gal serves thoughtful cocktails alongside a huge selection of whiskies, the bottles of which are artfully displayed on lit shelves surrounding the bar. Overwhelmed by all the choices? Service at Gal is phenomenal – just ask a member of staff to recommend something based on your tastes. Trust us: You won't be disappointed.

Outstanding Pick

Hidden in a tiny space in the former British concession, the cocktails at **Xiang Lounge** are worth using your maps app to find.



Best Atmosphere China Bleu, Tangla Hotel Tianjin

We've said it before and we'll say it again (and probably at next year's awards too): You can't beat the view from the top of Tangla. If you haven't been up for cocktails on the hotel's 50th floor, then we suggest you go there right away. China Bleu's great atmosphere doesn't only stem from its views over the city, but also its faultless music choices and consistently excellent cocktails.

Outstanding Pick

If you're after that gentleman's club vibe, then **Galaxy Bar** at Wanda Vista Tianjin is the spot for you.



Best Beer Drei Kronen 1308 Brauhaus Tianjin

Using 700-year-old recipes and abiding by the 500-year-old German purity law, DK1308 has a bona fide brewing tradition. As a result, the master brewers at the Bavarian-style brauhaus only use water, barley and hops in the creation of their beers. But what else do they need? Instead of flirting with novelty, Drei Kronen's wheat beer, dark beer and lager are gloriously simple – and are all the better for it.

Outstanding Pick

We couldn't be happier about Tianjin's newfound love for craft beer, and **WE Brewery** is leading the revolution.

Best Cocktail Bar Le Procope Lounge

While the city's hotel bars have upped the cocktail stakes over the past year, Le Procope remains our favorite spot to begin (and often end) a night out. The skilled bartenders make both signature and classic cocktails with equal aplomb, and the dim orange lighting and sophisticated decor give everything an inescapable air of cool. It's rare to find a bar that's as suitable for a date as a birthday party – but here it is.

Outstanding Pick

As one would expect given its name, **Flair** at The Ritz-Carlton Tianjin always serves up cocktails with that little extra something.





Bar Of The Year Le Procope Lounge

For the second year running, Le Procope grabs the trophy for Bar of the Year. While Tianjin's drinking scene has grown at a dizzying pace since our last Food and Drink Awards, none of the newcomers are ready to topple this ever-popular lounge bar from its throne. Oozing class and with consistently outstanding service, Le Procope remains the most chic spot in the city. Stay tuned to find out whether it can complete the hat-trick next year.

Outstanding Pick

Our favorite new bar **Gal** also deserves a mention in the Bar of the Year category. Expect a credible challenge for next year's title.

Party Scenes





Tasty 顶级烘焙



HEBE 时尚花艺研培机构

LETS NAIL



TIANJIN LISTINGS

CITY LISTINGS

Mandarin skills helpful **M**

HOUSEKEEPER SERVICES

LBB Housekeeping Service

Can't cook, won't cook? Relax: LBB has plenty of experience providing housekeeping and *ayi* services for both lazy and hard-working foreigners.

> Room 1102, Gate 3, 1 Building, Jinguan Li, Fengnan International, Wang Ding Di, Nankai District, 南开区王顶堤金冠里锋泛国际1号楼317门1102 (022 2368 0639; www.lbbli.com/htm/Project.asp)

BUSINESS SERVICES

American Chamber of Commerce

AmCham brings together US businesses and assists them in government advocacy, networking and professional events.

// Mon-Fri 9am-6pm, Room 2918, The Exchange Tower 2, 189 Nanjing Rd, Heping district 和平区南京路189号津汇广场2座2918室 (022 2318 5071/2318 5074; www.amchamchina.org)

European Union Chamber of Commerce

Assists EU members with government liaison, networking and professional events.

> Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Room 2415, Suite 17, Magnetic Plaza, Binshui Xi Lu, Nankai district 南开区滨水西道奥城商业广场17座2415室 (022 2374 1122; www.eurochamber.com.cn)

COURIERS

DHL **M**

DHL has its own offices, as well as appearing in branches of China Post, and can be used for domestic and international, corporate and personal shipping.

> Daily, 10.30am-9.30pm (www.cn.dhl.com/en/express; 800 810 8000). Alternatively, Fedex (www.fedex.com; 800 988 1888)

DENTAL

Aichi Dental **¥**

The only Sino-foreign dental joint in TJ. Reassuring service.

> Daily 9am-6pm, 4th Floor, Yunxiang Building, No.72-74 Xikang Road, Heping district, 和平区西康路72-74号云翔大厦4楼 (022 8568 5616; www.aichidental.com)

Zhen Hong Dental Clinic **M**

A private clinic with a prominent reputation, spotless operation rooms and award-winning dentists. Reservations required.

> 1st Floor, Henghua Building, 501, Da Gu Nan Road, Hexi district 河西区大沽南路501号恒华大厦一楼 (022 5819 6263)

Xin Aichi Dental Clinic **M**

This 10-year-old clinic shouldn't be confused with Aichi Dental, though it is equally as good.

> 84 Taida Yuan, Yong An Road, Hexi district 河西区永安道泰达园底商84号 (022 2328 5556, 022 2328 0060)

DRIVERS

Tianjin Car Service **M**

Airport transfer and car-rental services

HEALTH



INTERNATIONAL SOS CLINICS AND RAFFLES MEDICAL GROUP JOIN FORCES TO REBRAND CHINA CLINICS

If you hadn't yet noticed, International SOS clinics in China (including the ones in Tianjin and TEDA) have, since March 30, been branded and operated by Raffles Medical, with expanded services to all patients and privileged access for International SOS members. International SOS and Raffles Medical Group have formed a joint venture to enhance and expand the services of its China clinics.

Patients of the clinic will continue to have access to the same doctors, the same facilities and same high quality care. So the next time you or your family need quality healthcare in Tianjin, pay a visit to Raffles Medical and know that you can expect the level of medical expertise that you're used to.

Tianjin Clinic: Mon-Fri (9am-6pm), Sat (9am-1pm) 1F Sheraton Hotel Apartment Building, Zijishan Road, Hexi 河西区紫金山路喜来登饭店公寓楼一层 (022 2352 0143, customerservice@internationalsos.com). TEDA Clinic: Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm, 102-C2 MSD, 79 1st Avenue, TEDA, Binhai Area 天津经济技术开发区第二大街泰达现代服务区C2座102室 (022 6537 7616, customerservice@internationalsos.com)

with/without drivers, as well as English-speaking guides.
> (755 2595 1800; www.tianjincarservice.com, e-mail: bookings@tianjincarservice.com)

ELECTRONICS

Buynow Mall 百脑汇

The best thing about this gargantuan electronics mall is that it probably has everything (cameras, computers, phone, games, hard drives etc.) – the bad news is that its size means it might take you an hour to find. Be wary of fakes and get ready to haggle (in Mandarin).

> 366 Anshan Dao, Nankai 南开区鞍山西道366号 (022 5869 7666)

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Should you encounter trouble, look for Tianjin police (*jingcha*)'s green uniform and caps. **M**

> Police: Dial 110. Tianjin police Weibo @平安天津. Fire: Dial 119. General emergencies: 120.

GROCERIES

ISETAN Supermarket

The earliest non-Chinese supermarket to arrive in town provides imported groceries to TJ expats and foreign-food lovers; small and, of course, pricey.

> Daily 10am-9pm, 108 Nanjing Road, B1, Isetan Shopping Mall Heping District. 和平区南京路108号伊势丹商场地下一层 (022-27221111)

Joy City BLT (Better Life Together) Supermarket

The biggest high-end supermarket in town, offering the widest range of imported products locally – so you can finally enjoy that "better life together" through the gift of, er, foreign groceries.

> Daily 10am-10pm; 6 Nanmenwai Da Jie, B1, Joy City Shopping Centre, Nankai District. 南开区南门外大街6号大悦城地下一层 (022 5810 0108)

HEALTH

International SOS

The hospital has earned its reputation with years of a great service.

> inside Tianjin Sheraton Hotel, Zijinshan Lu, Hexi 河西区紫金山路喜来登大酒店 022-23520143

Tianjin First Central Hospital

The largest hospital in town, with advanced equipment and professional service.

> 24 Fukang Road, Nankai District. 南开区复康路24号 (022 2362 6600, 022 2362 6048; www.tj-fch.com)

Tianjin United Family Hospitals & Clinics **¥¥**

One of few hospitals in town with English-speaking staff.

> No.22, Tianxiao Yuan, Tanjiang Dao, Hexi district 河西区潭水道天潇园22号 (022 5856 8500; Emergency only 022 5856 8555; www.tianjin.ufh.com.cn/en/)

HOME DECORATION

IKEA

It's boring, Swedish (yawn) and horribly crowded. But it's also affordable and way nicer than the decorations your landlord favored. Go for the meatballs and sleeping Chinese, at least...

> Daily, 10am-9pm, 433 Jintang Road, Dongli 塘沽区津塘公路18号

INSURANCE

Life Insurance Company Ltd M
International and professional life-insurance company, whose mission statement is to pursue the philosophy “people-oriented, respect for life.”
> Room 501, C. Masson homes, Tanggu district 塘沽区 马森家园C座501室 (022 2530 7849; lifeinsurance@126.com)

INTERNET

China Unicom M
Probably the fastest local-access rates for the Chinterent, including high-speed fiber-optic networks (currently only available in new builds).
> From RMB160 a month/4MBs; RMB190 fiber-optic; installation cost of RMB200 is extra. (www.eng.chinaunicom.com; 100 10 (press 9 for English))

VPNS

Astril/Witopia
Recommended VPNs to skirt blockages by the Great Firewall and speed-up connections overseas, include Astril and Witopia, which also allow the use of foreign-based subscriptions like Netflix and TV-streaming sites like BBC iPlayer, by relocating servers to the desired country.
> From RMB35/month, includes 24-hr customer service. (www.astril.com; www.witopia.net)

LEGAL SERVICES

Winners Law Firm M
In trouble? Better call Saul – or these reassuring-sounding lot.
> Room 406, Silk Building, 10 Nanjing Lu, Hexi District, 河西区南京路10号丝绸大厦4层 (022 2313 3590)

LOCKSMITHS

Golden Key Locksmith M
Locked out? Bummer. Better call these guys....
> Hotline: 400 000 0220 (Tianjin Office: 022 2333 3333; www.locksmith.com.cn)

Tianjin Every Day Unlock services Ltd M
Does exactly what is locks on the tin. Does it every day, as the name suggests. It's all rather straightforward.
> 9 Yunnan Road, Heping District 和平区云南路9号 (022 81111 1111)

REAL ESTATE

China Relocation
Find the property you want, with bilingual rental agreements.
> (133-52017606; www.chinarelocation.com)

Jones Lang LaSalle
Jones Lang LaSalle help clients seeking to invest in the local property market, with specialized services including property management, office/retail leasing and sales, industrial, logistics and business park leasing, plus research, consulting and investment brokerage.

REMOVAL SERVICES

AGS Four Winds International Movers
Door-to-door service anywhere in the world, and assurances of top-quality service.
> A1701 Vanke World Trade Plaza, 129 Nanjing Lu, Heping district (022-27127759; www.agsfourwinds.com)

Tianjin Minyuan Removal Service M
> 5, Row 10, Qing You Dong Lu, Jianwu Da Jie, Heping district, 和平区建物大街庆有东里10排5号 (www.chinawutong.com/co/co1; 022 2721 1549)

Tianjin Tianyun Removal Service M
> 1st Floor, Kaili Jiayuan, Changjiang Road, Nankai

District, 南开区长江道凯立家园底商 (022 8961 3222; www.xinyuanbj.com)

RELIGION

Tianjin Christian Fellowship
Only permitted to foreigners.
> 22 Huan Hu Zhong Lu, Hexi 河西区环湖中路22号 (020 8829 7772; enquiry@tjcf.com)

Islamic Association of Hebei M
> Hai Men Lu and Xing Fu Dao 海门路和幸福道交口 (020 2653 2981)

SATELLITE INSTALLATION

AITE Satellite & Cable Television M
Your best chance of escaping endless Japanese war dramas.
> Ji Hua Building, 15 Jing Lu, Hedong district 河东区 十五经路与津塘路交口吉华大厦 (131 0210 0668; 022 2412 7882)

SPORT & YOGA

Yogi Lotus Yoga
By a hill in Nan Cui Ping Park, Yogi has soothing surroundings.
> 265, Hongqi Nan Road, Nankai district 南开区红旗南路265号 (022 2813 2007)

Magic Yoga
A chain yoga studio; men's and parent-child sessions available.
> 3-1101, Heping Yuan, Fu An Da Jie (close to Parkson), Heping District, 和平区福安大街和平园3门1101(近百盛购物中心) (022 2731 1665; 022 6089 6203; www.gufanhome.com)

Powerhouse Gym
The most popular gym in town. Good location (Line 1, Xiao Bai Lou station) and imported equipment.
> (No pool) 5th Floor, Binjiang Shopping Center, 29 Kaifeng Dao, Heping district, 和平区开封道29号滨江购物中心5楼 (022 2319 2008)
> (With pool) Monday-Saturday 7am-10pm; Sunday 10am-10pm. Section C, Olympic Center, 90 Weijin Nan Road, Nankai district, 南开区卫津南路90号奥林匹克中心C区 (022 2338 2008)

Ai Ze En Fitness Club
Yoga, spinning, kick boxing etc for all fitness enthusiasts.
> Daily 9am-10pm. 4th Floor, Jinyao Square, 9 Nan Men Wei Da Jie, Nankai district, 南开区南门外大街9号金耀广场4楼 (022 2734 4888)

Heping Tennis Courts
Indoor courts let you practice like a maniac all year round; prices vary from hour to hour.
> RMB70/hour, 8:30am-6pm; RMB110, 6-8pm and weekends. RMB90, 8-10pm. Daily 8:30am-10pm. No.207 Xinhua Road, Heping district, 和平区新华路207号 (022 2313 9129)

Tianjin Tennis Center ¥
Quality courts where the pros train – the price is a bit higher.
> RMB100/ hour. Daily 8am-10pm. 9-2 Fukang Road, Nankai district, 南开区复康路9号增2号 (022 2335 9964)

Heping Squash Courts M
Probably 99 percent of locals have no idea that squash exists, so these three courts are seldom occupied. Buy a 10-pass card for 300 *kuai* – well worth it!
> RMB40/hour 8:30am-6pm; RMB60, 6-10pm and weekends. Daily 8:30am-10pm, 2nd Floor, Heping Tennis Courts, No.207 Xinhua Road, Heping district, 和平区新华路207号和平网球场二楼 (022 2313 9129)

TOURIST SERVICES

Tianjin Tourism Bureau M
Get your local info fix here.
> Daily, 8:30am-5:30pm. 18 Youyi Lu, Hexi district 河西区友谊路18号 (022-28359093)

TRANSLATION SERVICES

Tianjin Oceanlink Translation Co., Ltd
> Rm 1216, Digital Time Square, Anshan Xi Lu, Nankai

district, 南开区鞍山西道时代数码广场1216室 (022 2825 5806; www.yytrans.com)

VET AND PET SUPPLIES

Changjiang Pet Hospital M
> Daily 8am-5pm, Xiangyang Road (Close to Changjiang Road) Nankai District, 南开区向阳路近长江路 (022-27691809; 27610183)

Pet Hospital M
Veterinary service attached to Tianjin Agricultural University
> No.22 Jin Jing Road, Xiqing District, 西青区津静公路22号 (022-23781292)

VISA SERVICES

Tianjin Foreign Service Corp M
Let these guys untangle the Byzantine new visa laws for you.
> Guangyin Building, Uoyei Bei Road, Hexi district, 河西区友谊北路广银大厦 (022 2801 6007)

ART LISTINGS

Mandarin skills helpfulM
Recommended*
Unmissable**

CLASSICAL

Tianjin Grand Theatre *
It's a pleasant surprise to learn that the Tianjin Grand Opera takes the art almost as seriously as Guangzhou, with 13 top productions in 2013, including *Tosca*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Aida* and *The Ring* (last December *La Traviata* was shown, first performed in Tianjin Cultural Palace of Workers in 1978). Yet it does, as well as hosting world-class orchestras like the Philadelphia, Royal Philharmonic and New York City Ballet. Keep an eye on posters at the Tianjin railway station to see what's being feted next.
> RMB30-280 approx, daily 8:30am-9:00pm, Tianjin Culture Centre, Yuexiu Lu, Hexi 河西区越秀路天津文化中心天津 (Box office: 022 8388 2000/022 8388 2008; www.english.tjgtheatre.org)

Western Shore Art Salon 西岸艺术馆 M *
Built to resemble a church of hodge-podge European origins, this all-round art temple is ideal for impressing a first date. Proximity to Tianjin University means no shortage of young culture vultures taking in weekly free lectures (Tue 3pm) while the decent acoustics make this place a haven for classical chamber music (performances every Sat and Sun starting at 8pm sharp). If you need to stay awake during the string quartet, visit the cafe next door for a divine (yet pricey) cappuccino.
> Sun, Tue-Thu (closed Mondays) 9:30am-5pm, Fri/Sat 9:30am-9:30pm, 3 Youyi Lu, Hexi 河西区友谊北路3号 (022 23263505, 022 2326 3515)

HISTORICAL SITES

Great Mosque 大清真寺
An important Islamic shrine since the Qing era, this famous mosque consists of four main structures – the Screen Wall, Archway, Preaching Hall and Prayer Hall – the latter being the most active and venerated spot (with over 1,000 worshippers a week), decorated with Arabic and Chinese couplets. There's also a pair of miniature Korans the size of a matchbox and carvings, featuring Tianjin 'scenic spots,' by well-known Hui artist Ma Shaoping. It's not really open to tourists (as it's a place of prayer) but one can stroll the courtyard and get a close look, then try one of the many halal restaurants nearby.
> Free, daily 6am-7pm, Dafeng Lu, opposite Xiaohuo Xiang Temple, Hongqiao 红桥区大丰路小伙巷对面 (022 8772 0540)

Huangyuan Great Wall *
One of the Great Wall's ultimate setbacks

is that its popularity means it's often swimming with tourists – somewhat detracting from the magic. The Huangya ('Yellow Cliff') Pass section, in the Tianjin municipality some 137km north-east of the city, is a good opportunity to see the wall, minus the crowds. Some sections suffer from over-restoration, looking more Legoland than Qing Dynasty, but keep walking and you'll discover beautiful views, snaking up through the green mountains. Certain sections can be a tough climb, but there's plenty of opportunity to buy drinks and fuel along the way. Getting there is an effort, though: either take a train to Jixian from Tianjin East Station, then taxi to 'Huangya,' or take a bus from Tianjin Hebei Coach Station to Jixian coach station, then a taxi. Drivers might not offer the meter, so bargain hard: aim for around RMB50-75.
> Nov 1-Feb 28, RMB35; Mar 1-Oct 31 RMB40. Daily 8am-5pm, Huangyaguan, Xiyang Town, Ji County 蓟县下营镇黄崖关村 (022 2271 8106)

Jiefang Beilu 解放北路
At the far end of the old British concession is Jiefang Beilu, which runs to the majestic Astor Hotel and housed many European banks at the turn of the century. Don't be fooled by the many 'old-style' modern constructs in the surrounding area; those on Jiefang Beilu are genuine, although doubtless have undergone much repair, and many now house domestic banks (so you can take a look inside). Look out for the black plaques on practically every colonial building, which will give you a forthright history.
> Jiefang Bei Lu, Heping district 和平区解放北路

Pu Yi Former Residence M
One of the delights of Tianjin's center is that you never know what freak of architectural nature might be hiding down any alley. Nowhere is this truer than with Jing Yuan Garden – better known as the last emperor Pu Yi's house – from 1929 to-1931 – a spacious Spanish-style villa, which looks like it's escaped a life on the Med and is now hiding down a particularly unexceptional second-tier street. Inside contains a collection of Puyi's possessions and, as the little plaque tells us, “the building is of great harmony as a whole.”
> Daily, 70 Anshan Road, Heping District 和平区鞍山道70号 (022 2731 1618)

Shi Family Residence 石家大院 *
If you've found Ancient Culture Street or Italy Style Town a bit too 'Disneyland' for your liking (we don't blame you!) head to the Shi Family Mansion, in Yanliuging Town, 15km west of the city. On offer here is a charming and well-presented house and gardens of a wealthy Qing family. It's reachable by the No. 153 bus from Tianjin West Station, but you might find a taxi (about RMB70 each way) is more convenient.
> Daily 9am-4:30pm, RMB20, 100m west of Yuhe Bridge, Yanliuging Town, Xiqing 西青区杨柳青镇估衣街47号 (022 2739 1617)

Temple of Deep Compassion *
Head north-east out of the center over the Jingang bridge (looking out for the 'Wanke Hotel' along the way!) and you'll come across one of Tianjin's most important sacred sites, the Dabe Temple – or, to give it its most evocative name, the Temple of Deep Compassion. Dating back to the Ming Dynasty, it's a predominantly Buddhist temple, still fully practicing and, although many building have been restored over the years, its main hall is perhaps the most striking imperial-era structure in the city. The size of the site, some 10,000sqm, means it doesn't suffer from encroaching construction on all sides, in the same way as some inner-city shrines (Confucius Temple, we're looking at you.)
> Daily, RMB10, 9am-4:30pm, Tianwei Road, Hebei 河北区天纬路 (022 2626 1769)

LIVEHOUSES

13 Club M **
The granddaddy of Tianjin music venues and main port of call for serious talent, domestic and foreign, playing all genres. But unless a touring band pops in mid-week,

best check-in on weekends for an affordable peek at local talent (and aging rockers' bald spots). Though the surrounding Italian Style Street winds down before midnight, one can stay for a cheap rooftop beer and killer river-view.

> Daily 8:30pm-1am, 60 Ziyu Dao 3/F, Hebei (intersection of Ziyu Dao and Shengli Lu in Italian Style Town) 13俱乐部, 河北区自由道与胜利路交口自由道60号三楼 (130 1225 7305; email: china13club@gmail.com)

NO.23 Music Bar

Somewhat reminiscent of Hong Kong's Lang Kwai Fong, the newly-opened No.23 Music Bar is awash with neon lights of almost every color imaginable. Although passable as a bar, the subterranean space also doubles as a live music venue with cover bands and the odd international act. Should the screens behind the stage be used to display decent visuals rather than muted fashion TV, then the venue could contend with some of the city's better livehouses. Even if the music doesn't suit your tastes, the drinks are affordable (and reassuringly strong) and the service is attentive.

> 8pm-late, 23 Chongqing Lu, Heping 和平区重庆路23号 (022 8433 6666)

Blue Map 小镇露台 M *

Blue Map's owner Wang Hui earned his pedigree through the legendary (now defunct) Riff Bar, so expect everything from local folk to metal played through solid stacks, tweaked by stand-up sound men. This is sure to rival 13 Club as Tianjin's premier rock venue.

> Daily 2pm-2am, Hubin Tiandi Shangjie, Bldg 1-1, Dongli (at the intersection of Donglihu Hanlianchengqinging Dadao and Xi Dadao) 东丽区东丽湖万科城情景大道与西大道交口的湖滨天地商业街壹栋01号 (138 2099 9403)

Back Alley Bar 后巷酒吧 M

Run by an alumnus of the Tianjin Music Conservatory, this hidden gem, filled with twisty staircases, flying beams, red lanterns and cozy corners, wins on atmosphere – even if there's no band playing. When the small stage is occupied, expect a spectrum from jazz to rock, on an intimate stage built for music lovers.

> Daily 8pm-2am, at the intersection of Xinkai Lu and Huajie Dao, in the little alley next to the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), Hedong 河东区新开路与华捷道交口工商银行侧门小巷内 (186 0227 9082)

Lhasa 5238 拉萨5238酒吧 M *

This newly opened lodge looks like it belongs at the base of Mount Everest – a vibe provided by a husband-wife team of white-collar Beijingers-turned-rock climbers, who also opened a hostel of the same name in Tibet. Although a little overboard on the Tibetan trinkets, the two-floor clubhouse features a decent stage for hippie folk-rock; both shoes and talent optional. The breezy atmosphere and reasonable drinks attract a student clientele, who managers encourage to crash in the booths when it's too late (and they're too drunk) to head back to campus. Two cheers for them!

> Daily 3pm-12am, 6-10 Tongfang Huayuan Bldg, Heping 和平区同方花园6-10号 (186 2226 4496)

Listener Café 倾听者咖啡 M

Tucked away in a dumpy residential compound, this cluttered clubhouse hosts weekly folk shows on a stage built for your grandma's living room. Grab a cheap coffee (RMB12) and not-so-fresh cheeseecake (RMB12), plop on a couch with your favorite Wi-Fi widget and mellow out among earth tones, all to earthy tunes from amateur acousticians. If you need something stronger, stop by for the weekly all-you-can-drink samplers (a worrying RMB60) from the well-stocked bar. Most just wimp out and sip on an "Ice Male Intimate" mocktail.

> Daily 11am-2am, Nanlufang Dajie (off Diantai Dao), Heping 和平区电台道南浮房大街 (400 6090 706)

Nine Songs 九歌 M

For musicians, by musicians – this dingy boom room, named for the grungy sex-rock movie, is the haven of the college-rock scene. Expect student bands (disclaimer: varying quality), playing everything from anti-folk to hardcore, plus visits from lead-

MUSIC



QUEEN SEA BIG SHARK

If you can't make it across to Beijing to see Queen Sea Big Shark at Strawberry Festival this summer, then fear not: The indie-rock quartet will stop off in Tianjin on the penultimate show of their nationwide tour. Their 23-date trawl of the country comes in support of the band's new album *To Wild Heart*. The record may have taken six years, but with viral hits "Bling Bling Bling" and "Mammoth" included, it was an immediate essential. Expect to hear plenty of new material, as well as tracks from their 2007 eponymous debut and 2010's *Wave*.

Sun May 15; RMB100 (Advance), RMB120 (door); 派Livehouse (Faction Livehouse), 56 Wanliucun Dajie, Hebei District 河北区万柳村大街56号纺机都市广场内

MUSIC



LARGE MAGELLANIC

Indie-electronica outfit Large Magellanic take their name from a galaxy 163,000 light years away from our own. Their tour won't see them reach that far, but the band will make it to Tianjin. Given that they've only just released their debut EP *Good Luck*, a three-month tour across China is ambitious indeed. But, if the record is anything to go by, they may be worth checking out. Expect catchy melodies galore. And if they become the next big thing, remember who told you about them (us).

Sat May 21, 8:30pm; RMB40 (advance), RMB60 (door); 派Livehouse (Faction Livehouse), 56 Wanliucun Dajie, Hebei District 河北区万柳村大街56号纺机都市广场内

ing figures in the local underground scene, with a well-equipped stage run by guys who take construction music seriously.

> Daily 11am-11pm, Shangye Lou Bldg B, 3/F, Tianjin Normal University South Gate, Xiqing 西青区师范大学南门商业楼B座3楼 (158 2271 6562, 186 2263 5924)

MUSEUMS

Astor Museum **

It's hardly something you'd expect – a hotel museum that has probably one of the best private collections in north China – but with a host of historical documents, postcards, newspapers and photographs, a film exhibition (over 100 movies have used the hotel as a location), old possessions and artifacts, this is a full trip through the highs and lows that Tianjin and the Astor have witnessed, from 1937, when it was renamed the Asian Hotel by the occupying Japanese, to present-day visits from celebrities and politicians. The entrance is by a (no longer functioning) Otis elevator – the first in the city in 1924.

> 33 Taierzhuang Lu, Heping 和平区台儿庄路33号 天津利顺德大酒店 (022 2331 1688; www.starwoodhotels.com)

China (Porcelain) House M **

Up there as one of the most weirdest and fascinating buildings you will ever visit, China House (or Yuebao – Porcelain – House) is a 3,000sqm-oddy decorated with (it's said) 400 million ancient porcelain fragments, at least 16,000 pottery shards and 290 tons of natural crystal – a mosaic of madness or a habitable work of stunning art, depending on who you ask. There are four enormous dragons, some 200 meters in length that surround the building like tentacles and even a Land Rover clad in 10,000 ceramic shards, that's supposedly worth a million kuai. The house itself is valued at over RMB2 billion, and filled with antique furniture (most of which is in a sorry state) but you can enjoy this unforgettable phenomenon for under RMB50.

> Daily 9am-6pm, RMB35. 72 Chi Feng Road, Heping 和平区赤峰路72号 (022 2712 3366)

Dagu Forts *

Sixty kilometers south of Tianjin stand what's left of the Dagu Forts, built in 1816 to protect Beijing – which, in 1860, they spectacularly failed to do (see 'Jin vs Jing', p.17). Most of the emplacements were subsequently *chafed* by the capitalist imperialists, leaving only the 65-ft Wei and Hai Forts, some fake cannons and – a little later, of course – the Dagu Fort Ruins Museum (est. 1997) and Monument. You can also take a look at the Haimen Bridge, Dagu Beacon, and Chaoyin Temple nearby. As a symbol of propaganda against the West, the Dagu Forts are one of the "three treasures" of Tianjin.

> RMB30, Daily 8am-5pm. (Take No.612/613 bus to Tanggu, transfer to No.110) 乘坐612/613路汽车到塘沽,换乘110路汽车

The Tianjin Museum M *

The Tianjin Museum, like many new things in China, is out to impress from the get-go. It's in a colossal building shaped like a swan (the second-largest in China, with over 150,000 exhibits), in a vast plaza surrounded by equally imposing buildings. It's the typical procedure here: ancient artifacts, followed by jade, porcelain and calligraphy, moving onto Tianjin's recent history, a display room – sadly closed on our visit – which we imagine offers the most interesting stuff, given turn-of-the-20th-century Tianjin's apparent displeasure at hosting nine concession areas.

> Free, Tue-Sun 9am-4:30pm. Youyi Lu 31, Hexi 河西区友谊路31号 (022 5879 3000)

MinYuan Terrace

This once neglected, former British concession, has grown in recent years to become a vibrant cultural hub. At the center of this revitalization is the MinYuan Terrace – a bustling arts space that houses a variety of independent eateries, galleries, cocktail bars and the award-winning MinYuan 33 boutique hotel. Not unlike Beijing's hutongs, or Shanghai's lanes, this winding cluster is connected by narrow passageways that

lead into a series of bright open courtyards. Complimented by a ever rotating display of specially-commissioned outdoor exhibitions, and under the cover of large leafy English trees, Minyuen terrace is the perfect place to wile away a long summer afternoon.
> 1 Changde Dao, Heping and 和平区常德道31号 (022 2330 0896, 022 2339 0525)

LIFE & STYLE LISTINGS

Pack a credit card.....¥
Where's my sugar daddy?¥¥
Mandarin skills helpfulM

SHOPPING

Ancient Culture Street M

It's not particularly ancient – everything here is a modern-looking reconstruction – and we're not sure if endless shops selling the usual trinkets actually counts as culture, but Ancient Culture Street is certainly a bustling network of lanes and alleyways that's perennially popular with tourists.
> Daily, no entrance fee, Gongnan Main Street, Nankai 南开区官南大街

Binjiang Dao Walking Street

Downtown Tianjin's busiest commercial avenue, with vendors, shops, malls, restaurants and cinemas, is swarming with dangerously nippy e-carts full of 'sightseers' (RMB3 a head).
> Binjiang Dao, Heping and 和平区滨江道

Friendship Plaza ¥

The place to go if you want to max-out your credit card on Louis Vuitton or Tiffany accoutrements. Cartier, Rolex, Chanel and more, all at twice the prices of Galeries Lafayette Paris.
> Daily 10am-10pm, 21, Youyi Road, Hexi 河西区友谊路21号 (www.tffstore.com; 022 6086 0000)

Galaxy Mall M

This relative newcomer, along with Lotte next to it, has become a local destination, as it combines high-street brands with high-end, various restaurants, an All-Star skating rink, cinema and IMAX theatre on the fifth floor.
> Daily 10am-10pm, 9 Leyuan Dao, Hexi 河西区乐园道9号 (www.galaxy-mall.com.cn; 022 8388 9668)

Heping Lu Golden Street M

Adjoining Binjiang Dao, Golden Street has Wanda, Parkson and Wal-Mart but the main lure seems to be the large bronze coin (Tong Qian) which people stand on, hoping for good luck.
> Golden Street, Heping and 和平区金街

Hisense Plaza ¥¥

Bottega Veneta, Fendi, Cartier, Prada – you know the drill. Look out for those sad people toting empty paper bags with luxury brand names.
> Daily 10am-10pm, 188, Jie Fang Bei Road, Heping and 和平区解放北路188号 (www.hisense-plaza.com; 022 2319 8888)

ISETAN

An oldie but a goodie, the B1 and B2 floor have some unique eateries including an *udon* noodle house (see Restaurant listings) and American pies (not the movie, or pizza; actual pies.)
> Daily 10am-9pm, 108, Nanjing Road, Heping and 和平区南京路108号 (www.isetan-tianjin.cn; 022 2722 1111)

Joy City 大悦城

The most popular mall in town, Joy City is close to the subway and bus stops and offers free parking for your Audi, Zara, H&M, GAP, Uniqlo et al can be visited along with Starbucks or Honeymoon Dessert.
> Daily 10am-10pm, 2-6 Nanmenwai Dajie, Nankai 南开区南门外大街2-6号 (www.tjjoycity.com; 022 5861 8888)

La Vita M

The newly renovated La Vita has one of the best locations in town and making it the shopping and dining centre for white-collars, hotel guests and local hipsters.
> Daily 10am-9pm, 189, Nanjing Road, Heping and 和平区

LIFE & STYLE



REGINA

If you think Tianjin doesn't offer much in terms of indie and alternative fashion, think again. Tucked down a tranquil street a stone's throw away from bustling Binjiang Dao, Regina is a little gem of pretty threads, original designs and some seriously covetable vintage gear that'll have ladies looking for a little European flair swoon over the stock.
11:30am-2:30pm, 6-10pm, 3F Westin Hotel, 101 Nanjing Lu, Heping 和平区南京路101号威斯汀酒店3楼 (022 2389 0088)

南京路189号 (www.theexchangetianjin.com; 022 2304 5555)

Lotte

Right above Line 2, this Korean-based shopping mall is popular for its nightlife scene: live music, food court on B1, cinemas and KTV.
> Daily 10am-10pm, 137, Dong Ma Lu, Nankai 南开区东马路137号 (www.china-lottesshopping.com; 022 5890 8888)

Milenio

Originally ISETAN, Milenio has good feng shui; also, MUJI, Zara, Paul Frank (plus other not-so-famous brands) and the biggest Sephora outlet on its 1st floor.
> 209, Nanjing Lu (Jili Plaza), Heping and 和平区南京路209号吉利大厦 (022 271 16666)

Parkson

Like every other Parkson with discounted goods on the eighth floor; be wary of pickpockets.
> Sun-Thu 9:30am-9:30pm, Fri-Sat 9:30am-10:30pm, 162, Heping Road, Heping and 和平区和平路162号 (www.parkson.com.cn; 022 8558 6688)

BEAUTY

Lets Nail M ¥



A Manicure and Cosmetic service Brand of high fashion, cross-boundary creativity and exquisite art, has official entered Astor Plaza, Tianjin in October, 2015. Our purely aesthetic space is designed as your private gallery, with a gathering of the latest Manicure Fashion Trend and Cutting-Edge Technique. Lets Nail looks forward to raise a new wave of manicure fashion among Chic icons in China.
> Daily 10am-7pm, Astor plaza store: 2/F, 32 Taierzhuang Lu, Heping and 和平区台儿庄路32号利顺德大厦二楼 (022 2346 9989)

OPI Nail Salon M

Every girl loves OPI's mani- and pedicures and there are tons of different colors to choose from.
> Daily 10am-10pm, 3-30A, JoyCity, No.2 Nanmenwai Dajie, Nankai 南开区南门外大街2号大悦城3楼30A (022 5810 0179)

Sakura Nail Salon M

The easygoing *laoban niang* encourages

staff to be creative for unique pinkies every time.

> Daily 10am-9pm, 101-2 Guidu Building, Yingkou Dao (at the intersection with Hebei Road), Heping 和平区营口道与河北路交口贵都大厦底商101-2 (022 2711 7080, 138 0202 0708)

Shang Pin Manicure M ¥

Good service and quality polish, so the cost can be quite high. That's the price of looking good!
> Daily 10am-10pm, 1 Nanbei Dajie, 2-21B, Capita Malls 南北大街1号凯德Mall 2楼21B (022 8826 8599)

HAIR

A&J

A&J focuses on style: ask for hairdresser Xiao Lei or Seven.
> Daily 9am-9:30pm, 124, Xinhua Road, Heping 和平区新华路124号 (022 2711 7798) / 107 Guangdong Road, Hexi 河西区广东路107号 (022 8381 8272)

Dada Star M

Tucked in a high-rise building, the studio is hard to locate but has enough of a reputation that reservations are recommended.
> Daily 11am-10pm, 1-506, Building 1, Chengji Center, No.125, Nanjing Road, Heping and 和平区南京路125号诚基中心1号楼1J506 (022 2315 5218)

Kajia Zaoxing M ¥¥

Located in the very center of the CBD, prices here can be high.
> Daily 10am-9pm, 2nd Floor, Building B, International Shopping Mall (Close to Xikai Cathedral) 211, Nanjing Road, Heping and 和平区南京路211号国际商场B座2楼 (近西开教堂) (022 2783 1639)

Li Zhi En Beauty Salon

Korean-run hairdresser with friendly staff and great service.
> Daily 9am-9pm, 97 Rose Eton Apartment Building, Er Wei Lu, Nankai 南开区耳纬路伊顿玫瑰公寓底商97号 (022 8735 9086)

SPA AND MASSAGE

Banyan Tree Spa Riverside M ¥¥

Globally acclaimed luxury spa offering pampering and massage "experiences" of the very highest standards.
> Daily 11am-10pm, 19, Changde Dao, Heping and 和平区常德道19号 (022 2330 9861, 151 2259 9861)

Heavenly Spa by Westin M

The 90-minute Heavenly Spa Signature Massage, with heated compress and foot bath will leave you ready for anything – as will the Aquatic Synergy bath.
> Daily 10am-midnight, 6th Floor, Westin Hotel, 101 Nanjing Lu, Heping and 和平区南京路101号威斯汀酒店6楼 (022 2389 0088)

I SPA ¥

Soothing scents, relaxing music, dim lighting – all that jazz.
> Daily 2pm-11pm, 7th Floor, Tangla Hotel, 219 Nanjing Road, Heping and 和平区南京路219号唐拉雅酒店7楼 (022 2317 5263, 022 2317 5262)

Thai Fe

Miss that bone-cracking session in Thailand? Thai Fe is the best place to get one in Wudadao.

> Daily 11am-10pm, 19, Changde Dao, Heping and 和平区常德道19号 (022 2330 9861, 151 2259 9861)

Zheng Sheng Yuan M

The most popular Chinese foot rubs in town.

> Daily 11:30am-1am, No.37-39, Youyi Bei Road, Hexi 河西区友谊北路37-39号 (022 8345 1166, 022 8345 1248)

Other

Think Gallery



Think Gallery is a social life space that advocates a unique lifestyle. With its own experiential online shop and a self-run social media, THINK GALLERY will establish its leading position in the fashion circle of Tianjin.
> 1/F ITC Shopping Center, at the crossing of Nanjing Road and Hefei Road, Hexi 河西区小白楼国贸购物中心底商 (南京路与合肥道交口) (022 5995 9455)

BAR LISTINGS

Slightly pricey (RMB150-250pp).....¥
Expense Account! (RMB250+pp).....¥¥
Mandarin skills helpfulM
Recommended*
Unmissable**

The Top Bars and Clubs

About This guide represents our editors' top picks, and includes some *That's Tianjin* advertisers. All bars have been personally reviewed by our team of expeWrtS, and scored according to the drinks, experience and affordability.

1308 Drei Kronen Brauhaus

Beside the River Hai is a cluster of cypocart bars, of which Drei Kronen is an original. One of the world's oldest heritage breweries, DK has been focusing on China, with branches now in Beijing and Shanghai. Apart from its dependable food, the beer is heavy but excellent – particularly the black. Offset the similarly heavy prices by taking advantage of their happy hour.
> Daily 11am-midnight, 1F, BLK 5, Jinwan Plaza, Jiefang Bei Lu, Heping and 和平区解放北路48号津湾广场5号楼D座1-2楼 (022 2321 9199)

1362 文聚永

Jazz tunes waft over relaxed conversation and clinking beer glasses at this friendly downtown bar. An ideal place to break up your day and watch the crowds go by with an RMB40 can of German beer, 1362 pays tribute to a local 14th-century brewery that moved out of the city, leaving the building to be remodeled as a stylish watering hole. Live music and dice games available.
> Daily 11am-2am, 31, Kaifeng Dao (European Style Street, Xiaobai Lou), Heping and 和平区开封道小白楼欧式风情街31号

Alibaba ¥ *

With a decade of history making this is one of the oldest bars in town. Alibaba's salad days are probably behind it but you can always come here for an RMB35 Long

the beautiful yard of Hotel Indigo, to which this bar belongs.

> 5pm-1am, 314 Jiefang South Rd, Hexi district 河西區解放南路314号 (022 8832 7698)

Blowing in the Wind *

This little bar is famous for its Mexican-style vibe – meaning its food and colorful Latino drinks, rather than any gang warfare or drug problems. The owner is fairly accomplished at mixology himself, so he has a very high standard of cocktails. Order a classic Mojito (RMB50), or venture into one a “Pink Trap” (RMB60) – again, not a honypot who will leave you in a bath of ice with a kidney missing, but a lady cocktail – or something with an equally intriguing name like the “AMF” (Adiós Motherf***er, RMB60) or just enjoy the “Illusion” (RMB60), then soak it up with some nachos or taco beef. Just have a good time, gringo and make it back over the border...

> Daily 6pm-midnight, Wujayao Er Lu, Heping 和平區吳家窑二號路(近蛇口道), (022 2351 4989)

China Bleu ¥

With an enviable reputation as having one of the best views in town – a commanding, 360-degree view from the 50th floor across the city that comes alive at night, a 58 kuai Long Island doesn't seem so much. Signature drinks like the China Bleu (RMB48), Tianjin Night (RMB68) and Tianjin Sling (RMB68) are all popular, as is the live jazz band (the female singer sounds like Norah Jones.)

> Daily 6:30pm-2am, 50th Floor, Tangla Hotel, 219 Nanjing Rd, Heping 南京路219号唐拉雅秀酒店49樓 (022 2321 5888, 022 2317 5293)

Dublin Irish Pub * ¥

The popular TEDA watering hole now has a large branch downtown, and we're going to go out on a limb and say it's probably the best pub in town (though you could argue it's the only one in town). The well-stocked Irish bar including ice-cold Guinness, Kilkenny and Jagermeister on tap.

> Downtown branch: Daily 10am-1am, 62, Jiefang Bei Lu, Heping 和平區解放北路62号 (022 2330 7233); Binhai branch: 137 Cui Heng Square at crossroads of No.3 Street and Xin Cheng Xi Lu, Third Avenue, TEDA 開發區第三大街137号 (020 6629 2963)

Exchange *

One of Tianjin's buzziest bars, thanks to its open-floor location in the middle of the Westin's impressively appointed lobby, Exchange is a meeting place to see and be seen. Don't miss the hotel's Happy Hour (6-9pm), where a mere RMB88 will get you free-flow selected cocktails, wine and beer. There's also a decent array of bar snack-type nibbles on the menu while you people watch.

> Daily, 9am-10pm, The Westin, 101 Nanjing Lu, Heping 和平區南京路101号 (022 2389 0168)

Flair, The Ritz-Carlton, Tianjin**

You've got to pretty confident to call yourself Flair, because it's a name that suggests you've got something worth showing off. We expect impeccably turned out mixologists, theatrics with the cocktails shakers and drinks that are worth writing home about. Luckily this bar is located at the Ritz-Carlton, Tianjin where standards are lofty and self-assured names are justified. The bare brick walls and exposed metal bars are intricate and delicate, which is just how head barman Paul likes his signature cocktails, such as a Chocolate Martini and a China Rose Martini. The Long Beach Ice Tea, which contains vodka, rum, gin and tequila can hardly be described as delicate but it the punch it packs is well worth it. Order pan-Asian snacks if you're after some kitchen-based flair.

> Fri/Sat 5pm-1am, Sun-Thu 5pm-12am, The Ritz-Carlton, Tianjin, No. 167 Dagubei Road, Heping 和平區大沽北路167号 (022 5857 8888)

Hank's Bar & Grill

This ten-year-old institution has recently benefited from a long-overdue move to a new and improved location. The place has a fiercely loyal following among middle-aged expats craving their “Murica fix and its raucous Fourth of July/ SuperBowl/“We Sure Killed Bin Laden” parties are Tianjin institutions.

> Daily 11am-11pm, Room 333, Building 6 Wanke Jin Ao International Square, Zhong Shi You Bridge, Wei

MUSIC



EASON CHAN

Hong Kong's Cantopop megastar Eason Chan came sixth in Forbes' China Celebrity Top 100 in 2013 and, while he's dropped a few places in recent years, his star still shines bright. He's already released two albums since then – 2014's *Rice & Shine* and last year's *Getting Ready* – but given that Chan has released multiple albums every year since 1996, it's impossible to know what he'll play at his live show. We understand that tickets for the Tianjin stop of the tour (entitled *Another Eason's Life*) are selling out fast, so jump on it.

Sat May 28, 7:30pm; RMB280-RMB1680; Tianjin Olympic Sports Center Stadium, 3 Binshui Xidao, Nankai District 南開區賓水西道3号天津奧林匹克中心(en.damai.cn)

MUSIC



BIG BANG

South Korean boyband, Big Bang (not to be confused with Chinese indie stars Da Bang) arrive in Tianjin with a display of K-Pop cuteness that will make your knees tremble (if you're into that kind of thing). Those already familiar with the hip-hop-inspired five-piece will know that the band's members have some pretty cool names (T.O.P and G-Dragon included) and even cooler haircuts. Get ready to scream like a teenager, as they power through a back catalogue of hits. Big Bang have released 26 singles to date – so plenty of choice.

Fri June 17, RMB480-RMB1280; Tianjin Olympic Sports Center Stadium, 3 Binshui Xidao, Nankai District 南開區賓水西道3号天津奧林匹克中心 (www.piao88.net)

Jin Nan Lu, Hexi 河西區天津南路中石油橋下万科金奧國際廣場商業6号楼333室 (022 5966; theup-perdecktj@yahoo.com)

Helen's Cafe 海伦咖啡 *

Like Kenny G and construction rubble, Helen's is everywhere in China. Beijing, Chengdu, Shanghai, Wuhan, Xiamen and, yep, Tianjin, which “boasts” two. You know the drill: RMB88 draft Tsingtao, backpackers' graffiti, cheap drinks, RMB38 buckets of fake alcohol, shisha pipes, half-decent food; go for the pizza – but don't, you know, go for the pizza. The crowd is 80 percent local, with a smattering of foreign students (there are three local universities) and the atmosphere convivial. A good place to pre-game but remember: those drinks are cheap for a reason and if you get there late, be willing to share a big table with infinite possibilities.

> Daily, 10pm-3am, He Yan Dao 116, (by Qixiangtai Lu and just over the Wu Jia Yao Number Two Bridge) Heping 和平區河沿道116号吴家窑2号桥旁 (022 2334 0071)

Indie Bar

Run by a cool young couple who you'll probably meet at the bar, Indie – as the name would suggest – is a chilled place to hang out and listen to some local budding musicians (many from nearby universities.) Big gin and juice or vodka coke at RMB15 for weekend Happy Hours and RMB10 Tsingtaos all day Sunday mean the prices are well within the busking musician's price range.

> Daily (closed Thursdays) 6pm-late, 1 Yichang Nanli, Yichang Dao & Xiangtai Lu, Heping 和平區宜昌道宜昌南里底商 (139 2030 1982)

Lancelot M

A rock heritage – the landlord is a synthesizer whizz whose mother owns a livehouse – means Lancelot teeters on the edge of being a livehouse but given that it is generally quite dead most nights, we didn't spend too much time agonizing which. The lack of any draught beer would normally kill it off completely, but Lancelot is partly saved by some kick-ass professional pool tables out back (RMB20; RMB48 after 8pm), used for local tournaments. Music doesn't start until after 10pm.

> Daily 7am-Midnight, No.228 Xinhua Road, Heping 和平區新華路228号 (022 2339 9557)

Le Loft ¥ *

Once the diners have gone home, it's all-night cocktail hour at this chic Chinese fusion venue, where you're likely to find some of the city's sexiest people working through the wine list.

> See Restaurant Listings for details

Le Procope**

A candlelit interior and sleek, industrial-like décor set the mood at Le Procope, perhaps Tianjin's most popular – and certainly most creative – cocktail lounge. The stylish parlor serves up a solid list of predefined and bespoke libations. While some of the drinks are exhilarating for their presentation some, like an excellent Old Fashioned, are remarkable for their flavor. Prices for cocktails are around RMB50, while beers are around RMB30. Whisky aficionados will be impressed by their scotch selection.

> Daily 7:30pm-late, Chengde Lu (at the intersection with Shandong Lu), Heping 和平區承德道與山東路交口 (022 2711 9858)

MUSE*

Picture the scene: it's a cavernous basement club, similar in many ways to Elements in Gongti, Beijing. The club is packed with people looking like they aren't enjoying themselves: there's a ton of phone fiddlers, and some long-legged woman looking bored at the idea of life itself. But here's a group of spiky-haired young men with two bottles of expensive foreign liquor open in front of them and apparently no idea what to do next. Get the picture? It's bizarre but it's engrossing.

> Daily 7:30pm-late, at the intersection with Xi'an Dao and Liuzhou Lu, Heping 和平區西安道與柳州路交口 (150 2219 9444)

O'Hara's English Pub ¥ **

At the back of the Astor Hotel, where the former lobby once greeted colonial guests, you will find a most clubbable English

gentleman's lounge, complete with regal Winchester-style sofas, an extensive single-malt whisky bar (regulars can keep bottles) and spot-on live music. Even by mid-week, this place starts getting lively after 9pm with locals who thrill to the old English atmosphere and expert bartending (try their cocktail creations).

> Daily 5pm-1am, 33 Taierzhuang Lu, Heping 和平区台儿庄路33号天津利顺德大饭店豪华精选酒店1层 (020 2331 1688)

Paulaner Brauhaus

Usually quiet before dinner but afterwards, the place comes alive with house bands playing varying genres, while Paulaner's food (sausage plates, pork knuckles and other Bavarian delights) and beer, brewed on site, is known to be a safe bet round these parts.

> Daily, No.243 Xinhua Lu (close to Chongqing Dao) Heping 和平区新华路243号(近重庆道), (022 2330 6866)

QBa, The Westin Tianjin

Located on the second floor of the Westin, QBa sees the rough brilliance of Havana and Trinidad transplanted onto Tianjin. Heavy on Latin-inspired ornaments and decor – think pre-Castro nostalgic Cuba – and we'll give you one guess what drink we were recommend. Yes, it's a Mojito (although the Caipirinha is not bad either) and it's served in a setting that oozes hotel chic without feeling stifling or pretentious. The fact that you can play Nintendo Wii on a gigantic screen is also a major draw to the place – we got into a game of bowling that lasted for almost two hours and a good few rounds of drinks – and so is the quick service and more than decent bar food.

> Daily 6pm-1am, No.101 Nanjing Lu, Westin Hotel, 2/F, Heping district 和平区南京路101号威斯汀酒店二楼 (022 2389 0088)

Second Floor

Once a noisy nightclub (Scarlet), the renamed Second Floor restaurant-bar is now a more laidback place. The (English-speaking) head bartender, Kevin, learnt his craft from Beijing's whisky-bar legends and his passion and creativity have infected the whole staff. They'll be more than happy to prepare bespoke drinks and generally ensure your drinking pleasure, while a small band plays Chinese classics. Just don't expect anything too crazy – after all, there's a functioning Sichuan restaurant slap-bang in the middle of the dancefloor.

> 2nd Floor (opposite Tianjin University), Bolian Building, 135 Weijing Lu, Nankai district 南开区卫津路135号博联大厦2楼(天津大学对面) (022 2337 2444)

Sitong Bar M

Though the name and decor are Chinese, Sitong is the after-hours club *du jour* for the needy and desperate (foreign and domestic alike). Wander in around 1am and expect to find archetypal Yellow Fever sufferers, gurning to deafening music, traditional Chinese twerking and, of course, a Filipino band. The drinks flow fast and cheap, hence the local saying: "If you cannot get laid in Sitong/ Then you're doing it all wrong." Stay safe, amigos!

> Daily 8.30pm-3am, Basement of Olympic Towers, No.126 Chengdu Dao, Heping 和平区成都道126号奥林匹克大厦负一层 (022 2337 7177; 138 2622 6777)

River Lounge

There are few better ways to enjoy the sparkling views of the Hai River than by drinking it all in with a Bloody Mary. Relax on a luxurious leather sofa and enjoy complimentary snacks (including an international cheese selection) during Happy Hour (6pm-8pm). A location close to the lobby means things remain lively yet still discreet whether it is an afternoon rendezvous with tea and cakes or cocktail hour, when Bloody Mary aficionados seek out the famous World Tour (with appetizers) of the signature drink.

> Daily 10am-1am, 158, Zhang Zi Zhong Lu, St. Regis Hotel, 1st Floor, Heping 和平区张自忠路158号瑞吉金融街酒店一楼 (022 5830 9958)

Truemans Bar

Sure, 99 percent of the clientele are English teachers who live five minutes away, but this partly foreign-owned bar – featuring

a dog called Skipper – has friendly service, lots of beer and cocktails and decent grub. The community around Truemans also hosts regular movie nights, live music most Saturdays and pub quizzes, but check the map carefully – this place is nestled deep in a hard-to-find alley off Wandezhuang Dajie.

> Mon-Sun 11am-late, 37 Long De Li, Wandezhuang, Nankai 南开区万德庄龙德里37号底商 (137 5239 1091)

Xingyue Bar



Supplying single malt whisky (made in UK & Japan), Hungarian noble rot wine, Moscato sparkling and Cuban cigars. Jazz music live show every Statuary.

> No. 206, Bldg 20, Shidai Aocheng Apartment, Nankai 南开区时代奥城酒店式公寓20号楼206 (130 2135 2608)

HOTELS

Astor Hotel

China's oldest international hotel, the Astor looks the part and has the heritage to boot: past guests include Sun Yat sen, Herbert Hoover and Zhou Enlai, while the hotel even served as a base for endangered expats during the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901). Restored to its former glory a few years back, the hotel now features 152 well-appointed rooms: choose between modern elegance and Victorian style.

> From RMB850, 33 Taierzhuang Lu, Heping 和平区台儿庄路33号天津利顺德大饭店豪华精选酒店1层 (020 2331 8920; www.starwoodhotels.com)

Banyan Tree

The lifestyle hotel landed in Tianjin in April and was an immediate hit with its riverside location – in the former Austrian concession district, filled with European villas, bridges and churches – featuring 159 guestrooms, the best of which have river views and giant circular bathtubs easily good for two (or more). With JIN bar and two restaurants (The Grill particularly recommended), you'll never need to leave, indulging instead in Banyan's "experiences", (they're not just massages, people!)

> 34 Haihe East Road, Hebei 河北区海河东路34号 (022 5861 9999; www.banyantree.com; email:tianjinriverside@banyantree.com)

Cloudy Bay Hostel M

The décor of this downtown hotel evokes a Mediterranean villa, thanks to its origins in the 1930s concession era, and it's now painted a distinctive blue and white. Facilities include a fantastic rooftop bar (with BBQ for summer grilling), kitchen, 24-hour hot water, A/C, free Wi-Fi, laundry bike rental service. Female dorm and (reasonably smart) private bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms are available for a price. The small family restaurant next door offers terrific local food, friendly service and rock-bottom prices.

> Dorms from RMB60-80 (YHA card permitting); private rooms from RMB380, 120 Harbin Road, Heping 和平区哈尔滨路120号 (022 2723 0606; cloudybayhostel@hotmail.com)

Hanting 汉庭酒店 M

A respectable budget option in China, Hanting offer reasonably smart – if a touch Spartan – rooms with old-fashioned hotel decor, and decent showers. Never a bad choice if you just want a place to crash and send a couple of emails.

> From RMB208, 164 Liaoning Lu, Heping 和平区辽宁路164号 022 5885 3288)

Holiday Inn 假日酒店

Out of eight in Tianjin, the branch right by the Tianjin Eye on the Haihe – about a ten minute walk from Banyan Tree – offers the

best location, as well as 419 clean, standard, tastefully decorated riverside rooms.

> From RMB730, Phoenix Shopping Mall A, Haihe Dong Lu, Hebei 河北区海河东路 (022 5863 2999; www.ihg.com)

Minyuan 33 民园33

Minyuan is the best choice for those who like the high life but prefer an intimate setting. With seven spacious, British-themed rooms (we highly recommend the James Bond) in an historic hutong setting, right next to some of the best restaurants in town (Café Sambal, Geba Geba and Casa di Niao), bars and clubs.

> From RMB980, 5 Minyuan Xi Li, 31 Changde Dao, Heping 和平区常德道31号民园西里5号 (022 2331 1626; www.minyuan33.com)

St. Regis

One of the most prestigious of the downtown hotels, St Regis combines a respect for tradition, such as its signature Bloody Mary, with classical style – not to mention fantastic river views, 274 sumptuous rooms and Tianjin's first Butler Service: Personalized bi-lingual attention. It's close to summertime favorite Italian Style Street, though both restaurants are top notch, and there's a complimentary finger buffet come Happy Hour.

> From RMB850, 158 Zhangzizhong Lu, Heping 和平区张自忠路158号 (022 5830 9999; www.starwoodhotels.com)

The Ritz-Carlton

Occupying a grand and imposing neo-colonial reconstruction on Jiefang Beilu, The Ritz-Carlton, Tianjin is one of the most impressive new hotels on the scene, with a great selection of food and drink options. The interior could rival Buckingham Palace for its grandeur.

> No. 167 Dagubei Road, Heping 和平区大沽北路167号 (5857 8888)

Tangla

Formerly the Tianjin Raffles, which pulled out a couple of years back – sending a shudder up the international hotel trade – the Tangla boasts the largest suites in town, all richly appointed in Art Deco-style furnishings. Buffet restaurant Sôu restaurant specializes in sushi, Boston lobster, Dalian oysters and homemade pizza, plus a fantastic city view, while the hotel bar is one of the most popular in town.

> From RMB989, 219, Nanjing Lu, Heping 和平区南京路219号天津中心唐拉雅秀酒店 (022 2321 5888)

Tianjin Three Brothers Youth Hostel

The YHA is still relatively new in Tianjin, but this tourist-friendly hostel tucked away in Wu Da Dao has your back(pack). Bike rentals and horse-drawn carriages are minutes away and the hostel is clean. RMB238 gets you a private room with king-sized bed.

> From RMB80 (RMB70 YHA), 141, Chongqing Lu, Heping 和平区重庆道141号 (022 2723 9777; 186 2285 2808; gesahostel@163.com)

Westin

Rising above the old concession precincts, the Westin's dramatic lobby immediately puts guests at ease with its sense of a chattering but relaxed social hub. Close to the best shopping areas, The Westin has 275 understated rooms with Herman Millar furnishings, signature Heavenly Beds and rainforest showers. Heated pool, an ultra-modern gym, signature Heavenly spa by Westin and gourmet breakfast buffet tick all the ritzy boxes. There's also a great range of restaurants with western and Chinese both represented.

> From RMB855, 101 Nanjing Lu, Heping 和平区南京路101号 (022 2389 0088; www.westin.com/tianjin)

RESTAURANT LISTINGS

Top Restaurants

About This guide represents our editors' top picks, and includes some *That's Tianjin* advertisers. All restaurants have been personally reviewed by our team of experts, and scored according to the cuisine, experience, cleanliness and affordability.

Banyan Tree, Riverside Tianjin

The Banyan Tree Riverside Tianjin's Bai Yun Chinese fine dining restaurant offers expertly prepared Cantonese and Tianjin-influenced cuisine, like sautéed snow beef with garlic and spring onion and double-boiled black truffle with sea snail. Better still, it comes with a riverside view.

> 34 Haihe East Road, Hebei 河北区海河东路34号 (022 5861 9999)

1863 Bistro & Terrace

Boasting authentic bygone-era menus and wines, 1863 relives the concession days with epicurean versions of classics like *escargots*, prawn cocktail (both RMB88), fish and chips and chicken pot-pie (both RMB188).

> Daily 2-10pm (kitchen opens at 6pm, see O'Hara's in Bar Listings (022 2331 1688 ext.8918)

Bistro Theonet (British)

Part of the Qing Wang Fu complex, this British-style café serves gastropub fare beside an AstroTurf garden, complete with fountain.

> Daily 10:30am-10:30pm, 55 Chongqing Road, Heping 和平区重庆道55号庆王府院内 (022 5835 2555; www.qingwangfu.com)

Maison Flo (French)

Marble slabs, mosaic floors and brass fittings establish the Parisian bona fides; dishes like snails (RMB168), oysters (RMB58) and steak tartare (RMB188) confirm. The grandeur is matched only by service, though how impressive you find it might depend on who's paying (about RMB300-500 per head, including wine). VIP room available.

> Daily 11am-3pm; 5:30-11pm, 37 Guangfu Lu, Italian Style Street, Hebei 河北区意式风情街光复道37号近新意街 (022 2662 6688; www.flo.cn/brasserie)

Chateau 35 (French)

Longstanding wine bar and bistro in the Wu Dao Dao area. Well-known for their imported Australian steak and wood fired pizzas – the latter up there with the best in Beijing. Look out for wine tasting events and make use of their garden in summer months.

> Daily 10:30am-midnight, Opposite 79, ChangDe Dao, Heping 和平区常德道久和里1号 (022 2331 5678)

Cholito (Spanish)

The best Spanish restaurant in town also happens to be (pretty much) the only one – but Cholito doesn't rest on its laurels.

> Sun-Thurs, 11am-11pm; Fri-Sat 11am-1am, Intersection of Luoyang Road and Hebei Road, No. 4, Xian Nong Da Yuan, Heping 和平区洛阳道与河北路交叉路口先农大院4号 (022 5835 2833)

Cafe Sambal (SE Asian)

When it comes to Malay food in a hutong, nowhere does it better in China than Sambal. Admittedly, that's something of a niche category, but then so is the food. The spicy Kapitan-style chicken is pricey, but well worth it. An oxtail soup is rich and tasty, and there's Tom Yum Gong if you prefer a little zing.

> Daily 11.30am-midnight, 5 Minyuan Xi Li, 31 Changde Dao, Heping 和平区常德道31号民园西里5号 (022 2330 0896, 022 2339 0525)

Duo Fu Lou (Tianjin)

Famous for innovative but traditional Tianjin cuisine (RMB100-300 a head), and non-traditional decorations, mixing a European style with Chinese furnishings. We recommend the *sai pangxie* ('Crab Lookalike' – it's actually made from fish and eggs), a signature dish.

> Daily 10am-2pm, 4:30-9:30pm, No.197-4 Chongqing Dao (at the crossing with Yunnan Lu), Heping 和平区重庆道197号增4号(云南路口), (022 2311 2323, 022 2330 2323)

Dublin Irish Pub (European)

This local pub boasts a former chef from Beijing's Great Wall Hotel who has put together dishes from *escargots* and roasted oysters to New Zealand steak and shepherd's pie. Perhaps the highlight, though, is the German menu, which features a smorgasbord of sausages and expertly cooked Pork Knuckle. Despite the variety, the quality doesn't suffer and the prices are

as respectable as the fare.
> See Bar Listings for details.

Geba Geba (Japanese) ¥ M

The best way to enjoy Japanese cuisine is to watch the sushi chef prepare your food as you wait. Geba Geba guarantees that should you wish, and its cozy location adds to its allure. > Daily 11:30am-2pm; 5:30pm-11pm, 4 Minyuan Xi Li 31 Changde Dao, Heping 和平区常德道31号民园西里院内4号 (022 2339 6673)

Goubuli 狗不理 (Tianjin) * ¥ M

The classic *san xian* buns (RMB48/eight) are essential and you can ask a kuaiban performer to tell you the history of the brand with a heavy Tianjin accent. It's fun – if you understand what the hell he is talking about.
> 77 Shandong Lu, Heping 和平区山东路77号 (022 2730 2540)

Guiyuan Canting (Tianjin) * M

One of the earliest 'Tianjin cuisine' restaurants – meaning it's all of 20-odd years old – but much cheaper than Goubuli at about RMB60-150 a head. The home-style atmosphere puts you in the mood for locally famous dish black garlic beef (RMB48). Don't like garlic or beef? There are plenty of other things, such as the eight treasure tofu (basically, tofu with seafood and meat, RMB48), braised eggplant (RMB33) and the refreshing mustard cucumber (RMB18).
> 101-103 Cheng Du Dao (close to Gui Lin Lu), Heping 和平区成都道101-103号(近桂林路) (022 2339 7530)

Hongxing Canting (Traditional Hot-pot) * M

You can have all three daily meals in this little restaurant, all for less than a hundred kuai. In the morning, try authentic Tianjin *lao doufu* and *guo ba cai*. For lunch or dinner, go for old-fashioned Mongolian hotpot with hand-sliced mutton, (the burst stomach is also worth ordering if you literally have the guts.) Don't forget beef-stuffed sesame cake, which goes with everything in the pot.
> Daily 6am-2pm, 5pm-10pm, Xinxing Lu (crossroads of Siping Dong Dao), Heping 和平区新兴路与四平东交口 (135 1226 8546)

In & Out (Yunnan) M ¥

The cuisine 'beneath the clouds' uses mushrooms, cheese and flowers in a way no other region in China does. This restaurant – Zuo Yi Wang in Chinese – adopts a 100 percent approach, from the staff (mostly Yunnan minorities) to the decor. And, of course, the dishes – especially the roasted tilapia (RMB45) and boletes (RMB88, for luck). The famous *hei san duo* (sautéed, chopped pork, RMB98) goes perfectly with the famous pineapple rice (RMB38).
> Daily 10:30am-9pm, 55 Luoyang Road, Xian Nong Square, Heping 和平区洛阳道55号先农大院内 (022 5870 1999)

Jinmen Yichuan (BBQ) * M

The first choice for mutton *chuan'r* (Chinese shashlik) without worrying it might be rat. Have the ordinary ones (RMB4 per stick, twice what you'd pay on the street) or pay five times as much for its so-called "Extraordinary Chuanr," though there may not be much of a difference. Don't miss its "Extraordinary Lamb Chop" (RMB20 each) and lamb spine hot pot (RMB45).
> Daily 11am-3am, 72 Qi Xiang Tai Lu, Hexi 河西区气象台路72号 (022 2355 1111)

Jincai Diancang (Tianjin) * M ¥

Innovative Tianjin cuisine for about RMB150-200; recommended dishes include their signature snack, *youtiao* (deep-fried dough sticks) with shrimp. The old-fashioned yogurt and traditional Tianjin sausages are what gets locals hot under the collar, come suppertime.
> 22 Tianwei Lu (close to Bo Yuan Mall, Da Bei Temple Commercial Street), Hebei 河北区天纬路22号底商近大慈院商业街博远商城 (022 2622 3333)

Jinxin Hongmen Yangrou (Hot pot) * M

Stewed lamb in spicy sauce is a Tianjin perennial, especially in winter. At this simple, somewhat scruffy restaurant, they have their own recipe, plus deep-fried *shaobing* (sesame seed cakes). But lower your expectations for service – the waitresses are all *ayi* in their 50s.
> Daily 10am-11pm, 205 Harbin Dao, Heping 和平区哈

DINING



TJ TEX-MEX CINCO DE MAYO PARTY

Our favorite Mexican in town, TJ Tex-Mex, celebrates Cinco de Mayo with a buffet of Mexican and American food. For your ticket, you'll also get free-flow Margaritas, draft beer and soft drinks. Yep, you heard that right: All-you-can-eat and all-you-can-drink for RMB100. There are only a limited number of tickets (50, to be precise) so get yours in advance to guarantee entry.

> Thu May 5, 6pm; RMB100 (or RMB50 for students); TJ Tex-Mex, 4-1-7, A3, Aocheng Shangye Guangchang (Aocheng Business Square), Bingshui Xidao, Nankai District 滨水西道时代奥城商业广场A3区4-1-7号 (022 5817 1937)

尔滨道205号 (022 2712 9380)

Kiessling 起士林 (Western) * ¥

Kiessling is the oldest Western-restaurant in Tianjin; every local speaks proudly of it. The four-story building offers a different flavor on every floor. The ground-level bakery is where it started – the original owner was a German baker. Second floor is mainly Russian, with a must-order stewed beef in casserole (RMB68). German cuisine (as well as beer) is on the third, and French on the fourth.

> 10am-9:30pm, 33 Zhe Jiang Lu, Heping 和平区浙江路33号 起士林饭店 (022 2331 9188, 022 2339 3533)

Kitchen Igosso (Italian) * ¥

One of a half-dozen restaurants boosting the redevelopment of Xian Nong Square – similar to the famous Shanghai Xintiandi – Igosso serves authentic Italian, like arugula salad (RMB48; hard to find elsewhere), lasagna (RMB98), pizza (RMB60-98), and desserts like caramel brûlée (RMB40) and an innovative tiramisu (RMB48), which uses seasonal fruits as the base.

> Daily 11:30am-2pm, 5:30pm-10pm, 55 Luoyang Road, Xian Nong Square, Heping 和平区洛阳道55号先农大院内 (022 5835 2860)

La Casa Di Nao (Italian) ¥ M

Low-profile, romantic Italian eatery, discreetly tucked into a converted terrace home in Wu Da Dao. The smartly turned-out Japanese owner, once head chef to the Italian Embassy in Tokyo, believes in good service – that's why he owns another seven restaurants in Japan. Though the food might seem pricey – most antipasto range from RMB60-90 and the carne and pesce mains start around RMB120 – the experience and authenticity, such as the Neapolitan-style wood-fired pizza oven, are worth every penny.

> Tue-Sun 11:30am-2pm; 5:30pm-9pm, 47 Changde Road, Heping 和平区常德道47号 (022 5805 3255)

Lao Feng Ge Pin Zhen Xuan (Shanghai) ¥ M

This Shanghai chain, with seven down south, just opened its first in TJ. Occupying a corner in the British Concession, the restaurant fits right in the area's vibe. In the three-story mansion, 10 dining rooms (each with bathroom) can handle 4 to 20 people. The food is carefully prepared and cooked: we recommend the longjiao shrimps (RMB118). Service also gets the thumbs-up: the staff makes you feel sincerely welcomed.

> Daily 11am-1pm, 5-9pm, 9 Hunan Lu, Xian Nong Square, Heping 和平区湖南路9号先农大院 (022 5835 2837; www.laofengge.com)

Lao Yiren Cangan 老艺人餐馆, (Tianjin) * M

Don't let the wavy walls or slanted ceil-

ings fool you – there's nothing crooked about this funky little mom-and-pop standby, serving family-style food made by traditional musicians (the name translates as Old Artists Diner). The menu offers no surprises, just wholesome, local fare at reasonable prices (the *shao san si*, RMB21, tastes better than it looks). And expect a 'family sized' portion of culture, such as the owner's granddaughter belting out a bit of Peking Opera as you dine.

> 69 Duolan Road (at the intersection with Hebei Road), Heping 和平区多伦道69号(河北路口), (022 2730 9406)

Laya Burger (American) M

In one of the city's most popular malls, a Taiwanese-owned joint serves American burgers and onion rings, in an atmosphere that resembles Betsy Ross's superego. If you expect an authentic American taste, you may be a bit disappointed. The beef is OK, but the sets just average. Still, there is always a long line.

> Daily 10am-9pm, 9 Leyuan Rd, Galaxy Shopping Mall, 5th Floor, Hexi 河西区乐园道9号银河国际购物中心5楼 (022 8388 9366)

Le Loft (Fusion) * ¥

Innovative cuisine designed to meet local people's taste, the restaurant functions also as a bar after dinner time, with free drinks for single ladies every Friday after 9:30pm.

> Daily 11:30am-2:00am, 4 Jin Song Li (close to Jinzhou Road), Nanjing Road, Heping 和平区南京路劲松里4号(近锦州道), (022 2723 9363)

Lüse Zhuang Yuan (Korean) M

One of the oldest – and cheapest – Korean chains in the city (Green Manor in English). The owner adopts style as well as content: Once you sit down, 10 appetizers show up automatically, including kimchi and pumpkin porridge. These will probably leave you half-full before you've ordered (pro tip: you can refill any two during the meal). Go for the grill or sizzling bibimbab – rice in a stone bowl.

> Daily 10am-10pm, 108 Nanjing Road, Isetan 8th Floor, Heping 和平区南京路108号伊势丹8楼(营口道口), (022 2718 8513)

Marugame Seimen (丸龟制面) (Japanese) M

The udon noodles are simple food, but to make them tasty is no easy job. Thanks to Marugame Seimen, Tianjin now has a place to enjoy the slippery udon (RMB15-30) and tempura (RMB6-10). Usually crowded at lunch, the line outside moves pretty fast, because you order in line and pay at the other end, then grab a table to enjoy the noodles and rich-flavored soup.

> Daily 10:30am-8:30pm, 108, Nanjing Road, B2, ISETAN Mall, Heping 和平区南京路108号现代城C区伊势丹

百货B2楼 (022 2718 8503)

MAXIM'S DE PARIS**

With a history that stretches back as far as the concessions of Tianjin, Maxim's de Paris is a French fine dining institution – a time-honored brand of *joie de vivre* and decadence. The indulgence comes in the form of oysters, seafood platters, bouillabaisse soup, terrines and foie gras – classic French haute cuisine that's only available in a few select restaurants across China. Perhaps the most flamboyant choice on the menu is the chocolate dessert: a white chocolate orb which needs a coating of molten chocolate to melt it away, revealing a rich brownie inside. Top it all off with a bottle of vintage claret from the wine list.

> 11am-2pm, 5pm-9:30pm, 2 Chengde Dao, Heping 和平区常德道2号 (022 2332 9966)

Mighty Deli

Much as we love sampling the many and varied epicurean delights that Asia has to offer, sometimes we just need a taste of home. Mighty Deli is one of the best stocked imported food stores in town, so for that particular bar of chocolate, spread for your bread or pasta sauce, this is probably the place to check out.

> Daily, Opposite Nancuijing Park, 1F Longbin Yuan, 85-87 Water Park Road West, Nankai 南开区水上公园西路85-87号龙滨园底商(翠屏公园对面) (022 8783 9683)

Nanshi Food Street (Chinese) M

Less a street, more a two-storey complex bursting with every local delicacy that Tianjin has to offer, this is a good place to come if you are feeling adventurous. There's not much English signage, and don't expect any vendors to speak it, so every bite is a bit of a lottery. Most famous here is *mahua* (fried dough sticks sweetened with a red-bean paste filling), chatang (a sugary millet-flour soup served from a huge copper pot) and the local hero: egg-pancake *jian bing*.

> Daily, times vary, Shenyi Lu, Heping 和平区慎益大街和和平区

Nha Trang (Vietnamese) M

Vietnamese is growing more popular here thanks to familiar ingredients with an exotic twist. Nha Trang offers a fast-food vibe with quality ingredients, for people on the go. Try *cha gio* (pork-and-shrimp spring rolls, RMB38) or grilled beef salad (RMB38). With a cup of Vietnamese milk tea (RMB18), you are good to 'pho' (sliced beef and brisket soup, RMB35).

> Daily 12pm-4pm, 5:30pm-9:30pm, Shop 002-02, 5F, Galaxy Mall, No.9 Leyuan Rd, Hexi 河西区乐园道9号银河国际购物中心5楼002-02铺 (022 8388 7666, 022 8388 7555; www.nhatrang.cn)

Pattaya (Thai) * ¥

There is little of the seedy resort from which it takes its name at this Thai classic surrounded by Western-style restaurants. Dishes like Tom Yum Kung Soup (RMB58), Pad Thai (RMB38) and drinks like Teh Tarik (RMB18) all taste authentic. The curries, green and red, are popular while service is above average, especially when the waitresses greet you with a sweet "Sawadika."

> Daily 10am-10pm, 33 Shengli Lu, Italian Style Street, Hebei 河北区意式风情街胜利路33号 (022 2445 8789)

Peng Tian Ge (Chinese) * M ¥

Upscale seafood restaurant providing a variety of typically Chinese delicacies, from bullfrog to Australian abalone and even esoteric rarities like scorpion. With its grand, Bond-villain decorations (small sharks swim in tanks, and you can even touch the sea turtle) and cozy atmosphere, it can be a great choice for family reunions and business dinners. Service is great too.
> Daily 11am-2pm, 5pm-9pm, 8 Hong Qi Nan Lu, Li Qi Zhuang, Hexi 河西区李七庄红旗南路8号近快速路 (022 2395 8888)

Pizza Bianca (Italian) * ¥

There is always a line outside come dinner time, and a good reason for the wait: the food is not only damn good, especially the pizza (RMB59-89), tiramisu (RMB39) and Mövenpick ice cream, it is fairly priced. Though the pizza may not taste as wonderful as one from a wood-fired oven, it is good enough. Due to the constant crowd, you need to be extra patient during rush hour. Brunch?

> Daily 11am-10.30pm, Olympic Tower, 1F, 126, Chengdu Road, Heping 和平区成都道126号盛捷奥林匹克大厦107-108室 (022 2351 2887)

Qing Wang Fu (South Chinese) * M ¥¥

Don't miss Chef Deng Qun She's unique creations, expanding Guangdong cuisine to incorporate a 'heavier' sauce-based Tianjin style in dishes like ribs in orange sauce. For appetizers, try the sliced pig's trotter (*fen te*), marinated in soy sauce, sugar and classic Shanxi wine (*feng zhou*); the duck soup is amazingly rich in taste. > Daily 11.30am-2.30pm; 6-10pm, see Bistro Theoret listings (022 5835 2555, 022 8713 5555)

RIVIERA, The St. Regis Tianjin**

While one could enjoy Riviera's contemporary Mediterranean cuisine in the surrounds of the art nouveau-inspired ground-floor bistro, we suggest that, weather permitting, you sit out on the terrace overlooking the river. Lamb with couscous and lime soy sauce (RMB138) is a fusion standout.

> 11.30am-2.30pm; 5.30-10pm; The St. Regis Tianjin, 158 Zhang Zizhong Lu, Heping 和平区张自忠路号 (022 5830 9962)

SALSA PUBLIC HOUSE * *

There is something Dali-esque about the oddball ornamentation and upside-down chairs hanging from a high, wood-paneled ceiling. The menu should hold something for most taste buds, including steaks (from RMB58), delicately balanced pan-fried lamb chops (RMB138) and the unique flavor combination of prawns and pineapple in a creamy wasabi "special" sauce (RMB98 and not for the faint-of-tongue).

> Heping: 11am-2am; 36 Xikang Lu, Heping西康路36号(近岳阳道中国银行旁) (022 8712 5158)

Nankai: 11am-2am; 7 Colorful Village 2nd Floor, Nankai 奥城彩染汇生活广场2楼 (022 6077 8011)

Sha Guo Li (Chinese)

Tianjin residents flock to this local hero – even more so in the last six months so it's opened a huge new chain in the luxurious

Galaxy Mall. This family favorite restaurant, known for its dependable Tianjin staples, might seem a little out of place next to shops for imported French bags and Italian leather shoes – but credit to the owners where it's due. Don't miss the signature pork belly (*li jia da pai*)

> Galaxy Mall branch: 4F Galaxy Mall, 9 Leyuan Dao, Hexi 河西区乐园道9号银河国际购物中心4楼 (022 8388 9139); Jiu Jian Lu branch: 46 Jiujiang Lu, Hexi 河西区九江路46号 (2326 0075); Huafu Plaza branch: 1/F Huafu Plaza Zhujiang Dao, Hexi 河西区珠江道华夏津典底商 (8838 8900)

Shanghai Time (Chinese) M ¥

Still one of the most popular destinations despite its age, Shanghai Time serves classic dishes from stir-fried eel with hot oil (RMB56), grandma pork braised in brown sauce (RMB48) to crab powder balls (RMB19) and, of course, fried buns. The decor recalls Old Shanghai with posters of beautiful 1930s actresses, and modern touches to ensure a delightful environment.

> Daily 11am-10pm, No.20 Hubei Road, Heping 和平区g湖北路20号 (022 2313 6667)

Shaoshuai Fu (Chinese) * M ¥¥

In a busy downtown area, this Baroque building was home to the beloved General Zhang Xueliang and wife Zhao Si, so you can find yourself eating in his converted study. High as prices are, Shaoshuai's individual serving system guarantees the best service. But do make a reservation because there are only four tables. A Chiang Kai-shek lookalike often comes and talks about the history (which is kind of weird: it wasn't even Chiang's house, after all.)

> Daily 11am-2pm, 5pm-9pm, 78 Chifeng Dao (at the crossing of Shandong Road), Heping 和平区赤峰道78号山东路口 (022 8789 6106)

Someday (Cafe/Teahouse) M

Besppectacle guimi (girly BFFs) and 'cute' couples kill time with British tea (RMB38) or cranberry mocha (RMB38) while waiting for waffles (plus ice cream, RMB48). Combos can be cheaper, and if you add them on WeChat, you get discounts. The

only downside is that it doesn't serve proper meals.

> Daily 10am-10pm, B1-111, Galaxy Underground Plaza, Hexi 河西区银地下商业广场B1-111 (022 8388 0888)

Takara Sushi 宝寿司 (Japanese) * M ¥¥

This little restaurant only offers 10 seats (four at the saké bar), so you have the staff's full attention, at least. The ingredients are carefully prepared to be the best, which is why the sushi and sashimi are pricey (usually RMB300 per person.)

> Mon-Sat 11am-10pm, Sun 11am-9pm, 55 Luoyang Road, Xian Nong Square, Heping 和平区洛阳道55号先农大院內 (022 5835 2870)

The Victoria Lounge at the Astor Hotel**

For as little as RMB98 guests can indulge themselves with the hotel's luxurious Afternoon Tea set. Beginning – as tradition dictates – at 2:00pm and ending at 5:00pm, the hotel's high tea features a variety of delicious cakes, scones, jam, cream, strawberries, finger sandwiches and sweet fruits. The tea is excellent too, and come served in a steaming bone-china pot. It's all very Downton Abbey, and a great place to take visiting friends.

> Daily 2-5pm, 33 Taierzhuang Lu, Heping 和平区台儿庄路33号天津利顺德大饭店豪华精选酒店1层 (020 2331 1688)

Wei Ding Xuan (Chinese) * M ¥¥

Once the residence of the fourth wife of Nationalist-period warlord Cao Kun, it is now one of the top-notch Chinese restaurants. Move over, Pepsi: the black rice juice (RMB180 per jar) is probably the best soft drink you'll try – healthy and delicious. Tasty eating plus history – what more can one ask?

> 36 Chengxiang Zhong Lu, Gulou Bei Lu (west of the North Gate), Nankai 南开区域路鼓楼北街36号鼓楼北街西側 (022 2728 0123)

Xi Hua Xuan (Chinese)** M ¥

The best place to sip the more infamous Chinese 'herb wines' – all kinds of them. Pay around RMB200 a head and let the

chef serve whatever's prepared – on our visit, this included roasted spicy fish and (unfortunately) shark's fin soup, with different kinds of *baijiu*: seahorse and deer penis infusions being fairly typical, tasty varieties. The owner can also tell the story behind every object in the room.

> Daily 4:30pm-10pm, 1 Cheng Xing Li, Si Ping Dong Dao (at the cross of Gan Su Lu), Heping 和平区四平东道成兴里1号与甘肃路交口 (022 2730 7878)

Xinjiang Fengwei Canting (Xinjiang) M

This Xinjiang restaurant is run by the state-owned Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, so authenticity is high, and service poor. Locals are willing to come just for its big plate chicken (braised with potato and peppers, RMB68), and *hongliu* Mutton *chuan'r* (RMB12 each). Come early; there is always a line.

> Daily 11am-2pm; 5pm-10pm, 1st Floor of Junken Hotel, No.21 Huaxing Dao (behind Tianjin Train Station), Hedong 河东区华兴道21号军垦宾馆1楼近天津站后广场 (022 2432 9998)

Yihe Yayan (Peking Duck) * M ¥

Qing surroundings beget an imperial style: the exquisite roast duck set (RMB198) is a must, as is the famous lion's head meatball (RMB18), stone plate eggplant (RMB38), cheese tofu (RMB38) and the ever-popular kung pao chicken (RMB48).

> Daily 11am-2pm, 5.10pm-9pm, L3-052 Galaxy Mall, 9 Leyuan Rd, Hexi 河西区乐园道9号银河国际购物中心3楼L3-052号 (022 8388 7926, 020 8388 7928)

YY Beer House 粤园 (Thai) * ¥

Don't be fooled by the name – YY is less a house of beer (though it has many) as a brilliant restaurant. The chef insists on the freshest ingredients, which explains why this classic eatery, almost hidden among the skyscrapers, has been around all this time. Better make a reservation, especially at dinner, because this small diner is always crowded (both by customers and its decorations, of which quite a few are antiques).

> Daily 11:30am-10pm, 3 Aomen (Macau) Lu, Heping 和平区澳门路3号洛阳道口 (022 2339 9634)

bazndei yunnan food

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set menu ¥ 150/person

Yunnan Cuisine
Art Gallery & Bar

TIME
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