

行廚太湖上

DELICACIES NOURISHED BY TAIHU

Taihu Lake, with its wide expanse of mist-covered waters, is the third largest freshwater lake in China. With clear water and abundant natural resources, it has been a natural food resource for Jiangsu people since ancient times. Throughout its long history, local people have created numerous delicacies with the gifts of nature.



Boat Feast in Taihu Lake / 太湖船菜

Boat feasts have a history of over 2,500 years. A boat is not only for travel or elegant occasions, but also for daily needs of people in the past. Since Jiangsu is a province full of rivers and lakes, in ancient times, merchants and literati mainly travelled by boat, so enjoying food prepared by the fishermen on the boats became a habit for local people.



The most important in Boat Feast is “fresh ingredients” . “Taihu Three Whites” , namely, white shrimp, white fish, and whitebait, is the most famous. Soft-frying is a popular practice to cook whitebait, which is featured by its transparent body. Fried whitebait is golden, of good shape, crispy and tender. White fish is usually made into “Taihu White Fish Balls” , which is features delicacy, tenderness, and refreshing taste. In contrast, the way to cook white shrimp is much simpler, as boiling or cooking with distilled grain is enough to manifest its delicious taste. Lightness, timing, degree of heating and freshness are significantly valued when preparing the Boat Feast. In addition to freshly cooked creatures from the lake, Duck Stuffed with Eight Delicacies, Steamed Turtle, Fried White Fish, and Steamed Pork with Rice Flavor in Lotus Leaves are all made into semi-finished products before being simmered slowly on boats. After thousands of years, the Boat Feast still retains its original grace and poetic quality.



Snacks on Boat / 船點

“Snacks on Boat” was popular on gaily-painted pleasure-boats in Jiangsu as a part of afternoon tea. It was regarded as a way to enjoy leisure time, while also reflecting people’ s aesthetics towards life. Most of the snacks are in the shape of cute animals, exquisite and small, and lifelike. Finely carved bird wings, white swan feathers and tail fin of goldfish, as well as surrounding pebbles, bamboos, and peonies brimming over with vitality form a wonderful fairy tale world. In addition to their exquisite appearance, snacks on boat also have particular fillings. The fillings in animal-shaped snacks are meat, and plant-shaped snacks are sweet.



Eight Aquatic Ingredients (Shuibaxian, Eight Immortals from Water) / 水八仙

Aquatic ingredients are always the most delicate. As the top variety of “Shuibaxian” , glutinous and soft Gorgon fruit is regarded as an excellent seasonal tonic for its high nutritional value and refreshing taste. Fresh and tender red caltrop with its thin shell and high water content, soft and sweet, is refreshing when served raw, and can whet the appetite when served cooked. Delicate cane shoots are incredibly delicious when cooked with meat. Water shield, water chestnut, lotus root, and arrowhead are mostly consumed from autumn to winter. “Shuibaxian” is the symbol of water town that is ingrained in the minds of Jiangsu people.



江畔風味長

DELICIOUS RIVERSIDE FOOD

Jiangsu, in the middle of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, is rich in products and resources, providing a wealth of food materials. Jiangsu’ s deep-rooted food culture attributes to its developed water and land transportation and trade exchanges, cultural edification, and exquisite folk customs.

Boiled Salted Duck / 鹽水鴨

In Nanjing, the birthplace and capital of Chinese duck cuisine, duck is indispensable to every festive banquet. Among numerous kinds of famous dishes made with duck, boiled salted duck is the most outstanding. Autumn, when Nanjing is full of sweet-scented osmanthus fragrance, is the best time to make boiled salted duck, so it is also called “Osmanthus Duck” . The best way to enjoy boiled salted duck is cook and serve it fresh, so that the skin is white, and the meat is tender, fat but not greasy, tasting extraordinarily delicious. A plate of duck and a glass of wine represent the simple way to show hospitality and is a folk custom of Nanjing people.



Salted Pork in Jelly / 水晶肴肉

Salted Pork in Jelly is a traditional special dish popular in Zhenjiang, another city along the Yangtze River. There is a saying in Zhenjiang that “Salted Pork in Jelly is enough to replace staple food in a meal” . It is crispy and smooth, has white skin and red meat. It tastes even better when served with aromatic vinegar and shredded ginger.



Salted Pork in Jelly in Aromatic Vinegar / 肴肉配香醋

For people in Zhenjiang, vinegar is an indispensable condiment in life. Vinegar can bring up flavors of most of the meals, especially perfect matches with Zhenjiang’ s Salted Pork in Jelly. It can instantly neutralize the saltiness and grease of meat and can be served as the best partner of various delicacies.



徐海風味濃

XUHAICUISINE

Xuhai Cuisine is a local flavor in the northern part of Jiangsu. With compared to Huaiyang Cuisine, Xuhai Cuisine features fresh and salty, combining five flavors (sweetness, sourness, bitterness, heat and saltiness). They are simple and substantial, having a style of their own. It adopts a wide range of ingredients, covering various meats and seafoods. It emphasizes “Diet therapy, food as a tonic” , and it usually keeps the balance of boiling, frying and deep-frying.

Health-preserving Xuzhou Cuisine / 彭城養生

Xuzhou has played a significant role in the history of Chinese cuisine. According to legends, Peng Zu, who has been regarded as the Father of Nutrition in China, was a native of Xuzhou. Xuzhou Cuisine, which has been inherited and developed by famous chefs of many generations, is time-honored and retains the original flavor.

Xuzhou Ground Pot Chicken

徐州地鍋雞

Xuzhou, located in the junction between south and north China, has its own cuisine, covering pungent, spicy, delicious, and sweet tastes and fragrances. The Ground Pot Chicken, as the most representative local dish, mixes peppers, potatoes and chicken, which complement perfectly with pancakes baked on the inner wall of a pot.



Xuzhou Fish Balls

彭城魚丸

“Xuzhou fish balls” pays a lot of attention to the freshness and high quality of ingredients, and its cooking techniques are exquisite and meticulous. Fish balls are cooked in clear water to retain the original freshness of fish, and crushed “glass” noodles add flavor to the tender taste of the fish balls.



Fresh Seafood of Lianyungang / 海洲嘗鮮

A great variety of seafood is the feature of cuisine in Lianyungang, a coastal city in Jiangsu. Even for top chefs, the taste of seafood is always determined by the quality of ingredients. Hundreds of fishermen are working hard on the boats, only to find it hard to resist the overwhelming joy of getting fresh seafood and making them into delicious dishes for the dining table.



In the mind of fishermen of Lianyungang, there is always a treasure map of seafood changing over time. They can serve people with the most authentic taste of the sea according to different seasons. Spring’ s swimming crab, summer’ s jellyfish, hair-tail fish in autumn and Shaguang fish in winter are all delicious and extremely nourishing. The greatest respect to seafood is to present the original taste of seafood by simply boiling it.



CHARM OF JIANGSU DELICACIES

水韻美食



ENGLISH

江蘇省文化和旅遊廳
JIANGSU PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

"Water", the source of life, is the most distinctive symbol of Jiangsu' s nature and people, and of course it plays a significant role in food. Thousands of years ago, the ancestors of Jiangsu lived by the river, farmed from morning to dusk, and made good use of natural resources to turn ingredients into delicacies. Such delicacies always remind people of the past while satisfying appetite.

Besides creating the most developed economic belt along the Grand Canal, (from Beijing to Hangzhou), it also contributed to the flourishing of reputable Huaiyang Cuisine, which is famous for thousand years. In the witness of changes of cities and dynasties, the various exquisite Huaiyang dishes have stood the test of time and remind people of the days of prosperity.

Among the rivers, lakes, and sea of Jiangsu Province, lake water can be regarded as the clearest, and embodies the spirit of the place. On a gaily-painted pleasure-boat, the ancient Chinese literati drank and enjoyed meals with friends on the vast Taihu Lake, which reflects an elegant sentiment. The pleasure is overwhelming when they chat about national matters while enjoying the lake's scenery.

Away from the canal and the lakes, cities on riverbanks, and small towns by the sea, also boast delicious flavors that are exclusive to Jiangsu, such as boiled salted duck, salted pork in jelly, and a dazzling array of seafood. Nourished by water, the food and cuisine of Jiangsu Province is all-encompassing, and always bringing surprises to visitors and tourists.

運河名饌 DELICACIES NOURISHED BY THE CANAL

Thousands of years ago, people along the busy canal dissolved their perceptions of life and fusion into food, resulted in the integration of flavors and excellent cooking skills of Huaiyang Cuisine, which made it to the top of the major four cuisines in China. The delicacies nourished by the canal have been passed down from generation to generation and become an integral part of ordinary people's daily life.

Commendable Huaiyang Cuisine / 淮揚佳味

The delicious Huaiyang Cuisine attributes to the ideal ingredients produced in Jiangsu, crisscrossed by rivers, where there is suitable climate, four distinct seasons, and abundant natural resources. In addition to delicious taste, ordinary ingredients processed with care and precision to present a visual feast to diners.



Braised Pork Balls in Gravy (Shizitou, Lion's Head)

獅子頭

Seasonality and freshness are two particularly significant elements in Huaiyang Cuisine. Also, it often comes with high standards in strict requirements in ingredient selection. Ingredients of "Lion's Head", or Braised Pork Balls in Gravy, a famous dish of Huaiyang Cuisine, change over seasons. Bamboo shoots are chosen in spring, fish soup is added in summer to make the dish even more palatable, fresh crabs are used in autumn for flavor, and soybean sprouts are added in winter for mellow taste. Since Huaiyang Cuisine makes the delicate connection between seasons and dietary habits, the cooking steps are based on traditional techniques that follow the rules of nature, making it superb throughout its history.



Eel in Cloth Bag

軟兜長魚

Eel, as the ingredient of this dish, is put in a cloth bag, tied, and boiled in a stockpot with soup mixed with scallion, ginger, salt and vinegar. The two ends of the bag hang down when it is clamped by chopsticks, so it needs to be supported by a spoon. The tender and delicious eel meat is famous for its endless aftertaste.



Wensi Tofu Soup

文思豆腐羹

Nowhere is this emphasis on cutting technique more apparent than in "Wensi Tofu Soup", a famous dish of Huaiyang Cuisine. A small piece of soft tofu can be cut into 5,000 shreds before being gently put into hot soup. Tofu shreds gathering in water "bloom" like a white chrysanthemum in an amazing manner.



Braised Shredded Dried Tofu

大煮幹絲

Shredded dry tofu and shredded chicken are the main ingredients of this typical dish of Huaiyang Cuisine. The tofu can be cut into 18 slices in a neat manner, and the thickness is less than that of a matchstick. Shrimps can be added additionally to the white shredded tofu. With various toppings and seasonings, the dish is presented in beautiful color and tastes delicious.



Morning Tea Culture

/ 早茶文化

Despite of the rapid pace of life in modern times, Jiangsu people have retained the tradition of enjoying morning tea. The morning tea consists of a plate of boiled dried tofu shreds, a few steamed buns and a pot of tea, served on an old-fashioned square table for eight people and Chinese long benches. Tea by the side of ancient Grand Canal will definitely offer a sense of ceremony when people start a brand-new day.



Happiness Comes from Here

/ 塵世幸福的開始

Taizhou, Jiangsu is a city deeply influenced by the long history of morning tea culture. Regardless of season or weather, loyal diners prefer to enjoy the morning tea in a time-honored restaurant. Such a tradition has been passed on from generation to generation in Taizhou. As a matter of fact, compared with eating the food, people value more the connections between people embodied in having morning tea together.



"One tea, three pastries and the noodle" is a long-standing tradition of Taizhou morning tea. To be specific, "One tea" refers to one cup of tea plus a bowl of hot shredded dried tofu. Then "three pastries" refers to steamed buns, steamed dumplings, and Shaomai, and "the noodle" refers to fish soup noodle. Shredded dried tofu is features a refreshing taste, fish soup noodle is thick soup, and mellow taste and crab-roe bun must be fresh. If there was plenty of time, people would sit in the teahouse for the whole morning, listening to old entertainers, as they tap wood on the table and wave Chinese folding fans, to tell past stories.



Refreshing Breakfast

/ 晨間盛宴

Yangzhou morning tea is more exquisite and gorgeous, as various types of tea, snacks and dishes make it a sumptuous feast. For Yangzhou people, drinking tea with friends at morning tea stands while chatting about major events or daily household affairs is a typical lifestyle, as well as a way to find the true self.



Three-Dice Buns

三丁包子

Among the components of morning tea, various cooked wheaten foods are critical. With the marinade fully absorbed by the filling, the white and soft three-dice buns are salty, sweet, crispy, oily but not greasy.



Emerald Shaomai

翡翠燒賣

Emerald Shaomai is named after the emerald color of the skin of Shaomai, which comes from chopped Chinese cabbage leaves inside the thin and translucent wrappers. The fragrant dotted pork on the top adds a finishing touch and enriches the taste of Shaomai.

Multiple Layer Oil Cake

千层油糕

Multiple Layer Oil Cake is diamond-shaped, translucent and slightly pink, with sugar and oil being alternately layered. Its appearance is pleasing, and its taste is soft and sweet.



水鄉育佳肴 WATER TOWN DELICACIES

Suzhou cuisine is as graceful and elegant as the city Suzhou, the Oriental Venice. Delicious ingredients collected according to season, sweet fruits and vegetables with natural fragrance, and meticulous cooking techniques convey the dietary aesthetics of Suzhou cuisine, resulting in its simple and elegant flavor and fragrance.

Sweet and Sour Mandarin Fish

松鼠桂魚

Fresh mandarin fish from Taihu Lake is processed with a special cutting technique after deboning with fish skin kept intact. After being fried, the fish is golden yellow with meat turned outwards. After sweet and sour sauce is poured over with bright color, the fish's head and tail are held high, looking like a squirrel.



Fried Shrimps with Biluo Tea

碧螺虾仁

The word "Biluo" refers to Biluochun tea picked before the Qingming Festival. The tea leaves soaked in 80-degree water are put into the pot together with shrimps collected from Taihu Lake, giving a fresh and tender taste. The fishy smell of shrimps is eliminated by the slightly bitter Biluochun tea leaves, giving off an indescribable fragrance with intensive aftertaste.



Yangcheng Lake Hair Crab

阳澄湖大闸蟹

Suzhou has a long history of eating crabs, and eating hairy crabs in autumn is a perfect gustatory enjoyment. Crab roe is red and plump, and crab meat is as white as beautiful jade. Steaming is still recognized as the best way to cook crabs. The crab meat is extraordinarily delicious when dipped in a vinegar mixture and condiments such as ginger, sugar, and garlic.



水韻美食 CHARM OF JIANGSU DELICACIES

