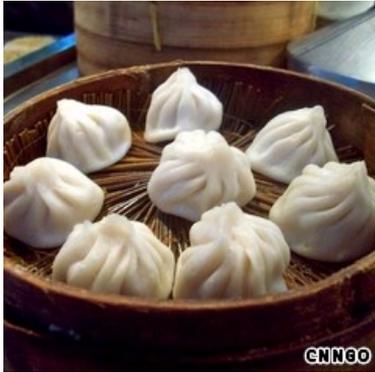




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Although Shanghai's oily, sugary and soy sauce-doused cuisine can't be heralded as the best eating on the mainland, we love our food here in Shanghai. **And, in a city that offers so many culinary options, from roadside stalls to Michelin-star restaurants, we wanted to celebrate that, with a list of the 40 foods you can find in Shanghai that we simply can't live without.**

1. Xiaolongbao (小笼包)

We just had to get this one out of the way first since no list of Shanghai's favorite foods (it was part of our 11 best Shanghai snacks list) would ever be complete without the mention of our famous soup dumpling, xiaolongbao. The dumpling, cleverly hiding its soup within its delicately pinched wrapper, has reached cult-like fanaticism in this city. Even though it burns the mouths and tongues of novice dumpling eaters (Note: you have to puncture the dumpling wrapper to let out the steam, and then slurp the soup slowly before shoveling the xiaolongbao down), we just cannot live without this Shanghai classic. We love it so much, in fact, we've even taken a few xiaolongbao tours of Shanghai.

For your own xiaolongbao tour try: Phat in Shanghai's Xiaolongbao Bike Ride

2. Di Shui Dong ribs

Listed as number 19 on our list of 50 reasons why Shanghai is the world's No. 1 city, these fall-off-the-bone ribs are as succulent as there are tender. Sweetly braised in soy sauce, these put those miniature rib appetizers to utter shame. And, without the small bones found in those ubiquitous appetizers, the meat on these solid ribs can be inhaled in a matter of seconds.

Try: Di Shui Dong, multiple locations, 2/F, 56 Maoming Nan Lu, near Changle Lu 茂名南路56号, 近长乐路2楼, +86 21 6253 2689

3. Braised eggplant (红烧茄子)

Few truly love eggplant before they come to China, but once here, almost everyone's a convert to this purple veggie. Of all the eggplant dishes offered in this city, the braised version of this hearty vegetable is by far the most savory. Stewed in shaoxing wine, soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, ginger, sugar, chilies and sometimes even pork, this Shanghai favorite has become a staple menu item at most restaurants. It boasts the perfect combo of saltiness, sweetness and savoriness — and we don't feel so guilty eating it because it's a veggie.

Try: La Gong Fu, 57 Yajiazhai Lu, near Changshou Lu 杨家宅路57号, 长寿路



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4. Grilled oysters (炒生蚝)

Shanghai is sea food foodie heaven and we have an entire street dedicated to oysters, mussels, scallops, crawfish and abalone (and for cheap!) to prove it. Every vendor on Shouning Lu has a slightly different take on

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29. Whisk chocolate with homemade marshmallows

Before Whisk, we couldn't find decent hot chocolate in Shanghai, much less hot chocolate with adorable, chubby homemade marshmallows. So although Whisk has gotten a lot of flack from neglected customers, we still wax nostalgic about those oh-so-holdable mugs and that thick chocolate soup though its become easier to get a cuppa at Hof and Charmant. Still, here's credit where credit is due.

Try: Whisk Choco Café, 1250 Huaihai Lu near Huating Lu, 淮海路1250号, 近华亭路, +86 21 54047770; for the hot chocolate new players, try Hof (30 Sinan Lu, near Huaihai Zhong Lu 思南路30号, 近淮海中路) and Charmant (1414 Huaihai Zhong Lu, near Fuxing Xi Lu 淮海中路1414号, 近复兴西路)

30. Shanghai smoked fish (熏鱼)

We already love their clothes, but another reason we love Shanghai Tang is because of their modern interpretation of the classic Shanghai liangcai (cold dish) Shanghai smoked fish, offered on their weekend brunch menu at the café. Delicately fried, the cold fish is bathed in a sweet and savory brown sauce and sprinkled with toasted sesame seeds.

Try: Shanghai Tang Cafe, 2-3/F, 333 Huangpi Nan Lu, near Taicang Lu 黄陂南路333号2-3楼, 近太仓路, +86 21 6377 3333



FLICKR/ALACHIA

Crawfish. 31. Crawfish (小龙虾)

Here we are, back at Shouning Lu for a food that Shanghailanders go crazy for in the summer: crawfish. The 35-plus degree weather is just not bearable without these weekend buckets of crawfish tossed with chili consumed alongside cold, cheap Tsingtao with lots of friends chowing down as well. Don't be scared to sit eye-to-eye with locals as you challenge them to a crawfish de-shelling battle on their own turf.

Try: Any place on Shouning Lu, but we like 17 Shouning Lu, near Xizang Lu 寿宁路17号龙虾馆.近西藏路, +86 21 6328 0098

32. Hi-Chews

So simple yet so delicious, you can buy Hi Chews — the irresistibly sweet, chewy fruit flavored candies — at almost any Shanghai convenience store. Out of the half dozen or so flavors, we cannot bring ourselves to stop chewing the peach flavor. Better than any Starburst, the peach is the perfect blend of sweetness and artificial goodness that makes us come back for more. And more.

Try: Available at Family Marts, City Shops, and Carrefours around town

33. Shanghai-style fried noodles

Shanghai cumian — a thickly cut pasta — is Shanghai's gift to the wondrous world of noodles. Served at most dumpling joints, Shanghai-style fried noodles are usually stir-fried with beef, chicken or pork (sometimes even shrimp) then cabbage and onions. As in most Shanghainese cuisine, a soy sauce-base is mandatory. Slurped up at most restaurants in the city, there is no shortage of this dish. The best, though, are found at Ming Ming Can Ting.

Try: Ming Ming Can Ting, 269 Beihai Lu, near Xizang Zhong Lu 北海路269号, 近西藏中路, +86 21 6352 5967



COURTESY MR & MRS BUND

Paul Pairet's lemon & lemon tart. 34. Paul Pairet's lemon & lemon tart

This tart is unbelievable. It is a candied lemon stuffed with a lemon sorbet, a lemon curd, and vanilla Chantilly. It's then served with lemon sable. With a single pierce of the rind, the lusciously tart and sweet filling oozes out — and the three-day process to make it has been completed. Don't even bother trying to share it, you'll end up being caught in the middle of a bitter spoon war. This is the single best dessert in the city.

Try: Mr & Mrs Bund, Bund 18, 6/Floor, 18 Zhongshan Dong Yi Lu, near Nanjing Dong Lu 中山东一路18号外滩18号6楼, 近南京东路, +86 21 6323 9898

35. Congee (粥)

There is a place you can always count on to help with a porridge craving: Dingxi Lu. Although this food street houses a variety of good eats from across China, every restaurant, whether they specialize in Cantonese, Shanghainese or any other type of cuisine, also does congee. Chaoshan Sha Guo, a must-visit spot for seafood