

Ancient China Learning Series

What's in Chinatown?

Issue No. 2 from the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden

Vancouver's Chinatown was originally known as Saltwater City and dates back as far as 1858 when the first Chinese immigrated here from California during the gold rush. Today, it is North America's second largest Chinatown after San Francisco with lots of interesting things to see and explore.



CHINATOWN EXPERIENCE: historical buildings, restaurants, apothecaries, dim sum



Walk Through History

Chinatown was home to the early Asian labourers who came to **Golden Mountain** looking for a better life. Most were men and only lived in Chinatown between jobs because they were often out of Vancouver for months at a time working at seasonal jobs, like lumbering or canning fish. When in Chinatown, they usually lived in crowded rooming houses in the Pender Street area.

Chinatown had several distinct groups

of citizens. At the top were several wealthy companies run by a few men who controlled the business life of Chinatown. Then there were the middle-class merchants, who owned and operated groceries, laundries, tailor

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Why was Vancouver's Chinatown called GOLDEN MOUNTAIN? Find the answer on page 2.

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For more information, or to obtain the other issues in the series, please contact:

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DR. SUN YAT-SEN
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shops and other small businesses. Labourers were at the bottom of the social class list. To assist their families and friends, associations, called tongs, were created based on common clan names or place of birth in China, e.g. Li Family Association. Members raised funds to construct the imposing buildings you can still see on Pender street. These associations provided social activities and social services in Chinatown.

In Chinatown today, you can see numerous historical buildings, monuments, visit a Ming Dynasty garden and explore a wide variety of traditional foods and goods.

Walk Through History

THE GOLDEN MOUNTAIN:

Golden Mountain is the name given by the Chinese to western regions of North America, particularly California, USA and British Columbia, Canada. After gold was discovered in California in 1848, thousands of Chinese came in search of a better life.



Chinatown Landmarks

1) Vancouver Chinatown Millennium Gate

The Vancouver Chinatown Millennium Society designed a physical structure to link the past and future of Chinatown.

The Millennium Gate, located on Pender street serves as a gateway to Chinatown.



2) Historical Alleys

Between 1900 and 1920, early Chinese immigrants settled in what was known as Shanghai and Canton alleys. Here one could find vibrant nightlife: opera music, shopping, and political and cultural activities. To depict the history of the alleys, a team of experts, historians and researchers constructed eight panels which can be found in Shanghai Alley.

3) Sam Kee Building

The Sam Kee Company, owned by merchant Chang Toy, dominated early trade in Chinatown. Originally, Toy owed a nine-metre lot on this site, but most of it was appropriated by the City in 1912 in order to widen Pender Street. Now at only 1.8 meters wide, this building has been recognized by *Ripley's Believe It or Not* as the world's narrowest building.

4) Chin Wing Chun Society

One of the various "association" buildings in Chinatown, this building was constructed in 1925 as headquarters for a surname association. It demonstrates the unique blending of influences in Chinatown's architecture which includes the recessed balconies common in tropical southern China along with a more classical Western crowning pediment and columns.

5) Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden

As the first Ming Dynasty Scholar's Garden built outside of China, the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden is an architectural maze of walls within walls with an interplay of various-sized courtyards within one another, complemented by an exquisite display of pavilions, halls, bridges and covered galleries.

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Chinatown Landmarks

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS A WUNTUN?

wuntun (wonton): Chinese dumpling filled with meat or seafood. They are usually boiled and served in soup or sometimes deep-fried.

6) Chinese Cultural Centre Museum and Archives

The Chinese Cultural Centre Museum and Archives hold many year-round programmes, exhibits and events.

7) Dollar Meat Store

The Dollar Meat Store specializes in curing meat and making Chinese traditional sausage. This market's products have been a staple in Chinatown for over 3 decades.

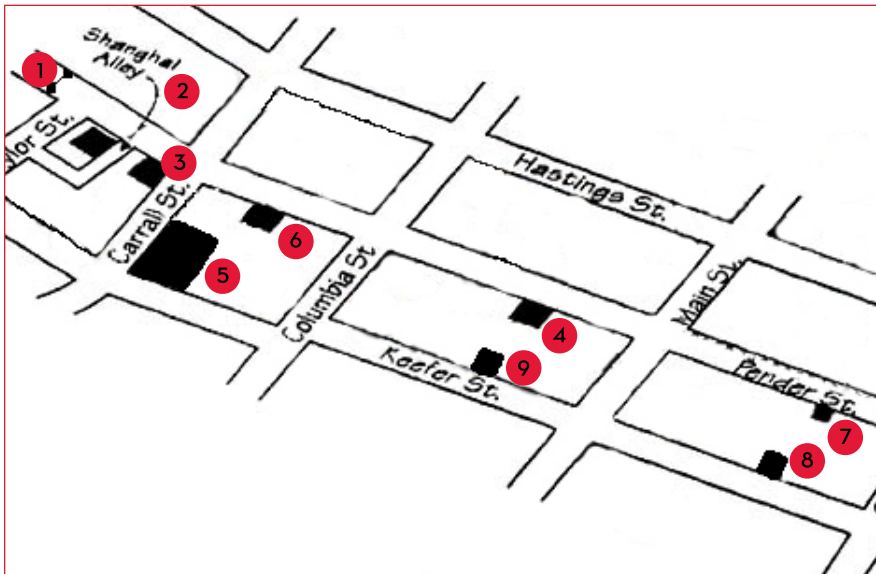
8) Hon's Wun Tun House Ltd.

Hon's Restaurant has been in operation for over 35 years and is a well-known wontun and noodle restaurant in Vancouver.

9) New Town Bakery & Restaurant

Another hallmark of Chinatown, this restaurant mixes dim sum with their famous steamed buns. Tastes range from salty to sweet, from spicy to plain and from meaty to vegetarian. Try their apple tarts!

DIM SUM: Dim Sum is best explained as a breakfast/lunch meal consisting of a variety of steamed dishes and other goodies such as pastry-type items, barbecued meat dishes, buns and dumplings. There is no menu; the food is served in bamboo steamers and ordered off carts that are pushed through the dining room.



What are THOSE?

Strolling through Chinatown can be a new and exciting adventure! There are many grocers and apothecaries to explore, each with a wide array of colourful items with interesting scents and textures. Try finding some of these in Chinatown:

Ginseng: Ginseng has been in use for over two thousand years. Its properties include helping to help boost energy, reduce stress and increase endurance.

Cinnamon: are twigs and bark from large tropical trees. Cinnamon is known to warm the body, invigorate circulation, harmonize the energy of the upper and lower body and reduce allergies.

Ginger: is a spicy herb with many uses. It is beneficial in aiding digestion, neutralizing poisons in food, ventilating the lungs, warming the circulation to the limbs, improving heart conditions and diarrhea. Many herbalists also use ginger to treat coughs and nausea.

Lychee: a fruit covered with a rough, brown rind. When peeled the pearl-coloured fruit is very sweet and juicy.

Gai Lan: also known as Chinese broccoli is a slightly bitter leaf vegetable featuring thick,



Dried plants and animals are used in traditional Chinese medicine. Here you can see dried lingzhi snake, turtle, luo han guo (monk's fruit) and ginseng.

flat, glossy blue-green leaves with thick stems and a small number of tiny flower heads similar to those of broccoli.

Dragon Fruit: a very beautiful fruit with a dark red rind covered in scales.



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