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# Stay

- To get a great view of the Dragon's Gate, request a room facing Bush Street at Hotel Triton (342 Grant Ave.). From \$199; hoteltriton.com
- San Francisco's famous cable cars stop at the entrance to the Chancellor Hotel (433 Powell St.), and it's a two-stop ride to Chinatown. Guests get to choose from a dozen special pillows, including a NASA-designed memory-foam cushion and one that hooks up to your MP3 player. From \$129; chancellorhotel.com
- Tony Bennett first sang "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" at the Fairmont San Francisco (950 Mason St.) in 1961, and Grammy and Tony nominees still stop by to perform in the Venetian Room. From \$499; fairmont.com





# Visit

- San Francisco's Chinese New Year parade has been a tradition for more than 150 years. The one on February 20 will feature a 268-foot Golden Dragon (100 people carry it!), costumed lion dancers and more than a half million firecrackers.
- Down the oldest alley in San Francisco, The Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory (56 Ross Alley) churns out 15,000 cookies a day. Taking a picture of the operation will set you back 50 cents—a courtesy fee for the free warm cookies you're offered upon entering. On your way out, you can buy a bag of freshly folded ones.
- Find your fortune (plus sweeping views of the city) at Tin How Temple (125 Waverly Pl.). Volunteers practice the ancient art of kau cim fortune-telling, which involves asking a question ("Will I get that promotion?"), shaking a jar of numbered sticks and interpreting a Chinese poem.
- The chrysanthemum flower and goji berries at the century-old Chinese apothecary Great China Herb Company (857 Washington St.) will make you look like you got a great night's sleepeven if you didn't.

## Check out the Chinatowns in these four other cities.

## New York

New York City has the largest Chinese population in the United States, and Chinatown in lower Manhattan always crackles with energy—especially during the Lunar New Year celebration.

Soup dumplings, or xiao long bao, are a cold-weather staple for Chinatown regulars, and eating them is practically an art form (take a bite, quickly slurp). At Shanghai Cafe Deluxe (100 Mott St.), you can watch nimble-fingered chefs fill and fold the dumplings.

#### VISIT

of chopsticks at Manhattan's Yunhong Chopsticks (50 Mott St.). More than 200 cool sets are for sale, including ones honoring the Year of the Monkey. Buy some as gifts—giving away chopsticks is said to spread happiness.

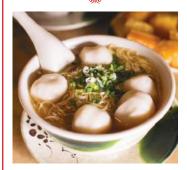
It's not easy to select a pair



### STAY

Nomo SoHo (9 Crosby St.) is in the heart of the SoHo shopping district, adjacent to Chinatown. and the nod to Chinese culture is subtle but chic. The cocktail lounge downstairs has a feng shui layout, including a triangular notch in the bar to promote the flow of good energy. From \$270; nomosoho.com

To see the Chinese influence in Seattle's Chinatown-International District, you just need to look up. You'll notice traditional curved-tiled roofs and fiberglass dragons wrapped around poles. Many of the restaurants in the area are still owned and operated by the same families who have run them for decades.



The neon signs in the windows of Mike's Noodle House (418 Maynard Ave. South) read "congee" and "noodle"—and that's all you need to know when ordering: For breakfast, try the congee (rice porridge) with a side of youtiao (sort of like China's churro); later in the day, try a bowl of super-thin egg noodles and wontons.

### VISIT

Martial arts legend Bruce Lee lived in Seattle, and the Wing Luke Museum (719 South King St.) offers a docent-led walking tour with stops at his practice dojo and samples of his favorite dishes at a local restaurant.

### **STAY** Hotel Monaco Seattle

(1101 Fourth Ave.) hosts a wine tasting every evening, and the rooms come equipped with yoga mats and—upon request a pet goldfish. From \$189; monaco-seattle.com

# Shicago

Chicago's Chinatown is more than 100 years old—and still growing. In the past decade, the population of Chinese immigrants has increased nearly 25 percent. The neighborhood reflects this mix of old and new with local restaurants that date back decades and with more recent projects, like the restored Pui Tak community center.

#### EAT

Go 4 Food (212 West 23rd St.) sells the crowd-pleasers (chow fun, mapo tofu), but the spot is best known for fusion dishes like bao tacos. The restaurant is BYOB, so swing by China Place Liquor City (2105 South China Pl.) for a bottle of baijiu: The clear liquor, distilled from sorghum, is nicknamed "firewater"—it's about 110 proof.

### VISIT

Sign up for a **Chinese New Year Dumpling Dinner** (chicagocci .com) hosted by the Chicago Chinese Cultural Institute and you'll learn about the history of dumplings—then you'll mix, fold and steam your own batch.



The James (55 East Ontario St.). a short "L" ride from Chinatown. is what happens when a museum and a hotel collide. A steady rotation of pieces from a local gallery is on display in the lobby, and quests with rooms facing the inner courtyard are treated to pictograph projections every evening. From \$199; jameshotels.com

## Honolulu

Hawaii has been home to Asian immigrants for more than 150 years, and today Honolulu's Chinatown is the best place to experience the melding of Chinese and Pacific Island cultures.

#### EAT

Traditional Cantonese cha siu bao (pork buns) are steamed, but in Hawaii vou'll find baked versions called manapua (Hawaiian for "delicious pork thing"). Try either classic barbecue pork or more modern takes, like coconut and black sugar, at Royal Kitchen (100 North Beretania St.).



### VISIT

On the first Friday evening of every month, Chinatown turns into a giant block party. Art galleries keep their doors open until 9 p.m., and bands play on the street. Start at the Hawai'i State Art Museum (250 South Hotel St.), where you can see works from local Chinese-American artists,

like Hon-Chew Hee's 20-foot

### STAY

steel mural.

Waikiki Beach is about 20 minutes south of Chinatown, and The Modern Honolulu (1775 Ala Moana Blvd.) is a surfer's paradise. It's steps from the beach, and the rooms come stocked with sarongs to use during your stay. From \$309; themodernhonolulu.com



