

# Top 10 Chinatowns around the World

Chinatowns are a common feature of major cities around the world. These bustling neighborhoods vary considerably in size from several streets to small towns within a city, and form a melting pot for Chinese, local and other cultures. They also provide great destinations where you can visit and enjoy colorful festivals, Lunar New Year parades, lion dances, as well as sumptuous Chinese delicacies.

The following is an overview of arguably the 10 best Chinatowns in the world.

## San Francisco, United States

San Francisco is home to one of the oldest Chinatowns in the western world. It starts from the junction of Bush Street and Grant Avenue – its southern gateway, beyond which you will encounter everything Chinese, including dragon–entwined lamp posts, street signs, more than 300 restaurants serving Chinese cuisine, and countless shops selling Chinese fabrics, porcelain, herbal medicine and many other items.



## London, UK

London prides itself of being home to one of the largest Chinatowns in Europe. This is not surprising given the long, but controversial ties between this city and China. Although the early London's Chinatown was located in the East End, where the Chinese traders and sailors had originally settled, today it is found in the busy city center, between Convent Garden, Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Square, and Soho. Here you can sample different Chinese teahouses, restaurants, supermarkets, or visit a traditional Chinese doctor. You would also not want to miss its exciting Lunar New Year celebrations that attract more than 300,000 tourists every year.

## Melbourne, Australia

Like San Francisco, Melbourne has one of the oldest Chinese communities. Its Chinatown is located in and around Spring Streets, Swanston and Little Bourke. This place is littered with many groceries, medicine shops, and restaurants that serve multiple cuisines, including Australian, Japanese, Vietnamese, Malaysian and Thai.



### **Manila, Philippines**

Founded in 1590s as a settlement for Catholic Chinese, the Chinatown in Manila Binondo is actually the oldest one in the world. It has a history of repression, and its location across the river from the walled city of Intramuros was positioned to make it more convenient for its colonial Spanish rulers to monitor the city's migrant subjects. But today, it is a proud part of Manila where you can enjoy the best Chinese street food in the city. If you are a Catholic, don't forget to visit the famous Binondo Church to see the miraculous Santo Cristo de Langos.

### **Johannesburg, South Africa**

Johannesburg has the largest Chinese community in Africa, and this explains the presence of two Chinatowns. The oldest is located downtown around the historic Commissioner Street. Although this place was full of bustling restaurants, shops and community centers, many of its residents were forced out in the 1990s by the surging crime rates. The new Chinatown that has emerged in Cyrildene an eastern suburb of Johannesburg has reinvigorated the old spirit with its many eateries and stores run by recent immigrants. Aside from tasty food and shopping, you can experience the exciting dragon dances and fireworks that are a common feature in Chinese New Year celebrations.

### **New York City, USA**

New York's Chinatown is allegedly the largest in the entire United States, and has the largest concentration of Chinese settlements in the Western world. The availability of countless booming restaurants, shops, as well as fruit and fish markets means that you can't be short of things to do and places to visit.

### **Vancouver, Canada**

Vancouver's Chinatown is the third largest in North America. It is divided into two sections – the merchandise section and the market section. In both of them, you can get to sample its many food stalls, restaurants, and shops that sell a wide selection of imported goods at highly discounted prices, including fashion accessories, authentic Chinese art, teapots, rugs, woven baskets and silk and much more.



### **Havana, Cuba**

Also referred to as Barrio Chino, Havana's Chinatown used to be the largest in the United States. But the aftermath of Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution saw its 50,000 population dwindle to 150. However, you can still enjoy some mouth-watering Chinese delicacies in this area during your visit.

### **Bangkok, Thailand**

Bangkok's Chinatown is one of the most fascinating and energetic places you can visit while in the city. The main attraction of this relatively low-rise neighborhood is street food. But you can take time to sample its religious and cultural landmarks as well, or visit its back-alley markets to meet lively characters and hear their unending stories.

### **Honolulu, Hawaii**

Honolulu is one of the most beautiful places you can ever visit. Its Chinatown doesn't disappoint. It is full of many historic and colorful restored buildings that are home to great restaurants, food stores and markets that are always bursting with lots of fresh produce.

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