

# QUIGDAO - GETTING READY FOR THE OLYMPICS



The Olympic Games in China have been making the headlines of most newspapers all over the planet. While there are very ambivalent feelings about China organizing the Olympics, the final stage of the constructions and preparations is taking place right now. Qingdao is one of the places which the Chinese are truly proud of - and for a good reason. It is set to host the 2008 Olympic Sailing regatta. However, this event is not the only one to be held here; in fact, the 13th Paralympic Games will also be held here soon after. The amazing Qingdao International Marina Olympic Sailing Center is almost finished. And many who have visited it agree that it is an extraordinary place.

Qingdao is located on the southern coastline of the Shandong Peninsula. It is a picturesque city with nearly 7, 5 million inhabitants. The climate is ideal for the purposes of the games, and the setting is gorgeous featuring a charming combination of Yellow Sea and impressive mountains. Often, it is referred to as the "Eastern Switzerland".

As the Paralympics are also scheduled to be organized here, a great number of arrangements had to be made in order to meet the given standards. All the facilities for the disabled have been tested with impressive results. In fact, many hope that once the games are over, Qingdao may serve as a model city of sports for the disabled.

The language differences are another aspect that local authorities are working on. A call center is about to be established, with some 60 volunteers who are ready to provide the incoming tourists with all necessary information on travel routes, events schedule, assistance and directions anytime. The call center is still seeking out personnel as speakers of more languages are still needed. The organizers are very happy with the progress and hopefully, both the regatta and the Paralympics will turn out to be a great success.

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