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DaDong's bar which features several

The Peking Duck Shines at Manhattan's DaDong

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Peking Duck has had a serious revamp, and it's worth every penny

Conveniently located adjacent to Bryant Park, DaDong is a [New York City](#) jewel of international dining that brings fresh and new flavors to an ever-growing global culinary scene.

The restaurant is the first branch outside China for the highly regarded Beijing company. Named for the Beijing-born [head chef, owner, and founder Dong Zhenxiang](#), the restaurant offers an authentic yet innovative take on Chinese cooking. After spending more than 35 years cultivating his menu, the chef describes his food as an “artistic conception of Chinese cuisine,” also known as DaDong YiJing cuisine.

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A chic and modern exterior provides makes a perfect introduction for the restaurant's serene interior atmosphere, complimented by the open floor layout inside. Visitors are quickly transported from the hustle and bustle of midtown Manhattan and into Dong's curated world.

The most memorable dish was the "SuBuNi" roast duck served with sugar, pancakes, crispy sesame buns, and "special" sauces. The DaDong sauce had a smooth, robust, smoky flavor that put regular ol' teriyaki sauce to shame, making the duck breast juicy enough to create a sensation of melting into the delicately thin pancake. I should have been forewarned, as these were dangerously small for something so delicious and I found myself scarfing down six before my main course even arrived.

In between the [appetizers](#) and entrée — because any practiced eater knows that there is no such thing as "too full" or "saving room" when surrounded by foods one can most likely not pronounce — the table was served [wagyu beef](#) fried rice that smelled like a Chinese street market on steroids. The beef fried rice had many complex flavors from the meat and seasonings that were all absorbed into the starch from the rice, and the dish was surprisingly light for something listed on the menu as "fried."

The cold avocado noodles perplexed me with the texture of fine pasta. They were laid over a surprisingly spicy but thin [Sichuan](#) sauce and topped with, of course, edible flowers.

Just when we thought our pants were about to burst open, the main courses arrived. The slow-cooked lobster with saffron rice, which I was delighted to order, would seem out of sync with the theme of the restaurant if it were not for the garnish of balsamic pearls, frozen solid from liquid nitrogen. The pearls were salty enough to tie this dish into the thematic menu. And of course, one could not call oneself a DaDong connoisseur without tasting the song shu crispy whole fish. The fish itself is a spectacle with the head and the tail still attached, flash-fried, and served with pine nuts in an upgraded sweet and sour sauce. The sauce is sticky but not greasy, something refreshing for Chinese food in New York City.

A noteworthy meal would not be complete without some light dessert to follow a line of hearty proteins. The perfect desserts to serve such a purpose were the traditional dried tangerine peel ice cream, and the cookies with "li guang" [apricot jam](#). The ice cream was tangy, light and refreshing, served with cookies that resembled something close to British shortbread.

Overall, DaDong provides a creative and whimsical dining experience to any adventurous eater looking for a fresh take on traditional Chinese food, and the staff was helpful and attentive throughout the entirety of the night. As is the sign of any wonderful dining experience, I left as a self-proclaimed Chinese food aficionado and with my palate excited for more.

Though it only opened in December, DaDong is staking a claim as perhaps the best Chinese restaurant in New York City, and by extension New York state. To find out which restaurant The Daily Meal chose for 2017, read about the [best Chinese restaurants in every state](#).



DaDong's second floor dining room



from left: Seared Wagyu beef with preserved Sichuan vegetables, slow-cooked lobster with saffron rice



DaDong's signature dish "Song Shu" crispy whole fish