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Priceless Pork Belly



SEE IT. EAT IT. MAKE IT.

“MEAT-SHAPED STONE” STARS IN SUMPTIOUS SUMMER AT ASIAN ART MUSEUM

Legendary “Priceless Pork Belly” inspires art-lovers and foodies from around the Bay Area, with museum fun on-site and more than a dozen eateries across San Francisco offering their take on this classic crowd-pleaser



SAN FRANCISCO, MAY 11, 2016 — An icon in its hometown, the celebrated “**meat-shaped stone**” will be traveling to the U.S. for the first time as a highlight of the Asian Art Museum’s summer blockbuster, *Emperors’ Treasures: Chinese Art from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*.

On view June 17 to Sept. 18, the stone is actually a hunk of jasper carved and dyed to resemble a portion of **braised pork belly** fresh from the pot. It was created nearly 200 years ago by an anonymous Qing dynasty artist working for an emperor in the Forbidden City.

“The meat-shaped stone exemplifies how the enduring appeal of traditional Chinese cooking has long inspired devotion,” says Asian Art Museum Director, Jay Xu. “It underscores the significance of both food and art in Chinese culture. And at the Asian Art Museum, we believe that food — just like art — is a beautiful way to share culture.”

SEE IT.

When on view in Japan in 2014, the stone was seen by an average of 6,000 people a day and generated a mini-boom in *dongpo rou*, the classic dish it closely resembles. Noted chef, author and TV foodie Anthony Bourdain even called the artwork, “the pork of my dreams” when he first encountered it.

In addition to the stone, audiences at the Asian Art Museum will enjoy a once-in-a-generation peek into the private collections of the Chinese imperial family, from exquisite

Meat-shaped stone. Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Stone: jasper; stand: gold. *National Palace Museum, Taipei*, Guza 000178 Lü-413. Photograph © National Palace Museum, Taipei.

MORE

jades, to calligraphy, paintings and porcelains. While these treasures can't be photographed in the museum galleries, audiences can visit our special photo booth and pose with an exact replica of the meat-shaped stone. Selfie-masters and memory-makers alike can share their pork passion on social media with **#PricelessPorkBelly**.

EAT IT.

Join the museum for a **month-long pork-fest**: from June 17–July 18, more than a dozen San Francisco chefs, artists in their own right, will feature signature pork belly dishes inspired by the meat-shaped stone in their restaurants, including Brandon Jew of Mister Jiu's, Danny Bowien of Mission Chinese, and Michelle Mah of The Slanted Door.

Has all the meat-shaped stone mania left you with a serious craving? We've got you covered. *Dongpo rou* will also be available at the museum's Cafe Asia throughout the *Emperors' Treasures* exhibition. Chef Melinda Quirino seasons the pork with soy sauce, rice wine, sugar, ginger and other spices for a mouthwatering blend of sweet and savory, then braises it for over two hours to achieve the signature succulent texture. Feast your eyes on the art, then enjoy an actual feast!

Two of the Asian Art Museum's popular **Thursday evening programs** will also feature innovative pork dishes prepared by local chefs:

Tasting Menu: The Chairman

Thursday, June 23, 6:30–9 PM

\$15, includes access to *Emperors' Treasures*, \$5 (for members)

Join The Chairman co-owner Kevin Kiwata and chef Curtis Lam as they discuss the idea behind the popular food truck chain and restaurant, and the collaborative process of creating their delicious bao menu. Get a taste of the creativity and business smarts that came together to build the successful brand, then sample a bite of bao. Part of the museum's new *Tasting Menu* series.

PORK

Thursday, July 7, 6–9 PM

\$15, includes access to *Emperors' Treasures*, \$5 (for members)

In honor of the U.S. debut of the meat-shaped stone," the museum presents PORK, a tribute to both the masterpiece and *dongpo rou*. Jamie Chu, curatorial project assistant, will introduce the poetic history of the pork dish and the inspiration behind the artwork. Exciting new interpretations of *dongpo rou* will be prepared by four local foodie innovators, including The Chairman and Mariko Grady, founder of Aedan Fermented, which produces traditional Japanese fermented foods. After they present their lip-smacking interpretations of *dongpo rou*, you can **grab a "pork passport"** and sample each dish (while supplies last). The night also includes music by DJ Umami, a cash bar and a special food-themed tour of *Emperors' Treasures*.

MAKE IT.

Looking for takeout? Bring this tasty treasure home with our soon to be available handy **step-by-step guide** and video to preparing *dongpo rou*. All you'll need are a few ingredients, available at most Asian grocery stores, and cooking supplies hiding around the kitchen. Be advised: The process is time-consuming — you should budget about four hours from start to finish. But the juicy, tender, sweet-and-savory pork belly is worth every minute you'll spend — trust us.

After all, **"San Francisco is a town where food is the common language!"** says Xu.

ABOUT THE ASIAN ART MUSEUM

The Asian Art Museum—Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture is one of San Francisco's premier arts institutions and home to a world-renowned collection of more than 18,000 Asian art treasures from throughout Asia spanning 6,000 years of history. Through rich art experiences, centered on historic and contemporary artworks, the Asian Art Museum unlocks the past for visitors, bringing it to life while serving as a catalyst for new art, new creativity and new thinking.

Hours: The museum is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 AM to 5 PM. Hours are extended on Thursdays until 9 PM from March 17 through September 29, 2016. Closed Mondays, as well as New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

Emperors' Treasures exhibition admission: FREE for museum members and children (12 & under). On weekdays, \$20 for adults and \$15 for seniors (65 & over), youth (13–17) and college students (with ID). On weekends, \$30 for adults and \$25 for seniors (65 & over), youth (13–17) and college students (with ID). On Target First Free Sundays, admission is \$10.

General Admission: FREE for museum members, \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors (65+), college students with ID, and youths (13–17). FREE for children under 12 and SFUSD students with ID. General admission on Thursdays after 5 PM is \$5 for all visitors (except those under 12, SFUSD students, and museum members, who are always admitted FREE). General admission is FREE to all on Target First Free Sundays (the first Sunday of every month).

Don't miss a moment: www.asianart.org/pork #AsianArtMuseum #PricelessPorkBelly

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