



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **AAPI MONTH IN CLEVELAND: THE HISTORY, TRADITIONS & TASTES**

*Destination Cleveland encourages residents to broaden their horizons as they celebrate Cleveland's AAPI community*

**CLEVELAND** (May 5, 2022) – When it comes to the contributions to Cleveland by residents of Asian and Pacific Islander (AAPI) descent, the AsiaTown district is only the beginning. The community, which first settled here in the 1860s, is a meaningful and important part of Cleveland's rich diversity and history. In honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Destination Cleveland encourages residents to get out and experience the history, local eateries and traditions that represent AAPI heritage here in Cleveland.

**HEALTH & SAFETY ALERT:** *Safety protocols vary by venue and, in some cases, by event at venues. Residents are encouraged to review both venue and event-specific protocols before arriving at an event.*

### **IMMERSED IN HISTORY**

Locals are encouraged to take a deeper dive into the history of the AAPI community; gaining a greater understanding encourages celebration of the culture all year long.

#### **AsiaTown Tours**

Local history buffs or residents with a curious streak can experience the decades of history within Cleveland's AsiaTown through an [AsiaTown Walking Tour](#), which covers about two miles of the district with stops at some of the area's businesses. Or, load up the car for a [driving tour](#) through the area and a closer look at Cleveland's first Chinese community, courtesy of Western Reserve Historical Society.

#### **Cleveland Cultural Gardens**

The Cleveland Cultural Gardens give residents a first-hand look at the history and horticulture of the many ethnicities that make Cleveland a cultural melting pot. The [Chinese Garden](#), a gift from the city of Taipei and modeled after the Chinese Imperial Palace in Beijing, features two dragons and a statue of Confucius. In the [Indian Garden](#), a statue of Mahatma Gandhi is surrounded by six pillars depicting different aspects of Indian heritage. The [Vietnamese Garden](#), celebrating the country's 4,000-year-old culture, features a statue of "Our Lady," carved by artists in Vietnam, along with a small bamboo garden.

- *Cleveland Cultural Gardens: Located along East Boulevard and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive*

### **EXPERIENCE THE CULTURE**

Whether it's taking time to view intricate art and artifacts, learning a cultural dance or taking part in the annual celebration of Cleveland's Asian heritage, there's a number of unique ways for residents to experience the rich culture and traditions of the AAPI community.

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### **Cleveland Museum of Art**

AAPI month is the perfect time for Clevelanders to pay a visit to the always free [Cleveland Museum of Art](#), where they'll find three beautiful celebrations of Asian culture on display. Paintings, prints and decorative arts from mid-1700s and 1800s Japan make up [Japan's Floating World](#), while scenes of battles and portraits of soldiers can be viewed in the [Martial Art of India](#) exhibit. And, modern art is front and center as part of [Creating Urgency: Modern and Contemporary Korean Art](#).

- *Cleveland Museum of Art; 11150 East Blvd., Cleveland*
- *Hours: Tuesdays-Thursdays and Saturdays-Sundays: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Fridays: 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Closed Mondays*

### **Pacific Paradise Hula Classes**

Clevelanders of all ages looking for a unique way to experience Pacific Island culture can find it thanks to [Pacific Parade Entertainment](#). This local hula, Tahitian and Polynesian dance group performs throughout the area and also offers hula and dance lessons. Adults and children will learn Hawaiian hula and Tahitian dance techniques in weekly classes offered at Cleveland Dance Center in Strongsville.

- *Classes (\$35 a month) offered on Fridays and Sundays*
- *More information and full class schedule available [online](#)*

### **Cleveland Asian Festival**

Taking place in the heart of the AsiaTown district, the [Cleveland Asian Festival](#) is a top choice for Clevelanders hoping to experience and celebrate local Asian culture. The outdoor event includes two days of live shows and cultural performances – including the [Kwan Family Lion Dance](#) – as well as martial arts demonstrations, an assortment of cultural food and drink, a World Marketplace vendor fair and plenty of family-friendly activities. This year's event also features an Asian Pop dance competition and "Colors of Asia" fashion show.

- *May 21-22, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.*
- *East 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Payne Avenue, Cleveland*

### **ENJOY THE CUISINE**

The flavors of the local Asian community extend well beyond AsiaTown. With a variety of neighborhood favorites, stops to satisfy any sweet tooth and grocery stores to help bring a taste of the cuisine home, there's a wide array of choices to tempt Clevelanders' taste buds.

### **AsiaTown favorites**

For Clevelanders looking to experience many Asian food styles in one area, AsiaTown is the ideal choice. Foodies can indulge in dim sum to their heart's content at [Li Wah](#), which offers a rotation of dim sum dishes like steamed buns and dumplings, along with authentic Chinese dishes and fresh seafood, 365 days a year. Soup lovers don't want to skip [Superior Phở](#), which offers up award-winning bowls of the Vietnamese specialty and classic Bánh Mì sandwiches. Or, for a slightly different soup experience, order the soup dumplings at [LJ Shanghai](#).

### Neighborhood picks

While AsiaTown is the epicenter of Asian culture in Cleveland, authentic Asian dishes can be found in many of Cleveland's neighborhoods and suburbs as well. A visit to [Himalayan Restaurant](#) gives Clevelanders a taste of Nepali and Indian food. The West Park restaurant offers a lunch buffet during the week and a full menu, including many vegetarian options. In Ohio City, [Phnom Penh](#) offers Cambodian and Vietnamese cuisine and allows diners to BYOB. A short distance away, [Banana Blossom Thai Cuisine](#) offers a large menu including lunch specials and build-your-own curries. And, in Lakewood, diners can get a taste of Singapore at [Dang Good Foods](#) or indulge in some Bangkok Street Food at [Thai Thai](#).

### Satisfy a sweet tooth

For the food lover looking for a little something sweet, Cleveland's Asian community delivers in a big – and unique – way. Hong Kong's street food scene is on display at [Ball Ball Waffle](#), which offers authentic bubble waffles, each made up of a number of round balls that are picked off and eaten one by one. The waffles are topped with chocolate, peanut butter, Oreos or bananas. Fruity and sweet desserts are on the menu at the newly opened [Mango Mango](#), offering everything from classic Asian desserts and cakes to traditional Hong Kong sweet soups and smoothies. At [KoKo Bakery](#)'s two locations in AsiaTown and Coventry, steamed sweet buns are the specialty, along with other desserts like Japanese style cheesecake and crepes, all sure to satisfy the sweetest of sweet teeth.

### Take the flavors home

Foodies hoping to bring a taste of AsiaTown to their own kitchen have no shortage of options. The impressive Asia Food Co. in [Asian Town Center](#) offers products imported from all over Asia, along with a fresh seafood market and roasted duck prepared fresh each day. At [Tink Holl Market](#), home cooks can find all the ingredients plus the cookware needed to make an authentic Asian meal. Or, a stop at [Park to Shop](#) in Asia Plaza provides a selection of fresh produce and meats, Asian snack foods and all the items needed to create an Asian hot pot experience at home. While there, be sure to check out some of the gift shops and retailers located in the plaza.

DON'T FORGET: Destination Cleveland's Concierge Team is available to help residents and their visiting family and friends explore the region. Contact the team via email ([cleconcierge@destinationcle.org](mailto:cleconcierge@destinationcle.org)), live chat at [thisiscleveland.com](https://thisiscleveland.com), or stop at the Cleveland Visitors Center (334 Euclid Ave., Cleveland) Tues. - Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m. for planning assistance.

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**ABOUT DESTINATION CLEVELAND:** *Destination Cleveland is Cleveland's destination marketing and management organization. This private, non-profit organization's mission is to drive economic impact and stimulate community vitality for Greater Cleveland through leisure and business travel. In 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic reduced visitation by 30 percent, with 13.8 million visits occurring. Prior to the pandemic, Cleveland hosted 19.6 million visits annually, with the County experiencing annual visitation increases that surpassed the domestic travel growth rate for nine consecutive years. For more information, visit [www.thisiscleveland.com](https://www.thisiscleveland.com).*