



The Journal



8 recipes to make right now before summer ends...Say it isn't so



Universal Beijing Resort Draws Sold-Out Crowds on Grand Opening Day

Beijing China October 1st, 2021 By Rebecca Davis;
The Universal Beijing Resort finally had its grand opening Monday, the culmination of a 20-year wait and further pandemic-related delays.

The park has proved a big hit with Chinese consumers so far. Tickets for Monday's opening were sold out in minutes, quickly followed by tickets for the week-long National Day holiday coming up on Oct. 1, with demand so strong that it crashed the site.

The opening gives the Chinese capital a U.S.-branded park of its own to compete with the Disneylands in Shanghai and Hong Kong. It is the fifth Universal theme park globally, the third park in Asia and first in China.

The multibillion-dollar resort has had a long journey from conception to approval to reality. It was first conceived two decades ago in 2001 and approved by Chinese authorities back in 2014. Construction began in the summer of 2018 and was completed last year. Stress tests began this past June and trial operations began on Sept. 1. The Sept. 20 formal open hits amid the country's Mid-Autumn Festival holiday running from Sept. 19 to 21.



Light show at the Universal Studio Beijing

The resort is a joint venture with 70% owned by state-owned enterprise Beijing Shouhuan Cultural Tourism Investment and 30% owned by Comcast Corp's Universal Parks and Resorts.

Oscartek Display cases in 26 locations



The park is located in Tongzhou, an eastern, less glitzy district of Beijing that the government has pushed hard to develop in recent years. Yang Lei, the deputy chief of that district, said that it ultimately cost more than \$5.4 billion (RMB35 billion) to build. The official Xinhua news agency declared that its construction “displays the strength of China’s manufacturing industry.”

The resort is expected to welcome between 10 and 12 million visitors a year and generate annual revenues of more than \$1.55 billion (RMB10 billion), according to the vice general manager of Beijing Tourism Group Yu Xuezhong, Xinhua said.

It features seven themed lands, including Minion Land, Jurassic World Isla Nublar, Transformers Metrobase and the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, a particularly popular section given China’s many Potterheads. In a world first, there is also a new Kung Fu Panda Land of Awesomeness currently unique to Beijing.

The full resort area consists of the theme park, a commercial CityWalk and two hotels. There is also an enormous cinema with 2,000 seats across 11 screening halls that boasts the largest Imax screen in the capital.

Universal ticket prices range from \$65 (RMB418) for a single day fare in the low season to \$116 (RMB748) at peak periods. That makes the cheapest ticket comparable but a hair above Shanghai Disney’s lowest adult ticket at \$62 (RMB399).

A promotional video kicking off the Universal resort’s opening featured soundbites from top filmmakers and stars from both sides of the Pacific.

Highlighted were directors Steven Spielberg and Zhang Yimou, pictured walking together side by side. The former emphasized how “world-renowned filmmakers” helped make the park “as authentic as possible,” while the latter opined in Chinese: “There are indeed many theme parts around the world, but only Universal Studios Resort takes film alone as its subject. This is a distinguishing feature that I particularly like.”

Actor Li Bingbing (“Transformers: Age of Extinction”) encouraged visitors to come experience a park similar to those abroad but with “more Chinese characteristics and elements,” while Huang Lei, the Chinese voice of Po in “Kung Fu Panda 3,” spoke of how he will “definitely bring [his] kid here.”

“Detective Chinatown” franchise superstar Liu Haoran said he felt “very proud that such a wonderful theme park has been built in Beijing, and in China.”

The attestations seem to emanate from a period before the current nadir of U.S.-China relations and harken back to a more cooperative time between Hollywood and Beijing when co-production dreams bloomed and American blockbusters entered the China market with little drama.

Indeed, the Universal resort was touted by China's Global Times newspaper earlier this week as a symbol of how China is not actually awash in as much of what it called "pervading anti-U.S. nationalism" as some might think.

Describing the enthusiasm for the park on local social media, the article stated: "This is a rare time in a long while when an America-themed topic has attracted such obvious and widespread praise in China."

8 recipes to make right now before summer ends...Say it isn't so

By Ronnie Koenig

Summer produce season is almost over so now's the time to make one last pass at the grocery store or farmers market to stock up.



"This is the best time to cook up your favorite fruits and veggies on the grill, enjoy a refreshing summer salad and blend up frozen drinks and smoothies," Erin Palinski-Wade, RD, author of "2 Day Diabetes Diet" told TODAY Food. "You can even use end-of-season fresh produce to make delicious homemade popsicles that cool you off while packing in the nutrition."

Palinski-Wade said that watermelon should be at the top of your shopping list.

"Watermelon will be in season for a few more weeks. Take advantage by stocking up on fresh varieties with a consistent stripe pattern with deep, dark green stripes and creamy, light yellow stripes that indicate ideal ripeness."

Sweet corn is synonymous with summer, and Palinski-Wade said now's the time to grab a few ears. "Stock up on fresh corn locally now, since corn loses some sweetness each day it is separated from the stalk," she said.

You can enjoy some corn on the grill now, but also be sure to shuck some and freeze for soups, chilis and stir fries throughout the cold weather months. "For the sweetest and freshest corn, look for bright green husks that are tightly wrapped and have a bit of a damp feel to them instead of yellowed or dried husks," she said.

Summer recipes: Make fried heirloom tomatoes and peach cobbler

Those sweet, juicy fruits that need a lot of heat, rain and sunshine to grow, such as stone fruit (peaches, plums, nectarines and cherries), grapes, tomatoes, fresh corn and melons (honeydew, cantaloupe and watermelon) should be going in your bag and into your belly, Olivia Roszkowski, chef-instructor at the Institute of Culinary Education explains. She said that purchasing local summer produce at peak ripeness will yield the tastiest results.

"Because the produce does not have to travel long distances, it is picked at a more optimal level of ripeness," she said. "This means

that the fruits and vegetables will most likely taste more flavorful, and possibly be more nutritious as they were allotted more time to absorb nutrients from the soil. From a culinary standpoint, ripe foods contain a peak level of natural sugars and essential oils that contribute to flavor. Just-picked produce will also have a more delicate texture, appealing aroma and deeper taste."

Roszkowski said now is also the time to scour the stores for produce that grows on vines, contains high water content and has thin skins which usually require refrigeration because of this including eggplant, bell peppers and hot pepper varieties, zucchini and summer squash varieties, cucumbers and string beans, yellow wax beans and fresh shelled beans, like edamame, fava and cranberry beans.

A lot of people say they hate eggplant, but after they taste this delicious ratatouille, they are singing a different tune. I love proving people's palates wrong!

Ratatouille:

TECHNIQUE TIP: Make sure that you coat both sides of the eggplant with salt; otherwise, the eggplant will retain too much water and less flavor.

8 fresh tomatoes, peeled, cored and chopped

6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided

1 large eggplant (about 1 pound), cut into 1-inch pieces

coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 large yellow onions, diced

1 head garlic, cloves smashed and peeled

2 bell peppers, seeded and diced

2 large zucchini, diced

1 bay leaf

1 tablespoon fresh basil

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

SWAP OPTION: You can always substitute canned tomatoes if you are making this in the winter when ripe tomatoes are scarce

Gazpacho Soup:

Gazpacho is one of my most-requested recipes, picked up from my years in Spain. A small cup of this refreshing soup is the first thing served at most meals in Spain, like their version of a first-course salad. The acid of the tomato opens up your taste buds.

Elizabeth Heiskell

SWAP OPTIONS: Using seasonal fruits like watermelon or even peaches, or topping it off with fresh avocado and crab can be great additions. It's like summer in a bowl, but because it starts with high-quality canned tomatoes, you can make it year-round. Natalie Morales

In my childhood and adolescence, this salsa recipe always signified a celebration, whether a party, a birthday or other special occasion. As I heal from my past, I have every intention to continue making it — because I believe I'm living a life worth celebrating.

3 medium-large tomatoes, off the vine, chopped

3 tablespoons chopped onion

1 medium jalapeño, seeded and chopped
4 green onions, chopped
2 cloves garlic, sliced
1 tablespoon fresh cilantro
1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon sugar
Sarah Garone



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