



Mid-Autumn comes to the Expo

YONG KAI / FOR CHINA DAILY
Bright lights and a full moon herald the Mid-Autumn Festival at the Expo.

It's time to munch on moon cakes and enjoy the full moon, so head to the Expo, **Yu Ran** reports.

The Expo Garden turns out to be the perfect location for people to enjoy the moonlight, eat moon cakes and hold reunion dinners with families as the Mid-Autumn Festival approaches.

This year, the Mid-Autumn Festival, the 15th day of the eighth month in the Chinese lunar calendar, falls on Sept 22. It is a popular harvest festival celebrated by the Chinese and Vietnamese. It is the date that parallels the autumnal equinox of the solar calendar when the moon reaches its fullest and roundest position.

For generations, moon cakes, the traditional food eaten during the Mid-Autumn Festival, have been made with sweet fillings of nuts, mashed red beans, lotus-seed paste or Chinese dates wrapped in a pastry. In some cases, a cooked egg yolk can be found in the middle of this rich dessert.

Since earlier this month, Expo Garden has been in Mid-Autumn Festival mode,

with moon cakes on retailers' shelves and people around the site munching on them as snacks.

"Five series of the authorized Expo Bright Moon moon cakes have been on the shelf at our store since last week. We've already sold thousands of boxes. It is a surprisingly good situation," said Gu Jiqing, the manager of the Shanghai Expo Licensed Products flagship store. It is the only store that sells moon cakes from Chantilly, the sole Expo authorized moon cake supplier, located in Zone B in the Expo Garden.

These moon cakes were specially molded with patterns of the Expo mascot, Haibo, the China Pavilion and the Expo 2010 Shanghai logo.

Gu has introduced popular western ingredients like ham, chocolate, cheese, coffee, blueberry and cranberry as fillings to make the moon cakes more appealing to foreign visitors and staff in the Expo Garden.

"In one series, the patterns on two different boxes of moon cakes are of the China Pavilion. These are the biggest sellers in our store and hundreds of customers buy these everyday," said Gu.

The prices for the five series of moon cakes vary from 88 yuan to 398 yuan and a delivery service to locations in China is available. Expo greeting cards with a specially designed Mid-Autumn Festival stamp come with the purchase.

Ganso, famed for its ice cream moon cakes, is one of the official bakers of the Expo 2010 Shanghai. It has also launched its Expo limited edition moon cake in the Expo Garden.

"We've sold over 400 boxes of the Expo limited edition series of moon cakes at the three Ganso stores in the Expo Garden. The series is only available within the period of Expo 2010 Shanghai," said Zhong Yunxia, supervisor of Ganso Expo stores.

"We're very proud of being the official baker of the Expo, especially making moon cakes. We haven't added any extra flavors as we think the traditional fillings always remain the best," said Zhong.

For thousands of years, Chinese people have related the vicissitudes of life to changes of the moon as it waxes and wanes — joy and sorrow, parting and reunion. Because the full moon is round and symbolizes reunion, the Mid-Autumn Festival is also known as the festival of reunion. All family members try to get together on this special day, have a big dinner and enjoy the glorious full moon either at home or a restaurant. This year they can share the experience at the Expo Garden.

As one of the best viewing points in the Expo Garden, the restaurants located on the top floor of the Cultural Center are getting ready for tourists who want to spend the Mid-Autumn Festival at the Expo Garden.

Shufu, a Sichuan restaurant on the top floor of the Cultural Center, will be one of the most popular eating places on Sept 22. The restaurant holds about 300 people and provides unmatched evening views of the Huangpu River and Zone A in the Expo Garden.

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