

THE PENINSULA

H O T E L S



# XO CHILLI SAUCE

The Peninsula Hotels

# XO CHILLI SAUCE

THE PENINSULA CREATION THAT HAS ENCHANTED  
THE CULINARY WORLD



Our famed gastronomic XO Chilli Sauce was first introduced at The Peninsula's Spring Moon Chinese restaurant back in 1986

## THE ICONIC FLAVOUR OF THE PENINSULA HOTELS

Guests who dine at The Peninsula Hotels in Asia have long savoured recipes made with the tantalisingly aromatic and delicious condiment known as XO Chilli Sauce. This piquant preparation, made from a secret

recipe that includes dried seafood, pork, garlic and a variety of chilli peppers, adds a delicious kick to every dish it touches. Though it is considered a signature flavour at many of The Peninsula Hotels,

it is little wonder that XO Chilli Sauce has also developed a devoted following among chefs, restaurateurs, and home cooks all over the world.





Deep-fried Scallop with XO Chilli Sauce, served at The Peninsula Chicago's Shanghai Terrace restaurant

## THE ORIGINS OF XO CHILLI SAUCE

The first batch of XO Chilli Sauce was devised in 1986 at Spring Moon, The Peninsula Hong Kong's Michelin- starred Cantonese restaurant. Chefs there combined some of the rarest and most exclusive ingredients – including dried scallops, shrimp roe, and superior Jinhua ham – to make a spicy sauce designed to enhance every sort of dish, from fried rice, noodles and dim sum to fresh seafood and fine cuts of meat. When naming their new condiment, the chefs reportedly took inspiration from the labels of luxury cognacs – which used 'XO' to denote an extra-old, expensively aged brandy.

Within a year of introducing the new sauce, its popularity had grown to the extent that Spring Moon began bottling and selling the condiment to meet customers' demands. Other restaurants around Hong Kong, which had noticed diners' appreciation for the condiment, also began creating and cooking with their own versions of the sauce. By the early 1990s, the enthusiasm for XO Chilli Sauce had extended beyond the city to other parts of Asia. And by 2011, an article in *Vogue China* described XO Chilli Sauce as “the caviar of the East.”

## XO CHILLI SAUCE GOES GLOBAL

In recent years, the popularity of XO Chilli Sauce has continued to spread. Variations on the sauce can now be found in both fine-dining restaurants and home kitchens all over the globe. Each sauce recipe is slightly different, and many include regional adaptations – for instance, chefs in the United States use bacon or sausage, rather than ham, in their XO Chilli Sauce due to the restricted supply of Chinese ham; While Australian chefs may substitute squid or Tasmanian abalone for scallops. Still, every version of the sauce strives to achieve the same savoury, smoky, uniquely umami flavour profile as the original.

David Chang, the multiple James Beard Award-winning chef and owner of the New York-based Momofuku restaurant empire, is just one of many culinary

celebrities who have come to embrace XO Chilli Sauce (his version uses orange rind, ginger, and 'country ham' – popular in the southern US). "It's one of those sauces that's great on everything," Chang said in an episode of a popular US cooking show, *The Mind of a Chef*. "It's got a real funk to it...and it's just so, so delicious."

A recent article in *The New York Times Magazine*, "A Love Letter to Homemade XO Sauce," even further highlighted the growing appreciation for the condiment. For home cooks aiming to create their own versions of the sauce, writer Sam Sifton advises: "Whatever ingredients you choose, the idea is simply to layer big flavours on top of each other like cartoon sound effects: Pow! Blam! Vaboom!"



Steamed Crystal Prawns with Eggplant and XO Chilli Sauce, served at The Peninsula Bangkok's Mei Jiang restaurant





Dim Sum with XO Chilli Sauce, served at The Peninsula Shanghai's Yi Long Court restaurant

## ENJOYING THE ORIGINAL XO CHILLI SAUCE

Today, there are still many ways in which discerning diners can sample the original XO Chilli Sauce, as it was first introduced at The Peninsula Hong Kong. Most Peninsula properties have a Cantonese restaurant with dishes that incorporate the sauce; at The Peninsula Bangkok's Mei Jiang, for example, XO Chilli Sauce enlivens steamed crystal prawns and fried-rice noodle rolls, and at Spring Moon in The Peninsula Hong Kong, the sauce still features in dishes such as wok-seared lobster and stir-fried Hungarian pork. Many Peninsula hotels also offer XO Chilli Sauce as a condiment to guests ordering room service; it is traditionally served in a small bowl with two chilli peppers laid atop it in the shape of an 'x.'

Those who wish to cook at home with the original XO Chilli Sauce – or share it as a gift – can also buy it at The Peninsula Boutique in several Peninsula locations. Bottles are also available for purchase online at [peninsulaboutique.com](http://peninsulaboutique.com) – with delivery available in to Hong Kong and China.