

Leisure Sailing in Qingdao

Places to sail - Rent or buy a boat? - Safe sailing

Photos by Philippe Mallejac, www.windattitude.com _ Text by Jeppe Mortensen, www.sailweta.com

Want to get out sailing in 2008? Not interested in sailing? Well, maybe you should be. Just to make sure that sailing is really not for you, read these [10 Reasons to Rent or Buy a Boat](#). If you're still reading this article, then you're likely interested in sailing, and I hope the information provided here will help you to get out and enjoy the sea along Qingdao's beautiful coastline. This article is primarily focused on small boat sailing, also known as 'dinghy sailing'.

Places to sail in Qingdao

Below is a list of sailing places located within Qingdao city proper. Places are listed in geographical order, from west to east. At the end of this article you can find a link to more Qingdao sailing information.

a. Qingdao Runlong Sailing Club. Location: #10 Laiyang Lu, just north of Qingdao Naval Museum.

Close to your home if you live in the old part of Qingdao. Boats are launched into the water using a small crane. Large billboard ad occasionally blocks the wind making it difficult to get out and back in by sail. A paddle will come handy. Located adjacent to Zhanqiao Pier, you will have to navigate the waters with motor boats taking out tourists.

b. The National Olympic Community Sailing Project (NOCSP). Location: No. 1 Bathing Beach.

A sailing program for children between the age of 6 and 15. Hosted by the Qingdao Water Sports Training Center and Zou Sailing Club. If you have children in this age group, this program comes recommended. More info:

<http://myredsail.decenturl.com/nocsp> | www.cybp-global.com/nocsp.php | <http://nocsp-qingdao.blogspot.com>

c. China International Sailing Club (formerly known as Wind-Catcher Sailing Club). Location: #6 Nanhai Lu.

Located just east of No. 1 Bathing Beach, this was the most active small-boat sailing place in Qingdao until the end of 2006 when the people behind the club decided to tear down "the old" and start constructing a whole new complex.

The new place is scheduled to open beginning of July (subject to possible delay). Name is likely to change to "China International Sailing Club". There are plans to widen and lengthen the existing ramp. This should somewhat eliminate previous years' problems to sail from the place during low tide hours. More info: www.chinasailingclub.com

d. Jida Sailing Club. Location: East of No. 1 Bathing Beach, approx. 200 meters south of China Int. Sailing Club.

Located on a small "peninsula" of rocks, this club is run by a group of retired national sailing coaches. Probably the cheapest place to rent a sailing boat in Qingdao - but - make sure you do a thorough inspection of the boat you plan to rent and make your own sound judgment whether the boat is likely to hold out considering the conditions on the day. More info: www.sailingcity.cn/en/

e. Sailing 2008. Location: #27 Taipingjiao Yi Lu.

A teahouse with some great facilities which the owner would like to share with private boat owners/windsurfers. The owner of this place is offering private boat storage for all the right reasons -- to establish a base for regular sailors to enjoy their interest for leisure sailing and to facilitate the social life that evolves around it. While there is access to a great beach for launching your boat, a downside is that you have to pull your boat approx. 100 meters along the Seaside Sightseeing Path to reach the beach. With helpful staff on hand this is very manageable. Compared to more easterly located sailing places, it's my experience that there is much less restrictions on private leisure sailing during international sailing events when sailing out from this place. More info: www.sailweta.com/taipingjiao/



f. Qingdao International Marina (aka Qingdao Olympic Sailing Center)

Likely to remain off limits for private leisure sailing until after the Olympics/Paralympics in August/September 2008. How accessible the facilities is going to be after these events, and at what cost, is to be seen.

g. Yinhai International Yacht Club. Location: #30 Donghai Zhong Lu.

In the far east corner of the Yinhai complex - near the ramp for launching small boats - you can find Yinhai Yacht Training School. The school has a mixed fleet of small sailing boats and some windsurfing equipment for rent, but as with Jida Sailing Club, make sure that you're comfortable with the condition of the equipment before going sailing.

Private boat storage is available in Yinhai, however, with the Olympics coming up, Yinhai will be a busy place with foreign teams coming in for training already in April (according to Yinhai). If you discuss boat storage with Yinhai, make sure you're well informed about how accessible your boat and the ramp will be during the coming months. Yinhai is currently the only option in Qingdao for berthing keel sailboats, unless of course, you're so well connected that the Qingdao International Marina is an option. More info: www.yinhai.com.cn

Location checklist: With above list of sailing places you should now be ready to check out which sailing location may best fit your needs. Besides geographical location plus availability and condition of boats, other relevant evaluation factors could be: Does the place offer safe storage for boat, equipment, personal belongings? Is there access to shower and changing facilities? Is it a place you would like to socialize before/after sailing? Is it possible to buy drinks and something to eat? Can somebody come out and tow you back in if you for some reason can't return to shore by wind or paddle power? Does the place offer access to fresh water for washing the boat after a sail?

Rent or buy a boat?

Unless you have settled down in Qingdao, at least semi-permanently, going out to buy a boat may not be your first thought. The list of places above should provide input to anyone who is strictly looking at renting a sailboat in Qingdao. Besides the obvious cost issue, there is several other factors worth considering before making a decision whether to rent or buy a boat.

Boat availability: Is the type of boat you fancy sailing available in Qingdao? Buying a boat alone or in partnership with others naturally opens up for boat choices otherwise not accessible.

Where to put your boat: I hope this article can serve as inspiration where to start looking.

Cost: With more and more foreign designed, high-quality boats being built in China, buying a boat may not be as costly as you think. Sharing the boat with one or two like-minded individuals will greatly reduce the cost of ownership.

Safety: In Qingdao I have seen plenty of small sailing boats I wouldn't dare to go out in. Some places leave uncovered boats outside all year round with UV rays taking its toll on both hull, rig, and sails. Having a boat failure is not as simple as having a car failure where you just pull over. The presence of strong currents, proximity to commercial shipping lanes, periods with frequent heavy fog, and darkness in the evening, can all make it an unpleasant experience should you have an equipment failure out at sea. Stay safe. Rent a boat from a place where you know they maintain their boats and replace parts when they ought to (and not just when they break) - or - buy your own boat and sail in comfort knowing that you haven't compromised on your personal safety.

Safe sailing – when can you sail in Qingdao and what to look out for?

You can sail all year round in Qingdao, but one should observe a few things to ensure sailing safety.

Wind: It is not uncommon to experience good wind when going out but lack of wind when you want to sail back in. Always bring a paddle when going sailing. If the wind can't move your boat, or you have an equipment failure, a paddle can keep you away from commercial shipping lanes and you are often able to bring your boat back to shore just by paddling. During the colder months the better wind conditions and the prevailing northerly winds give us plenty of days with flat waters. Great for speed.

Current: Qingdao has strong sea currents. Make sure you check a tide table before you go out so you know the direction of the current during the day. You don't want to find yourself having to sail both against the wind and the current when finally deciding to go back and it's already starting to get dark.

Fog: Foggy days are most prevalent in April to July. Checking the weather forecast before going sailing is especially important during this period. Always sail with a compass and a whistle just in case you still get "caught" by the fog while out on the water. The compass is essential to be able to navigate when visibility gets low, and the whistle will enable you to attract attention in case you need assistance to get back in.

Cold water: In Qingdao the water usually cools down significantly in November and warms up again around June. In small boat sailing it is always important to **dress for the water temperature**. From November to May one should wear a drysuit. A good quality drysuit will easily give you another 6 months of comfortable and safe sailing.

Before going sailing: Always check the forecast for the weather, wind direction, wind speed, chance of fog/low visibility, and direction of the sea currents during the day. This information will give you a very good indication of how far it is safe to sail on the day, and in which directions you can expect to sail fast, and in which direction you can only expect to make slow progress. Doing a bit of "homework" is the best way to avoid any unpleasant surprises.



Additional information and photos at: www.sailweta.com/sailing-in-qingdao/

Having questions regarding sailing in Qingdao/China?

Call 1388 463 7870 (Jeppé), or write: wetaqingdao@ketav.com

Interested in windsurfing? Philippe can answer your questions on 1358 927 1595