

Hakka People



Who are the Hakka?

Although considered as an ethnic minority in China, the Hakka are actually a subgroup of the Han Chinese majority. Originating from the Northern and Central regions of China, the Hakka started migrating *en masse* to the Southern part of China due to social unrest and war. Settling in mostly Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi and Guangxi provinces during the late 13th century, these people were called “Hakka” which means “guest families”. The local people were called “Punti”, meaning native. As migrants to the South, the Hakka had to settle in the non-fertile areas, generally in the hills and mountains. These people tended not to fully assimilate into their new culture, keeping to themselves in their own villages. They had their own language, customs, architecture and food. A typical

Hakka building, called a *tulou*, was like a mini-fortress.



Either round or square with thick earthen walls, multi-storied with no windows on the 1st floor, it was designed to withstand enemy and animal attacks.

Over the years there were many conflicts between the Hakka and the Punti. The Punti resented the Hakka people, considered them low-class, competing for jobs and land. Finally in the mid 19th century, Guangdong became the battleground for the Punti-Hakka Clan War, a very brutal conflict that within a course of 12 years saw over 1 million people dead and the Hakka fleeing for their lives. The Hakka again started to migrate, but this time, found themselves going overseas to places like Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Phillipines, Great Britain, France, Italy, South Africa, Jamaica, the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Peru, and a whole lot more. There is a Hakka saying, “Wherever there is sunshine, there are Chinese, wherever there are Chinese, there are Hakka”.

- to get a glimpse of Hakka cuisine: <https://TheHakkaCookbook.com>