

STAND UP!

FEBRUARY 2022

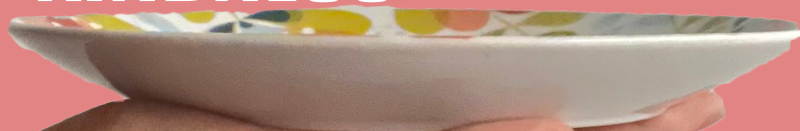
NEW ERA OF
DELIVERY DINING



BRINGING
IN-GAME FOOD
TO LIFE

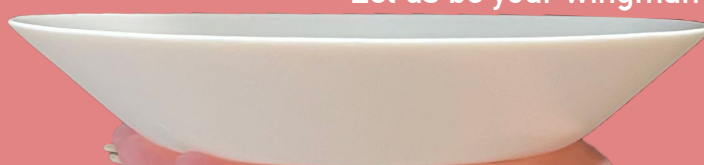


A BAKERY'S
KINDNESS



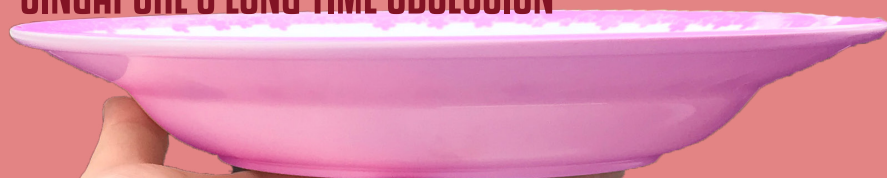
FIRST DATE
DINNER?

Let us be your wingman



BUBBLE TEA
CRAZE

SINGAPORE'S LONG TIME OBSESSION



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EDITOR'S NOTE



Anna Kwa
Editor

Hi readers,

I have a confession to make: I'm actually looking forward to Chinese New Year.

Chinese New Year is a big thing for many of us. The past 2 years, however, have been a little different. As COVID restrictions tightened, I found my usually introverted self missing my extended family. Now, 2022 and things aren't back to normal. Masks, ART tests and Health Risk Warnings are still barriers to interaction. Plans have to be cancelled, reunions postponed.

This is why, for our very first issue, we here at Sedap wanted to focus on the connective power of food. From comparing different kinds of Milo with your friends, to family recipes that have been passed down for generations. We hope the magazine gives you something to talk about and bond over with friends and family.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

THE TEAM



Sheryl Goh
Writer



El
Writer



Russell Ang
Writer



Titus Lee
Writer, Designer

SEDAP'S



FOOD VENTURE

By Russell Ang

Are your pockets feeling lighter these days after an evening of dining at your local hawker centre? Chances are, it's not just your imagination. Back in November last year, Trade and Industry Minister Gan Kim Yong said food in Singapore was expected to become more expensive as energy prices and global food commodities increase. With this recent phenomenon, some hawkers at coffee shops and hawker centres have started raising the prices of their dishes.

"I eat out frequently," said a patron. "But nowadays, my spending on food has increased to more than \$30 a day."

So you may be wondering, how can I get around these heftier meal prices but still fill my tummy? Well, what if we told you that it is possible to enjoy three meals a day with only a \$6 budget? Break out your piggy banks everyone as we at Sedap will show you a cheaper alternative to your meals!

(Photos courtesy of Mothership and Sethlui)

BREAKFAST \$1.60 Kueh (One Kueh At A Time)

Hidden behind our concrete jungle is a cafe that specialises in handmade Soon Kueh, a type of steamed dumpling in Teochew cuisine. Although the place itself is quite 'ulu,' trust us when we say it is still worth checking out. At just \$1.60, you can get yourself their Original Soon Kueh, a classic that's filled with a savoury mix of turnips, black fungus, and chives. Thin, yet chewy with a resilient bite, the skin retains every bit of moisture, making them very easy to devour. So if you are looking for a wallet-friendly breakfast, head down to One Kueh At A Time for some delicious traditional treats!

Address: 230 Pandan Loop #01-K1, Singapore 128415
Opening Hours: Tuesdays to Sundays, 10am to 6pm (by reservation only).
Closed on Mondays



LUNCH \$1 Nasi Lemak (Kedai Makan Muhajirin)

Located in the heartlands of Toa Payoh, Kedai Makan Muhajirin \$1 Nasi Lemak is a must-try for those on a tight budget. The dish consists of a serving of coconut rice, a slice of omelette, a cucumber slice, fried ikan, and a dollop of sambal chilli. But if you are feeling extra hungry, you have the option of adding a chicken wing or potato fritter for an additional \$1.20.

Overall, the ingredients complement each other really well. The sambal chilli, in particular, was not too sweet, and the spice level was just right, giving it that 'shio' factor. So what are you waiting for? Hurry down and satisfy your Nasi Lemak cravings!

Address: Block 20, 20 Lor 7r Toa Payoh, Singapore 310020
Opening hours: 6am-1:30pm

DINNER \$3 Fishball Noodles (Man Yuan Gourmet)

Last but not least, about a 5-minute walk away from Redhill MRT is Man Yuan Gourmet, a hawker stall that sells an assortment of noodles from laksa to mee pok. However, their main speciality is definitely their fishball noodles. At just \$3, you can get yourself a bowl of tasty noodles and a bowl of soup with not two, not three, but EIGHT bouncy fishballs!

We were pleasantly surprised at how generous they were with the portion of the noodles for its low price. Now you may argue that both the noodles and fish balls are factory-made and hence, not as good, but considering a sizable and satisfying meal like this costs only S\$3, this is one of the best food deals out there at the moment.

Address: #01-20 Redhill Food Centre
Opening Hours: 12pm - 12am, Mon to Sun

NEW YEAR'S DETOX

By Anna Kwa

Thinking of going on a detox after all the delicious but calorie-heavy food you ate during Chinese New Year or Valentine's Day? Eating healthy can be confusing and even scary for first-timers. Don't worry if you're unsure about how to start, Sedap's got you covered with these handy tips.

1. Eat slowly

Even though this may seem like a strange tip, research shows that the faster you eat, the more likely you are to eat! How hungry you are, how much you consume, and how full you get are all determined by hormones. Hormones signal to your brain whether you're hungry or full. However, it takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get these signals. That's why eating more unhurriedly may give your brain the time it needs to notice that you've had enough.



(Photo courtesy of City of Ashville)

3. Use healthier cooking methods

Instead of frying, consider baking or roasting your dishes. Such methods cut oil, which often contains trans fat, an unhealthy fat that raises cholesterol and makes you more prone to heart disease. If you really must fry, consider using an air fryer. They circulate hot air around the food to produce the same crunchy, crispy exterior without needing as much oil.



(Photo courtesy of Scientific American Blog Network)

5. Snack smart

If you're someone who needs their pick-me-ups in between meals, choose healthier snacks such as nuts. Or try some natural protein in the form of low-fat milk. For a refreshing kick, we recommend frozen fruit. For a refreshing kick, we recommend frozen fruit. Frozen grapes, especially, taste like a delicious sorbet and frozen bananas can be blended to get an ice-cream like texture. Don't forget to remove the skin!



(Photo courtesy of Cleveland Clinic Health Essentials)

2. Drink water

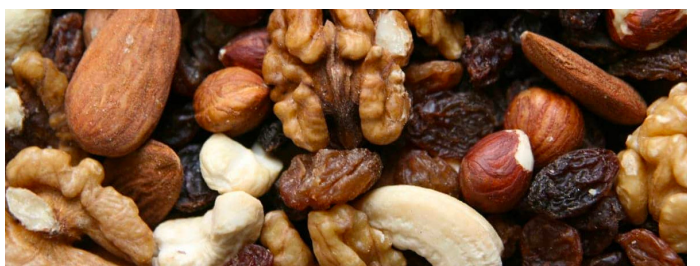
Water has many benefits. It helps to remove waste from the body. It also carries dissolves nutrients and carries them to all of our cells. You should drink at least 8 glasses of water a day. That may seem daunting so be sure to break it up. Set reminders or get a cute sticker to remind yourself to stay hydrated!



(Photo courtesy of Phillips)

4. Use smaller plates

When you use a smaller plate, your portions look bigger, which typically compels you to take less. Studies show that halving the plate size led to a 30% reduction in the amount of food consumed on average.



(Photo courtesy of Natural Living Family)



3 MEALS A DAY IN TEYVAT



By El Goh

In September of 2020, the game *Genshin Impact* took the world by storm. Almost everyone I know, me included, has been sucked into its addictive gacha system. But I didn't expect my 48-year-old mother to be swept in too.

"I was curious about what the game is about," says my mother, Patricia, when I asked her why she started playing it. "What's interesting is they actually adopted certain cultures into the story."

Knowing her admirable cooking skills, I challenged her to make dishes from the game, for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

FOR BREAKFAST: PUPPY PAW HASHBROWNS

INGREDIENTS

- 4 potatoes
- 20g of pine nuts
- 1 beat egg
- 40g of flour
- 15g of breadcrumbs
- 4 tablespoons of oil
- 4 broccoli
- 3 tablespoons of soy milk
- 5g of butter
- A pinch of salt



(Illustration taken from Genshin Impact Wiki)



RECIPE

1. Wash and peel the potatoes.
2. Boil or steam the potatoes for around 15-20 minutes.
3. Mash the potatoes and add pine nuts, soy milk and butter. Mix well.
4. Mould the mashed potatoes into a paw shape.
5. Dip the shaped potatoes into egg batter, then into the flour and breadcrumbs.
6. Fry hashbrown in oil and salt until it turns golden-brown.
7. Serve with broccoli and cheese dip!

FOR LUNCH: INVIGORATING KITTY MEAL

INGREDIENTS

- 2 servings of sushi rice
- 1 hard boiled egg
- 1 can of luncheon meat
- 1 slice of ham
- 1 slice of cheese
- 3 cherry tomatoes
- 1 pack of seaweed



(Illustration taken from Genshin Impact Wiki)



RECIPE

1. Arrange the plate with seaweed.
2. Mould the sushi rice into the cat's face and paws.
3. Cut the seaweed and ham into eyes, mouth, ears, tongue and paws.
4. Cut the cheese slice into 2 small fish shapes.
5. Use a round cookie cutter or the rim of a cup to cut the luncheon meat into 2 circular slices.
6. Use a knife to carve criss-cross patterns on each piece of meat.
7. Cut the hard boiled egg into half.
8. Use a small spoon to scoop out some yolk and arrange it on the egg white like paws.
9. Arrange everything on the plate with the cherry tomatoes.
10. Use a spoon to drizzle soya sauce and sesame sauce on the rice as brown fur patches.

FOR DINNER: COLD NOODLES WITH MOUNTAIN DELICACIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pack of premade ban mian (noodles)
- 1 bowl of chicken broth
- ¼ pack of pork shabu
- ½ pack of brown mushrooms
- 1 Japanese cucumber
- 2 leaves of parsley
- 2 tablespoons of soba sauce



(Illustration taken from Genshin Impact Wiki)

RECIPE

1. Cut up the brown mushrooms.
2. Boil the broth with mushrooms and pork shabu for around 10 min.
3. Boil a separate pot of water with the ban mian for around 10 min.
4. Pour the broth with meat and mushrooms onto a plate and add the ban mian.
5. Chill in the refrigerator for 3 hours.
6. Chop up the Japanese cucumber, add to dish along with 2 leaves of parsley.
7. Drizzle the soba sauce into broth and enjoy

REVIEW

The hashbrowns were thicker than what you would expect from McDonalds, but its thickness held more flavour with just the right amount of salt. It made the hashbrowns taste as if you fried them over an open fire in the wilderness, both organic and filling.

The Invigorating Kitty Meal was... invigorating indeed. The bento made me feel like I was back in primary school with my box of home-cooked lunch - the tiny cheese fish and the cat made of rice. It was so adorable I almost couldn't bear to eat it, but the nostalgia was worth it.

My personal favourite of the three was the cold noodle dish, because I'd never had Chinese cold noodles before. The pork shabu went surprisingly well with the chicken broth mixed with soba sauce, and the temperature of the dish really brings the flavour out.

On the other hand, the chef's personal favourite was the Invigorating Kitty Meal. According to her, "It's so cute. And it's not very tedious to make."

I went on to ask her which was her favourite dish in the whole game, and she surprised me once again, "The Rockin' Riffin' Chicken. Because the fire looks very dramatic. To cook it, it looks very dramatic. I think you have to serve it with the fire."

I've always known my mother to have a mild, calm personality, but for her to choose the most spicy, chaotic dish in the game as her favourite... perhaps I should watch out for my palate if she ever decides to cook Genshin Impact dishes on her own.



(Illustration taken from Genshin Impact Wiki)



Screenshots of the in-game cooking system within Genshin Impact. Genshin Impact players are spoiled for choice of flavours and cultures!



(Photo courtesy of Her World Singapore)

KUEH BANGKIT

By Sheryl Goh

Our Chinese New Years are starting to look the same.

Towards the end of 2019, an unknown virus was first reported in Wuhan, China. By the beginning of 2020, it had escalated into a full-blown pandemic, infecting millions each day. In fact, many of us might have had to skip house visiting and reunion dinners altogether.

If you're fretting, don't. With Sedap!, you can make your own goodies to add a bit of variety to your new year!

Ingredients

- 300g lulu hoon
- 100g tapioca flour
- 3 pandan leaves cut into 4 pieces
- 2 large egg yolks
- 160g fine sugar
- 150ml thick coconut milk



DIRECTIONS

1. Sift both flours. Over low heat, stir both flours and the pandan leaves together in a wok for 20 - 30 minutes. Keep stirring occasionally to avoid burning. Set aside to cool. Remove the pandan leaves.
2. Sift the mixed flours into a large mixing bowl. Beat the egg yolks and sugar until sugar dissolves and add it to the flours. Gradually add the coconut milk bit by bit and knead until a firm and supple dough forms.
3. Lightly flour moulds of your choosing. Separate dough into smaller pieces and press into moulds. Scrape off excess dough with a knife and tap gently to extract moulded dough.
4. Use tapioca flour to lightly flour a baking tray and place moulded dough. Bake in an oven preheated to 170C for 15 - 20 minutes or until dry and slightly brownish-white in colour.
5. Remove to cool on a rack. Store in air-tight container.

DINE IN, DINE OUT

By Titus Lee

When did you last order a meal through a delivery app? Or when was the last time you chose to take away your meal from the restaurant rather than dine in the restaurant? Chances are, it hasn't been long since either.

Food delivery and takeaways are nothing new to the food industry. In the past, food delivery was limited to fast food and a select few restaurants that had their own delivery service. However, in 2012, the Berlin-based Foodpanda was launched locally, starting what would become a boom in the food delivery market and industry in Singapore.



Deliveries are becoming increasingly common for restaurants. Some establishments like to prepare the takeout boxes beforehand.

Order, Eat, Repeat

One key factor that sees the growth of this industry are the consumers. Food delivery services are, without a doubt, convenient and efficient. With every platform offering a wide variety of cuisines to choose from, ranging from local dishes like chicken rice to high-end options like western food, consumers are spoiled for choice. Online ordering becomes even more convenient when there is no hassle of waiting out long queues just to get your food. A few clicks on your phone, a few moments of waiting at home, and soon you will see yourself enjoying a freshly made meal. The entire process of food delivery is designed to be quick and time-efficient, which is definitely a plus due to the hustle of Singaporean's daily lives.

When asked about food delivery in Singapore, Russell Goh, an owner of several cafes in Singapore, says, "There has been a tremendous growth when it comes to this. It is definitely convenient, and people are a lot more receptive to it too."

"You can order takeaway, maybe you eat in the office or at home, but you won't be able to experience the atmosphere that comes with dining out in cafes or restaurants."

Changing Times

Outside of individual habits and preferences, Singapore's progress into the future also pushes its people to adopt different eating habits as well. When Circuit Breaker first began in April 2020 due to the emergence of COVID-19, Singapore residents were not allowed to dine out in restaurants and establishments. Immediately, the population turned to food delivery options, and so did businesses. Plenty of vendors started appearing on these platforms to sustain their business, so much that even hawkers have implemented food delivery systems too.

"COVID-19 changed a lot of dining patterns," Russell says, "In fact, the whole delivery business really picked up within the last two years."

So does this mean dining out will eventually fizzle away? The answer: most probably not.

Russell says, "you can order takeaway, maybe you eat in the office or at home, but you won't be able to experience the atmosphere that comes with dining out in cafes or restaurants."



(Photo courtesy of Sethlui)

In many ways, eating out is deeply ingrained in the lives of many. It is part of the way we meet and interact with family and friends over a meal. Hawker culture is also heritage to Singapore. Although plenty of Singaporeans are content with eating within the safety of their homes, the experience between dining out and dining in is not comparable.

As Singapore emerges from the pandemic, we've had to redefine what normal means for many aspects of our life. Maybe it's time to redefine dining too.

SINGAPORE'S BOBA MANIA

By Russell Ang

Boba, bubble tea, pearl milk tea – call it what you may, whether you love it or hate it, they're everywhere. Head down to your nearest mall or local neighbourhood and you will likely find a bubble tea stall or two.

Even at a time when F&B stalls were forced to shutter due to dwindling sales from the pandemic, bubble tea stalls continued to enjoy roaring success. So how has this craze managed to sustain itself in Singapore for so long?

A RISING PHENOMENON

For those living under a rock, bubble tea is essentially a tea-based drink that consists of a combination of tea, milk, and the 'bubbles' - which are essentially little chewy balls made of anything from tapioca to fruit jelly.

Despite its humble origins in Taiwan in the early 1980, it has since taken the world by storm over the last decade. Bubble tea orders in Southeast Asia recorded a 3,000% increase in 2018 alone, with Singapore being one of the biggest consumers, averaging three cups per person per month.

Interestingly, when bubble tea was first introduced in Singapore in 1992, it didn't have the positive reception you would expect. Back then,



There are approximately 62 different brands of bubble tea all across Singapore as of 2022! (Photo Courtesy of Miss Tam Chak)

this novelty of drinking cold milk tea with tapioca "pearls" was a foreign concept to many. By 2003, the fad had died down, and many shops were closed for business. It was only in 2010 that it saw a resurgence in popularity, with well-known Taiwanese brands like Gong Cha and Koi entering the Singapore market.

Today, many Singaporeans are willing to go the extra mile just to get a sip of this delectable drink, evidenced by the snaking queues outside these outlets.

"It's my go-to drink, especially when I have a long day at work and I just want something to perk me up," said Kyleen Cabeal, a bubble tea enthusiast.

Our devotion to bubble tea is so fanatical that during the peak of the circuit breaker in April 2020, an argument broke out between a food rider and store employees about a hold-up in orders. Many were desperate to get one last fix that the store received 150 orders for 600 cups within its last hour before closing.

THE 3 CS

So why is bubble tea currently dominating Singapore's F&B scene? The answer is simple. It heavily relies on the 3 Cs: cheap, convenient, and customisable.

We all love a good shot of caffeine to keep us going, and bubble tea is one of the go-to choices because of its price point, which is slightly more expensive than a Koptiam's but cheaper than a Starbucks drink. Even

if the price is relatively cheap, some operators say their net profit margins range from 20-30%; Koi, for instance, made S\$45 million in 2017 at a 23% margin.

Bubble tea is also one of those drinks that you

can easily get your hands on when the cravings hit. These days, bubble tea stalls tend to operate near prime locations like shopping malls, making them easily accessible to the general public. Food delivery services like Grabfood and Foodpanda are also another alternative for busy office workers or big families.

Lastly, the option to customise your drink is always a plus—especially if you are picky with your preferences! Hence, bubble tea outlets have caught on to this, giving customers a multitude of creative flavours, toppings, sugar levels, and sizes to choose from. Koi, for example, displays a percentage chart for you to pick your (delicious) poison; the options are usually 100 percent, 75 percent, 50 percent, 25 percent, and zero percent sweetness.

THE FUTURE

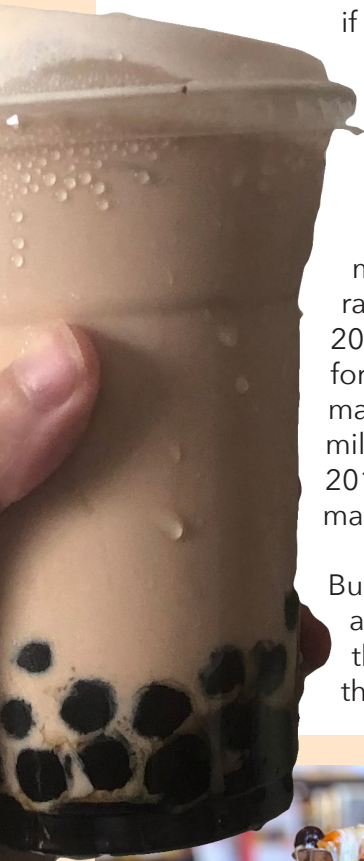
As with every food trend, the bubble tea craze has its pros and cons. For one, it will leave bubble tea lovers spoiled for choice, but this will also mean

the oversaturated market makes it more difficult for smaller brands to differentiate themselves from competitors.

Let's not forget the health impacts. Although the tea itself is relatively healthy, adding sugar or pearls can contribute to more than 200 calories per cup! With Singapore's government on the offensive against sugar, we are unsure how this will affect bubble tea lovers of the 100 percent sugar level.

Despite this, it's safe to say that bubble tea has become a social culture in itself. The drink has even become an ubiquitous Asian icon in Western Culture.

With the bubble tea industry expected to grow from \$2 billion to a whopping \$4.3 billion by 2027, one thing is certain - this bubble is unlikely to burst anytime soon.



Bubble tea's popularity has inspired other creative fusion foods, from pastries and desserts to even savoury foods like pizza and hotpot! (Photo Courtesy of Nylon Singapore)

CONVERSATION WITH CRUSHED CARAMEL BAKERY

By Anna Kwa



Dusty rose cupcakes done in Avnika's signature style

Locked at home with nothing to do, baking boomed in early 2020. There were lots of hacks on TikTok, flour even sold out at supermarkets. Anika and Avnika Gupta were two of many who took part in the trend. The sisters' love of baking dates back to their childhood. But it was during the pandemic that they started selling cakes.

Why It All Started

The sisters are now the driving force behind Crushed Caramel Bakery, a non-profit home-run boutique bakery that specialises in customised cakes. All proceeds go to local animal shelters.

"Our dog, Penny, is from Animal Lovers League. We didn't want her friends to meet a bad end," Avnika explains.

The bakers are passionate about the ingredients and techniques they use, describing their signature style as "less sweet". By avoiding the trap that is machine-produced cakes, they avoid overbearing sweetness. With diabetes on the rise, it's not surprising that more are turning to healthier alternatives.

Cakes and Clients



Gem-studded rainbow cake. The sisters handmade the gemstones for their customer.

Though they love a good challenge, no part of a bake is ever random. Every cake offers us a glimpse into a client's preferences and personality. Cakes moulded into the likeness of a client's favourite grilled cheese sandwich, edible gemstones for a crystal collector and a gold-dusted flute for a musician. The tailoring doesn't stop at designs, they also

cater to clients with dietary restrictions.

The sisters wanted to help part of the community that didn't have as much access to good tasting desserts. They speak with obvious fondness for the clients - each cake is made with the customer in mind. One of their most popular flavours, Caramel Macchiato, came from a client who said her husband likes caramel but her daughter preferred coffee. Such a huge amount of care doesn't go unnoticed.

"A lot of our customers come back, and we've been able to experience things like children growing up," Anika says. Avnika is just as thrilled. "It's crazy because we made their quarter cake, then their half cake and then their full-year cake. They're adding us to their baby's special day. And that's a huge deal. It makes our day and makes our year!"

Not all customers are lovely, however. Customers have had problems with the cost of cakes, which are priced at about \$150 each.

"A lot of our customers come back, and we've been able to experience things like children growing up."



A six-month cake. The sisters are happy to personalise cakes with a name.

"I feel like sometimes people don't fully understand the kind of work that goes into a cake. It's a very painstaking process that takes many hours," Anika says. Even though they run a bakery with over 5000 followers on Instagram, by night, by day, they are students. Avnika is an economics and data science major. Anika is in the IB (International Baccalaureate Diploma) program.

"If we could, we would just give everything to everyone, really."

This generosity is a constant and is, perhaps, the main thing that sets them apart from other bakeries. The sisters look beyond themselves and towards a shared vision of giving back to the community. I think we could all learn a thing or two from Crushed Caramel Bakery.

Images courtesy of Crushed Caramel Bakery. If you'd like to find out more, visit @crushedcaramelbakery on Instagram



MILO MYRIAD

A Blind Taste Test

By El Goh

(Photo Courtesy of Fairprice Singapore)

There has been an age-long Singaporean discourse as to what kind of Milo is the best - fast food, coffeeshop, canned or packet... but what really sets all these Milos apart?

19-year-old Samantha Ting gives us her answer. "My connection with Milo can be called a love-hate relationship," she tells Sedap!. "I would usually drink it when I have to pull all-nighters and I refuse to drink coffee at night because my mind would die, so instead I would just drink warm Milo with a lot of sugar to keep my mind going."

Let's see if Sam's bittersweet feelings are enough to tell these four iced Milos apart!



BOTTLED MILO

Rating: ★★

"Oh, this is definitely the bottled one. It's kinda watery. It's kinda diluted and it's not really chocolatey. It doesn't taste handmade."

BURGER KING MILO

Rating: ★

"This tastes nasty! It's not sweet and it's kind of powdery. You're supposed to add condensed milk but this added sugar. Not even a good amount of sugar. It's kinda bitter too. It's Koufu."

KOUFU MILO

Rating: ★★★

"Burger King. It's kinda sweet... a bit too sweet. It's kinda milky too. I think they might have added milk. It's not bad. It's kinda sweet, but it's not bad."

YA KUN MILO

Rating: ★★★

"Ya Kun. This is a better one. It's just nice, it's not too sweet. It's not like that nasty third one, okay! It's just the right amount of condensed milk or sugar, or whatever they put in."

VERDICT

Judging by Sam's critical Milo ratings, it is safe to say that no Milo is perfect. Each Milo recipe has its flaws, be it too sweet or too bitter, too much milk or too much water. It's all about your taste, preference, or perhaps the kind of relationship you have with the drink itself...

LOVE AT FIRST BITE

By Sheryl Goh

First dates are hard enough on their own. The build up to the anticipated day can make or wreck someone. Celebrate the upcoming Valentines' Day with your special someone in ease!

Why Food Matters

"I'll have what he's having."

Familiar with the line? It actually shows character - this indicates that you are easygoing, essentially allowing the other party to make that decision for you. While there may be some who insist on ordering whatever they want, psychology may make you think otherwise. According to science, your dietary preferences reveal more about you than you might think.

Even the choice whether to add spice to your food speaks volumes. Research shows people who have low moods crave a little zing. Capsaicin, an irritant found in plants, triggers a burning sensation when eaten. In response, your body releases endorphins, activating your opiate receptors and causing feelings of pleasure.

In social interactions, "I'll have what he's having" also shows how conscious people are of your food choice. According to the 2019 EAT-Lancet Commission on healthy diets, a global shift towards plant-based foods such as legumes, fruits, grains, and vegetables has been noted in the last few decades. This latest trend is sustainability. From farm to the table, the process in which your food goes through is scrutinised.

Is it grown organically? Is it harvested humanely? What kind of impact will your plate have on the environment?

Although it may not draw explicit reactions, the kind of meat you order will inevitably raise stereotypical connotations about your disposition and etiquette...even to the staff.

Jeanette Tham, a former chef in Club 55 at Marina Bay Sands Hotel, notes that ordering complicated dishes usually gets an impressed nod from her.

"Let's say two people are on a date. Person A orders something that requires using your bare hands to eat. It indicates that they are confident in who they are and do not care about how they may look. They're here for a good time and it shows."



In a mood for some romance? Pass on pasta. (Photo courtesy of Insider.com)

What You Should Eat (or not) on a First Date

Let's be clear. This article isn't supposed to tell you what to do. But if you are stressed enough, your choice of food can be one less thing to worry about.

go for rice over noodles. I don't want the splash-back to get on my shirt," says Jeanette. Her advice to score a second date?

"Avoid pasta at all costs. Garlic gives you bad breath and chilli makes you sweat."

The opinion is not just limited to her, either. When consulting Google, it seems like they share the same sentiment, too!

If you are in a sexier mood, try your hands at some cheese! Often paired with a good bottle of wine, it is seen as the universal language of sensuality. Like chocolate, cheese contains the chemical phenylethylamine (PEA), which promotes dopamine production. This heightens one's alertness, producing small bursts of happiness. Young cheeses can contain as much as ten times the amount of PEA than chocolate.

You can find many Twitters waxing poetics about the European product, and Jeanette is no different. In her observations, a nicely decorated charcuterie board at the right time can move a relationship along.

"Like romance, it's something you try in small quantities. The lingering tastes of each delicate piece leaves you wanting more."

We agree.

ORIGINS: CNY GOODIES

By Anna Kwa

No Chinese New Year celebration is complete without a good dose of goodies! Every year we are spoilt for choice, we can munch on everything from Prawn Crackers to Green Pea Cookies. But even we see these treats every year, do we really know where they come from or what they symbolise?

Sedap takes a look at some of the most common new year goodies and examines their roots.

PINEAPPLE TARTS

This popular snack dates back to the 16th century when the pineapple was brought to the Malay Peninsula by Portuguese merchants.



(Photo Courtesy of SideChef)

Serving any kind of sugary dessert is a tradition during Chinese New Year because it represents bringing sweetness into the coming year. Pineapples are considered lucky fruits, because they are called "Ong Lai" in the Hokkien dialect, which literally means "fortune come". So don't be surprised if you see your neighbours with pineapple themed decorations or goodies.

KUEH LAPIS

Malay for 'Layered Cake', the Kueh Lapis is an evolved version of the Baumkuchen, a round layered cake with German roots.

This delicacy comes from colonial times in the Dutch East Indies when the Dutch introduced it to Indonesia. The pastry slowly evolved into the version we all know and love after many changes and modifications, including the addition of



(Photo Courtesy of Daily Cooking Quest)

Indonesian spices like anise, cardamom and clove.

Fun fact: because of its colonial links, you can also find Kueh Lapis in the Netherlands.

LOVE LETTERS

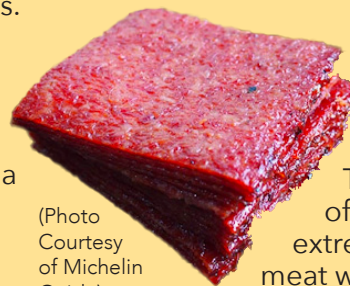
These familiar favourites are believed to have originated from the Dutch, who brought their waffle-making methods to Southeast Asia in the 15th century.

If you think the name hints at romance, you're not wrong! The name comes from times when girls were forbidden from meeting boys their own age without chaperons. They would instead hide small notes in the folds and throw them over the wall for their sweethearts next door.



(Photo Courtesy of Whish and Fold)

BAK KWA



(Photo Courtesy of Michelin Guide)

This treat comes from the province of Fujian in China. As poverty was extremely common in the past, eating meat was a luxury and only kept for celebratory periods like the New Year.

During Chinese New Year, there are often long queues for Bak Kwa. Its popularity is due to its red colour, which signifies luck and fortune.

Did you know? Singaporeans love Bak Kwa so much that in 2007, the Singapore office of Bloomberg News released a "Bak Kwa index" that tracked Bak Kwa prices during Chinese New Year.

There you have it! If you ever run out of things to say during dinner, you can now wow your relatives with these facts.

