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OODLES OF NOODLES

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Asian Geographic
Images of Asia (Asia Without Borders)
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The reef systems here are some of the most pristine I have seen anywhere in my dive travels around the globe, and Wakatobi resort and liveaboard are second to none. The diversity of species here is brilliant if you love photography.

~ Simon Bowen

An experience
without equal

“...” ~ Simon Bowen
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A Rice Journey
Half of the world’s population is wholly dependent on rice as a staple food – and this includes almost all of East and Southeast Asia. In this extensive feature on this precious grain, we navigate the historical timeline, the many varieties, and the prominent rice-based dishes found across the continent.

Oodles of Noodles
The humble noodle is a versatile staple that is enjoyed all over the world in different forms. While its origins have always been a highly debated topic, in 2005, archaeologists unearthed a perfectly preserved 4,000-year-old bowl of noodles in northwestern China. We look at the milestones in the history of the noodle, its different shapes and forms, and the vast array of dishes built around this Asian favourite.

Savouring the Sip
From sweet to savoury, caffeinated to serotonin-inducing, cool and refreshing to warm and comforting, these Asian beverages will take you across the continent and through different flavours, cultures, and walks of life.
**Features**

**FEARURE: STREET FOOD IN SINGAPORE**

**76 Savouring the Street Food Culture of Singapore**

Singapore is a melting pot of flavours and cultures, all crammed into a small island nation. And there is no better way to discover the city than to eat your way through it. Singapore photographer Aaron Wong was in the Top 5 finalists of MasterChef Singapore 2018, and is currently the Tiger Beer Global Street Food Ambassador. As the founder of Hawkers & Co., Aaron whips up a storm in the kitchen, and also knows exactly where to venture for an unforgettable dish.

*BY AARON WONG*

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**FEATURE: PAAAN**

**48 The Perfect Parcel**

*Paan* is no doubt an integral part of India's social and cultural practice and identity. Chewed by almost a tenth of the world's population, *paan* has also been used across Asia for over 5,000 years. From India to the Middle East, Indonesia to Thailand, the popular street dish is commonly had after meals as a breath freshener, a palette cleanser, a digestive aid, or simply as a dessert snack.

*BY BRYAN CHAN*

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**ERRATUM**

We had erroneously printed the wrong founder name when we featured Tiger Balm (Haw Par Corporation) in the Outstanding Local Brands of Asia category on page 77 of Issue 138. We sincerely apologise for this mistake!
“‘Your Ma does not always say what she’s thinking or feeling,’ Daddy said. ‘But when she cooks, she puts her whole mind and heart into the food and you’re bound to learn something about her’. So I searched for Ma in her spices and sauces, her mixed vegetables and her sweet desserts.”

— Sugarbread, Balli Kaur Jaswal

My childhood memories are of my vegetarian mother standing over the stove in the sweltering heat – mixing, mixing, mixing – concocting a delicious meat-based dish for her picky-eater children, and in a separate pot, something for her husband and herself. She would then serve us first, me by her own hand, before she ate herself. When I grew up, I ate her dishes less and less, favouring instant meals and fast food instead. But today, nothing compares to her lovingly prepared food, and whenever I get a chance to have her dalchawal (lentils and rice), it feels like she is feeding me, her three-year-old, all over again.

That is the idea of food I've always had: a selfless dish with a story to tell. Each ingredient and every process tells a tale of a home and a homeland. In this issue, we journey through the history of staple Asian foods, rice and noodles, and their associated dishes around the region. You may see stark differences as well as uncanny resemblances among dishes, and each dish will show you part of a nation's culture and tradition. Our feature articles highlight the unique street food culture of Asia, and take you through the fascinating history and practice of the paan (betel nut) custom. And in case it all makes you feel a little peckish, we have also provided some inspiration for amazing restaurants, cafés, and other dining experiences for any mood, budget and event, so you can have your fix in any corner of Asia.

Be warned though: your mouth will water and you may hear a rumble – from your tummy, of course. But we promise it will be worth the journey.

Shreya Acharya
Go Deeper

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Underwater, timing is everything.
Trust your equipment.

30th ANNIVERSARY PROMASTER

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BETTER STARTS NOW
Citizen’s PROMASTER line celebrates 30 years of adventure through tough terrain, ascending through crisp mountain air, and diving in the deep blue.

To celebrate, Citizen has launched “Save The BEYOND” as a global campaign in collaboration with the History Channel to raise awareness about the vanishing natural environment and the professionals fighting to save it. The Limited Edition PROMASTER is here for your escapades, too – through Asia’s expansive geography and beyond.

With only 6,000 pieces available worldwide, the Marine model (BN2037-11E) diving watch features a sleek, classic design that is water-resistant up to 200 metres. The Marine has a long battery life and is intricately designed with a stainless steel case and crystal glass for maximal performance. Furthermore, the 30th-anniversary logo and serial number are stamped on the back – so you know you are getting the real deal!

The Marine model also presents functions for enhanced safety, including a power reserve indicator, dive alarm for excess speed while ascending, water sensor, screw-locking crown, screw-locking buttons and unidirectional bezel – a rare gem for its specialist audience.
SCIENTISTS FIGHT BACK
Enter marine scientists Nathan Cook and Charlie Veron, as well as shark scientist Abam Sianipar, Citizen’s eco-heroes who fight to protect nature.

Guardian of the Barrier Reef
A PADI Master Instructor with over 3,500 dives, Australia-based Nathan Cook is an applied scientist and specialist in coral reef restoration and capacity building with Reef Ecologic. He has been a passionate advocate for sustainability and the stewardship of coral reef ecosystems since he started working in Southeast Asia nearly 20 years ago. Nathan has designed and implemented a range of experiential learning programmes, including curricula that integrate marine-management theory with active reef restoration techniques. As manager of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority’s “Eye on the Reef” monitoring programmes, Nathan was a lead coordinator of the task force that monitored the 2016–17 coral-bleaching incident.

They Call Him “GODFATHER”
Dr Charlie Veron is a prominent marine scientist who is entirely self-taught. Because he discovered 20 percent of all coral species in the world, he is nicknamed the “Godfather of Coral”. He has worked in all the major coral reef regions of the world, participated in 66 expeditions and spent 7,000 hours (the equivalent of 291 full days!) scuba diving. Formerly Chief Scientist of the Australian Institute of Marine Science, Charlie has authored over 100 scientific articles, including 14 books and monographs. He works tirelessly to educate the world about the impact that global warming is having on his beloved coral reefs.

Protector of Mighty Megafauna
Abam Sianipar studied ecology and biosystematics at Indonesia’s Bandung Institute of Technology and wrote his undergraduate thesis on reef sharks in Raja Ampat. He became Conservation International’s first employee fully dedicated to its Elasmobranch (i.e. sharks, rays and skates) Programme. The current Indonesian laws protecting manta rays and banning the export of certain sharks depend heavily on Abam’s work. Abam established an Indonesia-wide manta ray satellite tagging project in 2014 and performed the world’s first wild whale shark health assessment in collaboration with Georgia Aquarium. Abam works closely with local communities to find out what they need and to create sustainable plans for protecting marine nature and the magnificent local megafauna.

As nature reaches its limits, conservation itself is the ultimate challenge.
#SavetheBEYOND
PROMASTER 30th Anniversary Special
www.citizenwatch-global.com/promaster30th SDAA
Roaring from Empires to Estates

SINGAPORE

Tiger Balm (Haw Par Corporation)

From the southernmost island of New Zealand to some of the northernmost cities of Norway, Tiger Balm has roared its way through the homes and hearts of cities from East to West. With beginnings in the ancient courts of the Chinese empire to a small medicine shop in Burma called Eng Aun Tong, Tiger Balm was the brainchild of Aw Chu Kin, who originally concocted and had been selling the extraordinary formula in the late 1800s. His legacy then lived on through his two sons, Aw Boon Haw and Aw Boon Par, whose names aptly translate to “gentle tiger” and “gentle leopard”, respectively.

Soon after, the two gentle giants brought the business over to Singapore, where it won the hearts and cured the ailments of many, allowing expansion to then Malaya, Hong Kong, Batavia, Siam and various cities in China. However, where there is progress, there is change. While some countries transformed from low rise to high rise, and some shed colonial names, one thing remained constant: The tiny jar with the gold cap in medicine cabinets across homes and offices; its soothing scent lingering in hearts and souls.

Serving tradition and purpose, Tiger Balm has since become a trusted household name worldwide. The iconic tiger itself has faced its fair share of change, from resting in a crouching position to a leaping one, epitomising its role throughout the generations and its ability to catch up with and give aid to a fast-paced world. Their extensive range available today caters to a wide array of needs, and are trusted by many, from the man you pass by on the street each morning, to celebrities around the world, making it a brand that is fit for all, ready to pounce on its next challenge.

Used for everything from muscular aches and pains to cold and flu symptoms, from headaches to mosquito bites, whether in the sweltering heat of the tropics or bundled up in brutal winters, this is one vital addition to your first aid kit. Balancing the best of age-old tradition with modern innovation, Tiger Balm has been proven time after time to be the one that works where it hurts.
Across all ages and activities, Tiger Balm is the leading name when it comes to muscle pain. A trusted herbal formulation with the warmth of tradition and comfort from the relief it gives. A wide range to meet your needs. Gear up and go, you’re protected from head to toe!

Don’t Leave Home Without

Across all ages and activities, Tiger Balm is the leading name when it comes to muscle pain. A trusted herbal formulation with the warmth of tradition and comfort from the relief it gives. A wide range to meet your needs. Gear up and go, you’re protected from head to toe!
The Farmer

Digging the field under the scorching sun,
Sweat dripping into the soil.
Who knows the meal in your plate,
Every single rice comes from the hard work of those farmers.

Written by Li Shen, an official in the Tang Dynasty, serving as a chancellor during the reign of Emperor Wuzong. He was also an acclaimed poet.
Half of the world’s population is wholly dependent on rice as a staple food – and this includes almost all of East and Southeast Asia.

Rice is the seed from either of two grass species: *Oryza sativa* of Asia, and *Oryza glaberrima* of Africa, both of which were independently domesticated. The African species is speculated to have been cultivated between 2,000 and 3,000 years ago, and the Asian species from 9,000 to 10,000 years ago. As such, the earliest archaeological evidence of rice cultivation comes from central and eastern China and dates to 8000–5000 BC.

Asian farmers account for 87 percent of the world’s total rice production today, and the majority of all rice produced comes from China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Japan.
Rice is an integral part of many Asian cultures, and as such, stories on rice and its cultivation have seeped into local folklore and tales. In Bali, Lord Vishnu caused the Earth to give birth to rice and another deity, Indra, taught people how to harvest it. In Myanmar, the Kachins were believed to have been sent forth from the centre of the Earth with rice seeds and directed to a country where life would be perfect and rice would grow well. In China, legend has it that after a disastrous flood, all the crops were destroyed and no food was available, but one day a dog ran through the fields with rice seeds hanging from his tail. The people planted the seeds, rice grew, and bellies were appeased.
Rice was first domesticated in the Yangtze River basin in China, and by 6000 BC Chinese farmers were already using rice paddies – a system of growing rice in man-made ponds, which saves water and kills weeds.

8000–5000 BC
Rice was first domesticated in the Yangtze River basin in China, and by 6000 BC Chinese farmers were already using rice paddies – a system of growing rice in man-made ponds, which saves water and kills weeds.

5000 BC
The early domestication of rice in ancient India was based around the wild grain species *Oryza nivara*. This led to the local development that mixed wet- and dry-land production of the local *Oryza sativa* variation, *indica*, before the pure wet-land rice *Oryza sativa* variation, *japonica*, arrived in India.

3500–2000 BC
The spread of *japonica* rice cultivation arrived in Southeast Asia, beginning with the migrations of the Austronesian Dapenkeng culture into Taiwan.

300 BC
Rice reaches West Asia and Greece via the Silk Road. The Greek word for rice comes from the Indian word, *vrihi*, and all the other European words for rice come from the Greek word *ryzi*.

TODAY
Rice is the most important human food crop in the world, directly feeding more people than any other crop. In 2012, nearly half of the world’s population – more than 3 billion people – relied on rice every day. It is also the staple food across Asia where around half of the world’s poorest people live and is becoming increasingly important in Africa and Latin America. There are a variety of rice types to suit every occasion, dish and taste bud: short, medium and long grains, brown, red and white varieties, and a range of sticky and dry textures.
Mainstream archaeological evidence derived from paleoethnobotanical investigations indicate that dry-land rice was introduced to Korea and Japan at this point. Rice was cultivated on a small scale, where fields were impermanent plots, and evidence shows that in some cases domesticated and wild grains were planted together. However, there are no archaeological data proving the technological, subsistence, and social impact of rice and grain cultivation until after 1500 BC.

3500–1200 BC
There was a rapid expansion of rice cultivation into mainland Southeast Asia and westwards across India and Nepal.

3000–2500 BC
The Austronesian expansion began, with settlers from Taiwan moving south to Luzon in the Philippines, bringing rice cultivation technologies with them. The earliest evidence of rice cultivation in mainland Southeast Asia came from the Ban Chiang site in northern Thailand (2000–1500 BC); and the An Son site in southern Vietnam (2000–1200 BC).

2000–1500 BC
There is evidence of intensive wetland rice agriculture established in Java and Bali, especially near fertile volcanic islands.

500 BC
Cultivation appears in southern India after its domestication in the north.

1400 BC
Cultivation appears in southern India after its domestication in the north.
Red Rice

Also known as Himalayan or Bhutanese rice, this grain gets its name from its red husk, which also makes it high in antioxidants and other nutrients. Red rice is mostly grown and consumed in Central Asia.

Black Rice

The colour of this medium-grain comes from its high level of anthocyanin, the same antioxidant found in brinjal and blueberries, which make it nutrient-dense and flavourful. Black rice is also known as “emperor’s rice”, as it was reserved for the aristocrats in ancient China. Black rice is grown in Zhejiang in eastern China and often eaten as juk (congee or porridge).

Ponni Rice

Ponni, or gold, rice is a variety of rice developed by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in 1986. It is steamed before milling and then partially boiled in the husk, which makes it nutritionally similar to brown rice. Ponni rice is a south Indian staple and is used to make ven pongal, an Indian porridge dish, which is served with coconut chutney and sambhar (a lentil soup).

Koshihikari Rice

This short-grain white or brown Japanese variety has a high starch content, which makes it possess the perfect stickiness for sushi. It is also used for chawan, or rice bowls, and to produce sake.

Jasmine Rice

This long-grain fragrant rice has a similar aroma to that of pandan and popcorn and derives from the rice plant’s natural production of aromatic compounds. It is grown primarily in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and southern Vietnam, and is a prominent side dish in many Southeast Asian cuisines.

Glutinous Rice

Also known as sticky rice, this grain is popular in Southeast and East Asia. While, it does not actually contain any dietary gluten, its high starch content results in a sticky, glue-like texture when cooked. Glutinous rice is used in both sweet and savoury dishes, such as the Thai khao neeо mamuang (mango sticky rice) or the Chinese lo mai gai (steamed glutinous rice with chicken).

Com Tam

Also known as “broken rice”, this Vietnamese variety is a broken, imperfect, and leftover grain found after the drying and milling processes of rice production. Instead of being thrown away, com tam has become an integral part of Vietnamese cuisine and served alongside dishes such as suон nuong (grilled pork chop) and cha trung (steamed egg with pork).

Riceberry

Enter a new superfood. Exclusively grown in Thailand, riceberry is a cross-breed of Jao Hom Nin (a non-glutinous Thai purple rice) and Khao Dawk Mali 105 (Thai Jasmine) – and it has all the desirable characteristics of its parents. Riceberry is high in antioxidants and minerals like zinc and iron, and it cooks up light, fluffy and fragrant without needing to pre-soak.

Basmati Rice

This long, slender, and aromatic grain is native to select regions of India, where more than 90 percent of the overseas basmati rice market emanates, as well as Pakistan and Nepal. It was introduced to the Middle East and Central Asia by Hindu traders, and is now not only a quintessential part of Indian cuisine, but also Middle Eastern and Central Asian menus.
How Rice Is Consumed in Asia

It is no secret that Asia and rice go hand-in-hand. Here are the prominent rice dishes in their respective countries across Asia.

**THAILAND**

**Khaoniao Mamuang**
Better known as mango sticky rice, this traditional Thai dessert is made with glutinous rice, brown sugar, and fresh mango. It is then drenched in coconut milk, giving it a sweet, creamy, and luscious texture as well as delicious flavour.

**MALAYSIA**

**Nasi Lemak**
*Nasi lemak* is a prominent Malay dish in which rice is cooked in coconut milk and pandan leaves, and often served with anchovies, peanuts, a boiled egg, cucumber, *sambal* (a spicy relish made from ground chilli peppers and various other ingredients) and either fried or curried fish, chicken, or red meat.

**SINGAPORE**

**Hainanese Chicken Rice**
This is a dish of poached chicken with rice seasoned in chicken broth, garlic and ginger. It is served with a chilli paste and cucumber slices. Hainanese chicken rice was created by immigrants from Hainan in southern China and adapted from the Hainanese dish *Wenchang* chicken.

**MYANMAR**

**Htamin Jin**
This fermented rice dish is the regional specialty of the Intha people of Inle Lake in Shan state. The rice is kneaded with boiled fish, fresh tomato paste, mashed boiled potatoes, and finished off with a garlic garnish. Highland Shan rice, a starchy grain, is used alongside Shan potatoes, giving the dish a very rich texture.
**BRUNEI**

Nasi Katok

Nasi katok is a dish of plain rice, fried chicken and sambal. It is traditionally served wrapped in brown paper.

**CAMBODIA**

Bai Sach Chrouk

*Bai sach chrouk*, or pork and rice, is amongst Cambodia’s most popular breakfast dishes, and cannot be found past noon. The pork is marinated with garlic and coconut milk, then grilled over burning charcoal.

**LAOS**

Laap

*Laap* is a Vietnamese salad dish with a meat base and vegetables that are dressed in lime, garlic, fish sauce, mint leaves, and spring onion. It is then mixed with ground toasted rice, which gives it a nutty flavour and also makes it a well-rounded meal.

**PHILIPPINES**

Champorado

Traditionally made by boiling sticky rice with sugar, milk, and cocoa powder, *champorado* is a sweet chocolate rice porridge. Evaporated milk is usually drizzled on top to enhance its flavour and give it a creamier texture.

**VIETNAM**

Bánh Chung

*Bánh chưng* is a traditional Vietnamese glutinous rice dumpling with mung beans and pork, amongst other ingredients. Fun fact: Legend has it that Lang Liêu, a prince in the Sixth Hùng Dynasty, became king because he created bánh chưng and bánh giầy, which symbolised the earth and the sky, respectively.

**INDONESIA**

Nasi Goreng

Arguably Indonesia’s national dish, *nasi goreng* is a take on fried rice and is often seasoned with sweet, thick soy sauce – kecap – and garnished with *achar* (a mix of pickled cucumber and carrots).

**PHOTO:**

BRUNEI TOURISM

21
**AFGHANISTAN**

**Kabuli Pulao**

Considered the national dish of Afghanistan, *kabuli pulao* is a dish of saffron-steamed rice mixed with slow-cooked lamb, caramelised carrots and sultanas.

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**NEPAL**

**Samya Bhaji**

*Samay Bhaji* is a big plate of beaten rice, barbecued buffalo meat, boiled egg, and spicy potato salad. It is a traditional dish of the Newari people and has been passed on from generations. The dish is usually served during festivals.

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**PAKISTAN**

**Zarda**

Pakistani *zarda*, or sweet rice, is a Pakistani dessert that is full of flavour. The essential addition of saffron gives it a distinct taste and a yellowish tint, and nuts and raisins provide sweetness and texture to the rice base.

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**BANGLADESH**

**Pulao**

An easy one-pot breakfast dish, *pulao* is often vegetarian and the healthy choice. Rice and vegetables are sauteed together and then boiled or pressure cooked with water till fragrant, fluffy and cooked through.

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**A RICE JOURNEY**

**PHOTO:** NEPALIAUSTRALIAN.COM

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**INDIA**

**Kachchi Biryani**

*Kachchi biryani* features layers of meat, rice and potatoes infused with aromatic spices. The ingredients are combined raw and then steamed in their juices. A pot of *kachchi biryani* is not opened until it is ready to be eaten!
**HONG KONG**

**Shao e Fan**

This is a traditional specialty of Cantonese cuisine: A whole goose is roasted and cut into small pieces, and each piece has the skin, meat and soft bone intact. It is often eaten with plum sauce and rice.

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**MONGOLIA**

**Budaatái Khuurga**

This is an authentic Mongolian rice dish, cooked with shredded lamb or beef, onions, cabbage, carrots and capsicums. *Budaatái khuurga* is perfect to enjoy in a yurt on a cold winter night!

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**CHINA**

**Chaofan**

Can there be a list of rice dishes without fried rice on it? While the exact origins of fried rice are lost to history, it’s believed that it was invented sometime during the Sui Dynasty (AD 589–618), in the city of Yangzhou in eastern China’s Jiangsu province. Fried rice may seem like one of the simplest dishes in this list, but something about steamed rice that has been stir-fried in a wok with eggs, vegetables, and meat screams comfort and satiation like nothing else.

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**JAPAN**

**Sushi**

A dish of prepared high-grade Japanese rice, usually with vinegar, sugar and salt, wrapped up or topped with a variety of ingredients such as seafood, eggs, or vegetables, sushi needs no introduction as it is served and enjoyed all over the world.

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**SOUTH KOREA**

**Bibimbap**

*Bibimbap*, or mixed rice, is served in a hot – often stone – bowl with sautéed vegetables, chilli and soybean paste. A raw egg is often cracked right on top of it, cooked from the heat of the bowl.

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**TAIWAN**

**Lu Rou Fan**

*Lu Rou Fan* essentially originated when eating meat was a luxury to most, and if a small piece of pork came along, it was cut it into small pieces, braised for a long time to create a savoury meat sauce bursting with flavour, and mixed with lots of steamed rice for an entire family to enjoy. Today, it is Taiwan’s top comfort food and one of her most popular dishes, and is often served with pickled radish to enhance its flavour.
**Palov**

The main ingredients of *palov* are rice, oil or butter, onions and carrots, with lamb or other meat often added. It is a key dish in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan and can be found at roadside stalls.

**Pilav**

*Pilav*, or Turkish rice, is buttered and toasted, and combined with meat and vegetables. It is then topped with a generous dollop of yoghurt, which is a recommended mix-in for the dish.
IRAQ

Maqluba

Maqluba is a traditional Iraqi dish that consists of meat, rice and fried vegetables. All the ingredients are carefully placed in the pot in layers, so that when the pot is inverted for serving, the dish looks like a layer cake. The dish goes back centuries and is found in the Kitab al-Tabikh, a collection of 13th-century recipes.

SAUDI ARABIA, OMAN, UAE, QATAR, TURKEY, AND KUWAIT

Kabsa

Also called makboos, this is a traditional mixed rice dish that originated in Saudi Arabia. It is a prominent meal in the Gulf countries and consists of basmati rice, vegetables, meat or chicken, and a mix of spices. It may be served with yoghurt, salad, traditional bread and tomato sauce.

YEMEN

Saltah

Saltah is widely eaten in northern Yemen and mainly served for lunch. The base is a brown meat stew, or maraq, a dollop of fenugreek froth, and sahowqa (a Yemeni salsa). It is traditionally eaten with rice and Yemeni flatbread, which serves as a utensil to scoop up the food.

IRAN

Chelo Kebab

The national dish of Iran, chelo kebab is made of steamed saffron Persian rice and one of a variety of kebab.
The humble noodle is a versatile staple that is enjoyed all over the world in different forms. While its origins have always been a highly debated topic, in 2005, archaeologists unearthed a perfectly preserved 4,000-year-old bowl of noodles in northwestern China.

Text Shreya Acharya

Oodles of Noodles

The humble noodle is a versatile staple that is enjoyed all over the world in different forms. While its origins have always been a highly debated topic, in 2005, archaeologists unearthed a perfectly preserved 4,000-year-old bowl of noodles in northwestern China.

Text Shreya Acharya
In 2005, an overturned bowl of noodles, made of two kinds of millet grain, were found buried under three metres of sediment in northwestern China at the Lajia archaeological site.

Millet is a grain indigenous to China and was first cultivated as much as 7,000 years ago. Some of the earliest evidence of millet cultivation in China has been found in Cishan, northern China, where proso millet husk phytoliths and biomolecular components identified to be around 8,700 to 10,300 years old were discovered in storage pits, along with the remains of pit-houses, pottery, and stone tools related to millet cultivation. The unearthing of these noodles also proves that the conversion of ground millet flour into dough that could be repeatedly stretched into long, thin strands for the preparation of boiled noodles was already established in this region four millennia ago.

The earliest written record of noodles appears in a third century Chinese dictionary. It describes a dough made from flour and water, which is then torn into pieces and added to soup called mian pian. This dish is still eaten in China today.

Fine sheets of fried dough, or lagana, appeared in the works of Horace, who was the leading Roman lyric poet under Augustus’ rule. An early fifth century cookbook describes lagana as layered dough with stuffed meat, leading to the possibility of it being an ancestor to modern-day lasagna.

Henan noodles, a dish still eaten today, originated in the Tang Dynasty. The dough is worked aggressively by being pulled straight, with no twisting, folding or waving. It is also slammed on a table to ensure even stretching and uniform thickness.

Greek physician Galen mentions ition, homogeneous compounds made of flour and water. The Jerusalem Talmud also recorded that itrium, a kind of boiled dough and probably its successor, was common in Palestine from the third to the fifth centuries AD.

Udon is adapted from a Chinese recipe by a Buddhist monk.

In earlier dynasties, noodles were mostly referred to as soup cakes, but during the Song Dynasty wheat-based noodles officially became known as mian. Rice flour and other starch-based noodles became known as fen.
The first concrete evidence of pasta products can be traced to the 13th or 14th century, when fresh and dried pastas similar to today’s were consumed and an identical method of cooking was employed.

Hand-pulled noodles were developed. They were made by twisting, stretching and folding the dough into strands. The classic “five-spice” and “eight treasure” noodles were also created during this time.

Fishermen began selling ta-a, long, wheat-based noodles from baskets that hung from a pole carried over their shoulders, to earn money during the typhoon season when it was too dangerous to fish.

Noodles, or reshteh, are first mentioned in literary works of Persia in the 13th century. Theories suggest that these were the noodles that were introduced to Italy, and eventually led to what we know as pasta today.

Dried noodles that could be preserved for a long time were introduced. Dough made from wheat flour was kneaded to the width of a chopstick then pulled, twisted and folded in on itself and stretched into noodles several feet in length. They were then hung on racks to dry in the sun. Known as misua, today, these noodles are still enjoyed, especially as part of a celebratory meal.

Naengmyeon, or buckwheat noodles, became popular.

Persia
1201–1300

1271–1368
Yuan Dynasty, China
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Ming Dynasty, China
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1271–1368
Yuan Dynasty, China
Dried noodles that could be preserved for a long time were introduced. Dough made from wheat flour was kneaded to the width of a chopstick then pulled, twisted and folded in on itself and stretched into noodles several feet in length. They were then hung on racks to dry in the sun. Known as misua, today, these noodles are still enjoyed, especially as part of a celebratory meal.

1368–1644
Ming Dynasty, China
Hand-pulled noodles were developed. They were made by twisting, stretching and folding the dough into strands. The classic “five-spice” and “eight treasure” noodles were also created during this time.

1644–1911
Qing Dynasty, China
Fishermen began selling ta-a, long, wheat-based noodles from baskets that hung from a pole carried over their shoulders, to earn money during the typhoon season when it was too dangerous to fish.
Cold Noodle Soup with Sophora Leaves (Translated)

Green are the high sophora tree leaves,
we pluck them and send them to the kitchen.
Fresh noodles come from the market nearby,
they are combined with the juice and crushed leaves.
They are put in the kettle to ensure they will be quickly done,
I eat more, worrying that it will soon be gone.
Emerald freshness shines together on the chopsticks,
frAGRANT rice along with reed shoots.
Passing my teeth it is colder than snow,
I urge others, offering them like pearls.

DID YOU KNOW

When one refers to a dish of noodles,
a piping hot soup or dry dish is often pictured. However, many Asian regions offer cold noodle dishes as a refreshing alternative. These include the Japanese mori soba, which are cold soba noodles served with tyusu, or soy sauce; the Korean naengmyeon, which are thin, chewy noodles made with buckwheat and potato or sweet potato starch and served in a cold broth; and liang pi, or cold skin noodles, which are seasoned with a tangy and spicy savoury sauce, and is one of the most popular street foods in northwestern China. Eaten for centuries, cold noodles are often served slightly chilled – the perfect meal during hot summer months.
**Soba**

Made from buckwheat flour, *soba* is a traditional noodle dish made in Japan and usually a representative of Japanese cuisine alongside sushi. These chewy, nutty-flavoured noodles are native to Japan, and are traditionally eaten on New Year’s Eve as a symbol of longevity.

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**Lamian**

Translating from Chinese to “pulled noodles”, *lamian* refers to the technique used to make its long, thick strands. *Lamian* is hand-pulled, made by twisting, stretching and folding the dough into ribbons, using the weight of the dough. Since they are made of flour, the taste of the noodles is heavily dependent on the flavour of the soup broth.

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**Ramen**

Ramen is associated with Japan, but this noodle variety actually originated in China. Ramen became popular in Japan in the late 1800s, and is now ubiquitous in Japanese cities. There are many varieties of ramen noodles, from wavy to straight, thin to thick, and just as many variations of the broth it’s usually submerged in.

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**Banh Pho**

*Banh pho* are flat Vietnamese rice noodles made from rice flour. The noodles have no flavour of their own, but absorb the flavours of their accompaniments, making them flexible and complementary to different types of soups.
**Dangmyeon**

Made from sweet potato starch, dangmyeon is also known as glass noodles. These noodles are most commonly used in japchae, a popular colourful Korean noodle stir-fried dish of vegetables and meat. The chewy, rubbery and springy texture of dangmyeon complements the strips of beef and vegetables such as carrots, mushrooms and onions.

**Udon**

These thick wheat noodles are often kneaded by udon makers’ feet due to its stiff dough! Udon is commonly served in broth flavoured with soy sauce and mirin, a type of rice wine that’s common in Japanese cooking.

**Vermicelli**

Different types of vermicelli noodles are used in Asia. In India, the noodles are used in the dessert kheer, and in Central Asian kesme and reshteh also resemble vermicelli. Faloodeh is a Persian frozen dessert made with thin vermicelli noodles frozen with corn starch, rose water, lime juice, and often ground pistachios. In East Asia, bee hoon is the common vermicelli, which is also served as wunsen in Thailand, kya zan in Myanmar, and bún in Vietnamese.

**Shahe Fen**

A type of wide Chinese noodle made from rice, shahe fen is often stir fried with meat and vegetables in a dish known as hor fun.
Here are some of the ways noodles are enjoyed in the different Asian regions. Sweet or savoury, dry or soup-based, there is a noodle dish for everyone to enjoy across the continent.

**MYANMAR**

**Mohinga**

The main ingredients of ***mohinga*** are chickpea flour and/or crushed toasted rice, garlic, onions, lemongrass, banana tree stems, ginger, fish paste, fish sauce, and catfish in a rich broth cooked and kept on the boil in a heavy pot. It is served with rice vermicelli, and if feeling fancy, includes optional extras, such as crisp fried fritters, *pé gyaw* (split chickpeas), *baya gyaw* (urad dal), or sliced pieces of Chinese donuts, as well as a boiled egg and fried *nga hpè* fish cake.

**THAILAND**

**Pad Thai**

A Thai classic, *pad thai* is made with rehydrated dried rice noodles which are stir-fried with eggs and firm tofu, flavoured with tamarind pulp, fish sauce, dried shrimp, garlic, shallots, red chili pepper and palm sugar, and served with lime wedges and chopped peanuts. There is also an option to add fresh shrimp, squid, or chicken.

**MALAYSIA**

**Curry Mee**

Silky, thick yellow noodles are cooked into a spicy curry soup, with sambal, coconut milk, and a choice of dried tofu, cuttlefish, chicken, egg, and garnished with mint leaves. *Curry mee* has been influenced by Malay, Malaysian Chinese, and Malaysian Indian cuisine.

**SINGAPORE**

**Satay Bee Hoon**

Invented by Teochew immigrants in Singapore, this dish starts off with a rice vermicelli base that is topped with a chilli-based peanut sauce. While the star of the show is its sauce, sometimes cuttlefish, *kang kong* ("water spinach"), bean sprouts, pork slices, prawns, or cockles are added to the vermicelli for added oomph as well.
**LAOS**

**Lard Na**

This dish is made with stir-fried wide rice noodles and either chicken, beef, pork, or tofu, and includes kailan (Chinese kale) and straw mushrooms. It is seasoned with sweet soy sauce, nam pa (fish sauce), sugar, garlic, and black pepper.

**PHILIPPINES**

**Pancit Palabok**

Pancit palabok is a rice noodle dish with shrimp sauce and topped with several ingredients such as cooked shrimp, boiled pork, crushed chicharon, tinapa (smoked fish) flakes, fried tofu, scallions, and fried garlic.

**CAMBODIA**

**Num Banh Chok**

Also known as Khmer noodles, this dish is made of rice noodles topped with a cool fish gravy and crisp raw vegetables including cucumbers, banana blossom, and water lily stems, garnished with fresh basil and mint.

**VIETNAM**

**Pho Bo**

Flat rice noodles are served in a clear broth, with thin cuts of beef. Variations feature slow-cooked tendon, tripe, or meatballs in southern Vietnam. Chicken pho is another option for non-red meat eaters, and is made using the same spices, but with a broth made of chicken bones and meat instead.

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**INdonesia**

**Sayur Lodeh**

Served with glass noodles, sayur lodeh is a Southeast Asian vegetable soup cooked in coconut milk, most often associated with Javanese cuisine.

**INDONESIA**

**Bakmi Ayam**

Recognised as a Chinese-Indonesian course, bakmi ayam is a dish of yellow wheat noodles mixed in a bowl with cooking oil, soy sauce, and garlic. A seasoned chicken and mushroom mixture is then placed on the noodles, and topped with chopped spring onions. The noodles are served with a separate chicken broth, boiled Chinese cabbage, and wontons (dumplings) or bakso (meatballs).

**GLORIOUS LAKSA!**

In Southeast Asia, you can’t talk noodles without talking laksa. A spicy noodle soup popular in Peranakan cuisine, it consists of thick wheat noodles or rice vermicelli with chicken, prawn or fish, served in spicy soup based on either a rich and spicy curried coconut milk or sour asam (tamarind), or a combination of both. Laksa can be enjoyed in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Southern Thailand. Curried variants include the Katong laksa of Singapore, Nyonya laksa of Malaysia, laksam of northeast Malaysia, Bogor laksa of Bogor, Indonesia, and Thai laksa, amongst others. Asam variations include Malaysia’s famous Penang laksa and Ipoh laksa, as well as Medan laksa of North Sumatra, Indonesia. The Sarawak, Kelantan, Johor, Terengganu, and T ambelan laksas are a fusion of both types, and can be found in the respective cities they are named after.
**SOUTH ASIA**

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Aush**
This Afghan noodle soup is creamy and rich. Made with different spices, it is a hearty dish of meat and noodles, drenched in a tomato-based soup and topped with *chakka* (yoghurt sauce).

**NEPAL**

**Thukpa**
A national noodle dish, *thukpa* is a rice noodle vegetable soup. The Nepalese version of *thukpa* is influenced by Indian spices, and contains chilli powder, as well as garam masala, which makes it hot and spicy with a dominant Indian curry flavour.

**PAKISTAN**

**Seviyan Kheer**
Finally something for a sweet tooth! *Seviyan* (vermicelli) *kheer* is a sweet, milky pudding made with a base of milk and ghee (clarified butter). It’s often eaten during Islamic festivals, and garnished lavishly with dried fruits and premium nuts.

**INDIA**

**Semiya Pulav**
This *semiya* (vermicelli) based dish is made with assorted vegetables, garam masala, and a myriad individual spices, and is often enjoyed as an easy weekend breakfast.

**BHUTAN**

**Puta**
Puta is a staple during festivals and when welcoming guests. The noodles are made of buckwheat, and prepared and boiled. They are then stir fried in mustard oil along with a light seasoning of salt and Sichuan pepper.
Guriltai Shul

*Guriltai shul* is a hearty soup with meat that is topped with fried noodles. As vegetables are a rarity in Mongolia, it contains onions and carrots, which make it an ideal comfort dish in harsh winters.

Japchae

It is said that *japchae* (fried sweet potato noodles) was invented in the 17th century, and was, as per the translation, a dish of mixed vegetables. However, today, the dish is better defined by its sweet potato glass noodles, and also includes seasoned beef or pork slices. It is often served as a side dish, but sometimes eaten with rice as a main meal.

Ramen

It is hard to pick just one of Japan’s noodle dishes – there is *soba*, *udon*, *yakisoba*, and many others that deserve a mention. However, ramen holds a special place in most hearts, and it is arguably the most famous of Japan’s variety of noodles. Ramen is a thin, wheat-based noodle that is enjoyed in a broth with *chāshū* (sliced pork), *kombu* (kelp), *katsuobushi* (bonito flakes), *shiitake* mushrooms, and onions. Its instant version is also available all over the world in supermarkets, and loved by many.

Wăhn Tăn Mihn

In Hong Kong (and Guangzhou), *wonton* noodles are served in steaming hot soup with shrimp or pork-filled *wontons*, and garnished with leafy vegetables. There are plenty of variations of this popular Cantonese dish, with different toppings and garnishes.

Niu Rou Mian

*Niu rou mian*, or beef noodle soup, is often proclaimed as Taiwan’s national dish. What sets it apart from other kinds of beef noodles is its distinct Taiwanese flavour, achieved with the addition of pickled mustard greens and five-spice powder. Taiwan also hosts the Taipei International Beef Noodle Festival every year, where *niu rou mian* is consumed by the gallon, and their local 7-Eleven stores even stock Lay’s potato crisps that are flavoured with *hong shao niu rou mian* (braised beef noodle soup).

Singapore Noodles

*Singapore Noodles*, surprise surprise, cannot be found anywhere in Singapore! Typically made with rice vermicelli stir-fried with vegetables, eggs, and meat or seafood in a curry powder seasoning, the dish can be found in Cantonese restaurants in Hong Kong, but is especially popular in Australia, Canada, America, and the UK as a Chinese cuisine, and even available in their respective supermarkets as ready meals or instant kits. The closest thing to it in Singapore is *sin chow bee hoon*, which omits the curry powder, and is often seasoned with soy sauce, oyster sauce, ketchup, and sesame oil instead.

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Central Asia

Kazakhstan

Beshbarmak

Beshbarmak is known as the national dish of Kazakhstan. Its name means “five fingers” because of how it’s eaten. It consists of boiled horse meat or lamb and large noodles that look like sheets of lasagna in an onion gravy.

West Asia

Turkey

Tutmaç Çorbası

Tutmaç çorbası is typically made using homemade, square-cut egg noodles and it is often prepared with the addition of beef, lamb or mutton, or even horsemeat. The soup is traditionally served with katık, a type of Turkish sour yoghurt.

Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, Oman, and Saudi Arabia

Balaleet

Balaleet is a dish that combines sweet with savoury. It is prepared with vermicelli sweetened with cardamom, saffron, and rose water, and topped with a thin egg omelette. A popular breakfast choice, this dish is prominent during Eid al-Fitr, the festival marking the end of the Ramadan fast, and eaten as the first meal of the day.

Oman

Halawet Ahmad

Halawet ahmad is a famous dessert in Oman, where small nests or domes made with vermicelli are sweetened with condensed milk, coconut, almond powder and butter, and usually garnished with pistachios.

Laghman

Laghman is Central Asia’s dominant noodle dish and is considered a national dish of the local Uyghur and Dungan ethnic groups. Popular in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, this entree consists of pulled noodles, meat, and vegetables, and can be dry or soup-based. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and northeastern Afghanistan variations include the addition of chickpeas.
How do we pick just one noodle dish of China, the home of noodles?

In an attempt to show just some of China’s noodle smorgasbord, here is a list of three prominent contenders across three different cities:

**Beijing**

**Zhajiangmian**

Zhajiangmian, or Beijing soybean paste noodles, is made with thin wheat noodles, soybean paste mixed with pork, and topped off with cucumber.

**Chengdu**

**Dan Dan Mian**

These spicy wheat noodles are springy and fresh, and served with stewed ground pork mixed with ya cai, or preserved vegetables. It is then seasoned with chilli oil, fresh chilli, Sichuan peppercorns, and scallions.

**Lanzhou**

**Lan Zhou Niu Rou La Mian**

Created by the Muslim Chinese (Hui) people with a recipe passed on for generations since the Tang Dynasty, these Chinese-Muslim style beef noodles are typically known for incorporating halal meat and clear beef broth flavoured with herbs and salt.

**Iraq**

**Halawat Sha’riyya**

A traditional Iraqi dessert, halawat sha’riyya is a sweet and golden vermicelli noodle dish that is made with butter, sugar, cardamom, rose water, and pistachios and walnuts.

**Iran and Azerbaijan**

**Ash Reshteh**

Ash (thick soup) reshteh (thin noodle) is a thick vegetable, bean, and noodle soup that is traditionally prepared to welcome the Persian New Year, and symbolise good fortune for the coming year. It is often garnished with a drizzle of kashk, a yoghurt-like dairy product.

“I would prefer no house to live in, rather than no noodles to eat.”

Old Chinese saying
While Asian food gets all the glory, her beverages also deserve a mention. After all, how can you talk food without talking about its accompaniment? Whether you long for something sweet, refreshing, or energising; need warmth seeping through your bones on a winter’s night; or crave something to cool down after a hot day, Asia has you covered. From sweet to savoury, caffeinated to serotonin-inducing, cool and refreshing to warm and comforting, these Asian beverages will take you across the continent and through different flavours, cultures, and walks of life.

Text Shreya Acharya
**MYANMAR**

**Lahpet**

A popular Burmese expression goes, “Of all the fruit, the mango’s the best; of all the meat, the pork’s the best; and of all the leaves, lahpet’s the best.” Lahpet, or fermented or pickled tea, is Myanmar’s unique heritage. Tea is therefore not only a popular drink in this region, but also a delicacy.

**THAILAND**

**Cha Yen**

Thai milk tea is a renowned beverage in Southeast Asia. Condensed milk and sugar are mixed with Ceylon tea, and the concoction is poured over ice and then topped with evaporated milk, giving it an incredibly sweet and rich flavour.

**MALAYSIA**

**Teh Tarik**

*Teh tarik*, or “pulled” tea, is a hot, milky tea made by mixing black tea with condensed or evaporated milk. It is often considered Malaysia’s national drink, and its name comes from the pouring process of “pulling” the drink during preparation. The origin of *teh tarik* can be traced back to the World War II, when Indian Muslim immigrants opened up tea stalls at rubber plantations to serve the workers, and ended up creating a concoction that proved a hit amongst the public.

**SINGAPORE**

**Kopi**

Most mornings begin with coffee, and local *kopi* is an inexpensive brew made from robusta coffee beans that are roasted with sugar and margarine under high heat to caramelise the beans. The ground coffee is then mixed with hot water and strained in a flannel sock filter. *Kopi* is consumed hot or cold, and black or with sweet and creamy condensed milk.
**BRUNEI**  
**Coconut Milk**  
Fresh coconut milk is not only used for cooking, but in Brunei it is a popular drink enjoyed on its own. Natural, local, and healthy, it is perfect as a refreshment and a nutritional beverage on a sweltering day.

**CAMBODIA**  
**Palm Juice**  
Regarded as the traditional Cambodian drink, fresh palm juice contains vitamins B, C and D and is full of minerals. Palm is the national plant of Cambodia, and all its parts can be used: Its fruit can be eaten, the juice drunk, the leaves converted into mats and baskets, and the trunk is used as a construction material.

**LAOS**  
**Paksong Ca Fay**  
Coffee serves as Laos’ main export commodity, and these Laotian robusta beans are planted on the Bolaven Plateau in Paksong. This is often served hot in a glass with condensed milk on the bottom, meant to be stirred in.

**PHILIPPINES**  
**Salabat**  
This Filipino ginger tea is akin to sipping hot chocolate during the Christmas season. It is especially popular during the chillier month of December in the Philippines and the best accompaniment to the seasonal treats of the time. This drink also does wonders for a sore throat!

**VIETNAM**  
**Nước Mía**  
Better known as sugarcane juice, this beverage is sold by street vendors that freshly squeeze sugarcane stalks. This is then mixed with fresh calamansi juice, providing a crisp grassy flavor that cools you down in the Vietnamese heat.

**INDONESIA**  
**Bir Pletok**  
Despite its name, this Jakartan drink has no beer (bir) in its ingredient list. Bir Pletok is made from ginger, lemongrass, cardamom, cinnamon, sappan wood, and sugar to give its red hue and sweet, refreshing taste.

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**BANGLADESH**

*Seven-Layer Tea*

Seven-layer tea was invented upon discovery that different tea leaves have different densities. Each layer contrasts in colour and taste, ranging from syrupy sweet to spicy clove, and results in alternating dark and light band patterns throughout the drink, giving this tea its name.

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**NEPAL**

*Raksi*

Alcohol in Nepal is generally referred to as *raksi*, but the original brew is made from millet, rice, barley, or wheat passed through a distillation process, giving it an alcohol content that is more than 45 percent. Home-brewed *raksi* can be clear or slightly cloudy, and served hot or at room temperature, making it perfect for the chilly Himalayan weather.

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**INDIA**

*Lassi*

This sweet or salty dairy-based beverage is a blend of yogurt, water, spices and sometimes mango or chocolate. *Lassi* originates from Punjab, and is widely consumed in north India as a cold and refreshing drink, especially during the hot summer months.

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**BHUTAN**

*Ara*

*Ara* is a Bhutanese traditional alcoholic beverage made from native barley, rice, maize, and millet grains, or wheat, then distilled. The beverage is usually a clear, creamy, or white colour, but red cypress can be added to give it a reddish tint. It is often consumed cold but it can be heated and mixed with butter and eggs, thus becoming a hearty drink.

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**PAKISTAN**

*Gunney Ka Rus*

The government of Pakistan declared sugarcane juice as the country’s national drink in 2019, thanks to its large scale sugarcane production and the abundance of its fresh nectar. It is sold by roadside vendors, and famous for its refreshing and sweet taste in the hot summers. Delicious as it is on its own, lemon juice, ginger, or mint is sometimes added to enhance its flavours.
**East Asia**

**China**

**Yanqishui**

This refreshing carbonated water with hints of lemon and mint has been around since the 1960s — mainly in Shanghai. *Yanqishui* was the drink of choice for locals before Coca-Cola knocked on China's door, and many Chinese people still associate their childhoods with this sweet and fizzy drink.

**South Korea**

**Soju**

*Soju* is a clear, colourless distilled beverage with an alcohol content varying from 16% to 53%. Usually consumed neat, *soju* is traditionally made from rice, wheat, or barley, but modern producers often replace rice with other starches such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, or tapioca. *Soju* is best enjoyed with Korean food or snacks!

**Mongolia**

**Airag**

Also known as *kumis, airag* is a fermented dairy product traditionally made from mare's milk. It has a unique, slightly sour flavour with a bite and is usually served cold or chilled. Because mare’s milk contains more sugars than cow or goat’s milk, when fermented, *kumis* has a higher, though still mild, alcohol content.

**Japan**

**Sake**

Commonly referred to as *Japanese rice wine, sake* is an alcoholic beverage made by fermenting rice that has been polished to remove the bran. Because *sake* is less acidic than wine and contains more amino acids, it pairs well with many different types of food. However, it is believed that the best way to enjoy it is alongside traditional Japanese dishes like sashimi, sushi, or tempura.

**Taiwan**

**Zhenzhu Naicha**

The world-renowned bubble tea is a Taiwanese tea-based drink that was invented in Tainan and Taichung in the 1980s. It became known as "bubble tea" because of the thick layer of foam that forms on top of the drink after it is shaken. Recipes contain tea of some kind, flavours of milk, and sugar. Toppings such as chewy tapioca balls (pearls), popping boba, fruit jelly, grass jelly, agar, and puddings are often added to enhance taste and texture.

**Hong Kong**

**Gongsik Naaihcha**

Hong Kong-style milk tea has its roots in the British colonial days, where afternoon tea grew in popularity. However, Hong Kong’s version is made with strong black tea and condensed milk, with the tea leaves being repeatedly filtered through a sackcloth bag resembling a pair of stockings. *Gongsik naaihcha* is actually more popular than coffee, with 900 million glasses downed annually, and can be sampled in local cha chaan tengs (tea restaurants) across the city.
KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, AND UZBEKISTAN

2 Boza

Boza is a thick, yeasty, slightly fizzy concoction made from boiled fermented millet or other grains. It is a malt drink with a thick consistency, a low alcohol content (around 1%), and a slightly acidic sweet flavour.

KYRGYZSTAN

1 Kvass

Kvass is a mildly alcoholic drink made from fermented rye bread. The colour of the bread used contributes to the brownish colour of the resulting drink. It may sometimes be flavoured with strawberries or raisins, or even mint.

AFGHANISTAN

4 Sharbat-e-rayhan

A refreshing summer drink, sharbat-e-rayhan is a jelly-like, sweet beverage made with soaked basil seeds that is mixed either with plain water or fruit cordial. Rose essence may also be added to enhance its local flavours.

TURKMENISTAN AND KAZAKHSTAN

1 Chal

This fermented camel’s milk is white in colour with a sour bite. As it is hard to export because of its short shelf life, chal is a beverage unique to the region.

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KUWAIT
Leben

This milk tea is made from black tea brewed with condensed or evaporated milk. Sugar, cardamom pods and cloves are usually added to the tea to enhance its flavour and aroma.

YEMEN
Shahi Haleeb

This Yemeni milk tea is made from black tea brewed with condensed or evaporated milk. Sugar, cardamom pods and cloves are usually added to the tea to enhance its flavour and aroma.

IRAQ AND TURKEY
Arak

This clear, colourless, and unsweetened anise-flavoured distilled alcoholic drink is commonly mixed in a 1:2 ratio with water. It is then served on the rocks.

OMAN
Kahwa

This Omani coffee is a unique blend of Arabian coffee and is usually mixed with cardamom. Served black, it has a bitter taste and, therefore, is often served with halwa, dates, and fruits to balance out the flavours. Note: It is considered rude to decline an offer of kahwa!

SAUDI ARABIA
Saudi Champagne

Saudi champagne does not actually contain any alcohol – after all, this is a strict Islamic nation. The drink is a combination of sliced fruits, apple cider, and sparkling water.

QATAR
Karak

This bright orange drink is a strong dark tea that is spiced with cardamom and saffron, then mixed with sugar and evaporated milk to mellow its flavours.

IRAN
Doogh

This savoury, salted yoghurt drink was consumed in ancient Persia, and is still hugely popular today. It is often served chilled and paired with grilled meat and rice. Doogh may include pepper, mint, lime juice, or even cucumber pieces. Best of all, there is a carbonated version of the drink, too.

UAE
Jellab

A classic Arabic drink is jellab, a blend of grape molasses and rose water, with optional toppings of pine nuts and raisins. It’s a popular drink on a hot summer’s night, and especially during Ramadan.
Paan: The Perfect Parcel

Text Bryan Chan
Photos Bryan Chan and Shutterstock

Look around the pavements of any Indian city, and you will find red splatter spots marked on the ground. These are sun-dried spit stains, the unwelcome residue left by users of the country’s favourite vice – paan. The brick-red splotches often appear randomly scattered, but here and there, you will find them pooled together resembling an accident scene – a sure sign that a paan wala – a skilled paan maker – is just around the corner.

Paan comes from the Sanskrit word panna, which means leaf, but these days the word is synonymous with the flavour-packed after-meal snack usually composed of choona (lime paste), katha (acacia paste), and supari (areca nut slices), and loaded up with spices or sweets, then wrapped in a betel leaf.

Chewed by almost a tenth of the world’s population, paan has been used across Asia for over 5,000 years. From India to the Middle East, Indonesia to Thailand, the popular street dish is commonly had after meals as a breath freshener, a palette cleanser, a digestive aid, or simply as a dessert snack. It is also taken in weight control diets for its hunger-curbing and metabolism-increasing properties.

Paan is no doubt an integral part of India’s social and cultural practice and identity. In Assam, it is offered to guests after a meal as a customary sign of respect. Similarly, in Mysore, two betel leaves are offered to visitors on special occasions to symbolise good fortune and auspicious beginnings. In the north, paan leaves embellish kalash, a metallic or clay pot present during festive rituals like Durga Pooja and Diwali, which would otherwise be incomplete without the heart-shaped leaves.

For many millions, paan is a daily affair used simply for its stimulating effects. Providing its chewer with a buzz similar to nicotine at small dosages and a psychoactive high at larger amounts, the areca nut is undeniably the reason why many are addicted to the leaf wrap. When chewed together with choona and the betel leaf, the three ingredients form the reddish-brown liquid responsible for the many stained teeth, pavements, and walls across Asia.

So persistent is its staining spit that Dubai has resorted to banning the dish to put an end to this visual nuisance altogether. But here in India, paan is available everywhere, and at 9AM on Mumbai’s bustling Vaikunthlal Mehta Road, a crowd begins forming at the Brijwasi Paan Bhandar store. Bellies are full and mouths are itching. It’s peak-hour time for paan.

“Paan is no doubt an integral part of India’s social and cultural practice and identity”

Most in the crowd are regulars here for their after-meal fix. Like many in the city, they have a go-to wala whom they trust and rely upon to satisfy their cravings. With hands crossed and arms akimbo, the betel aficionados watch the familiar preparation process like a ritual – a visual appetiser before the mouthwatering main course.

Betel leaves are laid on the metal tabletop like emerald canvases waiting to be worked on. Jitendra Sharma, the shop’s owner and head paan maker, sits behind the counter taking orders. He is flanked by a wall of metal tins and plastic bottles, each one containing a different ingredient for his 20 or so paan concoctions available on – and off – the menu.
In the last 20 years, the mild narcotic snack has grown to include non-addictive varieties. By removing the areca nut and including modern spices and ingredients, the possibilities and reach of paan have expanded with the snack now available in family-friendly and children-safe varieties. Although puritans would argue that a paan without supari is a not a paan, walas all around have adapted to meet the growing demands for these fusion paan lovers.

At Brijwasi Paan Bhandar, a customer has ordered a fire paan sans supari, the epitome of a modern-day fusion paan. At a pace only acquired from countless repetitions, Jitendra opens a steel container and brushes a layer of choona over the underside of the paan leaf. From a clay pot, he lifts a steel rod to apply a sheen of katha on top. After bottle taps of Indian gooseberry powder and a thin slather of honey, he adds a dollop of rose petal paste and garnishes the small mound of ingredients with desiccated coconut and mint chocolate coated flax seeds.

At last, Jitendra slides the loaded paan on his palms and folds it swiftly into a triangle. He pins it shut with three clove tips and hands it over to his assistant Manoj, who sets the cloves alight and delivers the now flaming paan into the opened mouth of his waiting customer. A visual spectacle and a fiery delight, the fire paan like the other varieties of fusion paans, have given the age-old snack a fresh burst of life.

Just look at the paan boutiques that have popped up in Indian cities in recent times. While paan from the street ranges from 30 to 150 rupees (40 US-cents to USD2), boutique paan can fetch up 1,000 rupees, or USD14. Gold covered almonds, dark
chocolate coats, edible silver foil, fire, ice, and smoke. Novelty is the name of the game here. Wrapped up and served in a fancy package, these gourmet paan are crafted for an entirely different clientele.

Gone are the days where only men or addicts frequent the paan walas. The paan scene, like India’s social environment, is fast evolving. The walls of exclusivity are being brought down, and the ancient snack is being interpreted, celebrated, and shared in modern and more inclusive expressions. From the traditionalist to the experimentalist, addict to aficionado, Muslim, Hindu, man, woman, or child, there is something now for everyone, and it is wrapped in a little green parcel.
Interesting Paan Variations

Myanmar

Betel chewing has a long tradition in Myanmar, and up until the 1960s most households had a kun it, or a lacquerware box for paan, often to offer to guests with green tea on the side. Known as kwun-ya, the recipe of what is inside Myanmar’s betel leaf changes from one kiosk to another, with some including tobacco, chilli, and even jam! A toothpick is often used to keep everything in place before you pop it in your mouth.

Bangladesh

Paan-shupari is an important element of Bangladeshi culture, rich or poor. The leaves are arranged on a decorated plate called paandani and offered to elderly people – particularly women – when they engage in leisure time gossip with their friends and relatives. It also plays a vital part in rituals, etiquette, and manners. On formal occasions, offering paan symbolises the time for departure, and in festivals and dinners, paan-shupari is used as celebratory offerings.

Philippines

Part of the indigenous culture in the Philippines, betel nut chewing is colloquially known as buyo, bunga, hitso, or nga nga (which means “to chew”) in Tagalog and bua, maman or mama in Ilocano. Today, chewing betel nut is primarily done amongst the Lumads of Mindanao, locals in the lowland barrios, and the inhabitants of the Cordilleras. Although the tradition in urban areas has been replaced with modern vices such as cigarettes and chewing gum, in rural areas, betel nut chewing continues to thrive.

HOW TO ENJOY PAAN

STEP 1
Take the paan using your forefinger and thumb so that the contents don’t spill out.

STEP 2
Place it in your mouth, right under the teeth on the left or right side as the leaf might unwrap itself when placed in the centre and release the juices all around engulfing the taste buds to cause a gag reflex.

STEP 3
Chew, and let the syrupy sweetness overwhelm you as a good dessert might. Provided there is no tobacco added, swallow.
After nicotine, alcohol and caffeine, betel nut is the world’s fourth-most popular psychoactive substance.

**DID YOU KNOW**

Dispose off any residue in a bin.

**STEP 4**

Brush your teeth when you get back home to get rid of the red stains!

**STEP 5**

After nicotine, alcohol and caffeine, betel nut is the world’s fourth-most popular psychoactive substance.

**Taiwan**

*Binláng* is sold from roadside kiosks by *binláng xīshí*, or “betel nut beauties”. Donned in miniskirts, these ladies are seen in neon-lit glass kiosks by the roadside, and the target audience for their tasty binláng are, naturally, men. While betel nut is sold in many parts of Asia, this unusual marketing tactic is a Taiwanese tradition. It is also one that is controversial, with concerns about exploitation and health violations, especially since a majority of the employees are from working class backgrounds.

**Indonesia & Malaysia**

Referred to as *bersirih*, *nyirih* or *menginang*, chewing betel nut is widespread amongst ethnic groups in Indonesia, especially in the Javanese, Balinese, and Malay communities. *Menginang* chewing is a vital gesture in welcoming guests with a complete and elaborate set of *sirih pinang* equipment. The set is usually made of wooden lacquerware, brass or silverware and it consists of a *combol* (container), *bekas sirih* (leaf container), *kacip* (press-knife to cut areca nut), *gobek* (small pestle and mortar), and *ketur* (spit container). *Sirih pinang* has become a symbol of Malay culture, as are the sayings, “The betel opens the door to the home” or “The betel opens the door to the heart”. *Menginang* is used at many formal occasions such as marriages, births, deaths, and healings.

**Vietnam**

In Vietnam, *trau* is an important symbol of love and marriage, and the Vietnamese phrase *chuyện trầu cau*, or “matters of betel and areca”, is synonymous with marriage. Chewing *trau* starts when the marriage is arranged up till the wedding itself, where the leaves and juices are used ceremonially.
Edible Leaf-Wrapped Dishes of Asia

JAPAN
Mehari Sushi

*Mehari Sushi*, which translates to “wide-eyed sushi” in Japanese, is a traditional dish hailing from the Mie Prefecture of Kumano City. Instead of seaweed, flavoured rice and pickled vegetables are wrapped in a pickled *takana* mustard leaf. So tasty is the dish that it is said that anyone who takes a bite is left wide-eyed with delight.

VIETNAM
Bò Lá Lốt

The leaves that wrap the Vietnamese dish *lá lốt* are the very same kind used in *miang kham*. But on the streets of Vietnam, the snack takes on a meatier and smokier expression. With a spice-seasoned and fish-sauce-marinated beef and pork mince, it is rolled and wrapped in wild betel leaves and grilled over a pot of burning coal. Garnished with spring onions and peanuts, the street snack is commonly taken with *nước chấm*, Vietnam’s ubiquitous dipping fish sauce.

THAILAND, LAOS
Mieng Kham

Originating from northern Thailand, this flavour-packed pouch is loved by Thais all around. It is filled with roasted coconut shavings, spices, lime, nuts, and shrimp and wrapped in the *cha phlu* leaf. Also known as the wild betel leaf, *cha phlu* looks similar to the betel leaf used in *paan*. With both leaves sporting the same shade and shape, it is not uncommon for both foreigners and locals to mistake one for the other. *Miang kham* is frequently had during the rainy seasons when the *cha phlu* leaf grows in abundance.
CHINA

**Bai Cai Juan**

Light, simple, and refined. The delicate dish of **bai cai juan** is a home dish that has made its way to dim sum places and restaurant tables all across the country. Ground meat or minced prawn filling is wrapped with the stem of the Chinese *daikon* cabbage and then steamed. When bitten into, the dish releases a savoury broth-like juice.

KOREA

**Ssam**

Served with a platter of condiments at restaurants and present with the grilled meats at Korean barbeque joints, **ssam**, which means “wrapped” in Korean, refers to the act of wrapping ingredients in a leafy green. At restaurants, **ssam** may come with dishes and sauces specially selected by the chef for a tailored experience. At barbeque joints, this choice is left to the diner, who creates the wrap with whatever he or she pleases. Either way, most Koreans would agree that **ssam** is best taken in one mouthful.

SYRIA, TURKEY, LEBANON, IRAQ, IRAN

**Dolma**

In Turkish, **dolma** comes from the word *dolmakia*, which means “to wrap”. The grape leaf dish is believed to have originated from the Middle East and has been present in the region’s cuisine for hundreds of years. Each country has its own unique take on the dish, which is usually a modification of the basic recipe of uncooked rice mixed with herbs, spices, and nuts steamed in a pot until ready to eat.
Asian desserts are chock-full of unique, delectable tastes and textures. The largest continent in the world boasts a variety of people and cultures, who inevitably come to the party with their own vast ranges of desserts. With recipes handed down through the generations, these sweet treats are steeped in tradition. From southeast to east, and west to the south, we bring to your plate the plethora of dishes and their ingredients from all corners of the continent.

Text Shreya Acharya
The iconic soy sauce factory in Wakayama, Japan. Its on-site shop sells a variety of soy sauce products, including soy sauce flavoured ice cream for the adventurous!
BRUNEI
Kuih Cincin
This Bruneian kuih is made with both red palm sugar and brown sugar, and coated with rice flour before deep-frying. Fun fact: The word cincin translates to “ring”, which refers to the distinctive shape of these “cakes”.

CAMBODIA
Sankhya Lapov
This tasty treat consists of a small pumpkin filled with creamy custard containing coconut milk or cream, palm sugar paste, eggs, and salt, which is then steamed. It is usually prepared with kabocha squash, which is dark green on the outside and has a bright orange interior with a sweet flavour.

VIETNAM
Banh Chuoi
Usually made with plantain, this steamed banana cake is a popular Vietnamese dessert. The cake is commonly served with a creamy coconut sauce and the cooked plantain often appears purplish-red in colour. Banh chuoi comes in two versions: Banh chuoi nuong, which is baked, and Banh chuoi hap, which is steamed with the addition of rice starch.

MYANMAR
Mont Lone Yay Paw
The name of this dish translates to “food floating on water”, which accurately describes what it looks like when it’s being cooked. These glutinous rice balls filled with jaggery (dark unrefined sugar) are served with fresh grated coconut, and are commonly made during the New Year.

PHILIPPINES
Halo-halo
Halo-halo is tall glass of everything! Halo is the Tagalog word for “mix”, and that is the key to enjoying this dessert. Comprising crushed ice, nata de coco, beans, sago pearls, jelly, sweetened saba banana, sweet potato, coconut, ube (purple yam) jam, evaporated milk, leche flan, ube ice cream, jackfruit, and fried pinipig (flattened immature rice grains), halo-halo is definitely a mouthful… and literally so!
INDONESIA
Martabak Manis
This sweet, thick and fluffy pancake is a local favourite, and is usually sold at roadside stalls and sidewalk carts. Martabak manis, or “sweet thick pancake,” is often topped with crushed peanuts, chocolate sprinkles, Nutella, cheese, or fruit.

MALAYSIA
Kuih Dadar
This bite-sized dessert or snack has shredded coconut with gula Melaka, or Malaysian palm sugar, rolled into the centre of a pandan flavoured crepe. Pandan leaf is its core ingredient and the green exterior of kuih dadar is made of batter coloured with natural pandan juice, extracted from these leaves.

SINGAPORE
Ais Kacang
The ais kacang, literally “iced beans,” is Singapore’s most iconic dessert, and can be found in virtually any food court or hawker centre. Originally from Malaysia, it has a base of shaved ice, red beans, sweet corn, agar jelly, and is topped with evaporated or condensed milk and sweet, multicoloured syrups. Just be sure it eat it quick, before the tropical heat devours the ice instead!

THAILAND
Khanom Tuay
This traditional steamed coconut milk pudding has a custard-like coconut base and is topped with salty coconut cream. These two layers are jelly-like, and the sweet and savoury flavours meld to form a delicious treat. Khanom tuay literally translates to “dessert in a bowl”, just as it is served.

LAOS
Khao Tom
A staple in Lao cuisine is sticky rice, which is used in both savoury and sweet recipes. This particular dessert is a common street snack in Laos made from steamed sticky rice with coconut milk and bananas, all wrapped in banana leaves.

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BANGLADESH

**Mishti Doi**

This fermented sweet doi (yogurt) is made with milk and jaggery. It is made by boiling milk until thickened, then sweetened with either gura (brown sugar) or khejur gura (date molasses). This mixture is set to ferment overnight in earthenware. A pinch of cardamom is then added for flavour and fragrance.

AFGHANISTAN

**Sheer Yakh**

*Sheer yakh*, translating to “frozen milk”, is a traditional Afghan dessert made with milk, sugar, and flavourings such as cardamom, rosewater, or salep (wild orchid powder). This mixture is added to a metal container placed inside another metal container filled with ice and salt. It is then continuously rotated by hand until frozen. As a favourite summertime street food item, *sheer yakh* is usually served in small bowls and topped with chopped pistachios, almonds, and thick cream.

SRI LANKA

**Watalappan**

Originating with the Sri Lankan Malays, *watalappan* is a must-have for religious festivals and weddings. This crowd-pleaser is a coconut custard pudding made with coconut or condensed milk, jaggery, cashews, eggs, and spices including cardamom, cloves and nutmeg, making it not only silky and melt-in-your-mouth, but also rich and fragrant.

NEPAL AND BHUTAN

**Sel Roti**

A watery rice flour dough is prepared by adding milk, water, cooking oil, sugar, ghee (clarified butter), butter, cardamom, cloves, and bananas, which is then deep-fried in boiling ghee to create a sweet, fluffy doughnut-like delight.

INDIA

**Gajar Ka Halwa**

Move over, carrot cake! This carrot-based sweet dessert pudding is made by mixing grated carrots in with water, milk, and sugar on the stovetop, whilst stirring it regularly. It is often served with a garnish of almonds and pistachios that have been sauteed in ghee (clarified butter).

PAKISTAN

**Gulab Jamun**

Originating in the Indian subcontinent, *gulab jamun* has officially been declared Pakistan’s national dessert as of 2019. It is prepared by heating milk over a low flame for a long time, until the water content has evaporated and only milk solids remain. These milk solids, or *khoya*, are kneaded into a dough with a small amount of flour, and then shaped into small balls which are deep-fried in ghee until golden brown. The fried balls are then soaked in a syrup flavoured with cardamom, rose water, *kewra* (extract from the Pandanus plant), and saffron.
CHINA

Tang Yuan

*Tang yuan*, quite literally “soup ball”, originates from China and is usually made during the Lantern Festival. This dessert is made from glutinous rice flour mixed with water to form the balls, which are often served in boiling water with a sweet syrup. The rice balls are usually stuffed with black sesame paste and served in a ginger soup, but other fillings include peanut butter, pumpkin, red bean paste, and more.

JAPAN

Mochi

*Mochi* is a chewy Japanese rice cake made of *mochigome*, a short-grain *japonica* glutinous rice. The rice is pounded into paste and moulded into balls. As mochi is relatively flavourless, it is often mixed with sugar and other fillings such as *anko* (red bean paste) or *matcha* (powdered green tea leaves). While eaten year-round, *mochi* is a traditional Japanese New Year snack and is commonly sold and eaten during that time.

SOUTH KOREA

Patbingsu

Literally translating to “red beans shaved ice”, *patbingsu* is a popular Korean shaved ice dessert with sweet toppings such as chopped fruit, condensed milk, sweet syrup, and red beans. Varieties with ingredients other than red beans are called *bingsu*.

MONGOLIA

Boortsog

*Boortsog* is essentially deep-fried dough. Fresh from the fryer it is semi-hard, but by the time it’s fully cooled and served, usually at a day or two old, it becomes tougher. As such, *boortsog* is also known as Mongolian cookies, and are perfect when dunked into milky tea.

HONG KONG

Dan Ta

The dish consists of an outer pastry crust that is filled with egg custard and baked. Hong Kong-style egg tarts are made of butter and flour with a sweetened egg filling, and since the 1940s have flourished in Hong Kong tea restaurants, where they are frequently enjoyed with afternoon tea.

JAPAN

Soy Sauce Ice Cream

When you think “soy sauce” the first thing that comes to mind is “sushi” or “Asian cuisine”. But go to the small town of Yuasa in Wakayama Prefecture, Japan and you will find something else entirely unexpected. Here, in the home of soy sauce, you will find ice cream. And not just any old ice cream, but soy sauce flavoured ice cream! If that is not enough, it is recommended that you pour a little extra on top to give it a little more of a salty kick. It is truly the unexpected that can give us such joy!

Andrew Marriott visits Yuasa!
Baklava

Baklava (or pakhlava) is a traditional oriental confection of filo filled with chopped walnuts and held together with syrup. The very tasty oriental bake is traditionally made in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for Navruz (Persian New Year). In Uzbekistan, pakhlava is denser and sweeter than its equivalents from Western Asia.

Nishallo

Nishallo is made exclusively during Ramadan. It consists of sugar, whipped egg whites, and water, and is spiced with star anise and liquorice root. It has the consistency of a dip – perfect for dunking flatbreads. Nishallo is often enjoyed as part of iftar, the evening meal that breaks the fast each day.

Baursak

This puffed, deep-fried bread is cooked and served on special occasions, and is often eaten with sugar, butter, jam, or honey. People believe that the smell of the oil from frying baursak floats high into the sky, so that deceased loved ones can feed on the aroma and enjoy the delicacy with them.

Apple Cake

This apple cake may be made of a simple recipe, but its flavours shine through thanks to the region’s tasty fresh apples. Kyrgyzstan apple cake is made of apples, flour, eggs, and sugar. Yes, no oil and no butter! It is best enjoyed warm from the oven, as a delightfully moist, non-overpowering dessert.
OMAN

Omani Pudding

Omani pudding is made with butter, milk, vanilla powder, eggs, pistachios, sweetened condensed milk, almonds, sugar, and lemon zest. It is usually garnished with more nuts on top and served along with coffee.

YEMEN

Bint Al Sahn

Bint al sahn, or “beauty of the table”, is a honey cake with thin, flaky layers of dough. It is made with a generous amount of butter, then topped with egg yolk and black seeds. As per tradition, don’t forget to drizzle a good amount of honey on top of the cake as soon as it comes out of the oven!

QATAR

Om Ali

This Egyptian bread pudding is very popular in Qatar. Om Ali, literally “Ali’s mother”, is a combination of pastry dough, nuts, raisins, and milk. Often, nuts, sweetened hot milk, and cream are added before it is broiled to perfection. The result is a deliciously creamy and silky dessert, sure to please!

KUWAIT

Gers Ogaily

This perfumed sponge cake is often baked in a Bundt pan, and has notes of saffron, cardamom, rose water, and sesame. It is perfectly moist and light, making it a great dessert to serve after a heavy dinner.

IRAQ

Kunafa

This traditional Middle Eastern dessert is made with thin noodle-like vermicelli or semolina dough, soaked in sweet, sugar-based syrup with a floral essence, then typically layered with cheese, and sometimes even clotted cream or nuts.

SAUDI ARABIA

Samboosak Hilwah

Samboosak hilwah is a filo triangle with a sweet almond filling. Its key flavours are drawn from the saffron, rose water, and cardamom that are mixed into the batter.

SAUDI ARABIA

Faloodeh

These semi-frozen vermicelli noodles bathed in a rose water syrup are usually served with lime juice and/or sour cherry syrup. Visit any ice cream parlour or restaurant across Iran, and you’ll find faloodeh in a variety of flavours including pistachio, saffron, rose water, and honey, often served with bastani sonnati, a traditional Persian ice cream.

IRAN

Dondurma

Dondurma or Turkish ice cream, typically includes the ingredients cream, whipped cream, salep (ground-up tuber of an orchid), mastic (plant resin), and sugar. It is often sold from street vendors’ carts, where the mixture is churned regularly with long-handled paddles to keep it workable. Vendors often tease the customer by serving the ice cream cone on a stick, and then taking away the dondurma with the stick by rotating it around, before finally giving it to the customer. Vendors are also typically donned in traditional clothing of the Ottoman period.

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From the Streets to the Glitz
Asian cuisine is as varied as the continent is vast. From North Asia to South Asia to Southeast Asia, East Asia to Central Asia to West Asia, every cuisine is embedded with tradition, cultural practices, and the notion of home – whether through the ingredients, cooking methods, or preferences in flavours and spice levels.

Come with us to the unique places to dine in Asia, from roadside stalls to cafés, hawker centres to fine-dining restaurants. While the places may differ in price range and dining experience, one thing is for sure: Each serves up a storm more delicious than the last.

Text Shreya Acharya
Street Markets

The world’s best street food culture arguably comes from Asia. It is a quick and affordable option – and most importantly, incredibly tasty. Whether you’re trudging through the back alleys of Bangkok or navigating the lanes of Taiwan, you’re bound to find something cheap and delicious!

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

Jalan Alor Market

The best of Kuala Lumpur’s hawker culture congregates at Jalan Alor, where they form an unbroken chain of brightly-lit stalls. Located in Bukit Bintang, it is easily accessible and all you need to bring is a small sum of money and a large appetite. While the market opens in the morning, it is generally quiet in the daytime. Visit after sundown when the street is lit in colour, and the market is bustling.

ADDRESS
Jalan Alor, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

GETTING THERE
Take the KL Monorail to Bukit Bintang and exit at Lot10 shopping mall. From there, Jalan Alor is just around the corner

OPENING HOURS
10AM–3AM Mondays to Saturdays, 10AM till midnight Sundays

SINGAPORE

Bugis Street Market

You’d never be able to tell that Bugis Street was once the place to go to experience Singapore’s seedy nightlife. Today, it is one of the country’s best street markets where bargain shopping, hip cafés, and street food are aplenty. The food on offer includes Chinese, Indian, and Malay snacks, and as a bonus, it is fully sheltered and air-conditioned, so visitors can escape the blistering heat or torrential downpours. With over 800 stalls, the sprawling market attracts locals and tourists alike.

ADDRESS
3 New Bugis Street, Singapore 188867

GETTING THERE
By MRT, take the East West or Downtown Line to Bugis Station. From the station, it is a 3-minute walk to Bugis Street Market

OPENING HOURS
11AM–10PM daily
HANOI, VIETNAM

Hanoi Weekend Night Market

On the weekends, the Hanoi Weekend Night Market comes to life. The bustling gathering of roadside stalls and local food vendors bring huge crowds of locals and tourists together through great, affordable food. It runs through the Old Quarter district from 7PM onwards, starting from Hang Dao Street and running north to the edge of Dong Xuan Market. Pedestrian streets and historical sites within the area are illuminated with decorative lights, which can be enjoyed with iconic Hanoi dishes such as *bun thang* (rice vermicelli soup with shredded chicken, fried egg, and pork), La Vong grilled fish, *pho* (noodle soup with beef or chicken), *banh mi* (Vietnamese sandwich), and *bun cha* (rice noodles served with grilled pork).

BALI, INDONESIA

Kuta Night Market

Kuta is known for its vibrant nightlife, and this night market, referred to locally as Pasar Senggol, is the perfect opportunity to get to grips with local cuisine. The stalls are bustling with locals and tourists alike, all attracted by hot-off-the-wok treats and unique desserts, making Kuta Night Market a paradise for food lovers and one of the best night markets in Bali. Apart from the delicious and authentic Balinese cuisine, Kuta also offers souvenirs, clothes, accessories, and trinkets.
SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

**Gwangjang Market**

Built in 1908, Gwangjang Market is not only a foodie paradise, but also one of the oldest continuously functioning markets in all of South Korea. It is a great place to soak up the nation’s traditional culture and sample its one-of-a-kind flavours. Of all the foods the market is famous for, *mayak kimbap* has to be the crowd favourite. These sushi-like, seaweed-wrapped rolls are stuffed with carrot, pickled daikon radish, and rice seasoned with sesame oil, and are as addictive as their name (which literally means “narcotic rice roll”) suggests!

**ADDRESS**

88 Changgyeonggung-ro, Jongno 4(sa)-ga, Jongno-gu, Seoul, South Korea

**GETTING THERE**

Take the subway to Jongno 5(o)-ga Station (subway line 1) and take Exit 7. Alternatively, alight at Euljiro 4(sa)-ga Station (subway lines 2, 5) and take via Exit 4. The market is 150-metres away

**OPENING HOURS**

9AM–6PM Mondays to Saturdays

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TAIPEI, TAIWAN

**Shilin Night Market**

Shilin Night Market is a hot favourite among locals and tourists alike, due to its vast size and number of stalls. Its alleys are full of famed, must-try street foods such as stinky tofu, massive fried chicken fillets, bubble tea, and the iconic oyster omelet. This colourful, bustling market is sure to delight!

**ADDRESS**

No.101, Jihe Rd., Shilin Dist., Taipei City 111, Taiwan

**GETTING THERE**

By MRT, take the Red Line to Jiantan Station (駱駝). After leaving Exit 1, diagonally cross the street to the left to enter the night market

**OPENING HOURS**

5PM–1AM daily
TOKYO, JAPAN

Ameyoko Market

The name “Ameyoko” is a short form for “Ameya Yokocho” (candy store alley), as candies were traditionally sold at this market. Today, the market is home to the best takoyaki, Japanese curry, and fresh sushi, and is a favourite amongst both tourists and the locals. It is the prime location to grab a bite, with stalls lining the street that feature ramen, gyoza, and meat sizzling over charcoals, sure to make you salivate.

ADDRESS
4 Chome-9-14 Ueno, Taito City, Tokyo, Japan

GETTING THERE
The Ameyoko shopping street runs from Ueno to Okachimachi Station along the train tracks of the JR Yamanote Line and JR Keihin-Tohoku Line. It can also be accessed via a short walk from Ueno-Osaki Station along the Oedo Subway Line

OPENING HOURS
10AM–8PM daily except Wednesday

HONG KONG, CHINA

Temple Street Night Market

At sunset, Temple Street Night Market starts coming to life as sellers start laying out their goods, opera singers emerge in full glory, fortune tellers set up booths, and the incredible aroma of freshly cooked food wafts through the air. The lively market is best known for its organs in a pot, wonton noodles, fish cake, and prawn dumplings. Don’t worry, the size of the market is so vast, you’re bound to burn off the calories!

ADDRESS
Temple Street, Jordan, Hong Kong, China

GETTING THERE
Take the MTR to Jordan Station and take Exit A. Follow the signs to reach the market

OPENING HOURS
6–10PM daily
SHANGHAI, CHINA
Tian Zi Fang

Wangfujing Snack Street (王府井小吃街) is located on a narrow alley off the main walking street, and it is packed with food vendors, souvenir stands, and candy shops. There is also a vast array of uncommon food on offer, such as scorpions and insects. Other dishes include *chuanr* (meat kebabs, commonly made of lamb) and desserts such as *tanghulu* or candied fruits on a stick.

ADDRESS
Wangfujing Street, Wangfujing, Dongcheng, Beijing, China

GETTING THERE
Take Subway Line 2, get off at Wangfujing Station and take Exit C. Follow the throng into Wangfujing Pedestrian Street. Walking north for about 50 metres, you will see a KFC on your right side, and opposite is a decorated archway, the east entrance to Wangfujing Snack Street.

OPENING HOURS
10AM–11PM daily

SAMUT SAKHON, THAILAND
Mae Klong Railway Market

Nicknamed *Talat Rom Hup*, literally the “Umbrella Pulldown Market”, Mae Klong Railway Market is one of the largest fresh seafood markets in Thailand, but it also boasts a variety of seafood snacks, such as dried and candied clams, and fresh fruit-based desserts. Its main attraction lies in its experience though, as just seconds before a train comes through, vendors scramble to roll in their carts of fresh seafood, vegetables, and food, and reel in their canvas awnings to make way for the train. Sellers and buyers huddle close at the edges to avoid the train, and as soon as it passes, the vendors swiftly roll back out their shops, and bring down their awnings, and the railway market comes back to life.

ADDRESS
Mae Klong, Mueang Samut Songkhram District, Samut Songkhram 75000, Thailand

GETTING THERE
Mae Klong Railway Market is a roughly 60km drive from Bangkok. It’s a 1.5-hour drive past the Motorway 9 (Kanchanaphisek) Toll Road, which is the outer ring highway running around the outskirts of the city.

OPENING HOURS
6:20AM–5:40PM daily
Khujand, Tajikistan

Panjshanbe Bazaar

Panjshanbe Bazaar is one of the oldest markets in Tajikistan and arguably the most interesting place and colourful sight in Khujand. Erected in 1964, it has been described as “Stalin meets 1001 Nights” thanks to its unique architecture. The market boasts a neoclassical facade, sculptures of field workers, and a green dome with echoes of Stalin’s empire. Come with an empty stomach, as you’ll find an array of traditional Persian foods such as soups, kebabs, bread, and dried fruit and nuts. Be sure to try the giant meat sambusas (dumplings), which are their speciality!

Address
Sharq Street, Khujand
735700, Tajikistan

Getting There
Take a taxi directly to the bazaar, or take a marshrutka (routed and shared taxicab) #16 if you’re confident of your Russian fluency or feeling adventurous

Opening Hours
5AM–3PM Thursdays

Mumbai, India

Carter Road Khau Galli

Mumbai is known for its street food culture, with some dishes even influencing the menus of five-star restaurants. A khau galli, the Marathi phrase for “food alley”, is a sizable cluster of street food stalls, and these are prominent all over the city. A famous khau galli is Carter Road Khau Galli, which not only sells delicious treats at cheap prices, but also provides a cool sea breeze and a great vibe. Packed with famous street food joints and small eateries that serve up an explosion of flavours and textures, this food alley’s star attraction is the ubiquitous shawarma. The stalls also offer a wide range of other culinary delights, such as momos, falafels, wok-fried Chinese preparations, and spicy, lime sprinkled corn on a cob. Don’t forget to dig into scoops of frozen yogurts, sweet cupcakes or freshly made waffles for dessert.

Address
Near Shree Amruti CHS, Khar Danda, Carter Road, Bandra West, Mumbai, India

Getting There
Take a taxi or auto rickshaw to Cafe Coffee Day Carter Road, where Carter Road Khau Galli starts

Opening Hours
10AM till midnight daily
Savouring the Street Food Culture of Singapore

There is nothing epic about this article – no orgasmic description of how mind-blowing the food is. You will not find these stalls in any fancy Michelin guide or online chatter. But there is something undeniably superior about these places that defy common logic: simple, no-nonsense delights without unnecessary fanfare.

This is the stuff you have eaten all your life; the things that you have stopped taking note of. This is familiarity. This is comfort.

These are our local hawkers – folks who wake up in the wee hours of the morning just so you can have your breakfast fix before starting your day. That same uncle and aunty who reserve a smile for you each lunch break. The constants in your daily life that you don’t even notice.

These hawkers have no egos, and do not consider themselves “chefs”, yet they cook huge amounts of food throughout the day in a small, sweltering kitchen.

There is no sous-chef, no front-of-house, no service staff... but there are also no complaints.

And all of the above is done just so they can sell you a plate of food at a low cost.

They are the true heroes of our culinary landscape, if you ask me.

Text and Photos Aaron Wong

Aaron Wong is a Singapore-based photographer, best known for his underwater projects. However, he is not just known for his work behind the camera – Aaron knows good food. He was in the Top 5 finalists of MasterChef Singapore 2018, and is currently the Tiger Beer Global Street Food Ambassador. As the founder of Hawkers & Co., Aaron whips up a storm in the kitchen, and also knows exactly where to venture for an unforgettable dish.

You can follow Aaron’s food (and diving) journey at www.instagram.com/aaronwong.sg
Victor Famous Fried Chicken Wing Rice and Hainanese Chicken Rice

I had my first taste of this amazing, deep-fried goodness almost three decades ago. Victor, the owner, had a little store in an open air food court on the top floor of Funan Mall. (That’s right, those were the days when Funan had an open-air food court on the roof!) And in this food court stood a little store with a simple sign that read “Corona”.

Years later, Victor sold the name and it became a franchise. I remember seeing it pop up here and there in the early nineties. It was admittedly still pretty good, but not sweating it out in a fancy air-conditioned, fast food-type setting made it lose its charm. Somewhere along the line, the brand just vanished, and my life went Coronaless in an instant.

About a year ago, I got wind that our Victor had made a humble comeback – this time in a little coffee shop in Veerasamy Road. So I slid down the pole, hopped into my batmobile, and made a beeline there – stopping traffic along the way, of course. To my teary-eyed delight, it was the original taste from 30 years ago! That same dude, chopping those wings the same way, with that same magical chilli and that same sweaty feeling.

That’s the power of food. It brings people together, and at moments like these, it brings back fond memories. So Corona chicken wing is still good and well, and now goes by the name Victor Famous Fried Chicken Wing Rice and Hainanese Chicken Rice. Be sure to visit and say hello to Victor.

South Buona Vista Road Famous Teochew Boneless Duck Rice

The owner of this stall was the head chef of the original, famous braised duck store in Pasir Panjang, which has been closed for over five years. Upon hearing this, I decided to check it out for this article, and also to see if the old taste still lingered... and it is the same! If you’re unfamiliar with the original, picture sticky, messy, and rich gravy oozing over fresh duck, with hei bee kang kong and gizzard on the side. Can anything sound more delicious?

Tip: If you are driving, park at City Square, unless you’d like to pull your hair out whilst squeezing into a tiny streetside parking spot.

Once lost, but now found
Fatty Thai

This place might already be on your list, but to the blissfully unaware, this little gem tucked in a corner of a rundown coffee shop along Beach Road is one that cannot be missed. This little bowl of goodness is similar to the famous Soi 19 Thai Wanton Mee in Bangkok. Much like theirs, it looks deceptively simple: The noodles have no colour and there’s hardly any sauce at the bottom. But the magic lies in their lard oil, and the complimentary fried lard.

Note: Some of the seats are out in the sun, so remember to bring tissues and ample sunscreen!

Teochew Hand Made Squid Ball, Pork Ball, Mixed Soup

If a store can sell Teochew meatball noodles at SGD5.50 in a hawker centre and still get a queue, you know it is legitimate. This simple-looking dish is anything but. Both the pork and squid balls are flavourful, and I was taken aback upon taking a bite. You probably cannot find this little noodle stall in any hawker food guide, so I would say this is a real hidden gem. If it’s good, it’s good – famous, or not!
Yong Xiang Xing Dou Fu

You can take the ah beng out of Singapore, but you can’t take the Singapore out of the ah beng!

After two weeks of travel in Japan, despite my love for Japanese food – and as any self-respecting ah beng would – I craved for local hawker food. Whenever I need something clean and soupy, yong tau foo is the answer. And what better place to go to than People’s Park Food Centre – the yong tau foo capital of Singapore? And if you ask me, this stall is the champion of the hawker centre, and I say this not because I’m some yong tau foo connoisseur, but because of the ridiculous line that snakes its way out of the shop. This is not a very complex dish and you don’t get to pick your poison like at most other similar stalls. It costs SGD4.50 for a standard bowl and you eat what you get. That’s it. It is clean and simple. But that’s where the magic lies – there is a certain “smokiness” to the dish, and the individual pieces are well flavoured and pack some serious umami.

Be warned: The queue can get a little crazy, so if you are ravenous, don’t bother; you wouldn’t make it. And it gets hot, but it’s a no-holds-barred hawker centre – what else were you expecting?! It’s how it should be: noisy, sweaty, and a little mad.
Nan Feng Cooked Food

This, in my humble opinion, is the overall champion of Telok Blangah Crescent Market. While there are many stalls here that do great at their select dishes, this little stall is good at every dish they throw out. As an "economy/mixed vegetable" type of store, they have a whole load of dishes, but guess what? They are all good! The curry is a must-try, and they sometimes get adventurous and surprise patrons with random dishes like lor mee for breakfast. Needless to say, whatever they prepare turns out nothing short of amazing.

However, they do sell out pretty quick, with everything almost emptied by 7PM, and a snaking queue starts within seconds of opening. Plus, sometimes they don’t even open. But if all the stars are aligned in your favour and you have the persistence of a donkey to queue up, you will be rewarded with magic.

Tip: Bring your friends so that you can order more dishes to try. Make sure you order the plain fried kou lou pork, steamed fish paste, steamed minced pork, and the curry, of course!

ADDRESS
#01-80 Telok Blangah Crescent Market,
11 Telok Blangah Crescent,
Singapore 599011

OPENING HOURS
Not fixed

DIRECTIONS
By MRT, take the East West Line to Outram Park. From Exit H, take Bus 124 and alight at Safra Mt Faber, from where it is a 2-minute walk.
Outram Park

This stall sells economy bee hoon, but I honestly go there just for their wings. It has a large wing poster outside and you can even order online, so you know this is the place to go! They sell fast so the wings are almost always freshly fried. The batter is flavourful and crispy, and the dipping chilli sauce is a little sweet, but a match made in heaven when paired with the fried wings.

Fatty Aunt’s Yong Tau Foo

On my first visit to this stall, I ordered a good sized bowl with laksa soup, but was turned off by the SGD8 price tag. However, once I took the first bite, I was sold. In the humble-looking pieces of yong tau foo is no normal fish paste filling – it is flavourful and silky soft. Each different kind of yong tau foo has a slightly different kind of filling, and even the tau kee is lighter and tastier than any other. While the laksa soup is lighter than usual, it is made to go with the flavourful yong tau foo ingredients perfectly. Not your typical factory-made stuff for sure!

In fact, a quick peek into the small kitchen confirmed my suspicion: There is this lady hand making and measuring each piece on a cheap digital scale … Suddenly I feel bad for paying only SGD8!

Eng Kee: Famous Chicken Wings

This stall sells economy bee hoon, but I honestly go there just for their wings. It has a large wing poster outside and you can even order online, so you know this is the place to go! They sell fast so the wings are almost always freshly fried. The batter is flavourful and crispy, and the dipping chilli sauce is a little sweet, but a match made in heaven when paired with the fried wings.

ADDRESS
Blk 147 Silat Avenue #01-26 Singapore 160147

OPENING HOURS
9.30AM–8.30PM daily except Saturdays

DIRECTIONS
By MRT, take the East West Line to Outram Park. From Exit H, take Bus 124 and alight at Melati Blk 2, from where the stall is a 3-minute walk
Janggut Laksa

I doubt there’s a place in Singapore more old school than Queensway Shopping Centre – the sport-shoe capital of the country. Opened in 1974, Queensway was where I hung out in primary up till secondary school, and it hasn’t changed much since. And one of the long-term features in the middle of the maze is this laksa place. Make sure that you order the standard affair: laksa, otah, and curry chicken because these three items are a match made in lemak heaven!

Here is the price breakdown you should expect:

- **Laksa**--SGD 4.50
- **Curry chicken**--SGD 4.50
- **Otah**--SGD 2.00

Squeezing in a small chair in Queensway, inhaling this delight – priceless!

Upon the first bite, I felt like I was back in my school days, sitting shoulder to shoulder with a bunch of strangers enjoying this dish as much as I was. Everything was rich and creamy, like it was meant to be.

But sadly, like all things in Singapore, change is the only constant. Queensway Shopping Centre, as it turns out, is slated for the En bloc Redevelopment Scheme.

Needless to say, many shop owners are fighting to keep her, so do yourself this favour: go down, maybe buy a pair of shoes, revel in nostalgia, and drink that beautiful broth before it’s gone.

And if you ask me, I’d vote for her to stay.

Where else am I going to get my dirt runners?!

Whampoa Prawn Noodles

This is how a menu should be: “Soup or Dry”. FULL STOP. This simple, old school prawn mee is a classic, and has been running for three generations.

Note: The perpetual long queue, especially on Saturdays, means that you have to consider a significant waiting time!
Marvellous meatballs

Ming Fa Fishball Noodles

This *bak chor mee* along Upper Thomson Road requires little introduction, but I cannot find a single thing this stall needs to improve on. The noodles have a great texture and flavour, the meatballs are bouncy, pork slices are tender and tasty, and even the soup is made with love. They also give free fried pork lard, so pile it on! And I haven’t even started on their delicious fish cake and the fried fish skin... Try it for yourself!

**ADDRESS**
266B Upper Thomson Road,
Singapore 574370

**OPENING HOURS**
9:30AM-4:30AM daily

**DIRECTIONS**
By MRT, take the Circle Line to Marymount. The stall is a 10-minute walk from Exit A

Nyonya Chendol

Nothing compares to ice cold classic *chendol* on a sweltering day. This old school-style *chendol* stall makes each dish from scratch, and the coconut milk is rich, but not too thick. They have just four items on the menu (namely original, red bean, sweet corn, and XO durian), which just goes to show the confidence of the owners in their food. Open 12 hours, you can have it for breakfast or dessert—no one’s judging!

**ADDRESS**
#01-115 Old Airport Road Food Centre
Singapore 390051

**OPENING HOURS**
10AM-10PM daily

**DIRECTIONS**
By MRT, take the Circle Line to Dakota. Old Airport Road Food Centre is a 5-minute walk from Exit B

A sweet treat to beat the heat
Unique Dining Experiences

Think Alice’s trip down to Wonderland. Much like Alice’s adventure, these unique places to eat transport you to another world altogether. These quirky themed cafés and restaurants are changing the notion of “eating out” and bringing a whole new dimension to having a good meal.

SINGAPORE

Cable Car Sky Dining

Cable Car Sky Dining offers three different cabin choices, all offering privacy and each one more unique than the last. Its Stardust Cabin offers a delectable four-course meal as you take in the lights and splendour of Singapore’s cityscape set against the romantic night sky. This is the perfect way to pop the question, celebrate special occasions, or simply show someone how much you love them. The Singapore Flavours Cabin is infused with the authentic flavours of seven of Singapore’s favourite dishes along with the magnificent panoramic view. Meanwhile, the Champagne Cabin gets you “high” on life with a glass of bubbly and intoxicating vistas at 100 metres up in the air.

ADDRESS
Faber Peak Singapore,
Level 2, 109 Mount Faber Road, Singapore

GETTING THERE
If you are coming by from HarbourFront MRT station, take Exit B towards HarbourFront Centre. Cross the link bridge (beside KFC, level 2) to get to Singapore Cable Car at HarbourFront Tower Two. Tickets are available at HarbourFront Tower Two ground floor. Faber Peak Singapore is approximately five minutes from Harbourfront Station (alight at Mount Faber Station)

OPENING HOURS
Mondays to Fridays 6:30PM till midnight, Saturdays and Public Holidays 10:30AM–2AM, Sundays 10:30AM till midnight

PRICE RANGE
USD65–150
SINGAPORE

NOX – Dine in the Dark

Take a plunge into the world of mystery and sensation by heightening your sense of taste, smell, touch, and sound – all in total darkness. Seated in a pitch-black dining room, you will be guided and served by blind or visually impaired individuals who have been specially trained to offer guidance and reassurance to sighted guests. It is a truly human experience when the roles are reversed and the blind become your eyes, opening your mind to a deeper consciousness.

ADDRESS
269 Beach Road,
Singapore

GETTING THERE
Take the MRT to Bugis Station using the East West or Circle Line. From the station, it is a 10 minute walk to the restaurant.

OPENING HOURS
6PM till midnight daily

PRICE RANGE
USD50–75

BALI, INDONESIA

Inflight Restaurant,
Keramas Aero Park

In the middle of a rice field, an abandoned Boeing 737-400 stands, refurbished into a luxurious restaurant that serves much more than infamous aeroplane food. The Inflight Restaurant menu offers 30 mains to choose from – a vast difference from the stressful “fish or chicken” plight on an actual flight – and the dishes are served by waiters dressed in flight attendant uniforms. Furthermore, the wings are accessible through the plane and the cockpit is open for the perfect photo opportunity with your hands at the controls. Enjoy the stunning view of rice paddies, Keramas Beach, and the ocean – all whilst feeling like you’re in the sky.

ADDRESS
Jl. By Pass Prof. Ida Bagus Mantra KM 28,
Keramas, Gianyar,
Bali, Indonesia

GETTING THERE
The best way to get to the park is by car. You can either hire a driver for the day, or hire a taxi

OPENING HOURS
10AM–10PM daily

PRICE RANGE
USD8–14

PHOTOS: KERAMAS AERO PARK
### Rangali, Maldives

**Ithaa Undersea Restaurant**

Dine five metres below the surface of the ocean in the world’s first undersea restaurant, with panoramic coral garden views and fusion menus matched with fine wines. Ithaa Undersea Restaurant serves contemporary European cuisine in a six-course dinner menu, while the four-course lunch menu offers lighter fare.

**Address**
Conrad Rangali Island
20077, Maldives

**Getting There**
You can arrange a transfer from the airport to Conrad. Alternatively, you can also take a taxi to the hotel.

**Opening Hours**
11AM till midnight daily

**Price Range**
USD235–390

### Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Soon Heng Social Club**

This 70s Chinese-house-turned-restaurant is located at a secret venue in Kuala Lumpur, which is only revealed after a reservation is made through the establishment’s Instagram page. Soon Heng Social Club portrays a vintage Shanghai vibe with old school, rustic decor and antiques. They’re not open for walk-ins, partly in an effort to reduce food wastage and ensure the quality and freshness of ingredients being delivered right to diners, and partly to portray a mystery element and pique interest.

**Address**
Make a reservation to find out:
www.instagram.com/soonheng_

**Opening Hours**
Fridays to Saturdays, 6–11PM
Villa Chandara offers an afternoon and evening exploration of the Cambodian countryside, complemented by fine Khmer dining and free-flow wine beneath the stars. They take you on an adventure tourist crowds don’t usually follow – to an enchanting rural experience set in the landscaped gardens of a private dining villa. Arrive early in the afternoon on a private boat to take full advantage of the many activities provided by the villagers as they share ancient rural skills with you. Explore the village by ox cart, select ingredients from the herb garden for evening cocktails and enjoy a foot massage with a drink in hand as the sun sets over the rice paddies. Over five courses, the Khmer celebratory dinner is served by the award-winning team of DineBeyond beneath the stars and by candlelight for a truly memorable occasion.

Haidilao Hot Pot

Aside from its delicious (and spicy!) fare, Haidilao is known for its unique customer service. While eating, customers can view Sichuan’s characteristic face-changing performance as well as the art of making noodles combined with Chinese martial arts. Haidilao Hot Pot also provides customers with a variety of snacks, fruits, games during the wait for a table, due to their long queues. There are also personalised services such as free manicures for female customers, free leather shoe cleaning services, and free photo printing, all whilst waiting in line. Haidilao Hot Pot now has outlets outside of the Chinese mainland, in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Taiwan, United Kingdom, Canada, USA, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, South Korea, and Japan, but its first outlet was in Jianyang, Sichuan Province.
TOKYO, JAPAN

Ninja Akasaka

This ninja-themed restaurant is literally a labyrinth that is a replica of hidden ninja villages of the Edo era. The ambience is enhanced by waterfalls, ponds, and the sounds of bell crickets. But before you enjoy the atmosphere, you need to embark on a long and dark underground adventure through the ninja road. At your table, you will be served by ninja waiters, and also advanced ninjas who will perform at your table. Their experienced chefs serve Japanese, Chinese, French, and Italian cuisine, as well as pastries, all of which can be savoured with the fire- and smoke-based tricks, and other surprises.
Van Gogh Is Bipolar

Van Gogh Is Bipolar is more than just a café. It is a mood-healing sanctuary and a safe haven when you are feeling depressed, stressed, agitated, or just having a bad hair day. The restaurant serves The Mood-Healing Diet – food and blends of tea to make you feel happy and calm. Most of the staff at the café are suicide survivors, overcoming depression or anxiety, or other mental ailments. The café is almost like a maze, with a starting and end point. The stations in between come with instructions, such as deep breathing in the garden, expressing your thoughts by writing on a wall in a dark room, and mixing a concoction of healing oils to apply on your trigger points. Van Gogh is Bipolar provides a homely environment full of love, support, and good food.

New Lucky Restaurant

They say the food at New Lucky Restaurant in Ahmedabad is to die for… which would make sense since the bustling restaurant is built on top of a graveyard! Erected in the middle of an old Muslim cemetery, New Lucky Restaurant is known for its milky tea and buttery rolls. There are 12 graves inside the restaurant and locals believe that these graves belong to Sufi saints from the 16th century. Waiters decorate these graves with fresh flowers each day after cleaning them and paying their respects.
JAKARTA, INDONESIA

Warung MJS

Set inside a house built in 1959, this classic, unique restaurant is tucked away from the main streets, and features a wide selection of mouth-watering Javanese dishes. Its whimsical interior boasts antiques and traditional decor, including a special room for wayang (shadow puppets). Offering a humble, homely environment, the restaurant gives you complimentary drinks when you walk in, alongside crackers, bananas, and valet parking. The Ayam Setan, or “chicken with devil’s hair” is a must-try, made with a traditional steaming method, ungkep. The local chicken is moist, fresh, and perfect for lovers of spice.

ADDRESS
Jalan Setiabudi Tengah no.11, Setiabudi, South Jakarta

GETTING THERE
The best way to get here is by car. You can either hire a driver for the day, or hire a taxi

OPENING HOURS
10AM–11PM daily except Sundays, when they’re open 9AM–11PM

PRICE RANGE
USD3.50–9
TAIPEI, TAIWAN

Modern Toilet Restaurant

No list of unique dining experiences would be complete without this toilet-themed café, which has made toilet bowls into chairs and wash basins into dining tables. Each table is designed differently from the others, and the two-storey restaurant can seat up to 80 people. Naturally, the food is served in miniature toilet bowls and bathtubs, but we promise you that it tastes nothing like what’s in your potty!
Fine Dining

Dine at some of Asia’s finest restaurants, some of which have received a prestigious Michelin star rating. These establishments promise the very best of their respective cuisines, with a comfortable and luxurious setting to boot.

SINGAPORE

Odette

Awarded no fewer than three Michelin stars, Odette serves modern French cuisine that is guided by Chef Julien Royer’s lifelong respect for seasonality, terroir, and artisanal produce. The staff promises to make Odette an honest and welcoming experience for everyone, where every ingredient has its place and purpose, and is treated with the utmost care to highlight its purest flavours. Other notable features of the restaurant are its soft colour palette and decor, as well as its glass-enclosed kitchen, where diners have the opportunity to witness the chefs at work, reflecting the openness and honesty of Odette that is central to the entire dining experience.

ADDRESS
National Gallery Singapore, #01-04, 1 St. Andrew’s Road (entrance via Supreme Court wing’s foyer), Singapore

GETTING THERE
Take the MRT to City Hall and take Exit B. The Gallery is approximately 7 minutes’ walk via the Art Connector

OPENING HOURS
12–1:15PM (lunch) and 7–8:15PM (dinner)
Tuesdays to Saturdays (Mondays only dinner)

PRICE RANGE
USD95–240
BANGKOK, THAILAND

Bo.lan

This one-Michelin-star restaurant is headed by chef owners and television personalities Duangporn “Bo” Songvisava and Dylan Jones, who met while working at Nahm London. The couple works towards having a zero carbon footprint restaurant, which includes a vegetable garden, a system to recycle waste, water filtering, and an objective to reduce carbon waste. The restaurant also works closely with local farmers and advocates the use of biodiversified produce, reflected in its constantly updated menu.

KYOTO, JAPAN

Kyoto Kitcho Arashiyama

Kyoto Kitcho Arashiyama opened in 1948, in what had once been the home of an antique dealer. Over the years, gardeners, carpenters, and a variety of craftsmen have worked hard to maintain the beauty of Japanese culture reflected in the restaurant, and the exquisite scenery of the surrounding hills changes with the seasons, both contributing to a dining experience that is truly one of a kind. Engage your senses in the enjoyment of dishes prepared with carefully selected ingredients from around Japan.
TAIPEI, TAIWAN

Le Palais

Awarded three Michelin stars, Le Palais serves all the famous Chinese cuisines with hand-picked fresh ingredients, and has been awarded by the Culinary Culture Forum across Taiwan and China as one of their top ten restaurants. Le Palais serves the best Cantonese dim sum and Chinese banquet cuisines that are highly appreciated by both domestic and international diners. Six luxurious private VIP rooms merge the oriental and French aesthetic, and are ideal locations for private gatherings, where you can bask in the warm morning sunshine or enjoy the stunning view of the city by night.

ADDRESS
4F, Four Seasons Hotel, 8 Finance Street, Central, Hong Kong, China

GETTING THERE
Takethe MTR to Central Station, where it is a 10 minutes’ walk from Exit A

OPENING HOURS
12:00–10:30PM daily

PRICE RANGE
USD80–380

HONG KONG, CHINA

Lung King Heen

Lung King Heen at Four Seasons Hotel is the world’s first Chinese restaurant to be awarded three Michelin stars, and has retained the honour for 11 consecutive years. Relish exquisite seafood and dim sum made with personally sourced ingredients in an establishment built on teamwork and over a century of accumulated experience.

ADDRESS
4F, Four Seasons Hotel, 8 Finance Street, Central, Hong Kong, China

GETTING THERE
Take the MTR to Central Station, where it is a 10 minutes’ walk from Exit A

OPENING HOURS
12:00–10:30PM daily

PRICE RANGE
USD720/pax (min 2 people, book 3 days in advance)
DUBAI, UAE

**Amaseena**

Bedouin-inspired tents, a star-filled sky, the sounds of live Arabic music and the mesmerising movements of a belly dancer create a sense of desert romance at Amaseena. Spark your imagination and palate at this marina restaurant with a nightly buffet featuring Middle Eastern favourites and themed nights every Wednesday and Thursday. The outdoor setting is also perfect for a post-dinner shisha!

**ADDRESS**
26 Al Mamsha St,
Jumeirah Beach Residence, Dubai
26525, UAE

**GETTING THERE**
The nearest tram station is Marina Terrace, from which the hotel is a 15-minute walk.

**OPENING HOURS**
5PM till midnight daily
(buffet 7–11PM)

**PRICE RANGE**
USD60–90

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SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

**Gaon**

Prided as the “Centre of Korean Cuisine”, this three-Michelin-star establishment is operated by the KwangJuYo Group, makers of fine ceramicware and traditional Korean liquor. Gaon is a fine-dining restaurant committed to promoting a better understanding of Korean food around the world and to celebrate Korea’s time-honoured aesthetic values. The food is made with prime ingredients each season has to offer, and as a bonus, is also presented on custom-designed KwangJuYo ceramic dishes.

**ADDRESS**
26 Al Mamsha St,
Jumeirah Beach Residence, Dubai
26525, UAE

**GETTING THERE**
The nearest tram station is Marina Terrace, from which the hotel is a 15-minute walk.

**OPENING HOURS**
5PM till midnight daily
(buffet 7–11PM)

**PRICE RANGE**
USD190–250
Jade Dragon

Three Michelin-starred Chinese restaurant Jade Dragon showcases exquisite culinary masterpieces created with the freshest seasonal ingredients and delectable delicacies. With spectacular designer decor and superlative personalised service, Jade Dragon sets the benchmark for fine dining in Macau.

ADDRESS
MO Jade Dragon, Level 2, The Shops at The Boulevard City of Dreams, Estr. do Istmo, Macau, China

GETTING THERE
A shuttle service runs from Border Gate, Macau Ferry Terminal, Taipa Ferry Terminal, Macau International Airport, Studio City, and Macau Peninsula

OPENING HOURS
Lunch: 12–3PM Mondays to Saturdays, 11AM–3PM Sundays and holidays
Dinner: 6–11PM daily

PRICE RANGE
USD190–300
MANILA, PHILIPPINES

Toyo Eatery

Toyo Eatery is a Filipino Eatery that takes the essence of its nation’s flavours, traditions, and technique. Chef Jordy Navarra showcases his country’s culture on a plate with flavoursome creations such as the three-cut pork BBQ silog – a modern version of the popular street food, made in the restaurant using three cuts of pork cooked over charcoal and finished in pork bone broth – and a dessert duo of charred cassava cake and chocolate bonbons filled with fish sauce-infused salted caramel.

ADDRESS
2316 Chino Roces Ave, Makati, Metro Manila

GETTING THERE
Toyo Eatery is located at Karrivin Plaza along Chino Roces Avenue. Get there by car or taxi

OPENING HOURS
6–11:30PM Tuesdays to Saturdays

PRICE RANGE
USD40–80

PHOTOS: SMART SHANGHAI

SHANGHAI, CHINA

Fu He Hui

This one-Michelin-star vegetarian restaurant will make even the most staunch of meat-lovers happy. Set in a colonial townhouse, Fu He Hui lies in a three-storey structure with interiors of neutral palettes of earth and grey tones with lots of stone, wood, and fabrics – some from the Ming and Qing dynasties. As a tasting menu-only restaurant, Fu He Hui takes you on a journey in understanding China’s diverse supply of vegetables and fungi, some of which are extremely exotic – each dish a refinement of the ingredients’ essences, with no added oil and just a touch of salt.
NEW DELHI, INDIA

Bukhara

The romance of the rugged Northwest Frontier comes alive at this authentic, award-winning restaurant, a landmark dining destination in Asia. The restaurant’s stone-clad walls and rough-hewn furniture evoke the rustic origins of the cuisine. Looked after by Chef JP Singh, Bukhara recreates the charm of the traditional clay oven or tandoor with its delicious menu of succulent tandoor-cooked kebabs, vegetables, and breads. Bukhara has notably served the Clintons, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Roger Federer.

ADDRESS
ITC Maurya, Sardar Patel Marg, Akhaura Block, Diplomatic Enclave, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, Delhi

GETTING THERE
The nearest train station to ITC Maurya, where the restaurant is located, is Chanakyapuri, from which it is a 14-minute walk. Alternatively, a taxi or auto rickshaw can drop you off directly at the hotel.

OPENING HOURS
12:30–2:45PM (lunch), 7–11:30PM (dinner)

PRICE RANGE
USD80–115
Prima Tower Revolving Restaurant

Operating since 1977, Prima Tower is the only Chinese revolving restaurant in Singapore that combines top cuisine with spectacular views. Nestled on top of Singapore’s first flour mill factory, the restaurant is designed to provide diners with magnificent panoramic views of Sentosa Island, Mount Faber, and Singapore’s harbour. Hong Kong Master Chef Chan Sung Og’s notable dishes are the Authentic Barbecued Peking Duck and Shredded Scallops with Fish & Egg White – a must-try against the beautiful backdrop!

ADDRESS
201 Keppel Road, Singapore

GETTING THERE
Take the Circle or Northeast Line on the MRT to Harbourfront Station. From there, it is a 5-minute taxi ride or – if you want to work up an appetite – a 30-minute walk

OPENING HOURS
11AM–2:30PM (lunch), 6:30–10:30PM (dinner) daily

PRICE RANGE
USD50–130
Rooftop Bars

Scenic views, good food, cold beer – what else could one ask for? Here are some of Asia’s must-visit rooftop bars spanning from low to high levels, each more inviting and breathtaking than the last.

BEIRUT, LEBANON

Iris Beirut

This city retreat boasts panoramic views over the ocean, alongside the Beirut skyline. They offer innovative cocktails and a selection of Asian- and American-inspired dishes. It is highly recommended to watch the sunset from Iris, and then stay and catch one of the live artists or DJs that play most nights of the week.

LEVEL 2

ADDRESS
Beirut New Waterfront, Seaside Pavilion, Rooftop, Beirut, Lebanon

OPENING HOURS
6PM–3AM Mondays to Saturdays, 5PM–3AM Sundays
ABU DHABI, UAE

Beach House Rooftop

Enjoy refreshing cocktails and lounge-style music from the Beach House Rooftop with breathtaking views over the Arabian Sea. Watch the stunning Saadiyat Island sunset while sipping a signature cocktail, and feel on top of the world.

LEVEL 2

ADDRESS
Park Hyatt Abu Dhabi Hotel and Villas, Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi

OPENING HOURS
4PM till midnight daily

Bali, Indonesia

Unique

A pool club by day and a Mexican-inspired dining spot by night, Unique features a stunning rooftop location high atop Rimba Jimbaran Bali by Ayana. It boasts an inviting central bar and a 25-metre infinity pool that faces one of Bali’s most captivating sunsets. Plus, there is no need to fight for the best view: The multi-levelled seating provides panoramic 360-degree views from any location. All of Unique’s dishes can be paired with a range of margaritas, tequilas, beers, and signature cocktails crafted by their mixologists.

LEVEL 3

ADDRESS
Jimbaran, South Kuta, Badung Regency, Bali, Indonesia

OPENING HOURS
11AM till midnight Mondays to Thursdays, 11AM-1AM Fridays to Sundays
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

Man Tao Bar

This neighbourhood nook-inspired rooftop bar offers easygoing vibes and a tropical theme. Offering unobstructed views of downtown KL, it is an urban escape that is the perfect setting for foreigners and locals alike. Man Tao Bar also serves crafted Tsingtao (Chinese beer) themed cocktails and man tao buns – a perfect combination.

LEVEL 21
ADDRESS
25, Jalan Kamunting, Chow Kit, 50300 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
OPENING HOURS
6PM till midnight
Thursdays to Saturdays,
12–3PM Sundays

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

Kloud

Rooftop bar Kloud is an elegant and modern cocktail bar, situated on the 21st floor of Mercure Ambassador Hotel in Gangnam. The sky-high location promises sensational views of the major parts of Gangnam and the city skyline. Kloud offers mixologist creations as exclusive as the venue itself, with award-winning bartenders serving both signature cocktails and premium champagnes.

LEVEL 21
ADDRESS
Mercure Ambassador Hotel, 10, Teheran-ro 25-gil, Seoul, South Korea
OPENING HOURS
6PM–2AM Fridays to Saturdays, 6PM–1AM Sundays to Thursdays, and Public Holidays
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

Vistas

On the 24th storey of Movenpick Hotel Colombo sits Vistas, a bar that serves delicious, signature Mövenpick-inspired cocktails and puts on tropical house chill-out beats and jazz throughout the evening. Fusion and cocktail shishas are also available, taking the shisha smoking experience to a whole new level.

LEVEL 24

ADDRESS
No. 24, Dharmapala Mawatha, Colombo, Sri Lanka

OPENING HOURS
5:30PM till midnight on weekdays,
5:30PM-2AM on weekends

SINGAPORE

LeVeL33

Beer lovers, this is the place for you! LeVeL33 offers not only open-to-the-sky spaces and panoramic views, but is also the world’s highest urban microbrewery. All beers are brewed on site by the resident brewmaster, and beer-cocktails are also served. They offer a comprehensive food menu integrating all the different beer brewing elements with finesse and sophistication for a menu and cuisine that is like no other. Be sure to witness the unobstructed view of Marina Bay and the fireworks display during special occasions such as National Day and New Year’s Eve!

LEVEL 33

ADDRESS
#33-01, Marina Bay Financial Centre Tower 1, 8 Marina Boulevard, Singapore

OPENING HOURS
11:30AM till midnight Mondays to Thursdays,
11:30AM-2AM Fridays, 12PM-2AM Saturdays, 12PM till midnight Sundays
MUMBAI, INDIA

**Aer**

Aer is the second-highest bar in Mumbai, and this trendy rooftop bar at Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai won the Best Hotel Bar in India award at the 30 Best Bars India 2019. From the 34th floor, the panoramic view of Mumbai’s city skyline and the sea is its best feature, as well as live DJs that spin lounge music each evening.

**LEVEL 34**

**ADDRESS**
1/136, 34th Floor, Hotel Rooftop, Dr. E. Moses Road, Worli, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

**OPENING HOURS**
5:30PM–1:30AM daily

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JAKARTA, INDONESIA

**Skye**

Established as a “lifestyle resort in the sky”, Skye is located in the heart of the Indonesian capital some 230 metres up in the air. Dining at Skye gives you a complete experience, from appetising delicacies and a great selection of crafted signature and classic cocktails, to a breathtaking view of the cityscape. Their exciting line-up includes live DJs and bands, “Yoga in the Skye”, and other themed events, making every day a great day to visit Skye.

**LEVEL 56**

**ADDRESS**
Jl. M.H. Thamrin No. 1, BCA Tower lt. 56, Jakarta Pusat, Indonesia

**OPENING HOURS**
10PM–1:00AM daily
SHANGHAI, CHINA

Flair

Flair Rooftop Restaurant & Bar at the Ritz-Carlton Shanghai is China’s highest rooftop bar, offering a stunning view of the city, including views of Pearl Tower, The Bund, and Hongkou. They serve creative signature cocktails, taking inspiration from the histories of China and all of Asia. There is also a large food menu that offers tapas-style dishes from Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Thailand, and China.

LEVEL 58
ADDRESS
Shanghai International Finance Centre, 8 Century Avenue, Shanghai, China
OPENING HOURS
5:30PM–2AM Mondays to Thursdays, 2PM-2AM Fridays, 11AM–2AM Saturdays to Sundays 11:00-02:00

HANOI, VIETNAM

Top of Hanoi

Located on the 65th floor of Lotte Hotel Hanoi, Top of Hanoi gives a stunning 360-degree view of the entire city and its surroundings through its transparent curtain wall. Expect fine wines, cocktails, and also an open kitchen where you can witness their brasserie menu being prepared.

LEVEL 65
ADDRESS
Lotte Center Hanoi, 54 Lieu Giai St. Cong Vi, Ba Dinh, Hanoi, Vietnam
OPENING HOURS
5–11PM daily
BANGKOK, THAILAND

**Baiyoke Sky Hotel**

Enjoying a sophisticated ambience and fabulous setting, the rooftop bar at Baiyoke Sky Hotel is one of Bangkok’s most exclusive after-dark venues. Located on the 83rd floor of the hotel, floor-to-ceiling windows provide guests with stunning views of the city, all whilst sipping expertly-crafted signature cocktails and a variety of fine wines.

**LEVEL 83**

**ADDRESS**

222 Ratchaprarop Rd, Thanon Phaya Thai, Ratchathewi, Bangkok, Thailand

**OPENING HOURS**

5PM–2AM daily
Ozone

The world’s highest rooftop bar, Ozone is positioned 480 metres up in the air, on the 118th floor of the luxurious Ritz-Carlton, and offers stunning views of the city. Here, you can enjoy signature cocktails along with Brazilian or Asian tapas, and catch some of Hong Kong’s most well-known DJs live. For the highly recommended Dom Pérignon Ultimate Brunch on Sundays, there’s free flow champagne, and a mouthwatering food and dessert buffet.

HONG KONG, CHINA

ADDRESS
Level 118, International Commerce Ctr, 1 Austin Road West, Kowloon, Hong Kong, China

OPENING HOURS
5PM–1AM Mondays to Thursdays, 5PM–2AM Fridays, 3PM–2AM Saturdays, 12PM till midnight Sundays
What’s Online?

**WWF Launches Plastic Smart Cities Initiative in Southeast Asia with a USD40M Commitment**

Text Shreya Acharya

WWF launched the Plastic Smart Cities initiative at the Responsible Business Forum in Singapore. The initiative brings cities and tourist destinations together to commit to fight plastic pollution by developing an action plan, establishing circular economy projects and testing innovative solutions. In the last 12 months, WWF has successfully fundraised USD40M for the initiative.


**Celebrating Earth with the Late H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej, King of Thailand**

Text Shreya Acharya

An international day to celebrate soil was recommended by the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) in 2002. Under the leadership of the King of Thailand and within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN supported the formal establishment of this day as a global awareness-raising platform – officially adopted at the 68th UN General Assembly.


**ASIAN Geographic Celebrates Cheetahs!**

Text Shreya Acharya

These beautiful, fast creatures are racing against extinction. *ASIAN Geographic* brings awareness to the world’s fastest land animal – now chased by their dire fates. Dr. Laurie Marker is the founder of Cheetah Conservation Fund. She designated December 4 as International Cheetah Day in remembrance of Khayam – a cheetah she raised from a cub at Wildlife Safari in Winston, Oregon – on his birthday.

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Platforms

- **eMagazine**
  - 18,000 – 25,000
  - Monthly average online downloads

- **Website**
  - [www.asiangeo.com](http://www.asiangeo.com)

- **Social Media**
  - 226,500 followers
  - 5,000 followers

Our Readership

- **ASIAN Geographic circulation**
  - 92,000 copies per issue

- **Bringing Asia to the hearts and minds of over**
  - 428,000 readers across Asia

- **Readership**
  - 2.5 million a year
ASIAN Geographic magazine is going through a rehaul! Featuring 2020 editorial lineup

Elements of Life, Colours of Asia

In 2019, ASIAN Geographic is celebrating 20 years of bringing Asia to the world, and we have an exciting lineup ahead in 2020. Our editorial calendar will be based on a philosophical approach to Wu Xing, or the five elements in Chinese philosophy – Water, Wood, Fire, Earth, and Metal – with our last issue of the year projected to focus on bringing these elements together, all through travel.

Our first five 2020 issues will be colour-coded in blue, green, red, brown, and silver, respectively, to address our concurrent themes, and each issue will include a PASSPORT section that will focus on a specific region in Asia. The sixth and final issue of the year will be an ASIAN Geographic PASSPORT special edition that will combine all these elements and their associated colours, making the entire year’s publication come together in a stunning, rich hue – making up the perfect collection!

NO. 140 ISSUE 1/2020
+ PASSPORT SECTION
FEATURED REGION:
SOUTHEAST ASIA

Water

An inherent part of our lives, the water element is downward and inward, and its energy is stillness and conserving. This issue covers everything blue, whether by taking a plunge into the waters – where we will swim amongst issues of ocean governance, conservation, sustainability, or diving – or even just by sipping on the Asian-native butterfly pea flower tea from the pods planted in your garden.

NO. 141 ISSUE 2/2020
+ PASSPORT SECTION
FEATURED REGION:
WEST ASIA

Wood

Wood, sometimes translated as Tree, symbolises growth and longevity, much like the bamboo stems that are strong, flexible, and some of the fastest growing plants in the world. As the first phase of Wu Xing, it also signifies the birth and beginning of life. This issue celebrates and navigates through the most important thing known to the living: Life itself.

NO. 142 ISSUE 3/2020
+ PASSPORT SECTION
FEATURED REGION:
EAST ASIA

Fire

The motion of fire is upward and its energy is expansive, representing dynamism, strength, persistence, and prosperity. This issue will look at brightness, warmth, heat and the full bloom of flowers, fruits, and creativity in the arts and culture of Asia.

NO. 143 ISSUE 4/2020
+ PASSPORT SECTION
FEATURED REGION:
CENTRAL ASIA

Earth

Earth is a balance of both yin and yang. Its motion is inward and centering, and its energy is stabilising and conserving. Earth is associated with practicality, hard work and stability. In this issue, we look at Asia balancing sustainability, conservation, and economic growth, as well as exciting solutions that can spur a new green economy while shining a spotlight on marine and wildlife conservation.
Metal's motion is inwards, and its energy is contracting. Metal attributes are firmness, rigidity, persistence, strength, and determination. This issue of ASIAN Geographic looks at all the special festivals and remembrance days that are celebrated by different countries and cultures all across Asia, as we contract and combine the things that make this continent so vast, yet so unique.

NO. 144 ISSUE 5/2020
+ PASSPORT SECTION
FEATURED REGION: SOUTH ASIA

Metal

The Colour Edition: Passport
TRAVEL ISSUE

This PASSPORT special edition will bring all the five elements together into a full circle, as it is meant to be, and we will explore all the corners of Asia through Wu Xing. Water, Wood, Fire, Earth, and Metal will encompass the largest continent in the world, and all the regions in Asia will be seen through this exceptional lens.

NO. 145 ISSUE 6/2020

SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA
1 year □ SGD50
(5 + 1 Issues)
2 year □ SGD95
(10 + 2 Issues)

SOUTH EAST ASIA
(BRUNEI, INDONESIA,
PHILIPPINES, THAILAND)
1 year □ SGD70
(5 + 1 Issues)
2 year □ SGD130
(10 + 2 Issues)

REST OF ASIA,
AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND
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2 year □ SGD145
(10 + 2 Issues)

REST OF THE WORLD
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(10 + 2 Issues)

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