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WARM AND TOASTY

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Editor's Letter

The chilly temperatures of early spring whet the appetite for heartwarming, healthy dishes. In the first issue of *Crave* 2018, we begin with comfort feasting and an array of soups, broths, pies and tarts.

South Korea-based celebrity chef Edward Kwon - one of his country's best-known chefs with his own television shows - talks to us about his culinary inspirations and his aspirations to globalise Korean cuisine.

Hotpot dining is a sociable affair, with friends gathered around a cauldron of bubbling-hot broth. This issue's People section showcases the masterminds behind Hong Kong's leading hotpot restaurants.

For those in search of nutritious comfort eating, check out our Feature for the lowdown on the art of making soup. From broths punctuated by umami flavours to rich, piquant hot-and-sour soups, the city's experts share their tips on how to create scrumptious bowls of goodness.

Looking for last-minute travel ideas for Valentine's Day? Take a gourmet trip to Seoul, with our list of must-visit dishes and where to find them. For those planning a cosy evening in, check out our revamped wine section for our connoisseurs' best picks. Happy Valentine's Day and Chinese New Year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen Li". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Editor in Chief & Publisher

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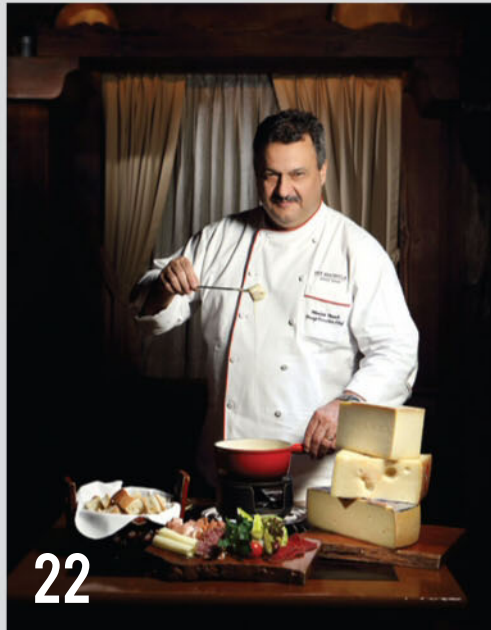
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Crave Box

Sign up online to win great prizes



ROMANCE IN THE SKY

Bonne Saint Valentin

Le39V is presenting a decadent 6-course dinner to celebrate the day of love. Enjoy our passion-infused menu in the romantic setting paired with the breath-taking Victoria Harbor view.

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LE 39V
RESTAURANT
HONG KONG

Crave Panel

We check in regularly with our team of seasoned pros who help answer all your pressing food-related queries.



Peggy Chan
Executive chef and managing director, Grassroots Pantry

Small person doing tremendous things with all things green and sustainable in Hong Kong



Michael Chan
Executive chef, Sushi Tsubomi

A charismatic culinary artist who adds a creative touch to authentic Japanese cuisine



Jennifer Cheung
Founder, Sift Desserts

We have Asia's queen of confectionery to thank for starting the cupcake trend in Hong Kong



Richard Ekkebus
Culinary director, The Landmark Mandarin Oriental

Dutch-born chef with two Michelin stars and a lifelong soft spot for fries and mayo



Calvin Ku
Food and beverage director, Buzz Concepts

From US bar bites to Japanese curry, Ku is the F&B scene's Mr Versatility



Paul Kwok
Chief executive officer, 1957 & Co. (Hospitality) Limited

Started as a kitchen hand and is now one of the passionate restaurateurs in town



David Lai
Chef-partner, Neighborhood

Ask him anything – his encyclopedic knowledge of seafood (and everything else, really) will astound you



Vicky Lau
Chef-owner, Tate Dining Room & Bar

Creative director-turned-Michelin starred chef, Lau's French/Japanese plates are works of art



Pino Lavarra
Director - Tosca, The Ritz-Carlton, Hong Kong

Italian chef with three Michelin stars and Hong Kong's most infectious smile



Alvin Leung

Executive chef, Bo Innovation
Hong Kong's "demon chef" breaks the rules with his Michelin-three-starred extreme cuisine



Leung Yu-king

Executive Chinese chef, Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong
The Michelin-starred local chef brings authentic Cantonese dishes to the table with masterly finesse



Li Shu-tim

Executive Chinese chef, Grand Hyatt Hong Kong
Master of Cantonese cuisine who's all about traditional home-style cooking



Christopher Mark

Restaurant creative, Black Sheep Restaurants
Masterminds welcoming, accessible restaurants for guests to experience culturally authentic sub-genres of cuisine



Satoru Mukogawa

Executive chef, Sushi Kuu
This Japanese chef has a yen for handing out the sake shots. You have been warned



Gerhard Passrigger

Executive chef, Grand Hyatt Hong Kong
Fun-loving and enthusiastic, this Austrian chef's personality is reflected in his fine but unpretentious food



Esther Sham

Chef-owner, Maison Es
One woman, many hats: fashionista, yogi, cool mum, chef-restaurateur



Satpal Sharma

Chef de cuisine, The Chinnery & Captain's Bar Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong
Makes some of the best British-Indian curries in town



Jaakko Sorsa

Executive chef, FINDS
Pioneering Finnish chef who brought Nordic cuisine to Hong Kong



Tam Kwok-fung

Director of culinary operations, City of Dreams
The Michelin-two-starred chef firing up Macau's Cantonese cuisine



Florian Trento

Executive chef, The Peninsula Hong Kong
This thirty-year veteran of The Peninsula Hong Kong oozes culinary finesse

10

THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT
FEBRUARY & MARCH

Places to go, plus things to eat, drink and do.



1

Eat: Hong Kong MEAT Up

*Lily & Bloom, 5/F & 6/F LKF Tower,
33 Wyndham Street, Central
T 2810 6166*

Carnivores take note: Lily & Bloom is hosting a beef-themed campaign, aptly named Hong Kong MEAT Up, with five rounds of cook-offs with beef cuts prepared by esteemed chefs and the media. The campaign kicked off on January 9 and ends on March 26, with the inaugural menu featuring tenderloin and beef cheeks prepared by La Paloma's Jose Antonio Navarro Cotes and Co Thành's Brian Woo respectively. The tantalising menu will rotate every two weeks with future dishes including beef shanks, beef brisket and short ribs.

2

Drink: PDT Hong Kong

*The Landmark Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong,
15 Queen's Road Central | T 2132 0110*

A frequent contender on the list of the world's best bars, this New York favourite has made a grand arrival at The Landmark Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong. PDT (Please Don't Tell) is celebrated for its intimate atmosphere and ever-changing menu of creative cocktails, limited-edition wines, beers and spirits. In keeping with its New York roots, the bar's entrance is disguised as a phone booth, while the cocktail menu will feature PDT's original house favourites such as the Benton's Old Fashioned. To eat, expect a seasonal menu of hot dogs crafted by the city's best chefs, starting with the hotel's acclaimed culinary director Richard Ekkebus.





Go: Ralph's Coffee

3/F Ocean Terminal, Harbour City,
Tsim Sha Tsui

If you're in the market for a new brew spot, look no further. Luxury fashion brand Ralph Lauren is opening Asia's first Ralph's Coffee in Ocean Terminal. In the brand's timeless style, the coffeehouse's elegant interior has accents of green, white and gold, with vibrant geometric floor tiles. Unique coffee blends crafted by La Colombe are served, including Ralph's Roast, decaf and espresso, all made with organic beans from Central and South America and Africa. For nibbles, check out the artisanal chocolate bars from Brooklyn-based chocolatier Fine & Raw.

Go: Women of Wine Festival 2018

March 1, 7pm to 10pm

The Women of Wine Festival, hosted by Asia's first Master of Wine Debra Meiburg, is back. After last year's successful inaugural event, there are even more wines for tasting, plus inspirational and educational seminars and workshops to attend. Hear from WoW-worthy women such as actor and director Trudie Styler, a wine enthusiast and Tuscan vintner, who will share her secrets to producing organic, biodynamic wines recognised as some of Italy's finest. Tickets are available at Eventbrite.hk, from \$450.



5

Valentine's Day: Bene at Sheraton Grand Macao

1/F Sheraton Grand Macao, Estrada Do Istmo,
Cotai, Macau | T +853 8113 1200

Love is in the air at the Sheraton Grand Macao, where Italian restaurant Bene is putting together an exquisite menu for Valentine's Day. Available on February 14 only, the special six-course menu features irresistible dishes such as Boston lobster gratin with porcini tartare, wagyu tenderloin M5 and parmigiano glaze, and crab-filled raviolo with saffron crustacean bisque. Finish with molten chocolate cake with balsamic berries and salted-caramel ice cream. To snag this romantic dinner for free, book the "A Grand Romance" room package, which includes a deluxe room with sweeping views of the Cotai Strip.



Valentine's Day: Sushi Love

12/F Henry House, 42 Yun Ping Road,
Causeway Bay | T 2851 9128

Love pleasant surprises? Sushi Love will be serving a special Valentine's Day omakase menu (\$1,830 for two) with a total of nine courses. Expect a selection of seasonal sashimi and sushi, chawanmushi, seared scallop foie gras seaweed roll, grilled Angus steak or grilled cod, Hokkaido sea urchin and salmon roe rice, soup, and a Valentine's Day-themed dessert. Award-winning Japanese sparkling wines and rosés are also available to order by the glass. Bookings essential.

6

7

Valentine's Day: TokyoLima

G/F Car Po Commercial Building, 18-20 Lyndhurst
Terrace, Central | T 2811 1152

Indulge in a night of romance with TokyoLima's Valentine's Day Lujuria Dinner (\$520 per person). Crafted by chef Arturo Melendez, this V-day exclusive features eight enticing sharing plates including the Tiradito of Desire – tuna, tamarind, shoyu, tiger's milk and coriander chips – and TokyoLima Guilty, a soba noodle dish made with charred avocado and tossed with ahi panca dressing and sesame seeds. End the night on a sweet note with the cheeky caramelised Lust Apple dessert with spicy apple cake and ginger cream.



8



Lunar New Year Menu: Sha Tin 18 at Hyatt Regency Sha Tin

4/F Hyatt Regency Sha Tin, 18 Chak Cheung Street, Sha Tin | T 3723 1234

With Lunar New Year around the corner, Sha Tin 18's Chinese chef de cuisine, Ho Chun-hung, has prepared an intricate menu that weaves messages of plenty, wealth and treasure into each dish with ingredients such as abalone, sea cucumber and dried oyster. Sweet lobster with seasonal vegetables symbolises good luck, while braised dried oyster and sea moss represents good business and plentiful fortune. Enjoy a lucky meal here and count your blessings.

10



Lunar New Year Puddings: Duddell's

3/F Shanghai Tang Mansion, 1 Duddell Street, Central | T 2525 9191

To get the family festivities going, head to Duddell's for a selection of traditional Lunar New Year puddings. Leaving modern twists and variations behind, nothing can beat the original. Choices include the sweet new year cake (\$288), a traditional glutinous rice cake with brown sugar; and turnip cake (\$338), made with turnips, Chinese dried sausages, dried shrimps, conpoy and mushrooms. The puddings can be collected from February 8 to 14. Order soon.

Lunar New Year Afternoon Tea: WOOBAR at W Hong Kong

6/F W Hong Kong, 1 Austin Road West, Tsim Sha Tsui | T 3717 2889

WOOBAR welcomes the Year of the Dog with a scrumptious afternoon tea set named Who Let the Dogs Out (\$438 for two). Put together by culinary director Alain Allaire, savoury titbits include mushroom wonton with black truffle and wasabi mayonnaise, and drunken chicken with foie gras, apricot and sesame soya. Sweet delights include jasmine mousse cake with yuzu jelly and an adorable red packet-shaped pistachio cupcake with dog prints made from red dates. Surely there's no sweeter way to welcome the New Year.

9



IN FULL BLOOM

VIP guests are granted a private viewing of the meticulously crafted Mikimoto Bloom Collection of prized pearl jewellery.

Date December 1, 2017 Venue Mikimoto, 1881 Heritage, Tsim Sha Tsui





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* Includes entry ticket, unlimited food, wines & drinks.

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PRETTY IN WHITE

Dressed in white, guests enjoy an elegant soirée at the Hong Kong edition of Le Dîner en Blanc, an evening of champagne, gourmet food and friendship.

Date December 16, 2017 *Venue* Whitehead BBQ, Ma On Shan



AGAINST THE FLOW

*A professional kitchen doesn't have to be harsh and sterile.
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to your kitchen.*



A regular on the Red Dot Design Awards list, GROHE, the world's leading provider of innovative water products, has launched a new professional-style faucet – Essence – combining stylish design with ease of use to make kitchen work more fun and efficient.

The Essence Professional faucet makes switching between spray action and normal water stream an easy task. GrohFlexx technology ensures user-friendliness with a silicon hose integrated with metal springs to allow maximum flexibility so the user can twist and turn the spray through 360 degrees with no

problems. Whether you're doing the dishes or washing fruits and vegetables, your chores will be completed with utmost efficiency.

The attention-to-detail doesn't end here: the new GROHE EasyDock M technology uses a powerful magnet in the holder to guide the professional spray back to its ideal docking position, so the spray can easily re-attaches itself to the completely turnable spray arm to ensure comfortable handling and simplicity of use.

The Essence Professional faucet is where form meets function, and GROHE prides

itself on the products' pared-down elegance with only the slimmest and most streamlined body built around a 28-millimetre cartridge. In addition, a replaceable silicon hose means the faucet is easy to clean, and you can switch from one colour to another to coordinate with the overall kitchen ambiance.

For a limited time only, GROHE is offering hoses in seven attractive shades, including yellow, orange, red, pink, purple, green and blue. After all, who doesn't want to have fun while they cook?

THE EDIT

Everything we want, from great reads to stylish gadgets that make your life easier.

Words **Lorria Sahmet**



W&P Design Pineapple Cocktail Shaker

A design staple in most Millennials' homes, the gold-plated pineapple returns in the form of a three-piece cocktail shaker. Handy for whipping up a cocktail at any time of the day, it doubles as a nifty statement piece for your home.

\$750 from Lane Crawford

Maxi-Matic 3-in-1 Deluxe Breakfast Station

Wake up to the aroma of breakfast cooking with this hassle-free breakfast station. A combined toaster oven, coffee maker and frying griddle, it makes the perfect breakfast for four. Now there's really no excuse to skip the most important meal of the day.

US\$79.77 from Amazon



Ember Ceramic Smart Coffee Mug

Everyone loves a good brew. Keep yours steamy for longer with the Ember Ceramic Smart Coffee Mug. A connected coaster keeps drinks hot and sounds an alert when it reaches your preferred temperature. It is completely customisable and can be adjusted through a smartphone app.

US\$79.95 from Ember.com



Berry Buddy

Rinsing fresh berries has never been easier. This beautifully handcrafted stoneware strainer is an all-in-one design with an integrated drip-catcher and spout. Say hello to minimal clean up and healthy, all-natural snacks next time you cosy up for a binge-worthy Netflix show.

\$360 from Uncommon Goods



Flavours of Hong Kong by Smudge Publishing

Spend the year sampling an impressive range of cuisines with the help of *Flavours of Hong Kong*. Beautifully photographed and illustrated, and sure to get your mouth watering, this colourful volume features restaurant guides, bar recommendations, and tips for grazing Hong Kong's best food venues. Also included are signature recipes from some of our favourite restaurants.

\$480 from SmudgeEats.com



Paper Moon



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BETTER THAN BULGOGI

Culinary stardom wasn't part of chef Edward Kwon's career plan, but he's using his unexpected celebrity to make a kitchen career respected in his native South Korea, and to introduce the world to traditional Korean cuisine.

Words Iris Wong

Many chefs tell you their aspiration to cook professionally started early, often after watching a mother figure whipping up their favourite childhood dish. But not Edward Kwon. The Jamie Oliver of South Korea – whose youthful, camera-ready face has appeared on CNN's *Culinary Journeys*, TV dramas and cooking shows such as *Cheongdamdong Alice* and *Yes Chef* – started working in a kitchen because it paid US\$20 more than his server job at the same restaurant. "At that time, \$20 was not small money," he says. "A music CD was around \$1.50, so we're talking more than 10 CDs there. That was a lot of money for me, so I didn't hesitate to switch jobs."

Not only did Kwon not expect to be a chef ("When I was in middle school, I made tteokbokki for my sister. She hated it. Took one bite, slammed down her chopsticks and said it was garbage"), he wanted to become a priest. That news didn't go down too well with his family.

"I was the only son, so if I became a priest, the generations would be disconnected, and my grandmother was so, so worried," he says. After giving up his plans for the priesthood, he went through a phase as a delinquent teenager, then moved to Seoul to work at a restaurant. He eventually went to culinary school, where he discovered his passion for the culinary arts, especially French cooking.

Kwon honed his craft at luxury hotels in Seoul (The Ritz-Carlton Seoul and W Hotel Seoul-Walkerhill), San Francisco (The Ritz-Carlton Half Moon Bay), and most notably, Burj Al Arab in Dubai, where his TV career took off. "I was the head chef at Burj Al Arab, and back then, Dubai was just opening up to the world. It's one of the most expensive hotels in the world. I guess because I was a Korean guy who's not old and worked at a seven-star hotel, the media thought that would make a good story. I started appearing on the news and in documentaries... there were crews filming how I cooked and lived at the hotel. It became a hit," Kwon recalls.

Perhaps South Korea's first globally recognised celebrity chef, Kwon's presence in the international culinary scene may have kick-started changes in how Koreans, especially from the older generation, perceive those who want to pursue a culinary career. "One of the reasons I came back [to Seoul] was because I wanted people to look at us differently," Kwon explains. "Working in the kitchen in Korea was not a respected job, as compared to, say, in Europe or in the US. Chefs are not just workers in the kitchen. The word 'chef' has a connotation of leadership and I want people in the industry to be acknowledged and respected."

It was following his move back to Seoul, in 2009, that he decided rather than localising Korean cuisine >>

abroad and fusing it with local products and recipes, it should be kept traditional and globalised. Frowning, Kwon says, “In Korea now we live in modern houses and wear Westernised clothing. Koreans don’t even wear hanbok (traditional Korean dress) anymore, nor do they live the traditional way. The only thing that remains unchanged from our original culture is our food. I want it to make an impact.”

Thus began his quest to globalise Korean cuisine, one dish at a time. Despite being French-trained, Kwon always makes Korean food when he travels to other countries for gala dinners, collaborations and pop-ups.

“Right now, Korean cuisine is like water in a kettle, slowly bubbling. Within five years, Korean food will be bigger than ever. A lot of chefs overseas have shown interest in Korean products, such as sauces and condiments for fermentation and barbecue. When I went to Mongolia for a TV shoot and I went to the local markets, I was shocked to see so many Korean products. Hallyu [the Korean Wave] has definitely hit with all the TV drama and music, and that has also had an impact on people’s interest in Korean food.”

Last November, he opened Elements by Edward Kwon and relocated LAB XXIV into uber-chic hotel Le Méridien Seoul, returning to the kitchen he first worked in 23 years ago, when the property was The Ritz-Carlton Seoul. LAB XXIV, a “24-hour laboratory” for Kwon and his team to experiment with new dishes, serves a French-focused nine-course dinner menu. Notable dishes include seared scallop with Korean parsley oil and Jerusalem artichoke purée, lobster with red curry beurre blanc, and refreshing iced persimmon. At Elements, the Asian fusion restaurant is split into three areas: a sushi counter offering an omakase-style menu, two Korean barbecue rooms and a main dining area for contemporary Asian dining. Its Japanese, Thai and Korean fare includes the famous ganjang-gejang (crab marinated in soy sauce) prepared to a traditional recipe.

Apart from his plans to open a new restaurant in Shenzhen (“Hong Kong is way too expensive!”), Kwon is also one of the top chefs enlisted to prepare special dishes to be served in restaurants at this year’s Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. It looks like he is another step closer to his mission to globalise Korean cuisine. ■

Clockwise from top left:

Lobster with red curry beurre blanc; LAB XXIV amuse bouche; LAB XXIV-style mont blanc



MY FAVOURITE THINGS WITH EDWARD KWON

1

Favourite Korean dish?

My favourite Korean dish is tteokbokki, or spicy rice cakes. Some people don't like tteokbokki's texture but I love it. It's very simple to make, cheap to buy, easy to find and has a unique sweet and spicy taste.

2

What makes a good chef?

Being a good cook and being a good chef are not the same thing. It's easy to find a good cook, but a good chef is like an orchestra conductor. A good chef needs to be fully engaged in a business mindset. He or she has to think about numbers, costs, human relationships – every aspect of the cooking and business process is important and should be respected.

3

One culinary tip?

Use the right amount of salt and the right oils. While respect for each ingredient is very important, knowing how to use salt is vital. Salt is in everything and those countries that use less salt still have substitutes – the Japanese wrap foods with seaweed, for example. Oils are also important. At LAB XXIV we infuse our dishes with different oils depending on the flavour we want to achieve.

4

Favourite restaurants in Seoul?

Ryunique by chef Tae Hwan-ryu, and the traditional Korean BBQ restaurant Young Chen Young Hwa – it serves excellent quality beef at value for money.

5

Go-to dish to cook at home?

Kimchi stew – this is a typical Korean answer. All I need to enjoy a meal is kimchi and rice. Kimchi to Korean food is what potatoes and butter are to French food. Without kimchi, there is no Korean cuisine.

6

When you're not cooking, you are...

Car racing! I don't drink, so for stress relief I head over to Inje, in east Korea, and spend time on the racing track. There's a racing community there.

7

Favourite ingredient to work with?

Meat. I love beef and so do most Koreans. We love chicken, beef and pork in Korea. Ninety-five per cent of my customers order beef if there is a choice. I always say, if you want to know the level of a restaurant's cooking, order the fish. Fish is very delicate but meat is a far more approachable ingredient.

8

Advice for aspiring young chefs?

Always focus on what you do. Lots of young people want to be famous, want to be a top chef or want a shortcut to success. I want to emphasise the importance of looking back at what you've done and at what you're currently doing. Competition is high. You need to focus on yourself. Put in the effort and focus on your time management.

FULL STEAM AHEAD

From Cantonese herbal broth to Swiss cheese fondue, a hot pot of steamy, bubbling goodness is our go-to option in chilly weathers. Three connoisseurs share their hotpot secrets and explain why it's Hong Kong's favourite winter comfort food.

Words Lorria Sahmet Photos Happy Yuen

VIVIEN SHEK

Founder of The Drunken Pot

Hotpot is said to have originated in China during the Jin dynasty, when travelling Mongolians would rig up their helmets over an open fire and gather around the makeshift cooking pots to simmer soup and boil meat. In Hong Kong, hotpot is still a sociable experience, a chance for groups of friends and families to escape the winter chill.

Offering an elegant twist on the classic hotpot experience is Vivien Shek at The Drunken Pot. “Compared to other dining experiences, hotpot is much more interactive,” she says. “The Drunken Pot aims to provide an exquisite hotpot dining experience with an array of innovative food options. Hotpot is always popular in Hong Kong as it involves a unique dining format. Food is shared interactively among friends and families.”

Shek, who completed her education in Australia, had no training in the food and beverage industry, but a desire to defy tradition. She took Cantonese hotpot – Hong Kong's beloved family dish of simple soup with meat, vegetables and fish balls – and transformed it into a sophisticated and premium experience.

The Drunken Pot serves up a variety of unusual soup bases. Recognising Hong Kong's love of choice, Shek introduced the five-in-one concept, enabling diners to enjoy different broths at the same time. “The soup base is the secret of our success. We've partnered with

many overseas chefs to develop special ingredients to include in our soup bases,” she says. There are more than 20 options at The Drunken Pot, including local favourites such as pork bone broth, regional Chinese classics such as the numbingly spicy Sichuan-style soup base, and unconventional options such as squid ink seafood.

Another signature is the “soup bomb”, such as Japanese sake, coconut milk and black beer, that give the broth an extra kick of flavour. Shek uses only fresh ingredients, either made in-house or sourced fresh from one of more than 20 suppliers around the world. Her butterfly-shaped dumplings and penguin-shaped cuttlefish balls are particularly popular.

Shek aims to keep the experience new and interesting without losing the original intent of traditional hotpot, which is to share and enjoy time with loved ones. “The hotpot market is ever-evolving,” she says. “We always have to keep an eye out for what's new. Guests can enjoy the food, handcrafted cocktails designed for hotpot and a lovely ambience at the same time. This is not something you can enjoy at home.”

What's next for Shek and The Drunken Pot? “The F&B industry is very dynamic and requires a lot of time to manage and execute. For me, the most important element in this industry is passion. I still have hotpot every day and I think I will keep doing that.” ■







FLORIAN TRENTO

Executive chef at Chesa

Cheese fondue is the hotpot of the West. A bubbling pot of melted cheese and wine served over an open flame, this ultimate winter warmer is beloved in Europe, particularly in the Alps.

“Cheese fondue is very important in Switzerland,” says Florian Trento, executive chef at The Peninsula Hong Kong’s Swiss restaurant, Chesa. “Almost every family has a pot and burner at home and will eat it once a month or even once a week during winter.”

Trento’s passion for cooking began with a one-week internship at a Swiss motorway rest stop with six food joints. He continued his culinary career in Saudi Arabia before moving to Hong Kong in 1987 to join The Peninsula as sous chef. Twenty years on, Trento is now the group executive chef for The Peninsula Hotels and executive chef at Chesa.

As a teenager he would have cheese fondue with friends at a classmate’s home. “I used to have cheese fondue every Wednesday. We really enjoyed it, especially with the company of each other,” he says. “Also the discovery of Swiss white wines, which was especially great when you were only 16.”

Literally translating to “melted cheese”, fondue originates from the French part of Switzerland, where it is a national dish. It is typically enjoyed with cubes of bread for dunking and cold cuts or a salad are sometimes served beforehand. While fondues vary across Switzerland, it is the concept of sharing that draws diners to the dish. “Having fondue is a social activity. It is about sharing since it brings people together. Often we will have [fondue] for

dinner since people will have more time to enjoy it.”

As jetting around the world becomes more common, so does the ability to experience different cuisines. Authenticity is important to Trento, so for Chesa’s classic fondue he uses two types of cheese – a mixture of mild and strong flavours – along with a touch of garlic and white wine. He recommends buying cheese from specialist stores rather than supermarkets since fresh cheese is the secret to a good fondue. “A good cheese should be around one year old. It can’t be too old or it will be too salty,” he says.

The melted cheese must be continuously stirred so it doesn’t burn. However, for a truly authentic finish to the meal, Trento recommends letting the last bit of cheese crisp up and turn golden brown at the bottom of the pot. Called *la religieuse* (French for “nun”), this cheesy crust has a crunchy bite. It is also common to add an egg to *la religieuse* to make a cheesy scrambled egg.

It’s not the only fondue tradition. “Anyone who loses his bread in the fondue has to buy a round of drinks for the table,” he says. It is traditionally paired with wine or alcoholic black tea to cut through the greasy goodness. According to Swiss lore, other liquids, water included, will cause the melted cheese to coagulate in your stomach and cause indigestion. Trento’s final tip is to have fun and enjoy sharing this great dish. “Fondue is a very easy dish to make, but it is about the atmosphere and the company you bring that makes the cheese fondue experience different,” he says. ■



AU-YEUNG KWOK-MAN

Executive chef at Megan's Kitchen

Hong Kong-born Au-Yeung Kwok-man's love of cooking started when he was young. Experimenting with different omelette fillings piqued his interest in a culinary career. He worked in hotels and restaurants for 20 years, racking up an impressive range of Chinese and Western culinary experiences. In 2005, he became executive chef at Megan's Kitchen, a contemporary hotpot and Cantonese restaurant concept.

"I used to gather with my chef friends after work, hotpot was our 'must-eat' every week. We examined soup bases, ingredients and exchanged all sorts of ideas altogether," Au-Yeung says. "Hotpot was one of my most craved foods when I was a kid, but it only became affordable once I started to earn my own living. Beef balls are my favourite."

Unlike most hotpot chains, Megan's Kitchen also serves premium Cantonese dishes, such as sautéed spare ribs with strawberries and mango, and fried pigeon cooked to a secret recipe. While these dishes are popular, what really draw the crowds are the innovative hotpot ingredients and wide selection of soup bases.

Au-Yeung puts his own spin on ingredients with French-inspired twists such as stuffed cuttlefish ball with escargot, stuffed pork ball with chestnut, and foie gras and duck meat dumpling. He believes top-quality ingredients are crucial for hotpot because they arrive raw. "Guests cook the food on its own, like a slice of raw beef or fresh lobster. It's not like a stir-fried dish where you stir in a few ingredients together and enhance the different flavours," he says. As well as trusted suppliers, Au-Yeung schedules a trip to the wet market every morning to handpick produce to ensure his guests experience his creations as fresh as possible.

He has a few chef's tricks up his sleeve. To keep one of his meatball concoctions fresh, he says, "I pick out produce that is not too ripe [so it will be ripe when the meatballs are ready to eat]."

The chef also adapts the menu to meet diners' ever-changing preferences. Serving broths with seasonal ingredients allows Megan's Kitchen to constantly tweak its soup bases and menu, creating intriguing new dishes that attract a steady stream of loyal customers.

Hotpot allows customers to choose exactly what they want to eat, making it easy for the chef to spot any trends in tastes. "We are paying more attention to sourcing 'healthy' ingredients as customers are getting more conscious about their health as well as environmental protection. For example, we now serve Korean ham, which has lower sodium and lower fat compared to traditional luncheon meat," Au-Yeung says.

Going healthy doesn't mean more restrictions to the typically yeet hay ("hot air", or too much heat inside the body) dish. Au-Yeung experiments with unusual seasonal broths every fall and winter: Italian parma ham consommé soup base in 2015; creamy chestnut and mushroom in 2016; and double-boiled French spring chicken stuffed with porcini mushrooms and quinoa last year. He believes most Hongkongers are too busy to prepare a good home-cooked meal, so the restaurant should provide a hassle-free dining experience with good-quality food and service.

"Having hotpot should be de-stressing. It is usually a happy occasion when family and friends gather for lunch or dinner, with a great variety of dishes to cook together. There is a sense of togetherness and sharing that makes hotpot the ultimate comfort food." ■



The VERY BEST OF...

At *Crave*, we have the luxury of dining and drinking at Hong Kong's finest restaurants and bars, whether it's a new venture, a one-night pop-up or a new menu at an older establishment. Here are our latest reviews and the best things we've tried recently.



Casa Don Alfonso

Words Iris Wong

THE SPACE

Dining at Casa Don Alfonso is like a private invitation to an aristocratic Italian grandmother's living room. Think big floral couches, velvet cushions, a giant chandelier with white shades, oil paintings in gold-leaf frames and walls hand-painted by European artists. Comfortable, spacious seating in the main dining area and the two swanky private rooms, which can accommodate eight and 12 guests respectively, make Casa Don Alfonso a choice location for families and big groups. And the staff's stylish teal uniforms blended so harmoniously with the rest of the establishment that we could not help but admire the level of attention to detail.

THE FOOD

Revamped from fine-dining southern Italian restaurant Don Alfonso 1890, which previously occupied the same space, Casa Don Alfonso is a casual dining concept serving rustic Italian fare by chef de cuisine Claudio Favero. We had been told the Neapolitan pizzas – crafted by pizzaiolo Maurizio Ferrini – are a must-try, so we started with **pizza al tartufo bianco** (\$160). The white pizza was topped with ricotta, mozzarella and a generous shaving of white truffles. The lush creaminess of the cheese accentuated the earthy

aroma of the truffles, while the pie had good charring and a stretchy chew. Struck with a serious craving, we ordered the **tagliatelle alla bolognese** (\$180). It exceeded our expectations: the house-made egg pasta had just the right bite, while the meat sauce was topped with cubes of crispy pancetta for extra texture and flavour. **Crispy suckling pig** (\$250) was served with seasonal vegetables and mustard sauce, and while the suckling pig was well done with juicy, tender flesh and crispy skin, every bite reminded us of Chinese suckling pig. An Italian meal would not be complete without dolci, and the **sfogliatella napoletana** (\$80), a delicate puff pastry filled with cinnamon cream and sour cherry, rounded off the meal nicely.

THE VERDICT

The spacious, snazzy interior and authentic Italian fare at affordable prices are more than enough reasons to return to Casa Don Alfonso, despite the bumpy ferry ride. The tagliatelle and sfogliatella were particularly memorable. Next time we're in Macau, we'll try the restaurant's famous antipasti semi-buffet lunch.

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Neapolitan Puff Pastry at Casa Don Alfonso

“Sfogliatella means ‘small, thin leaf or layer’ in Italian, and is cut in a particular size, shaped as a pocket and filled with cream. Casa Don Alfonso’s sfogliatella is a reinterpretation of the classic sfogliatella napoletana, filled with cinnamon cream and sour cherry.”

Claudio Favero, chef de cuisine

The puff pastry of the sfogliatella came in incredibly thin, delicate layers filled to the brim with cinnamon cream, its heaviness cut by the sour cherry. It’s a very rich dessert to end the meal, but we had no complaints.



Tepache - Pineapple & Cinnamon at COA

“There are many variations of tepache but the most common ones are made with pineapple, often with skin included to aid fermentation. At COA we go a step further and ferment it twice: once in a large glass container for four to five days and then again in the serving bottle to trap all the natural carbonation, just like champagne.”

Jay Khan, co-founder

A sure-fire favourite for soda lovers, the tepache has just the right amount of sweetness, balanced by the tartness of pineapple and spiciness of cinnamon. The light fizz makes for a refreshing weeknight drink.





COA

Words Iris Wong

THE SPACE

It's hard to miss COA, despite being tucked away on quiet Shin Hing Street, thanks to its hand-drawn wall mural of Mayahuel, the Aztec goddess of fertility and also the goddess of agave. Named after the machete-like tool for harvesting agave, COA is a subterranean, Oaxaca-inspired cocktail bar in the cosy space formerly occupied by NEO Cocktail Club. In place of NEO's pinball machines and colourful furniture, expect industrial-chic raw concrete walls, Edison light bulbs, dark wooden tables and, behind the bar, an imposing display of agave-based spirits stacked in the formation of an Aztec pyramid.

THE COCKTAIL

Like many people, we once appreciated tequila as a party fuel, and one we've avoided since we started going home early muttering, "Sorry, I'm working tomorrow". But COA helmsman and bar veteran Jay Khan is here to educate us. Flip open the bar's menu – aka the Agave Bible – to find a dizzying list of tequila, raicilla, sotol and mezcal made from different agave varieties, including some that have been redistilled with turkey or chicken breast. Ask for the bartender's recommendations if you want to try the spirits straight, or opt for the cocktails. Up first, and our favourite of the night, is **tepache** (\$80),

naturally fermented with pineapple and wild yeast, with a touch of cinnamon. Fresh, fruity, slightly fizzy and lightly alcoholic, the tepache slips down easily. Next up is **horchata de pistacho** (\$90), a concoction of Ocho Blanco, house-made pistachio orgeat, lemon, egg white and sweet potato dust. It's creamy and nutty, like a liquid dessert. We couldn't leave without a sip of the **Del Maguey Pechuga** (\$298/glass), made by suspending a whole chicken breast (pechuga) in the still for 24 hours in a third distillation of the mezcal. Served in a little gourd cup, it has a savoury, fruity nose, and is smooth and smoky on the palate with a subtle chicken flavour. Or perhaps that was just our imagination. We finish with **Mezcal Paloma** (\$100), a citrusy and smoky libation of Montelobos mezcal, Tequila Cabeza, grapefruit soda, lime and salt.

THE VERDICT

COA gets a pat on the back for its dedication and honest approach to agave spirits. The cocktails are a delight, and navigating the menu and sampling hard-to-find spirits gave us some insight into a new world. Hong Kong may not be embracing mezcal and tequila just yet, but if they do become the city's next gin, COA may very well be responsible.

6-10 Shin Hing Street, Central | T 2813 5787



Beet

Words Iris Wong Food photo Happy Yuen

THE SPACE

Beet is the new kid on the block at Kau U Fong in Central. It opened two months ago with little fanfare but it has been earning rave reviews ever since. The airy, effortlessly cool eatery has high ceilings, Oxford Blue banquettes, dark-wood furniture and an internal picture window lined with jars of pickled vegetables, through which diners can watch the kitchen team at work. The restaurant's interior is minimalist and rustic, qualities apparent in the food prepared by Robuchon-trained chef Barry Quek, whose impressive CV includes gigs at De Wulf in Belgium, and Attica in Melbourne.

THE FOOD

Beet prides itself as an ingredient-driven restaurant, which is good news for the indecisive – the menu is compromised of a handful of snacks, starters, mains and desserts. Better yet, the five-course tasting menu (\$690) claims to let us “experience what Beet is about”. Decision made. A trio of snacks starts the meal: a tangy palate-prepper of **snapper ceviche on a cracker**; creamy, airy **chicken liver on shortbread**; and an umami-packed **mini profiterole of chestnut and aged parmesan**. Next is **hamachi crudo**, a highly Instagrammable dish that draws many to Beet. This art on a plate features a pool of dill oil, kefir cream and caviar surrounding flavourful hamachi sashimi, topped with thin circles of Taiwanese peach. The sweetness and crunch of the peach blend well with the punchy herbaceous

dill, while the hamachi brings depth and a creamy texture. A little more relaxed in presentation, the **Te Mana lamb** is exceptionally flavourful. Two cuts of lamb – loin with a perfect, juicy pink centre, and charred, caramelised belly, which melted in our mouths – are served with dollops of black garlic purée, sugar pea shoots, figs and eggplant, drizzled with sweet soy sauce. The dessert is incredibly smooth **hay ice cream** with macerated strawberries and wild rice crisps, a welcoming refresher after all the bold flavours. Petit fours of ultra-moist **brown butter financier**, paired with pu'er tea, really hit the spot.

For a tiple with dinner, don't be afraid to ask the friendly, knowledgeable staff for recommendations. We adored the **Negroni** and the gin-based **20th Century**. The drinks list also includes lesser-known spirits, such as aromatic Fernet Hunter, and natural wines, all carefully curated by beverage director Raphael Holzer.

THE VERDICT

Modern European cuisine is nothing new, yet Beet surprises with its choice of ingredients, harmony of flavours and colours, and precise execution in each of the dishes. We can't wait to see what new creations chef Quek will bring to the table. The cocktails and the wine list are also excellent.

6 Kau U Fong, Central | T 2824 3898

Beetroot with House-smoked Curd, Radicchio and Sprouted Buckwheat

at Beet

"I want to create a dish honouring local ingredients that can be found readily in Hong Kong, so I used beetroot from New Territories, as well as milk from Kowloon Dairy to create the cheese curd. Flavours come first, but I've used a Chiba turner to thinly slice the beetroot for a better looking dish."

Barry Quek, chef-owner

Sheets of beetroot and the sprinkle of sprouted buckwheat lend an earthy flavour, while the creamy cheese curds add an enticing smokiness. The sweet blackberry vinegar and crispy radicchio also add depth to the dish.



SOUP SONGS

Your guide to Chinese soups and Cantonese broths.

Words Johannes Pong Recipe photos Happy Yuen



Every culture has soup or a soup-like dish, prepared by boiling ingredients in water. Simmering meat, bones and plants extracts vitamins, minerals, protein and flavour, which are suspended in the liquid to create a nutritious, easily digested drink. Broth is the basis of any sophisticated cuisine. Every fine-dining kitchen, particularly those in high-end French or Chinese restaurants, will have pots of luscious stock on the stovetop.

Chinese soups fall into two broad categories: clear broths called tang (meaning “hot liquid”) and thicker potages known as geng. The latter evolved from an ancient mutton stew (the character contains the word lamb) that bubbled away perpetually in giant bronze cauldrons, keeping whole clans warm during the arid winters of China’s Central Plains. During the long simmer, sheep’s trotters, tail fat, connective tissue and bones break down, transferring their collagen and elasticity into gelatin, literally giving body to the broth.

Geng (potage)

The preferred soup at formal banquets, usually introduced as “chowder” on Hong Kong menus, viscous geng nowadays is basically a tang

(liquid broth) thickened with cornstarch at the end. This gives a rich, tongue-coating mouthfeel. It’s a fancy soup with multiple components, including julienned or hand-shredded bamboo shoots, mushrooms, tofu, fish, snake, or controversially, shark’s fin.

Shang tang (superior stock)

As in French cuisine, the starting broth has a profound impact on the finished dish. The basis of a good geng is the master stock, which is not necessarily made from the edible fixings of the soup. Shang tang (listed as “superior stock or soup” on most menus) is refined broth, which is the essence of banquet-worthy geng, as well as countless stews and sauces. Depending on the chef and budget, shang tang (seung tong in Cantonese) is made with a combination of scallions, ginger, chicken, pork, their bones and, sometimes, duck and cured Jinhua ham. The prosciutto di Parma of China, this brand-name ham has been transported all over the country since the 10th century solely for flavouring soups and other dishes with its muscular, salty umami. Dried scallops add a briny, savoury element while shiitake mushrooms bring an earthy meatiness to the mix.

Tang (broth)

Reigning supreme in northern China are broths based on beef or mutton, like the original geng. The classic Chinese aromatics, ginger, scallions and leeks, temper the meat’s tallowy taint. Bay leaves, star anise, cassia, fennel and black cardamom may further enhance the stock. This robust soup may have been the distant ancestor of Vietnam’s famed beef pho broth, far to the south. The Vietnamese word canh (from Chinese geng) is still the usual word for soup – even watery ones.

Chef Peter Cuong Franklin – who is shocking Vietnam and the rest of the world with the US\$100 pho at his Ho Chi Minh City restaurant, Anan — believes only two cultures on this planet have that level of sophistication when it comes to soup making.

“Soup is very elemental, and in French and Cantonese cooking, it’s the basis of the cuisine,” says the Vietnamese chef, who trained in classical French technique at a Michelin-starred restaurant. The amped-up beef broth for his exorbitant pho goes through a clarification process with an egg-white raft and is strained twice, like a traditional consommé. “The French take two days to clarify soup. The Cantonese just put all the ingredients in a ceramic container, put it in a steamer, and let it sit for six to eight hours under slow fire; double-boiling produces the same result,” explains Franklin. “Whatever effort the Cantonese put in, they want maximum value output.”

Cantonese dun tong (double-boiled soup)

Indirect steaming (double-boiling) or gentle cooking in a bain-marie is the Cantonese method of making a refined broth, served at restaurants or prepared at home for special occasions. Dun tong (Cantonese for “double-boiled soup”) is all about discipline – no stirring, no touching; just let time do its work. Clarification with an acid or egg white is unnecessary. The effect is like a sous-vide soup, with all the flavours of the ingredients concentrated into one bowl.

Chef Leung Yu-king of Island Shangri-La’s Summer Palace serves a sophisticated dun tong full of subtle flavours. Quality plump dried scallops are soaked overnight, steamed for two hours then frozen for two hours to maintain the >>

structural integrity of the scallops. Leung stuffs the prepared scallops inside a ring of marrow then double-boils it for two hours, adding only matsutake mushrooms for flavour and goji berries for their nutritional value and ability to give the broth a golden colour. The result is concentrated consommé with the scallops' briny sweetness and the almost spiced, woody umami of the mushrooms.

Cantonese lou fo tong (slow-cooked soup)

Homemade Cantonese soups are easy to prepare, although they still require slow cooking. Instead of double-boiling they are gently simmered for two to three hours. The basis of lou fo tong is blanched lean pork and aromatics, usually ginger and aged tangerine peel (Xinhui in Guangdong has produced the finest since antiquity). After that, the permutations are endless. Summer might bring ribs with sun-dried bok choy, or cooling lotus root with mung bean. It could be as cheap and cheerful as chucking in chicken feet (for collagen) and peanuts (for protein), or it could be a complex herbal concoction of dried huaishan (Asian yam), sweet earthy yuzhu (Solomon's seal root) and jujubes (Chinese dates). Dried seafood, such as scallops and conch, may be added for some oceanic umami, and dried figs, longans, arhat fruit and loquat function as natural sweeteners. Food and medicine are intimately intertwined in Chinese culinary culture and flavourful curative herbs such as danggui (angelica root) and ginseng often double as seasonings, especially in southeast China.

"Historically, the lush Pearl River Delta produced a plethora of ingredients the Cantonese got to play with," explains food and cultural critic and restaurateur Lau Kin-wai. "There are endless combinations to Cantonese soups. Every village would have a unique creation. A few months back, I went to my ancestral village in Zhongshan and I had pork broth with green bananas for the first time in my life." Lau's favourite broth right now is chestnut and dried oyster soup, served at Kin's Kitchen.

"I believe that dim sum and lou fo tong are the epitome of Cantonese cuisine. Westerners appreciate dim sum, but they don't seem to get Cantonese soups at all," Lau laments. "Maybe it's the cultural aspect of it. There's a strong emotional association to leng tong (beautiful soup) in Cantonese culture. It's the representation of the patience and love of a mother or a grandmother who cooks a daily soup for you."

Eastern Chinese soups

In Jiangnan, eastern China, both geng and tang make regular appearances on dining tables. In Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province and the former capital of the Southern

Song dynasty, soups have definitive names, such as West Lake beef geng and Sister-in-Law Song's fish geng, boasting a written reference some 800 years old. Ingredients might include quality freshwater fish, deboned and flaked; egg whites that form delicate blossoms over the surface of the thick soup; and julienned bamboo shoots for textural crunch.

Ducks are plentiful in the region's many marshes and lakes, and duck soup is another Hangzhou classic. Immortal Duck Soup made with a whole duck boiled with Jinhua ham for three hours. "[The chefs] lit three sticks of incense (which take approximately three hours to burn), as if you were worshipping an immortal," explains Crystal Jade Jiang Nan's chef Lau Yuk-lam, who hails from Taixing, near Yangzhou, another illustrious two-millennia-old city with a refined cuisine that helped inform the cooking styles of Jiangnan. In Lau's version of duck soup, he adds an extra slab of good-quality ham for the last few minutes of simmering to amp up the savoury umami levels. Unlike minimalist Cantonese broths, fancy homemade fish balls are added to the soup at the end. Hangzhou-style fish balls are like fluffy fishy marshmallows, made with nothing but fresh grass carp, hand-chopped to create an airy texture.

Shanghai flavours are more punchy than delicate. The city's signature soup is yanduxian, a rich, home-style stew. The name reflects the ingredients: yan means salted pork, du (with a glottal stop) is onomatopoeia for the sound of boiling liquid, xian means fresh (pork). Rice wine adds a nice vibrancy, and chunks of bamboo shoot and knotted bean curd sheets soak up all that savoury umami.

Sichuan's hot and sour soups

Climate informs a cuisine. In northern China, soups are heavier, designed to fill up stomachs and keep bodies warm in harsh winters. In the hot south, light, restorative herbal broths are the key to rehydrating and replenishing energy. In Sichuan's Chengdu Basin, winters are humid and freezing and, while there are a lot of dishes cooked in flavoured oils or liquids, people there barely drink any soup.

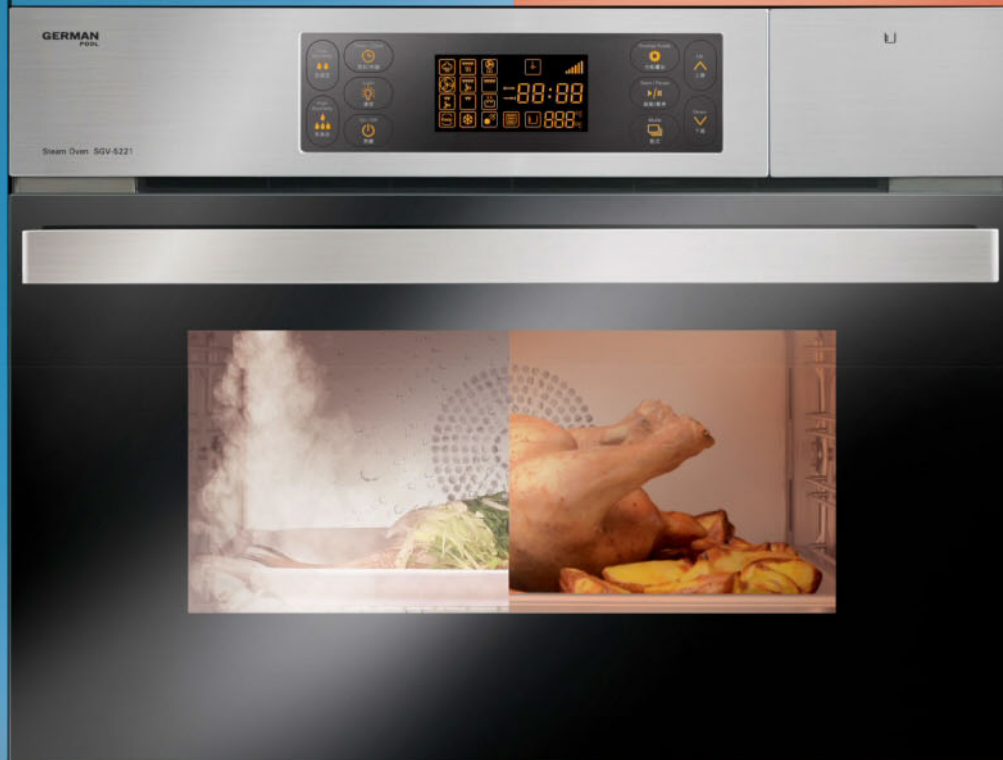
However, it is famous for one, which is now an international favourite: hot and sour soup. The version most people know is actually from Shanghai. The tartness does not come solely from smoky Zhenjiang (Chinking) vinegar, but also from the pickling juices of fermented chillies or fermented ginger. It is traditionally thickened with blood. San Xi Lou has an authentic Sichuanese hot and sour soup flavoured with pickled wild Sichuan chillies that give it a sharp, clean tanginess laced with heat. ■

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Hangzhou Duck Soup with Chinese Ham and Fish Balls

Not one for novice home chefs, this tasty broth packs a punch that makes it worth the effort. Recipe by Y. L. Lau, executive chef at Crystal Jade Jiang Nan.

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 rice-fed duck, about 1.2kg
 12 bundles of Shanghai bok choy
 12 Hangzhou fish balls
 600g huotong Jinhua ham (shank end with bone)
 12 Jinhua ham slices
 3.5L water

Hangzhou fish balls

1 Chinese grass carp
 Ginger slices, to taste
 Green onions, cut into 2.5cm pieces, to taste
 Salt, to taste
 Water

Prep & cook time

2 hours; 4.5 hours

- 1 Make the Hangzhou fish balls**
 Remove the skin and fins from the carp, and mash the fish into a paste. Add green onions and ginger into water, then pour mixture into the fish paste and stir. Season with salt, then mix until the paste thickens. Mould the fish paste into 2.5cm balls, then simmer in hot water over low heat for five minutes until cooked. Drain.
- 2 Make the soup**
 Wash the huotong ham, blanch in boiling water and drain. Place the blanched ham in a pot with 3.5L of water and bring to the boil, then cook on low heat for 1.5 hours. Remove the ham, but keep the ham stock. Wash the duck, blanch in fresh boiling water, then pat dry. Place the blanched duck into the ham stock and bring to the boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer for 2.5 hours until the duck meat falls off the bone.
- 3 Cook other ingredients**
 Boil the bok choy and set aside. Blanch Jinhua ham slices, steam until properly cooked for around 15 to 20 minutes then set aside.
- 4 Serve**
 Add the fish balls and bok choy into the simmering soup. Place Jinhua ham slices over the duck. Bring soup to the boil and serve.

Five Snake Soup

Nothing warms you up like a bowl of viscous, nourishing snake soup. Recipe by Chan Yat-sang, executive chef at Stellar House.

Serves 2

Ingredients

240g five snake mix (usually a combination of cobra, banded krait, Chinese krait, Indo-Chinese rat snake, water snake), steamed

120g fish maw, blanched and sliced into strips

80g ginger, sliced

Dried tangerine peel, to taste

40g black mushrooms, thinly sliced

40g wood ear fungus, thinly sliced

40g bamboo shoots, julienned

120g fresh chicken meat, steamed

2pcs lemon leaves

Soup base

Old chicken

Pork bones

Jinhua ham

Lean pork

Snake bones

Garnish

Chrysanthemum petals, to taste

Fresh coriander, to taste

Lemon or lime leaves, thinly sliced

Fried dough or wonton skins, to taste

Salt and pepper, to taste

Prep & cook time

1 hour; 6.5 hours

1 Prepare the snake meat

Ask the butcher to skin and bone the snakes. Keep the bones for making the soup base. Boil the snake meat until cooked. Allow to cool and hand-shred.

2 Prepare the ingredients

Soak the fish maw, tangerine peel, black mushrooms and wood ear fungus in separate containers. Julienne the ginger, tangerine peel, black mushroom and wood ear fungus into equal-sized matchsticks; the fish maw may be bigger. Hand-shred the steamed chicken. Set aside.

3 Make the soup base

In a large pot, simmer all the soup base ingredients over low heat for six hours. Strain out the ingredients, then season with salt.

3 Add the ingredients to soup

Add the prepared ingredients to the soup base and bring to the boil, then simmer gently for 20 minutes. Garnish and add salt and pepper to taste.



Double-boiled Clear Broth with Bamboo Pith, Black Mushroom and Brassica

There is nothing better than a hot, soothing broth to help you wind down after a long day. Recipe by Tony Wan Chung-yiu, Chinese chef at Golden Leaf, Conrad Hong Kong.

Serves 1

Ingredients

2 heads Chinese cabbage (brassica)
1 black mushroom
2 pcs bamboo piths
1 slice of Chinese dry-cured ham
350ml clear chicken broth
Salt, to taste

Prep & cook time

2 hours; 1.5 hours

1

Prepare the ingredients

Thoroughly clean the black mushroom and remove the stem. Then soak the mushroom and bamboo piths in cold water until softened. Cut the Chinese cabbage into segments without removing the stem. Blanch Chinese cabbage in boiling water for a minute, then dry and set aside.

2

Make the soup

Bring the chicken broth to the boil. Place the broth and all the ingredients into a double-boiling jar and cover with the lid. Create a water bath by boiling water in a pot or wok, add the double-boiling jar and stew for an hour on low heat.

3

Serve

Remove jar from the water bath. Season the soup with salt and serve.



Yan Du Xian

Beat the winter blues with this Shanghainese classic bursting with umami. Recipe by Lau Wing-yuen, executive sous chef at Shanghai Min.

Serves 4

Ingredients

200g pork belly, blanched
200g Shanghainese salted pork
200g tofu skin knots
125g bamboo shoots
1.5L superior stock

Seasoning

10g scallions, chopped
5g butter
4g salt

Prep & cook time

30 minutes; 2.5 hours

1 Prepare the ingredients

Cut the salted pork and bamboo shoots into slices, and the blanched pork belly into large chunks. Blanch the tofu knots and bamboo shoot slices in boiling water for about 30 seconds.

2 Make the soup

Place the salted pork, pork belly, bamboo shoots and broth into a large clay pot and bring to the boil on high heat, then cover with a lid, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for two hours.

3 Serve

Add the tofu knots and simmer for five minutes. Remove from the heat and add all the seasoning ingredients before serving.





Immunity Booster

Give your immune system a boost with this all-natural Cantonese soup. Recipe by Siu Ka-shing, head chef at Sofofama.

Serves 4

Ingredients

4pcs dried monkey head mushrooms
 300g lean pork
 100g chestnuts, de-shelled
 30g jujubes, de-seeded
 50g fresh ginger, sliced
 2 cobs of corn
 40g yam
 3L water
 Salt, to taste

Prep & cook time

3 hours; 3.5 hours

1

Prepare the monkey head mushrooms

Cut off the stems and soak the mushrooms for two to three hours in warm water, changing the water once or twice. Squeeze out any dirt trapped in the folds. Set aside.

2

Prepare other soup ingredients

In a pan, blanch the lean pork in boiling water for three to five minutes. Remove the pork from the water and set aside. Peel and finely slice the yam. Cut the corn cobs into big chunks.

3

Make the soup

Place all the ingredients and water into a large pan over high heat. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for three to four hours. Add salt to taste.

Hot and Sour Soup with Wild Sichuan Chillies

Everyone craves a hearty, piquant hot and sour soup from time to time. Recipe by C. H. Wong, executive chef at San Xi Lou.

Serves 4

Ingredients

1/2 fresh chicken
5 slices of ginger
6 prawns
6 scallops
Sliced wood ear fungus, to taste
Sliced soft tofu, to taste
Julienned bamboo shoots, to taste
75g Sichuanese vinegar
75g wild pickled Sichuan chillies
2L water

Prep & cook time

4.5 hours; 20 minutes

- 1 Make the chicken broth**
Boil the chicken and ginger in water for four to five hours to make stock.
- 2 Prepare the soup ingredients**
Wash the prawns and scallops, dice, and set aside. Julienne the wood ear fungus, tofu and bamboo shoots.
- 3 Make the soup**
Add the vinegar, wild pickled Sichuan chillies and julienned ingredients to the chicken stock and bring to the boil. Strain out the chillies and serve.



Chestnut and Dried Oyster Soup

This thick yet refreshing sweet and savoury broth will quench your thirst and keep you warm. Recipe by Chun Lau, general manager at Kin's Kitchen.

Serves 4

Ingredients

600g pumpkin
180g chestnuts, de-shelled
30g Chinese pearl barley
60g dried oysters
240g carrots
900g pork breast bone
4L water

Prep & cook time

20 minutes; 2.5 hours

1 Prepare the pork-breast bone

In a pot, blanch pork-breast bone by submerging it in room-temperature water and bringing it to the boil over low heat. Remove the bone from the water and set aside.

2 Prepare other soup ingredients

Peel the pumpkin and cut into rectangles. Soak the dried oysters for 10 minutes and rinse. Peel carrots and cut into big chunks.

3 Make the soup

Place all ingredients in the pork bone broth on high heat and bring to the boil. Cook over high heat for 30 minutes, then reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for another two hours.



Double-boiled Soup with Soft-shell Turtle, Teal and Chinese Herbs

This soul-warming soup recipe with Chinese herbs, soft-shell turtle and water duck may just help you keep the flu away. Recipe by Chan Wai-teng, executive chef at Man Hing at Greater China Club.

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

300g sustainably farmed wattle-necked soft shell turtle
600g teal (one small water duck)
300g lean pork
10g gastrodia elata
8g Sichuan lovage
8g angelica dahurica root
1.8L water
6 chicken feet
2 slices of ginger
1 dried tangerine peel
Vegetable oil, for cooking
Salt, to taste

Prep & cook time

45 minutes; 4 hours

1 Prepare the soup ingredients

Wash herbs with water, dry properly. Rinse lean pork, teal and chicken feet. Blanch all three ingredients, then remove and drain.

2 Prepare the soft-shell turtle

Wash and cut soft-shell turtle into chunks, then blanch, remove and drain. Pour vegetable oil into a hot wok and fry soft-shell turtle to a mild yellow. Remove and drain.

3 Make the soup

Place all the ingredients into a double-boil pot, add water, and double-boil for approximately four hours. Add salt before serving.





URBAN TREE HOUSE

In small spaces, designers must think big. This Kowloon micro apartment shows that, when it comes imaginative solutions, size doesn't matter.

Words Michele Koh Morollo
Photos Dennis Lo



In densely populated Hong Kong, small apartments can leave homeowners feeling limited when it comes to interior design options, but not architect Nelson Chow, who remodelled his micro apartment using tree houses as inspiration.

Raised in Canada and trained in New York, Chow's practice, NC Design & Architecture, has made waves in Hong Kong with its exciting designs for F&B establishments. Projects include the interiors of Mrs. Pound in Sheung Wan, a covert lair behind the façade of a traditional Chinese stamp shop; Central lounge bar Foxglove, a speakeasy-style space behind an umbrella shop, like something out of Hollywood blockbuster *Kingsman*; and the exclusive Krug Room at the Mandarin Oriental.

Chow's experiments with the themes of secrecy, seclusion and fantasy come into play wonderfully in his own home. His 370-square-foot apartment has been imaginatively transformed into a stylish and

cosy pad with a tree house-like raised bedroom loft.

In many parts of the world, tree houses are built for children, where they can escape homework and chores to daydream and engage in make-believe in a private oasis up in the trees. This is precisely what Chow was going for when he designed his home, located on the eighth floor of a Ho Man Tin high-rise. In a residential neighbourhood surrounded by trees, his split-level design makes the most of the views.

"The building is located in a site that's like a forest in the midst of the city. This is very rare in Hong Kong, so I wanted to accentuate this aspect of the property," Chow says.

The original apartment had a more conventional layout, with a bedroom, kitchen, dining and living areas on one level. To maximise the functional space, Chow decided to make full use of the 10-foot-high ceiling by building a 40-square-foot sleeping loft and freeing up precious floor space. >>

“I grew up in Canada, and I sometimes went out to the woods and stayed in tree house cabins. When you stay in a tree house, you don’t need a lot of floor space, because you feel fully connected with the great outdoors and nature when you’re there,” Chow says.

When he downsized to this microflat, he decided he didn’t need a large bedroom. “I knew I wouldn’t feel comfortable sleeping in a space that was too large. What I wanted was something cosy and intimate. Remembering those tree houses I loved, I decided on a loft-style bed space.”

So he knocked down the internal walls and built a loft-bedroom above the dining area, creating two very different moods within the micro apartment.

“For the lower level, my priority was to capture a panoramic view of the trees outside. It’s hectic in Hong Kong and I wanted the living and dining rooms to be quiet and serene. I created a more contemplative environment here with dark blue walls, subdued enough to draw attention to the greenery outside.”

In contrast to the relatively sombre living areas, the sleeping loft is a light, bright and airy Scandinavian-inspired floating wooden box. Though the living and sleeping zones evoke distinct ambiances, they are visually unified through warm wood, which is used for both the loft and the floor of the living areas.

On entering the flat, there is a galley-style kitchen on the left, with an open-plan living and dining area beyond. Suspended in a wooden box above the dining area, the bed isn’t visible from the living spaces. Instead, the loft wall is encased in a striking feature wall of terracotta latticework that resembles the cross-section of cardboard.

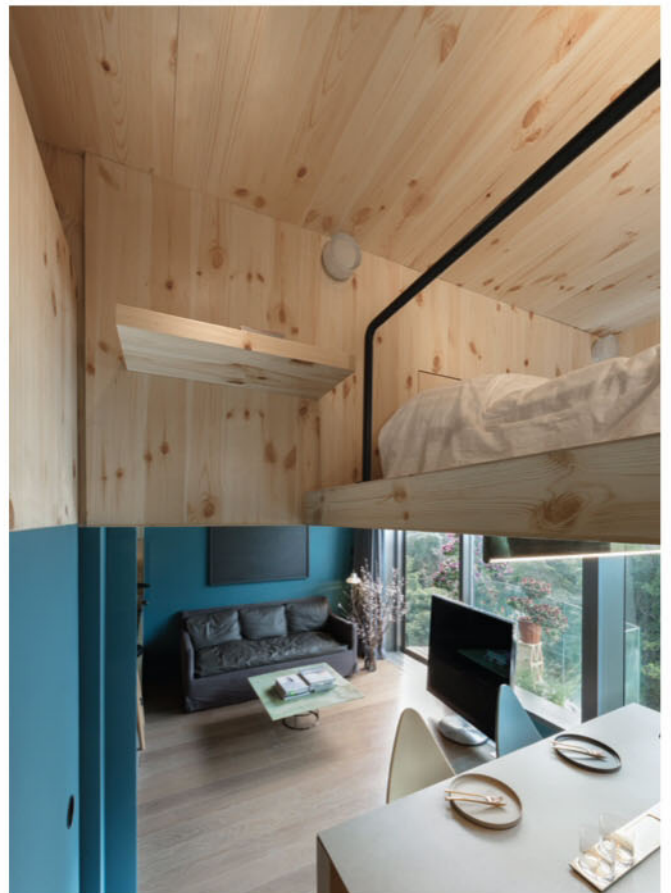
It reduces the ceiling level to six feet above the dining area and is reached by a ladder-like staircase in the dining area.

Clad in natural pine, with a slot-like linear window that looks over the surrounding woods, this nook-like sleeping loft seems to hover above the lower level of the apartment. The window is positioned to give Chow a bird’s-eye view of the surrounding trees when he wakes. At night, outdoor lights from the communal gardens below shine up through the greenery, illuminating the loft in a soft, dreamy glow.

The loft is furnished simply with a mattress, a reading light and a shelf against the back wall where Chow stores his nighttime reading. Along one side is a protective railing, to prevent him rolling out of bed and falling down the staircase. Downstairs, the living spaces are furnished with his favourite pieces from designers such as Hans Wegner, Konstantin Grcic and Alvar Aalto.

“A home needs to reflect your unique personality,” Chow says. “It’s worth taking risks and creating a one-of-a-kind retreat.” ■









Iris Wong

Ride the *Seoul* Train

K-pop and great shopping aside, Seoul should be on every gastro tourist's list of culinary destinations. Here's why.

Words and Photos Iris Wong Illustrations Tim Cheng

Seoul has never been on my travel bucket list. I don't follow any K-pop groups. I can hardly afford regular waxing sessions, let alone plastic surgery, and (somewhat blasphemous as a food writer) I'm quite happy just taking bites of kimchi pancakes with some makgeolli on Kimberley Street. But never say never. As I discovered on a recent trip, there's more to Seoul than meets the eye, especially when it comes to gastro travel.

Dividing the city in two is the Han River, or Hangang, which has 27 bridges connecting the north and south banks. North of the river are historical landmarks such as old villages and palaces, while on the south is the city's most affluent district, Gangnam-gu (the name may be familiar from Psy's 2012 international hit, *Gangnam Style*). One of Seoul's least-developed areas until the 80s, it now has the city's most expensive real estate, the South Korean headquarters of global tech giants such as Google and IBM, and Asia's largest underground shopping centre, COEX Mall. Not only is Gangnam the epitome of luxury living, it is also the powerhouse of medical tourism. Apgujeong-dong, also known as the "beauty belt", is flanked with plastic surgery clinics, with the most common procedures being double-eyelid treatment (not considered cosmetic surgery in Korea), rhinoplasty and chin augmentation.

The main strip seems to have an unfeasible number of big-chain coffee shops, many of which are open 24 hours, with more around every corner. People saunter through the streets carrying takeaway coffee and the hearty aroma of roasted beans permeates the air. According an article in *The Korea Herald*, South Korea ranks fourth in the world for the most Starbucks outlets per capita, with more than 1,000 branches nationwide. Coffee has become a symbol of luxury: imagine a »

Korean Carrie Bradshaw strutting down Cheongdam Fashion Street in sunglasses, shopping bags hooked over her left elbow, a skinny latte in her right hand... you get the idea.

Even if you don't drink coffee, the many small, cosy cafes are a good place to rest your feet after shopping and sightseeing. Hipster coffee joints are clustered around the popular university area, Hapjeong-Hongdae, while the local artsy crowd heads for the cafe street in Samcheon-dong. For something different, there's a raccoon café in Yongsan District called Blind Alley (yes, you can pet and feed them), and a Sherlock Holmes-themed cafe in Gangnam. Caface prints your selfie onto your drink, while Monster Cupcakes celebrates Halloween all year round.

For those seeking refined dining experiences, head south of the river for some of the finest, most talked-about restaurants, including South Korean celebrity chef Edward Kwon's LAB XXIV (the iced persimmon is delightful). At Soigné, chef Jun Lee serves contemporary Korean cuisine in the form of an "episode" menu that changes every three months. Chef Tae Hwan-ryu offers a 23-course menu of Japanese-French hybrid cuisine crafted with local Korean ingredients at Ryunique. Or try his latest restaurant, Rooftop by Ryunique, in Apgujeong.

When it comes to street food, Korea's first permanent market, Gwangjang, is a great place to start. It overwhelms the senses, with mung bean pancakes sizzling on a grill, customers shouting their orders, and ganjang-gejang (soy sauce crab) and other fermented delicacies oozing umami and mouthwatering pungency. Eventually I settled down at one of the stalls with my travel companions to sample some tteokbokki (spicy rice cakes), Korean fish cakes in a clear broth and to sip makgeolli (fermented rice wine) from small metal

bowls. One of my biggest regrets, however, was not trying the live octopus sashimi, despite the friendly persuasion of the ajummas (Korean middle-aged ladies, all with similar perms and the same shade of lipstick) manning the stalls.

There's a great debate among Koreans about which store serves the best chimaek (Korean fried chicken and beer). Everyone gives a different answer – BHC, Baengi, Goobne, Kyochon – each endorsed by a different celebrity. But there's a consensus that the best way to enjoy chimaek is at the park by the Han River, at sunset. Take a picnic mat, grab a few beers and order fried chicken (there are people handing out flyers) to be delivered to your exact spot. Sunbathe, people-watch, leaf through a good book, and tuck into crispy yet tender fried chicken and ice-cold beer.

For a more hands-on food experience, try gimjang, or kimchi-making, which was listed by Unesco as Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013. I signed up at the Museum Kimchikan, where the chef-instructor guided us through the ingredients, steps and techniques of making kimchi. I packed a box of my final product in my suitcase to bring back to Hong Kong, but be sure to wrap it up in several ziploc bags unless you want your clothes smelling like kimchi, as I learned the hard way.

The best way to end the day is to visit a jjimjilbang, a bathhouse where you can steam, sauna, bathe, eat and even sing karaoke. If live music tickles your fancy, head to one of the many jazz lounges in Itaewon, the Lan Kwai Fong of Seoul. All That Jazz is the first jazz club in Korea and offers some of the best live jazz in town for a reasonably low cover charge. It's a dark, moody jazz bar that doesn't scrimp on quality (or alcohol) in its drinks, making it the perfect way to wind down in the company of friends, old and new. ■





Iris Wong



First Things First



Maps

Google Maps isn't accurate in Seoul. Download Naver Map if you can read Korean, or Hanchao Map if you can read Simplified Chinese.



Getting around

Download the helpful Subway Korea smartphone app. Taxis are accessible and the drivers of black "international" taxis are supposed to understand basic English.



Airport

If you're travelling on a Sunday, get to the airport three hours in advance or risk missing your flight owing to long queues. There are plenty of restaurants and shops to keep you occupied.

What to Do



Iris Wong

In spring or autumn, start the day with an early visit to **Haneul Park**. Be sure to take your camera for amazing photos ops with a sea of spring flowers or silvergrass and fall foliage. Hikers can take a short two-hour hike up **Mount Bugaksan**, and be rewarded with spectacular views of the city and the famous Gyeongbokgong Palace. For lunch, head to **Gwangjang Market** for Korean street food such as bindaetteok (mung bean pancakes), tteokbokki and sundae (Korean blood sausage), with makgeolli. Seafood lovers might prefer the 24-hour **Noryangjin Fish Market**, where you can pick your catch and have it prepared any way you like at one of the restaurants. For coffee,

Samcheongdong or **Hapjeong** are packed with cosy, trendy cafes that know their brews. For shopping, **Garosu-gil** (which translates literally as tree-lined street), is great for high street brands and local designer stores. **Myeongdong**, another hugely popular shopping district, has a variety of fashion and beauty stores, with luxury brands as well as department stores. Rest your feet after all the retail therapy and devour plate after plate of galbi at **Samwon Garden**, one of Seoul's most famous Korean barbecue restaurants. Then unwind at a **Korean bathhouse**, or jjimjilbang, for a unique local spa experience, or with an old-fashioned at one of the many live jazz lounges in **Itaewon**.

Where to Stay



Art: Le Méridien Seoul

Opened late last year, Le Méridien Seoul was inspired by the golden age of travel in the 1960s and exudes the glamour of a bygone era. The hotel is all about “coordinates, culture and cuisine”, with timeless chic interiors, state-of-the-art facilities, great dining options, and even an art museum, M Contemporary, which hotel guests can access free. *120 Bongeunsa-ro, Gangnam-gu, Seoul 06124*
T +82 2 3451 8000



Homely: Hotel 28

This luxury boutique hotel was inspired by a retro film set, with interiors by global design studio HBO+EMTB. Guests can unwind in the hotel's rooftop garden, visit the cinematheque and gallery, or dine at the restaurant Wolhyang. *13 Myeongdong 7-gil, Jung-gu, Seoul 04534*
T +82 2 774 2828



Historical: Rakkojae Seoul

Rest mind and body at this beautiful hanok (traditional Korean house). The serene Rakkojae Seoul has three rooms and a separate house with two rooms, each with a slightly different feel and en-suite bathroom. Enjoy unusual activities such as a natural mud sauna, kimchi-making workshop and tea ceremony. *49-23 Gyeonggi, Jongno-gu, Seoul*
T +82 2 742 3410

What to Eat and Drink



Tteokbokki

One of the most popular street foods in Korea, these cylinder-shaped white rice cakes are highly addictive. Often eaten with Korean fish cakes and boiled eggs, tteokbokki are drenched in gochujang (chilli paste) or non-spicy ganjang (soy sauce). We tried it at **Yupdduk**, in Dongdaemun, in a huge portion enough to feed three people.

Korean Barbecue

Who can resist fine cuts of beef and pork being sizzled on a hot grill right in front of you? Diners usually cook their own meat, but renowned Korean barbecue restaurant **Samwon Garden** has experts who grill the meat for you. We highly recommend the Korean fresh short rib and the beef tartare.



Ganjang-gejang

Ganjang-gejang, raw crab marinated in soy sauce, is a must-try in Korea. Get your hands dirty as you suckle on the creamy flesh and slurp up the roe. Head to one of the restaurants on famous **Ganjang-gejang Alley** in Sinsa-dong to savour this fermented seafood dish.

Bingsu

Popular in summer, bingsu, or shaved ice, is a Korean dessert topped with anything from fruits and matcha powder to chocolate brownies and condensed milk. One common variety is patbingsu, made with sweetened red beans. Head to **Sulbing Korean Dessert Café** for Injeolmi Sulbing, with nutty bean powder, chewy rice cakes and sweet, soft cheese.



Fried Chicken and Beer

Koreans call it chimaek – a compound of the words chicken and maekju (beer in Korean) – and there's no denying the pleasure of gulping down ice-cold beer after mouthfuls of tasty, crispy fried chicken. There are lots of chimaek chains but we recommend **Chicken Baengi** and **BHC**.



Conversation *with a Local*



HANA SUH

Tour Guide

Hana Suh ditched IT engineering three years ago to become a tour guide in South Korea. A keen traveller, she recommends visiting Busan and Jeju Island as well as Seoul.

Favourite spots to eat in Seoul?

I like Itaewon, it offers a lot of variety when it comes to food. Vatos Urban Tacos is a bar that serves tacos – I like the fries with kimchi topping, frozen margarita and Corona beer.

Where to chill?

There's an area called Hapjeong, one stop from Hongik University, which has a lot of cafes, small restaurants and clubs and pubs. If you want to have coffee at a cosy cafe, I really recommended the area.

Best shopping districts?

There is an outlet in Seoul called the Gasan Digital Complex, which has several outlet malls. If you get there at the right time of the year, you'll get great discounts on clothes.

Best place for fried chicken and beer?

I like BHC, made famous by the popular Korean drama *My Love from the Stars*. The original chicken with spicy sauce is the best. Order takeaway to eat at Hangang Park – the deliveryman will find you and give you chicken and beer.

What's the most scenic place in Seoul?

Noeul Park, near Seoul World Cup Stadium. Noeul means sunset. It's famous for its golf course and on top of the hill there's a campsite where you can have a barbecue with amazing views of the Han River.

What do you love most about living in Seoul?

Convenience. It is easy to find places to eat and easy to get around. A lot of events are held here, like marathons, hikes and any kind of meet-ups.

Where can you get temple cuisine?

Near the Kimchi Museum, there's a temple called Jogyesa. Across from the temple there is a Buddhist vegetarian restaurant named Balwoo Gongyang. It may not be the best temple cuisine out there, but it's easy to find for travellers.

If we only have one day in Seoul, what should we do?

I like hiking and would recommend the two mountains behind Gyeongbokgung Palace, [called] Bugaksan and Inwangsan. If you climb the mountains, you'll get a nice view of Seoul, including the president's house, Gyeongbokgung Palace and the main square. It only takes two to three hours, and gives a great overview of the city. Then definitely go for a coffee in Hapjeong, and a jjimjilbang, where you can relax in several rooms at different temperatures. Koreans believe you sweat out all the toxins so it's good for your health. Food is served in the common area. [It's the] perfect to end the day, especially in winter.

GERMAN
POOL



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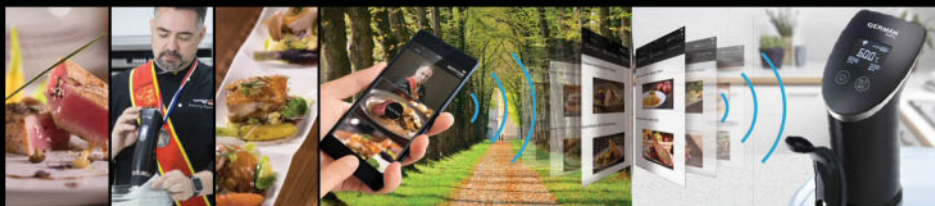


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PIES AND TARTS

A staple of dinner tables, bakeries and snack bars worldwide, pies and tarts are enjoyed anywhere and at any time of the day. Pies come in a huge variety: holiday pies, homemade pies, grand pies, tiny pies, sweet pies and savoury pies. There are pies for afternoon snacks and pies for late-night tummy grumbles. Here are some of the world's favourites.

Words Lorria Sahmet Photos Happy Yuen





1. Meat Pie

This palm-sized Antipodean meat pie is designed to be enjoyed on the go. Traditionally filled with minced meat and gravy, and served with a dollop of ketchup on top, the pies also come with fillings such as onion, mushrooms, cheese and exotic meats such as camel and buffalo. As well as street stalls, meat pies can be found in many pubs and restaurants, served with peas, mashed potatoes and an ice-cold beer.

2. Baked Cheese Tarts

Originating in Japan and hugely popular across Asia, these bite-sized tarts are twice baked for a crumbly, crunchy, cookie-textured crust. The fluffy interior is made from three types of cream cheese: mild Hakodate cheese from Hokkaido, full-bodied Betsukai cheese and a salted French cheese for flavour. However, don't be fooled by its cheesy filling; these tarts tend to be slightly sweet rather than savoury.

3. Spanakopita

A Greek rendition of the spinach pie, spanakopita is made by wrapping ingredients – typically spinach, feta, egg and onions – in flaky filo pastry, made with butter or olive oil, and baked. A popular snack, the classic triangular pastry is often served with tzatziki, a dip made from yogurt, garlic, cucumber and fresh herbs (usually dill or mint). For extra gooeyness, use a mixture of different cheeses.

From left: Mince and onion pie from The Globe (\$160 each); Spanakopita from Employees Only (\$198 each)



4. Quiche

Native to France, the quiche is a savoury, open tart combining eggs, cheese, milk or cream, and sometimes meat, seafood or vegetables to form a custard-like filling cooked in a savoury pastry crust. A usual suspect at lunch, quiche is commonly served warm with a simple salad. Popular fillings include bacon, Gruyère cheese, ham, spinach, leek, goat's cheese and mushrooms. Can be served hot or cold.

5. Coconut Tart

A sibling of the Hong Kong egg tart, the coconut tart is a beloved dessert with a sweet filling of shredded coconut, icing sugar, melted butter and a splash of vanilla with a maraschino cherry on top. Unlike the egg tart's flaky pastry base, the coconut tart calls for a buttery, shortcrust pastry that complements the fluffy interior. They're popular at local bakeries, and are best eaten warm for a satisfying crunch.

6. Calzone

Meaning "stocking" in Italian, calzone is an oven-baked folded sandwich made from salted bread dough. Often sold by street vendors, its folded form began as an effort to make pizza easier to enjoy while on the go. Typically stuffed with salami or ham, mozzarella, ricotta, parmesan and an egg, the fillings vary from region to region and are usually reminiscent of pizza toppings. Deep-fried calzones are also common.

From left: Bacon onion quiche from Pacific Coffee (\$28 each); Calzone from Ciao Chow (\$219 each, only available upon request)



7. Apple Pie

Among the most iconic American comfort foods, apple pie is known for its generously packed, sticky filling and golden flaky crust. Slices of sweet and tart apples are spiced with cinnamon and sugar then encased in pastry with a neatly latticed or closed top. Other popular fillings include apricots, blackberries and strawberries. Spices like ginger, cloves and nutmeg can also be used for taste variations. Best enjoyed with ice cream, whipped cream, or both.

8. Banoffee Pie

Back in 1971, the chef and owner of the Hungry Monk restaurant in East Sussex were testing the US recipe for Blum's Coffee Toffee Pie and found it wanting. They experimented with adding banana to the recipe and the banoffee pie was born. A play on words, the banoffee is a mixture of bananas and toffee on a base of crumbled biscuits and butter, generously slathered in whipped cream (or coffee-whipped cream) and topped with light chocolate shavings or caramelised pecans.

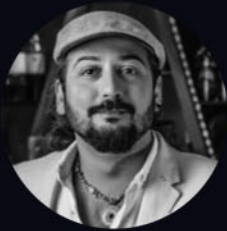
9. Portuguese Egg Tart

What makes the Portuguese egg tart unique is the slightly caramelised top resembling a bite-sized crème brûlée that is surrounded by a buttery and flaky pastry. Taking inspiration from Portugal's pastel de nata, thanks to Macau's Portuguese heritage, the sweet creamy-custard centre is made by combining milk, sugar, vanilla and egg yolk. A popular Macanese street snack, Portuguese egg tarts are found throughout the city.

From left: All American apple pie from Tai Tai Pie Pies (\$450/9.5-inch); Banoffee pie from The Globe (\$70/slice)

RAISE YOUR GLASS

What our wine and spirits experts are drinking.



10 Year-old Rum

“St Nicholas Abbey is a great expression of an English-style rum and a favourite of mine. A dry rum, it packs a punch with lots of flavour and heart without being too sweet. Whisky drinkers often love this rum, which contains similar, if slightly sweeter, notes of vanilla spice, toffee apple, barrel char, maple spice and buttery, creamy toffee. There are also hints of marzipan and dates, as well as a tinge of espresso bean. In terms of flavour profile, it has a light, soft and fruity palate with oak and bourbon notes.”

from **Mario Calderone**
Bar manager, Honi Honi Tiki Lounge
A born and bred Italian who has spent the past 10 years perfecting his craft of mixology across the globe



Babylonstoren, Nebukadnesar 2015

“Nebukadnesar 2015 is the flagship Bordeaux blend from one of South Africa’s oldest Cape Dutch farms, Babylonstoren, which dates back to 1692. This beautiful property has extensive gardens and a restaurant with an almost legendary earth-to-table philosophy, serving up the freshest produce straight from the garden. Dense, concentrated and inky, with lovely perfume, spicy accents and succulent fruit, expect this wine to fill your mouth with flavour, so serve it with roasted duck, lamb or beef. It’s not hard to see why Asia’s top wine professionals judged it Best South African Wine at the 2017 Cathay Pacific Hong Kong International Wine & Spirit Competition.”

from **Debra Meiburg**
Master of Wine
Dedicated wine professional teaching the world to navigate their taste buds



Orange is the New Black

“Orange is the New Black is a decadent limited-release porter by Hong Kong’s Young Master brewery. With a 6.6 per cent alcohol content, this is a rich yet drinkable porter that balances the roasty, chocolatey and coffee notes characteristic to the beer style. Inspired by the flavour profile of a chocolate-orange truffle, the brewers infused the beer with Valrhona cacao nibs, orange peel and fresh vanilla beans. At 30 IBU (International Bittering Units), it has a mild bitterness that provides just the right counter-point to the sweet chocolate and citrus flavours, preparing your palate for the next sip. Pair it with Big Sur’s Memphis-style ribs and then continue drinking it after your meal as dessert.”



from **Rohit Dugar**
Founder, Young Master Ales
Beer aficionado turned full-blown beer geek

Ginseng Thunder

Power through winter with this adventurous hot cocktail inspired by Jeff Talarigo's book *The Ginseng Hunter*. Recipe by Hungie Fong, bar manager at The Envoy.

Drink photo Happy Yuen

Ingredients

60ml fresh Korean pear juice
10ml fresh lime juice
1pc candied ginger

Ginseng redistilled gin

A bottle of London dry gin
Dried ginseng, to taste

Yata watte tea syrup

8g yata watte tea leaves
110ml boiling water
White sugar, about 110g or equal quantity as weight of brewed tea

1 Make the ginseng redistilled gin

Redistill the London dry gin with the dried ginseng, using a rotary evaporator to concentrate the flavours and create a clear consistency. Pour into a clean glass bottle and label. Set aside.

2 Make the yata watte tea syrup

Steep yata watte tea leaves in boiling water for five minutes. Strain. Add an equal amount of white sugar to the weight of brewed tea (50:50 ratio of sugar and tea). Stir until dissolved. Pour into a clean glass bottle and label. Set aside until cool.

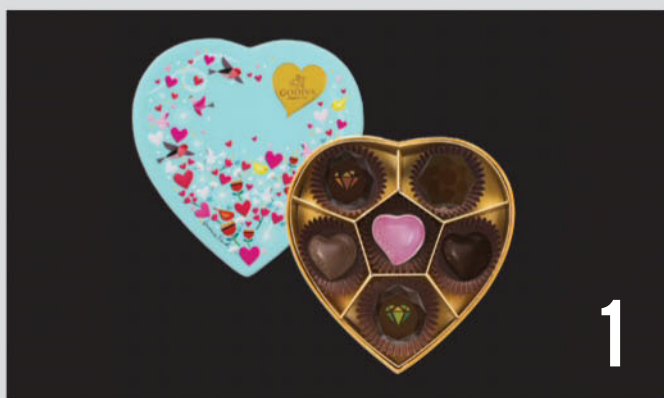
3 Make the cocktail

In a milk-steaming jug, add 40ml ginseng redistilled gin, 30ml tea syrup, the Korean pear juice and lime juice, and stir briefly. Using the steam wand on an espresso machine, heat and froth until hot to touch. Pour into a warmed ceramic mug and garnish with candied ginger on a cocktail pick. Serve on a coaster.



February GIVEAWAYS

Visit *Crave's* Facebook page at facebook.com/cravemagazinehk for a chance to win one of these sumptuous gifts.



1. Godiva Valentine's Day Chocolate Gift Box

Value: \$290 per box | Giveaway period: February 1 to 7

Premium chocolatier Godiva is giving away three Valentine's Day assorted chocolate heart gift box to three lucky *Crave* readers. Each containing six pieces of exquisite chocolate creations, such as the limited edition strawberry and lemon ganache and pistachio praline, the heart-shaped box makes for an indulgent gift just in time for Valentine's Day.

3. Sunday Brunch for Two at ON Dining

Value: \$2,000+ | Giveaway period: February 15 to 21

Beloved ON Dining by chef Philippe Orrico is now serving Sunday brunch. Be among the first to try the delicious Le Grand Brunch menu, which includes a selection of house-made croissants and savoury canapés, appetisers, hearty mains, and plenty of sweet pastries and fresh fruits for dessert. The brunch also comes with free-flow Nicolas Deneux champagne, house wines and fresh fruit juices.

2. Pastel Lovers Cake (1 lb) at VIVE Cake Boutique

Value: \$590 | Giveaway period: February 8 to 14

VIVE has just opened its second branch in Central, and the stylish cake boutique is giving away a one-pound Pastel Lovers cake, a Central store-exclusive creation of molten strawberry candy, chocolate sponge and chocolate crunch topped with handmade meringue. February just got sweeter.

4. Dinner for Two at Le 39V

Value: up to \$3,000 | Giveaway period: February 22 to 28

If you still haven't tried chef Frédéric Vardon's Hong Kong outpost of his Michelin-starred restaurant in Paris, now's your chance. Boasting incredible views from the ICC, Le 39V is giving away a \$3,000 dining voucher for two guests. Just thinking about its blue lobster carpaccio, roasted line-caught sea bass in Matelote style and the chocolate Religieuse is making us salivate.

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