

Where to go

KOTA ZHENG ZHONG BAK KUT TEH

Launched in Singapore: 2018
Number of outlets: Two - at Causeway Point and Serangoon Garden Way

This hok loo soy chiu chuan started in Kota Tinggi in Johor in 2010 and features a slightly sweeter broth here than its Kuala Lumpur version because of the dark soy sauce added to it.

You can also add slices of heat-tolerant ingredients. The outlet here also offers peppery Singapore hok loo for those who prefer the local version.

But the most popular item is its signature Herbal Clamper Bak Kut Teh (right), which is brewed with 18 Chinese herbs and pork parts such as spare ribs, tail and belly. The braised Pig's Trotters is a favourite too. Prices start at around \$15.

GO WOODLE HOUSE

Launched in Singapore: 2019

Number of outlets: Two - at VivoCity and at Tampines Hub



The noodle story here brings together specialties from both sides of the Straits of Johore. At the table, a small tray of five different nibbles give the dish an interesting aroma and depth of flavours.

The dry pan version is very good too. It is served with hard-boiled and topped automatically with dried century egg.

Other popular items include Braising Malaysian Noodle Superior Soup, Handmade Pan-Meet Soup and the Taro Root Cocoa Noodle Soup. Most noodle items cost less than \$15.



Taste of Malaysia in Singapore

People are flocking to Singapore outposts of Malaysian chains to satiate their cravings amid travel restrictions



Wong Ah Yook
Senior Food Correspondent

Here, that Singapore and Malaysia are seeking towards mutually recognizing vaccine certificates for better travel is cheer for the thousands who used to make weekend jaunts across the border before the pandemic hit.

But while the details are being ironed out, fans of Malaysian food are going for the next best thing - flocking to outlets opened here by popular chains from Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Johor.

Enteries like Pappadick and Kota Zhong Zhong Bak Kut Teh say that despite strict social distancing measures, business is thriving. It is, in fact, better than before borders closed last year.

Pappadick's Singapore chief executive Sebastian Low says sales from last December to February have grown up by about 30 per cent, compared with the same period a year ago.

Another chain he brought in from Johor in 2018, Go Noodle House, has similarly seen a 10 per cent bump in sales. The owing to hok loo brands came to new life last year during phase two of the recovery's reopening after the circuit breaker.

This was partly due to pure craving for Malaysian food. Many customers told staff they discovered it, in some cases, rediscovered our brands because of their longing for Malaysian-style food, he says.

But other factors played a part too. "There's a certain nostalgia for dining Singaporean indulgences in beverage outlets as they could not travel," he notes.

Moreover, sales rise in neighbourhood malls enjoyed a rebound in sales because people wanted the convenience of dining out amid the relative safety of their own neighbourhoods.

Pappadick, which has six outlets mainly in malls like Serangoon and Parkway Parade, sells dishes like Penang prawn noodles and mam tok, while the Noodle House at

112 Serangoon specialises in Chinese noodle soups.

Kota Zhong Zhong Bak Kut Teh from Johor, which came to Singapore two years ago, reports a similar growth of 27 per cent for the January to February period compared with a year ago.

Its second outlet in Serangoon Gardens, which opened in March last year, is already surpassing its first shop in Holland Village, according to its spokesman. There are plans to open a third one in the next six months at Singapore's new east.

The quest for demand came in December with the start of phase three, when the number of dine-in customers a table was raised from two to eight, says its spokesman.

The added boost in feedback from its staff, many diners were Malaysians who missed the food from their home country.

Another hok loo, soy chiu chuan from Malaysia, New Harber in Dugis, reports a double-digit jump in sales from a year ago. It did not give figures.

Food-stalls featuring exclusively Malaysian hokker (or hot) noodle bowls from World Senzema (RMS), for example, has seen more customers at its Singapore Food Street since the start of Singapore's phase one.

Its spokesman says, "Diners here have been getting their Malaysian food fix here while staying out attractions in during these restrictions at home."

Food court chain Malaysia 101, which serves Malaysian hokker fare in three locations, says business has rebounded since last year, with a significant jump over the December to January festive period.

It adds that an increase in delivery orders since the circuit breaker also contributed to its launch performance.

It is also the impetus for the hokker and open a new outlet at 112 Causeway Point in the new year.

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PHOTOS: GO WOODLE HOUSE, JAPAN HOLDINGS, KOTA ZHONG ZHONG BAK KUT TEH, LAMBA WANGKAT PUE, RESORTS WORLD SINGAPORE, ST FILE

MALAYSIAN DUCK!
Launched in Singapore: 2012
Number of outlets: Three - at Jaring Park, AMK Hub and Causeway Point

A favourite featuring hokker food from Malaysia, popular Penang Curry roasted with pepper is called here to make it eat this cook their dishes. They include Peking Roasted Duck (left) in Kuala Lumpur and Sister Curry Chicken Mele in Penang.

Its more popular dishes include Penang Char Kway Teow, Geyser Rice, Chili Ikan Mas and Carrot. More menu items available here.

The chain has also opened all modern outlets called Malaysia Duck! in malls like Great World and City Square, plus a hotel version Duck Hotel in Clementi Mall.



PAPPADICK
Launched in Singapore: 2019
Number of outlets: Six - at Causeway Point, Newton Innovation, Our Tampines Hub, Parkway Parade, Waterway Point and Wraggoc

This chain, which serves popular Malaysian fare and its rice dishes, is going strong in Singapore despite reports of struggling partners being liquidated.

Popular items on its menu include Nasi Lemak With Sambal Prawas and Fried Chicken (above), Char Kway Teow and Ikan Tani Hui, the Cantonese cousin of the hot hokker with eggplant.

All dishes cost less than \$10.



NEW HARBER BAK KUT TEH
Launched in Singapore: 2015
Number of outlets: One - at Dugis

A well-known name in Kuala Lumpur, where it started more than 40 years ago, this franchised shop serves authentic Malaysian style hokker fare with a choice of various pork cuts such as pig trotters, soft bone, leg meat and belly cooked in a robust brew of herbal soups.

There is also a dry version and one with clear peppery soup, for those who prefer Singaporean hokker fare.

The most popular item is the signature 3 Mts (Meat, Meat, Meat), which comprises pork belly, soft bone and trotter.



MALAYSIAN FOOD STREET
Launched in Singapore: 2012
Number of outlets: One - at Resorts World Sentosa

This foodway (left) by the integrated resort brings together some popular hokker stalls from across the Causeway, including Penang Char Kway Teow.

There are also Chinese pastries like Egg Tarts and Milk Buns. So don't miss your favourite hokker food from Kuala Lumpur's heritage brand Peng Woong (above). Every dish costs less than \$10.

Starting this week, three will also be monthly specials. The spotlight now on Di Yu Noodles will move over to Ki Chai Rice Noodle next month.