

FoodPicks

Hedy Khoo ST Food Online Editor recommends

CRISPY, JUICY PORK CUTLETS

For Japanese deep-fried pork cutlets and ramen that are worth the calories, head to Hajime Tonkatsu & Ramen.

The most expensive set on the menu is Premium Pork Loin (\$22.90+, right), but it offers excellent value for money with quality ingredients and skilful preparation.

Co-owner and executive chef Tan Tai Fern, 62, better known as chef Tan-san, earned his chops at tonkatsu restaurant Tonkichi and Japanese restaurant Tampopo before starting his own joint in Serangoon Garden in 2016.

The pork loins are prepared to order, using Yume no Daichi pork from Hokkaido. The meat comes from crossbreeding four pig breeds in Japan. The pigs are given a special blend of feed which includes potato and barley.

The pork is not marinated, so you can taste the natural flavour of the meat. The cutlets are coated with breadcrumbs and deep-fried at 160 deg C, resulting in a crispy exterior but a tender and juicy interior.

Tonkatsu sets come with free-flow rice and cabbage. Chef Tan uses premium rice from Niigata, which is famed for its rice.

The Ebi Fry Ramen (\$17.50+) is another must-try. It comes with two large black tiger prawns encased in a crispy crust. The sweet seafood flavours in the ramen broth – which is tasty and does not have a thick layer of oil – come from sakura ebi, a Japanese shrimp.

For sides, try the Tori Karaage (\$5.50+), made from boneless chicken thighs that are marinated overnight before frying; the smoky Roasted Edamame (\$4.50+); and the Torikawa (\$4.50+), fried chicken skin tossed in savoury-sweet sauce and served with Japanese seaweed.

WHERE: 02-07/08/09 myVillage @ Serangoon Garden, 1 Maju Avenue MRT: Lorong Chuan

OPEN: 11.30am to 3.30pm daily; 6 to 10pm (Mondays to Fridays); 5 to 10pm (Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays) **TEL:** 6509-9952 **INFO:** hajime.com.sg



ST PHOTOS: HEDY KHOO



SCAN TO WATCH:
Hajime Tonkatsu & Ramen
str.sg/hajime



CLASSIC JAPANESE CHEESECAKE

The burnt cheesecake fad may still be raging, but those who prefer lighter Japanese cheesecakes should make a beeline for Meruto Cheesecake.

Established in 2014, the confectionery churns out Japanese cheesecakes and Swiss rolls from a small shop in Bukit Merah Central.

Meruto in Japanese means "melt". That is what happens with each bite of the velvety Meruto Light Cream Cheesecake – Original (\$10, above).

Founder Edmund Suen, 49, learnt how to bake Japanese cheesecake in his 20s when he worked at a manufacturing company in Japan. He later refined the recipe for Meruto, using less sugar, yogurt and sour cream to suit the local palate, with a

blend of two types of cream cheese.

The Meruto Light Cream Cheesecake – Pandan (\$12) is made using pandan juice extracted from leaves and has a texture remarkably similar to that of pandan chiffon cake.

The Meruto Light Cream Swiss Roll (\$14) is available in three flavours: original, chocolate and matcha. The fresh cream filling is made daily.

The matcha roll has a subtle matcha fragrance and contains adzuki beans.

WHERE: 01-3663, Block 165 Bukit Merah Central

MRT: Redhill

OPEN: 10am to 6pm (Mondays to Fridays); 10am to 3pm (Saturdays), closed on Sundays and public holidays **TEL:** 8866-0100

INFO: fb.com/merutocheesecake

CAFE WITH A DINOSAUR VIEW

With the spotlight on the newly unveiled Changi Jurassic Mile, expect queues at Hub & Spoke Cafe – which is located next to Changi Airport's Terminal 2 – even on weekdays.

Head chef Mohamed Firdaus, 38, who used to work at The Coconut Club, has worked with owner Jaryl Sim, 30, to come up with two versions of nasi lemak.

The Nasi Lemak With Chicken (\$7.90, above) comes with a large chicken leg marinated in housemade rempah, which is slow-baked and then fried.

While the skin is crisp and flavoursome, the chicken could have been marinated longer, as the flavour does not fully penetrate the meat.

The rice used is a short-grain variety from Vietnam. While it has the flavours of coconut milk and shallots, it is slightly overcooked with broken grains.

The housemade chilli paste saves the dish. Sweet, spicy and tangy with assam, it is well-balanced.

The Nasi Lemak With Fish & Otah (\$6.90) has three fried ikan kuning marinated in turmeric and salt. The fish is crispy but could do with more seasoning.

The Mee Rebus Java (\$6.90) is made using housemade rempah and the gravy is thick, aromatic and flavoursome. But the portion of noodles is overly generous and soaks up the gravy too quickly, so ask for less noodles.

The Eggs Benedict (\$9.90) comes with two large, perfectly poached eggs cooked sous-vide, an English muffin, two slices of picnic ham and a serving of fresh salad leaves with vinaigrette. The Hollandaise sauce lacks creaminess and flavour, though.

The cafe uses good-quality coffee powder. The Kopi (\$1.40) is decently strong but not bitter. For a sweet twist, go for Gula Melaka Kopi (\$2.50 with ice).

The Signature Taro Milk (\$4.20) is rich with yam that is steamed and mashed in-house.

WHERE: 01-T2S-02, Changi Airport Terminal 2, 60 Airport Boulevard **MRT:** Changi Airport **OPEN:** 7.30am to 9.30pm daily **INFO:** fb.com/hubandspokecafe



FOOD

PROMOTIONS

Hai Tien Lo's Dim Sum Buffets

Indulge in more than 50 handmade dim sum items and signature a la carte delicacies. Among the new dim sum items are deep-fried taro puff with prawns, chicken and mushrooms; deep-fried scallop and prawn paste wrapped with vermicelli; and steamed Teochew spicy dumplings with minced pork, dried shrimps, chives and peanuts.

WHERE: Hai Tien Lo, Level 3 Pan Pacific Singapore, 7 Raffles Boulevard

MRT: Esplanade **WHEN:** Weekday & weekend dim sum lunch buffet:

11.30am - 2.30pm **PRICE:** Weekday: \$60.80 an adult, \$33.80 a child (six - 12 years old); weekend: \$69.80 an adult, \$39.80 a child (includes unlimited house wines, beers, juices & soft drinks), \$129.80 an adult (includes unlimited house-pour champagne, house wines, beers, juices & soft drinks), \$39.80 a child

TEL: 6826-8240 **INFO:** E-mail dining.ppsin@panpacific.com

Celebrating Five Years Of Cantonese Delights At Yan

To mark Yan's fifth year at National Gallery Singapore next month, head chef Ng Sen Tio and his team present a five-course set menu that conveys the classic flavours of Cantonese cuisine. Highlights include

double-boiled Brazilian mushroom and chicken soup, and poached cod fish with daikon and luffa. The meal comes with a glass of house red or white wine.

WHERE: Yan, 05-02 National Gallery Singapore, 1 St Andrew's Road

MRT: City Hall **WHEN:** Oct 23 - Nov 22: noon - 2.30pm & 6 - 10.30pm

PRICE: Five-course set menu: \$98++ a person **TEL:** 6384-5585 **INFO:** E-mail reserve@yan.com.sg

Butcher's Halloween At W Singapore – Sentosa Cove

This month, put on your scariest outfit to dine at W Singapore – Sentosa Cove, which will transform into a bloodcurdling waterfront slaughterhouse on Halloween. Enjoy dishes such as Giant Kraken

(char-grilled octopus), The Sailors' Leftovers (sirloin topped with chimichurri) and Bloody Ribs (pork ribs with burnt BBQ sauce). Also, stand a chance to win a one-night stay in W Singapore's Fabulous Room.

WHERE: W Singapore – Sentosa Cove, 21 Ocean Way **MRT:** HarbourFront

WHEN: Oct 31, 7.30 - 10.30pm

PRICE: \$138++ a person (food only), \$188++ (food, cocktails, shots & bottomless bubbly) **TEL:** 6808-7268

Tiffin Room And Thevar's Indian Culinary Dining Experience

The dinner is jointly presented by Chef Kuldeep Negi of Tiffin Room and Chef Mano Thevar of Thevar, and offers signature dishes from both chefs via a six-course set menu. Dishes include grilled paneer roll with tomato cashew nut chutney from Tiffin Room and mysore tandoori rack of lamb with coriander chutney from Thevar. There is a vegetarian option of the menu. During the promotional period, a limited

selection of the regular Tiffin Room a la carte menu will also be available.

WHERE: Raffles Hotel Singapore, 1 Beach Road **MRT:** City Hall

WHEN: Till Oct 28: noon - 2pm, 6.30 - 9.30pm daily **PRICE:** Lunch & dinner set menu: \$118++

TEL: 6412-1816 **INFO:** bit.ly/377bdZM

WINE/WHISKY EVENTS

Crossroads' LoveSG Cocktails

Sip on bespoke LoveSG cocktails (\$11.90++ each) that draw inspiration from Singapore's rich heritage. They include KopiKwah (organic cachaca rum, black kopi, condensed milk, caramel syrup and chin chow), Bandung Sensation (Tanglin gin, violette, coconut cream and strawberry syrup) and Gimlet of the East (lemongrass-infused gin, fresh lime juice and honey water).

WHERE: Crossroads, Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel, 320 Orchard Road **MRT:** Orchard

WHEN: 11am - 10.30pm

TEL: 6735-5800

INFO: bit.ly/2H2Umwe

Potato Head And Zam:dessertbar Unveil Decadent Dessert-Cocktail Pairing Concept

The Studio 1939 bar team from Potato Head has teamed up with Zam:dessertbar to curate a selection of desserts by multi-award-winning chef

Janice Wong, paired with new cocktail offerings. Among the pairings is Cassis Plum (\$40) – the Cassis Plum dessert is crafted with Cassis bombe, yogurt elderflower foam, plum liqueur textures, while the accompanying Red Velvet cocktail is made with Reyka Vodka, Giffard Creme de Peche Liqueur, raspberry syrup, fresh lemon juice and yuzu syrup.

WHERE: Potato Head, 36 Keong Saik Road **MRT:** Outram Park

WHEN: Potato Head: 11am - midnight daily; Studio 1939: Mon - Thu: 5pm - midnight, Fri - Sun: 4pm - midnight

TEL: 6327-1939

INFO: potatohead.co/singapore/booking