

新來記

牛什

NO PORK
BEEF SOUP

每碗

RM4.00

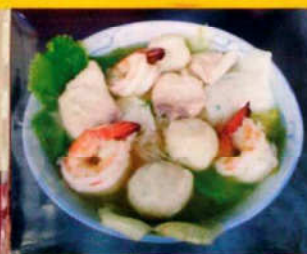
加料 RM5.00



鱼头米粉 Fish Head Noodle
RM 5.00



牛杂米粉 小 RM 4.00
Beef Soup Noodle 大 RM 5.00



鱼丸滑米粉 小 SMALL RM 4.00
Fish Ball Noodle 大 RM 5.00



TASTES

CROSSROADS CUISINE

With influences stretching from northern China through India to the Malay Archipelago, Malaysia is at the crossroads of migratory cuisine, writes **Tamara Thiessen**

Malaysia's distinctive cuisine can be sampled on its streets, thanks to the countless hawker stalls serving native specialities

STREET FOOD IN MALAYSIA IS

among the most varied in Asia. According to Penang food writer, Helen Ong, despite all the accolades for the spicy island's fine dining, the best grub is still hawker food. "The Assam *laksa*, Hokkien *mee* and *nasi kandar* are the best in Malaysia, though KL has a lot to shout about – their *wonton mee* is darker and fuller-flavoured, and their Cantonese food is excellent."

Food stalls operate round-the-clock in open and undercover markets, the most moody being the evening *pasar malam*, which offer noodles, rice, *roti* and *satay*. Open-air *taman selera* – literally "appetite

parcs", though we would call them hawker centres – cook up a daily storm.

For snacking en-route, stop at roadside stalls for grilled corn on the cob, coconut pudding *kelapa*, prawn crackers, peanuts, fresh fruit and fried *pisang* (bananas). *Nasi* (rice) and *mee* (noodles) are staples.

The most ubiquitous eateries here are coffee shops, which serve typical fare at tables topped with lollipop-coloured plastic baskets of cutlery and chopsticks. The council rate these for cleanliness – stick to the 'A's and steer away from the 'C's.

The universal Malay breakfast is *nasi lemak* served from stalls, in *restoran* and at

hotel breakfasts. This delicious concoction of coconut, pandan leaf and aromatic rice is garnished with fried anchovies, sliced cucumber, peanuts and hard-boiled egg.

Other common rice dishes include *nasi kuning*, yellow rice with egg, coconut and cucumber, and *nasi goreng* with slithers of chicken and potluck. Vegetarians should ask for *nasi dengan sayur*, rice with vegetables.

Both Chinese and Malay dishes call heavily on noodles in soups and as main meals. Typical Malay noodle dishes are: *mee goreng*, spicy fried thick noodles, and *mee mamak*, curry-powdered fried yellow noodles. You decide on how you want them



Hokkien mee for four: Malaysia's best grub is its hawker food

Tamara's Quickie Char Kway Teow



- 500g flat fresh rice noodles or 375g packet dried and ready to use
- 1-2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tbsp peanut oil
- 200g shelled prawns (leave tails on if desired)
- 1 small chilli, sliced
- 2 cups fresh bean sprouts
- 1 egg (optional)
- 1/3 cup chopped chives or shallots, 2cm lengths
- 100g or 1/2 cup shelled cockles (optional)
- 2 tbsp soy sauce – preferably 1 dark, 1 light
- 1-2 tbsp chilli paste, *sambal olek*
- 1 tbsp *belacan* shrimp paste



1. Heat oil in wok, add chilli and shrimp paste and fry for one minute.
2. Add garlic, then prawns and fry 1-2 minutes until cooked.
3. Add rice noodles and stirfry 2-3 minutes until tender. Add egg and combine. Add cockles if used, then bean sprouts, chives/shallots, soy sauce and *sambal olek*.

cooked – “wet” with sauce or “dry”, chilli-powered or mild.

Be brave about durian; they are a matter of acquired taste

fishy *Assam laksa*. Visiting coastal areas, dive into

Beef and chicken are the most common meats: tangy coconut beef *rendang* is served with turmeric rice while *ayam masak merah*, red cooked chicken, is a casserole of chicken pieces in tomato. Coconut flavoured meat curries are also available as fish and vegetable versions.

Vegetarians are surprisingly well served in Malaysia. No meal is laid without mixed vegetables in light oyster sauce or stewed in coconut. In Sabah and Sarawak, “local vegetable” can mean roots collected from the jungle that morning, such as dark-green fern tops. Fusion food is nothing new to Malaysia. A taste-bud highlight of Malacca and Penang is *Nonya* food – grandma’s Straits Chinese cuisine – which combines Malay spice with Chinese sour flavours to produce dishes like tangy,

the pescetarian menus: grilled fish and calamari are sold by the weight; *sambal udang* prawns are soaked in shrimp and tamarind paste, chilli, garlic and shallots. Flashier aquarium-sized Chinese restaurants feature more formal seafood – butter prawns and black-pepper crab, oyster fried with egg, and steamed fish.

The sweet of tooth should visit Chinese cake shops for yam pastry buns, egg custard tarts, steamed red-bean cakes and Hakka soybean cakes. A healthier choice is Malaysia’s incredible tropical fruit platter – from the humble, multi-species banana, to the hairy-coated rambutan. Be brave about durian; they are a matter of acquired taste, believe me, and one of my greatest recent achievements has been learning to love, rather than loathe, this fruit.