



Playground Coffeery

HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN

Veiled by a yellow façade, Playground Coffeery is hard to miss and adds a dash of vibrance to the Taman Melawati locale. The offerings here go beyond coffee and cafe fare, to a watering hole where friends, family and couples can convene. Settle down on the daybed by the window or simply sit at the book bar to bask in the ambience.

Playground Coffeery serves up a melange of comforting fare, for lunch and dinner, evident with the Orange Fish. This is a well-balanced and indulgent breakfast comprising two heart-shaped waffles, pan-fried salmon with dried herbs, sunny side up eggs, sautéed mushrooms and a salad comprising iceberg lettuce, shredded carrot and homemade breadcrumbs, and drizzled with a creamy sesame dressing.

For a sweet breakfast, we suggest opting for Play's Waffles and more specifically, The Brown Elephant and Spotted Jellyfish. Both artistically presented, the former is a decadent medley of sliced banana, peanut butter and garnished with chocolate chips while the latter brings a smile to the face with perfectly lined strawberries, crushed walnuts, a drizzle of chocolate sauce and maple syrup. Onto our drinks recommendations, coffee is the natural choice, especially given its alluring coffee machine with Indonesian beans. Stray away from the norm and indulge in the likes of the Rose Latte, garnished with rose petals and sweetened with rose syrup — such feminine flavours.

Playground Coffeery *Cafe fare *Casual dining (pork free)
19 Jalan E-1Taman Melawati, 53100 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 03-48214522

Merchant's Lane

HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN

Set in a preserved historical building, Merchant's Lane in Petaling Street is an unpretentious and luring café created for hipsters. The entrance to this café is through green vintage double doors, leading you to a flight of stairs that then opens up to a wide space. As you make your way towards the centre section of the room, it's almost like being transported to another realm where the sunlight playfully streams in, the roots draping the wall here are almost on purpose while the opposite wall hosts flower crowns, an absolute haven for picture-taking and dining.

From the menu, South China Sea is an easy breezy dish that's refreshing. The grilled salmon fillet takes centre stage here. It's accompanied by homemade, finely grated potato hash for crispiness, two eggs that are poached to perfection and salsa comprising mango, pineapple, green and red capsicum, coriander and apples. If we had it our way, we would want to eat this dish forever. Lo and behold the mother of all burgers comes in the form of The Mistress. This magnificent beast of a burger made us pause in appreciation before ultimately devouring it. The mistress features fried chicken patty sandwiched by charcoal buns, topped with fried egg and generously drizzled with a cheesy sauce. P/S: If you order this dish during your first date and he wants a second date after, you'd know he's the one.

The namesake of the Better Than Sex dessert is a nod to this building's risqué history and we think that it might actually be better than sex. This unique dish is Merchant Lane's rendition of the roti jala. Here, pandan is infused into the roti jala which is topped with melted cheese and drizzled with gula Melaka. That's not all; accompanying this dessert is their signature kaya toast-flavoured ice cream that pairs beautifully with the roti jala. We had to order extra scoops of ice cream because it was just that good.

Merchant's Lane *Comfort food *Casual dining (pork free)
150 Jalan Petaling, 59000 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 03-2022 1736



Nasi Lemak Pancake



Pizza selection



Fried Seafood Noodle



Chicken Ballotine

Resting under the roof of Alila Bangsar, the locale's 5-star hotel, Botanica+Co at Alila Bangsar differs significantly to assimilate with Alila Hotel's brand and style. That said, what stays true is its fantastic fare and stellar hospitality. Open the door to a bounteous space of sprawled chairs and table. Its interior is earthy, contemporary and adhering to its famous greenery. Every carefully selected accent and nuances of this restaurant resonate warmth and cosiness, from the chairs, music to the temperature which disassociates from the hubbub of the city.

The menu features an extensive selection of hearty, authentic, Western and Eastern fare made with quality local and imported produce. Each item on the menu is made from scratch with the components including house-

Botanica and Co Alila Bangsar

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN

made sauces, salad dressings, dips and soup stocks to beverages. For the uninitiated, opt for the Ginger Flower Pesto Linguine — a hearty and comforting meal that features Botanica's signature ginger flower pesto swathed with chicken and parmesan cheese.

From the Asian section, you can't go wrong with The Botanica Laksa, a bowlful of goodness

brimming with signature laksa broth cooked with flower crabs, seafood and secret laksa pesto. You can also find ample tiger prawns, poached chicken, julienned fish cake, silver sprouts and quail egg, as well as laksa noodle or mee hoon. Botanica's plant-based and meat free segment is impressive, boasting a myriad to choose from, including the The Planet-Lover Burger. This glorious burger sees 100% plant-based patty at its heart, layered with tomato, lettuce, vegan cheddar cheese and sandwiched by egg-less house-made buns and served alongside dipper fries.

Botanica and Co Alila Bangsar *International cuisine
*Casual dining (pork free)
58, Jalan Ang Seng, Brickfields,
50470 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 011-2600 8188

Uroko is a neighbourhood Japanese restaurant tucked away in the locale of Section 17, Petaling Jaya. This eatery's allure lies in its plethora of contemporary and high-quality offerings, at reasonable prices. Uroko's specialties include the Uroko Salad with its own special blend of dressing, perfectly steamed Chawanmushi that's velvety smooth, pan-fried foie gras with steamed melon that melts in your mouth and a variety of Makis (sushi rolls) and Temakis (hand rolls) that are not only a delight to the taste buds but also a feast for the eyes. In addition, patrons can indulge in a host of tasty Yakitori offerings off the charcoal grill that's a perfect complement to an impressive list of Japanese beers and sake.

Choices are aplenty at Uroko. Indulge in a Sashimi Moriawase or mixed sashimi platter and choose between Jyo, Tokujyo and U-Sashimi, each selected by the

Uroko

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN



Sushi Moriawase

chef. For something more satiating, the sushi rice bowl will do the trick. From this segment, we love the Bara Chirashi — a medley of cubed sashimi served on a bed of Japanese rice. It's a treat for the senses. You won't be sorry for ordering any one of the sushi rolls and hand rolls for each boasts decadent and comforting piquancy you don't want to end. As aforementioned, the Chawanmushi at Uroko is one of its specialties so be sure to order any of the six varieties. We personally appreciated the tried-and-true Ikura Chawanmushi — steamed egg with salmon roe atop. Its velvety consistency melts in the mouth while the ikura conveys a pop of saltiness to this dish.

2nd Floor *Japanese cuisine *Casual dining
(pork free)
No 22A-1, Jln 17/54, (Section 17)
Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
Tel: 017-673 9223

The Farm Foodcraft's Offerings

The Farm Foodcraft

BY HIRANMAYIL AWLI MOHANAN

Enveloped by ubiquitously-placed plants and exuding a rustic ambience, The Farm Foodcraft is quite literally a farm and restaurant that doles out farm-to-table experience. Almost every ingredient for its dishes is freshly grown and harvested from its urban farming lab. What it can't grow in its lab are sourced directly from local farmers and vendors.

The menu is a harmonious marriage of various cuisines, each embracing all that is fundamentally 'good' such as fresh vegetables and seasonal ingredients, to serve up fresh, contemporary dishes. This is evident in the Soil to Soul Garden Pot — the Farm's signature appetiser featuring edible 'soil' made from mushroom, sour dough, onion and black olives. This is served alongside heirloom tomatoes, ice plant, Farm-grown cress and finger lime citrus — such a beautiful medley of wholesomeness.

For a bowlful of comfort, the Rendang Brisket Ragu from the pasta section is fulfilling and emits local piquancy. Comprising rendang-style beef brisket, it is cooked with cherry tomatoes and kaffir lime leaves on a bed of bucatini pasta and finally garnished with a handful of Farm-grown cress. For an Asian touch, we suggest the Nasi Padang of the Day, with the signature dishes varying daily. This dish comes with the choice of chicken, beef, fish, cuttlefish or clams and two side dishes of the day, ulam, keropok and two varieties of homemade signature sambal.

The Farm FoodCraft Restaurant Bangsar South
Unit G-1 & G-2, Level Ground, The Sphere, No.1, Avenue 1
Bangsar South City, No.8, Jalan Kerinchi, 59200 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 014-9933880

The Hungry Tapir's Vegan delights

The Hungry Tapir

BY HIRANMAYIL AWLI MOHANAN

Set in Chinatown, scurry up the staircase to the first floor where a gleaming space of foliage, neon signs, cylindrical lanterns hanging from steeple ceiling greets you. The interior is a mood board of its own and design goals. Helmed by an affable and amazing mother-daughter duo, Cynthia and Makissa, The Hungry Tapir's moniker pays tribute to interior designer Cynthia's love for everything black and white and the Malaysian herbivore, tapir, feeding into their mission of a plant-based eatery.

The menu is an amalgamation of East and West, with an emphasis on championing local ingredients, heritage and flavours through dishes like nasi lemak, yellow masak lemak, rainbow ulam fried rice and many more. To whet the palate, choose mama's satay. We can't sing enough praises for this dish. Using hedgehog mushrooms for consistency resembling chicken and it is then lightly fried and grilled, skewered and served with an addictive peanut sauce that exudes a beautiful harmony of spiciness, sweetness and nuttiness.

From the Western segment, the pink bombshell burger commands attention with its pink hue (owed to beetroot) and mammoth size. It's served on a wooden platter alongside pea shoots tossed in a seductive chilli vinaigrette and sweet potato fries. Sandwiched between the buns is a thick and sizeable homemade patty, layered with caramelised onions, lettuce and tomato, and slathered with homemade vegan herb cheese. We find this not only satiating, but utterly scrumptious.

The Hungry Tapir *Plant-based *Vegan
135 (1st floor), Jalan Petaling
Chinatown City Center, 5000 Kuala Lumpur.

Gajah Mada by The Majapahit

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN



The Majapahit Mini Flying Fish

Nestled in MyTown Shopping Centre, Gajah Mada by The Majapahit is a Southeast Asian restaurant that doles out cuisines spanning Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia. Its intriguing moniker takes a nod to the legendary Gajah Mada — a powerful leader and a Mahapatih (equivalent to prime minister) of the great Majapahit empire. The restaurant's menu is appealing to both individuals and families, and offering a plethora of choices to suit the most discerning of palates.

The Majapahit Mini Flying Fish Set comes highly recommended and is the restaurant's



Nasi Ayam Ijo Bandung

signature, albeit a personalised rendition. The crunchy exterior and warm, soft meat of the tilapia fish is best drenched with the sweet-savoury dark sambal sauce and eaten with rice. The set is complemented with savoury corn fritters, sambal kering tempe, emping crackers and hearty aromatic soup to complete the experience. This Flying Fish is also available in the a la carte segment for families or couples to share.

Another signature and our favourite is the Bandung Chicken with Spicy Green Chilli Set or commonly known as Nasi Ayam Cabe Ijo



Nasi Lemak with Spicy Chilli Paste Squid

Bandung. Its influence derived from Indonesia, this delightful dish sees steamed marinated chicken topped with a fiery green chilli and ginger-flecked bumbu for a little kick and this is served with fragrant steamed rice, corn fritters and sambal kering tempe. Such harmonious, savoury flavours are experienced with this set.

Gajah Mada by The Majapahit *Indonesian, Thai, Malaysian and Vietnamese cuisines *Casual dining (halal)

G-021 & G-E-021, Ground Level, MyTOWN Shopping Centre, Seksyen, 90, Jalan Cochrane 55100 Kuala Lumpur.

CC by Mel

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN



Truffle Puddle

What started out as a florist shop that conducted flower arrangement workshops has evolved into a clean, cosy and humble cafe with a slant towards Japanese-Western fusion fare. Ascend to the first floor of Aurora Place and a Japanese minimalistic concept becomes the interior of CC by Mel. The kitchen, helmed by a chef who has more than a decade of experience in the industry, heads the crafting of CC by Mel's appetising menu and aesthetically-pleasing plating.

Beauty is ubiquitous at CC by Mel — from its well-designed space to the food. Each dish is beautifully presented, using edible flowers as garnish to make it picture-worthy. While most of the offerings here are delectable, their bestselling Nori Taco is exceptional. It's now offered in a trio taco box suitable for takeaway, comprising the Tropica Nori, Yu Nori and the recently introduced, Ebi Nori. We strongly urge you to try these Japanese tacos to experience the different textures and

playful flavours from the seafood topped with ebiko and ikura.

For heftier meals suited for lunch or dinner, the Truffle Puddle is on the top of our list. So simple yet scrumptious, the al dente pappardelle pasta is tossed with egg yolk, layered with grated truffle and garnished with fried enoki mushroom — divine. While CC by Mel's menu is mostly Japanese-Western fusion, a number of dishes such as the Nacc Lemak, Samba Dance and Yellow Mellow adds a Malaysian twist to their fare. The Yellow Mellow fuses the Malay masak lemak with pasta. It's then topped with tender grilled chicken and garnished with edible flowers and micro greens, making each spoonful hearty and simply addictive.

CC by Mel *Japanese-Western fusion *Casual dining (pork free) B-2-21 Aurora Place, Jalan Persiaran Jalil 1, Bukit Jalil, 57000 Kuala Lumpur.

Jibby by the Park

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN

In keeping with the greenery outside, Jibby by the Park's interior is embellished with ubiquitously placed plants, including the likes of ferns and monsteras. Reminiscent of a contemporary glasshouse, this restaurant is a juxtaposition of modern and vintage features and furnishings — from high ceilings and vintage glass panes to its cascading chandelier and vintage lounge chairs.

With a menu that offers a meld of Asia and the Antipodes' best, there is something to suit every palate. Sunday brunches call for the Jibby Big Breakfast — a plate featuring indulgent artisan chicken sausages, beef bacon, mushroom, sautéed kale and onion, falafel hash brown, roasted tomato and a slice of sourdough bread alongside your choice of egg. Take a walk on the healthy side with the Crispy Shredded Duck and Watermelon Salad, a refreshing dish that

sees a medley of rocket leaves, mint, Kyuri cucumber, avocado, cheese, crispy pita, feta cheese and a drizzle of yuzu vinaigrette for harmony. Utterly delicious and satiating.

From the mains, the 300gm Murray Pure Ribeye accompanied by Greek fries and barbecue chilli jam might strike your fancy. On the other hand, for a taste of familiarity, the Ayam Bakar Madu or Tiger Prawn WokFried Spaghetti is reminiscent of a good hawker stall. Save room for desserts because the Jibby by the Park Berry Pavlova Ice Cream and Beignet are worth every calorie.

Jibby by the Park *Fusion *International *Casual dining (pork-free)
FF-17, The Waterfront, 5, Persiaran Residen Desa Parkcity, 52200 Kuala Lumpur.



Jibby by the Park's scrumptious pasta dish

Jhann

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN



Jhann's Kerala Flower Crab

Jhann is flamboyant in all right ways, from its black and white marble tiled floors to its velvet upholsteries and Roman columns. With its interior reminiscent of a mansion, it inspires one to get dolled up to blend into the plush ambience. Akin to its interior, Jhann adds contemporary flair to the North Indian cuisine it doles out. The love affair starts with Papadum and a Gin to chase any blues away. Proceed with the Yoghurt Papdi Chaat to whet the appetite — A crispy fried dough served with a creamy dip of potatoes, tomatoes, shallots, coriander, mint, tamarind and garnished with pomegranates and more coriander. Leave it to the Indians to infuse beautiful flavours into a simple dish.

For mains such as the Kerala Flower Crab and Kerala Fish Curry, you would want to order extra rice or naan to soak up the seductive sauces. The former, a recipe passed down by the owner's grandmother, bursts at the seams with robust flavours from the marriage of its onion-based gravy, creamy coconut, turmeric and a slew of spices. Much like the Kerala Flower Crab, the Kerala Fish Curry is infused with incredible ingredients that highlights the subtleties of the gourmet level white mackerel fish. For something healthier yet equally indulgent, you must try the Zardah Rice, made from three simple ingredients — turmeric, roasted cashews and raisins. We find that this rice complements the Kerala Flower Crab Curry beautifully.

Jhann, 6 *Indian cuisine (pork-free)
Jalan Medan Setia 2, Bukit Damansara
50490 Kuala Lumpur.

Edju Omakase

BY AGNES AUI

Edju, which stands for chef Eddie Ng, and the Japanese word for ten (the number of seats), is exactly what this Omakase place at Damansara City mall is about – the chef and his intimate guests. Though fundamentally Japanese, the Omakase here is “contaminated”, as they’d like to call it, with techniques and flavours echoing the team’s diverse experiences and backgrounds.

Just take a look at their palate cleanser using the very familiar jambu pickled in calamansi, or a monaka enclosing ankimo (monk fish) liver and sweet Turkish fig in the centre. If contamination allows for exciting takes on tradition, maybe it’s not such a negative word.



Carabineros

The ultimate course to go for here is simply called “The Experience”, of appetisers, chawanmushi, seven pieces of premium sushi, specialty dishes, a fish course, as well as a soup and dessert. Time is key for Edju’s sushi, whether it is the sushi rice they insist on using within the optimum of two hours, or the sashimi dry aged for eight days.

More in depth, the finest sushi restaurants choose to age their sashimi rather than



Salmon Mashed Potatoes Toro Tartare

servicing it fresh, as the ageing process causes enzymes to break down the meat, which softens the texture, and produces natural glutamate for increased umami. Being the first aged sushi omakase experience in KL, the 10 seats here are sure to be fought for.

**Edju Omakase *Japanese *Omakase
G-19 Ground Floor, Damansara City Mall,
6 Jalan Damanlela, Damansara Heights,
50490 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 03-2202 6536**

Therefore

BY AGNES AUI



Kiss-A-Dia

Between coral pink interiors and botanical murals, we had an intimate luncheon at Therefore. We started with some nachos with shredded jackfruit, which raised some eyebrows around the table. But before we knew it, the plates were empty across the long table. The crisp, sweet jackfruit was a nice touch of flavour among salsa, guacamole, sour cream and cheese sauce. On the healthy side, we had a refreshing mesclun salad aptly named Tropical Summer, rich with fruits like grilled pineapple and berries, tossed with a pina colada vinaigrette.

Came the mains, the Well-Tempered Salmon was a crowd pleaser, featuring tempeh herb crust that gave the flaky fish a nice crunch while the lime basil coconut sauce stimulated the appetite. Indulge in the Cheesy Gratin-tude, which is butter rice topped with a gratin

layer of creamy curry sauce, served with mixed seafood. Fusion desserts at Therefore had us looking at an “apple pie” wrapped in vanilla crepe, in the form of a Chinese money bag. Salted gula Melaka and cinnamon sprinkles added the finishing touch to it, served together with a homemade coconut sorbet.

Therefore’s fusion concept extends beyond the menu to its interior, where sleek velvet upholstery get a tropical twist with rattan weave furniture. Instagram dwellers will definitely come together in this charming space for a good meal and an Insta-worthy shot.

**Therefore *Modern fusion casual dining *halal
Lot 02-G, Menara Symphony, No, 5,
Jalan Professor Khoo Kay Kim, Seksyen 13,
46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
Tel: 03-7625 3119.**



Bento



Sando

Neutrals

BY AGNES AUI

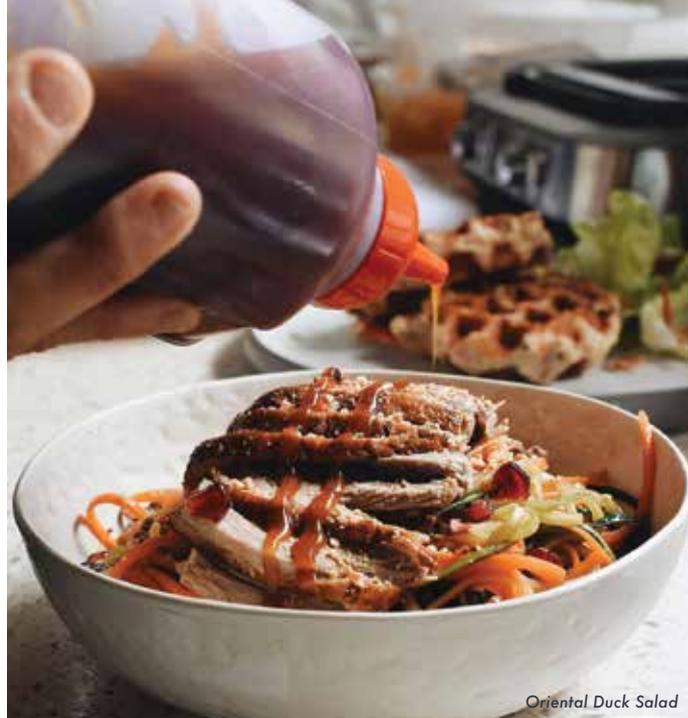
They say “two is better than one”, and that’s exactly the case at Neutrals. The newly opened cafe in Taman Tun Dr Ismail is a brilliant collaboration between The Roast Things and Stand by Sunbather. Together, they feature aromatic coffee alongside Japanese sandwiches and bentos.

Known as a ‘sun-washed space’ that invites you in to clear your mind, the coffee at Neutrals is a definite must-try. From the classic espresso/long black to hot chocolate (with or without milk) and matcha latte that can be made with milk or oat milk, can be enjoyed by anyone, even the lactose-intolerant. However, if you’re looking for something unique, try the jasmine silver needles Yunnan white tea, or the wild tree purple moonlight jinggu white tea. Or go for healthy kombucha instead.

For food, Neutrals offer thick sandos with unconventional options like scotch egg sando featuring a scotch egg made from chicken, rosemary carrot, beetroot fritter and wafu sesame mayo, as well as fish katsu sando, with fried fish, gribiche, crushed minty edamame, cheese and cucumber slices.

Nevertheless, big eaters should opt for bentos instead. Go classic with the marmalade chicken bento or the teriyaki chicken bento, both of which include Japanese spinach and imitation crab. You can also choose the beef chizu hambagu bento that features Australian beef hamburger steak, or the grilled salmon bento that includes a chikuwa cucumber roll.

Neutrals *Japanese cuisine *Coffee *Pork-free
30A, Persiaran Zaaba, Taman Tun Dr Ismail, 60000 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 017-870 2627



Oriental Duck Salad

Fest

BY AGNES AUI

Another cafe that recently made its mark in the TTDI community is Fest. Located along Jalan Aminuddin Baki, Fest is a choice spot for cosy and hearty meals paired with a cup of warm and delightful coffee, tea or matcha.

Try its bestseller chicken waffle featuring minced chicken, chives, onions, pickled onion, romaine, raisins, fried shallots and sriracha mayo. You can also opt for the duck porridge by Grain, featuring roasted duck breast, leek, Chinese donuts, raisins, romaine, and rice in duck broth.

If simplicity is what you’re searching for, get the hash brown waffle with eggs and a cheese mayo sauce. Or you can try the healthy oriental duck salad that’s a medley of roast duck breast, carrot, cucumber, shallot, peanuts, pomegranate and plum dressing. A simpler version of the oriental duck salad is the romaine salad featuring romaine leaves, pickled onion, raisins, and fried shallots.

Fest has also expanded its menu on beepit, where customers can order rice bowls with options like roasted duck, braised chicken and chilli bean chicken. You can also order the duck maryland, an interesting choice that can be found in the mains section. For drinks, a must-try at Fest is the magic, which also happens to be its bestseller. Other classic coffee options are also available alongside chocolate that’s made in-house and matcha drinks like hojicha latte and genmaicha latte.

Fest *Asian & Western cuisine *Pork-free
155B, Jalan Aminuddin Baki, Taman Tun Dr Ismail, 60000 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 017-370 8235

Poppy Kat

BY AGNES AUI

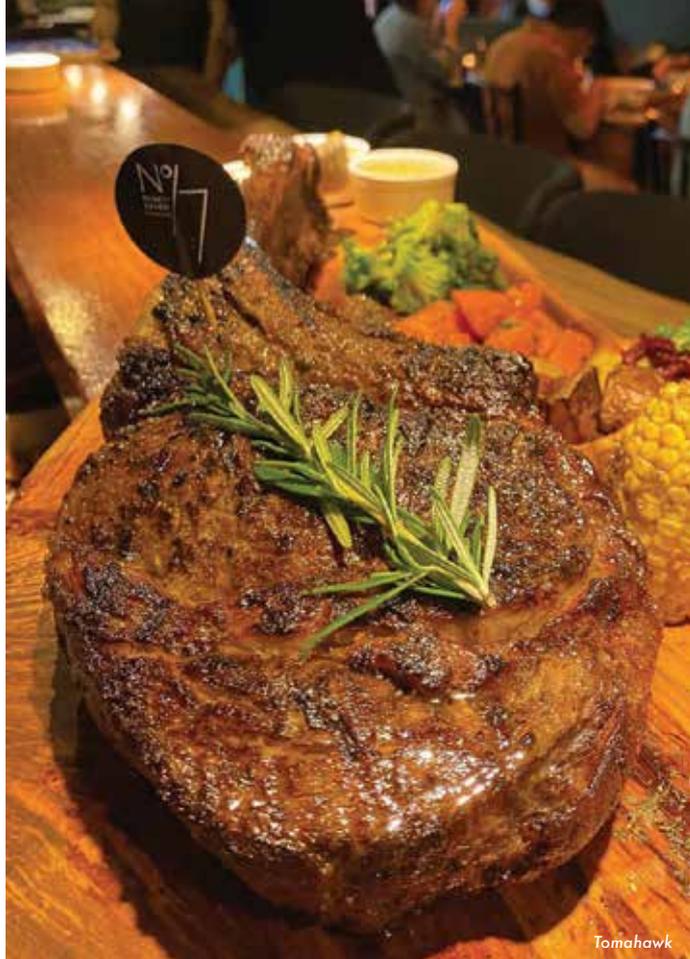
Though Poppy Kat has yet to open its doors for dine-in due to the MCO 3.0, it has started offering takeaway coffees and breakfast meals. Not only does the cafe feature Instagram-worthy interior and mouthwatering dishes, but it is also filled with cats to keep you company throughout your stay.

As its tagline states, "come for the coffee, stay for the cats", patrons can find a wide array of coffee options like piccolo, flat white, cappuccino, mocha and even single origin filter coffees. But those who can't take caffeine have other choices, such as the chocolate that's made with Valrhona buttons, chai latte, hojicha latte and matcha latte.

Bagels take a sui generis twist here, with lovely creations that are sure to have you drooling for more. Take your pick from creative pairings like the honey pomelo bagel with classic cream cheese, matcha pineapple bagel with cream cheese biscoff, PB&J bagel with peanut butter and strawberry jam, and the cinnamon raisin bagel with lescure butter and maple syrup.

Croissants and croffles are also available here, with a tantalising spread of lescure butter, biscoff, maple granola and more. Poppy Kat also offers breakfast sets with dishes like croffle croque monsieur, croffle croque, kaya lescure butter croffle with two Japanese soft boiled eggs, and big breakfast with croffle.

Poppy Kat *Western cuisine *Cafe
34A, Jalan Nadchatiram, Taman Taynton View,
56000 Cheras, Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 011-5431 3453.



Tomahawk

N97

BY AGNES AUI

Located in Lorong Kurau, Bangsar, N97 is a steakhouse that's a perfect place if you're looking to splurge on luxurious cuts of meat for any special occasion. Known to open from 6.30 pm till 11 pm, N97 will be taking booking slots at 6.30 pm, 8 pm and 9.30 pm during the pandemic.

Should you be able to book yourself a table to dine in N97, start your night out with the creamy roasted cauliflower soup, paired with a unique blue cheese crumble and herbed garlic biscotti. You can also try the seared Hokkaido scallops with parmesan puree and fragrant garlic chips.

For mains, chicken lovers should try the oven-baked chicken roulade, stuffed with spinach, turkey ham, sharp cheddar cheese and roasted pumpkin puree. If you're looking to savour its juicy steaks, try the tenderloin featuring buttered asparagus alongside magnificent truffle cream.

N97 also curated a special MCO menu for 2021, which includes five sets ranging in portions, depending on the number of people in your household. The first set is the biggest, featuring the raved wagyu tomahawk, wagyu fried rice, wagyu fat salad, ayam masak merah, kurma telur, sambal kicap and papadom. Another set features wagyu sirloin, spring chicken, king gambas and mushroom cream.

If you need any additional information, call the number listed below or send a WhatsApp text.

N97 *Steakhouse *Western cuisine *halal
9, Lorong Kurau, Bangsar, 59100 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 03-2858 3641 / 011-14343534

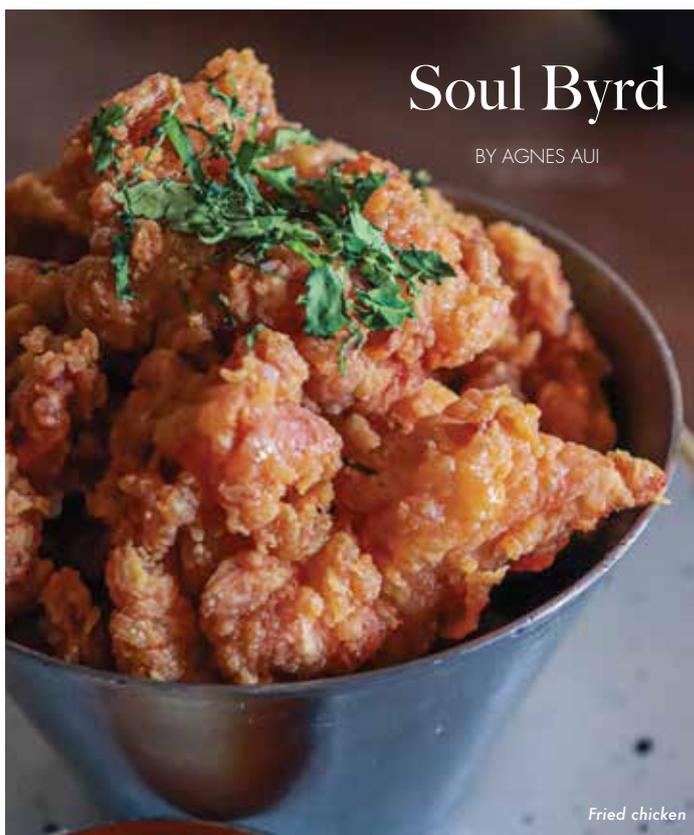


Jalapeno Aioli Ham Croissant

Launched on April 28, 2021, Soul Byrd is dedicated to bringing American soul food to local grounds. Featuring an interior of bright and contrasting tapestries, Soul Byrd serves some of the crunchiest fried chicken and sandwiches, alongside hot sauces that are made in-house.

When dining at Soul Byrd, its menu takes you step by step on how you can order. In the first step, you can choose from wings and drumettes of six, 12 or 18 pieces. You can also opt for a whole chicken leg, chicken sandwich or chicken nuggets, the latter in small or large order.

The second step is to choose the level of spiciness you prefer. Go for the classic



country salt and pepper or mild, if you're unable to take the heat. If you want a challenge, try the hot, soul byrd hot or the Nashville. Then, pick your choice of sauce from Amba (pickled mango) and green sauce (fresh and mild), to yellow sauce (medium spicy sauce), red hot mamma (with orange and cocoa) and whistlin' woman (very hot habanero sauce).

Lastly, if you'd like to add on a side dish, try the deep-fried mac and cheese, succotash (a deep south vege medley), green rice or truffle fries. As for drinks, the classic sweet lemon tea and lemonade are something you'd definitely want to try.

Soul Byrd *Western cuisine
No. 19, Jalan 17/45, Seksyen 17,
46400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
Tel: 03-7931 2202



Authentic Japanese treats are extremely hard to come by, as many are made in factories and sold in large marts or grocery stores. Old Hands Cafe is run by Mr and Mrs Okamoto, who come from the humble land of Shizuoka in Japan. Mr Okamoto has previously served at The Japan Club of Kuala Lumpur and has years of experience making Japanese pastries and desserts.

The cafe's best-selling item is the signature fluffy, handmade Red Bean Mochi, which is guaranteed to sell out every day. Using imported flour from Japan, the mochi is made in small batches to ensure freshness, and no preservatives are used.

Old Hands Cafe

BY AGNES AUI

For some warm pastries, patrons can choose to order the sultana raisin almond bun, cinnamon roll, sausage roll, red bean bun, sugar cheese bun or the classic butter roll. You can also get taiyaki, a classic waffle-like street snack in Japan that's shaped like a fish and filled with various fillings like sweet red bean, cream cheese and dark chocolate.

A delightful four-inch burnt cheesecake is also available for those ordering or patronising the cafe on Fridays and weekends. As for drinks, we recommend trying the classic latte, made with Rwanda Kamonyi blend alongside specialty coffee milk. Tea lovers should try the yuzu black tea, which is a fragrant and fruity option, made with black tea leaves and yuzu peel.

Old Hands Cafe *Japanese cuisine *Muslim-friendly
1-13 Glomac Centro, Lorong Masjid 1, Kampung Sungai Kayu Ara, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
Tel: 011-5411 3398

Neybrfood

BY AGNES AUI

Established on Nov 19, 2020, Neybrfood is a platform for consumers to enjoy hearty homemade meals from a selection of various home-based food businesses. Featuring crunchy premium cookies and fresh hot meals, the options provided on the platform guarantees delicious and warm choices that feel like home.

Neybrfood also aims to alleviate the pain points commonly encountered by these aspiring foodpreneurs, such as order management, marketing and food delivery. In fact, Neybrfood's co-founder and CEO, Donovan Tan mentioned that the idea of Neybrfood came when his wife picked up baking cookies during the first MCO. Her cookies were an instant hit and eventually turned into a full-fledged baking business. However, she struggled in handling the marketing and operational aspects of the business, such as running a website and the overall process of taking and fulfilling orders.

We tried a specially curated kit from Neybrfood and thoroughly enjoyed every single element. From Poshies Home Kitchen's 100% peanut butter and Add ONzz's crunchy bitter gourd chips to Lina's Good Food's sticky and crunchy tempeh, and Schewy cookies, everything was evidently made in small batches with an abundance of love. The bitter gourd chips and tempeh were fresh, crunchy and to our surprise, super tasty! Nevertheless, if you're looking to try some hot meals, we recommend the Hainanese chicken chop, sneaky "vegetante" burger and carbonara spaghetti.

Neybrfood is now a channel for over 39 different home chefs, including niche food products, where consumers get to choose from traditional kuih-muih, Western, Korean and Japanese dishes to keto, vegan and vegetarian food.

Neybrfood
116, ss22/32 Damansara Jaya,
47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
Tel: 017-3272788
www.neybrfood.com



Carbonara Spaghetti



Pizza

Fifty-Three

BY AGNES AUI

Located at Reggae Mansion Hostel Kuala Lumpur, Fifty-Three is the ultimate spot for comfort Western fusion food, from pizzas and burgers to udon and rice bowls. With an extensive menu, patrons will never run out of ideas when it comes to daily meals.

If you're looking for pizzas that will guarantee satisfaction, try the truffle and wild mushrooms pizza featuring black truffle pate, mixed wild mushrooms, mozzarella, fresh herbs, truffle oil and signature cream cheese sauce. Not only is this pizza luxurious, but vegetarian too. For something unique, get the pesto chicken pizza, made with pesto sauce, grilled pesto chicken, mozzarella and basil.

Burgers are delightful here as well, with various options like the best-selling ultimate beef, mozzarella double cheese, chicken katsu burger, truffle wild mushroom and spicy Mexican. However, do note that the latter burger is spicy as it includes jalapenos and spicy hot sauce.

For something light, look to the soups and salads section, with tantalising choices such as the baked cheese onion soup, cream of chicken corn soup, pesto chicken salad (bestseller), smoked salmon dill salad and more. If you want something Asian, check out the rice bowl section, featuring donburis like kare chicken don, kare beef don, spicy kare don and yakiniku don. If that's not enough, try the recommended mentaiko smoked salmon don featuring torched caramelised mentaiko ebiko, smoked salmon, carrots, radish, spring onion and sushi rice.

Fifty-Three *Western fusion cuisine *Halal
57, Jalan Tun H S Lee, City Centre, 50050 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 017-752 2280



Park Grill's Offerings

Park Grill

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN

Launched despite testing times, Park Grill is a new restaurant nestled in Platinum Park. The restaurant's namesake Park Grill is fitting, doling out Continental American classics with the Jasper as the main artery of the restaurant. Combining the finest ingredients and techniques as well as reimagined food from that era, dining at Park Grill is an experience on its own, featuring table-side preparations, freshly shucked oysters, and an ambience of bygone style and glamour.

Indulge in the likes of Spicy Beef Tartare which sees a play of textures, treating your palate to a lovely experience with every bite. Served with house-made potato crisps, you'd find yourself throwing calories to the wind and digging in.

Yet another allure of Park Grill lies in its Oyster Bar which offers three types of oysters shucked to order —US Pacific with a mild, sweet taste, a crisp texture and briny flavour, Shigoku, a clean, sweet flavour with a hint of cucumber and melon scent, and a briny bite and Kumamoto which is fruity, sweet, and with a melon-scented flavour and light brininess. To each oyster ordered, a layer of ponzu, kimchi and chives is added to complement the intrinsic oyster profile. Add a dollop of caviar for a touch of luxe.

Park Grill *Continental American cuisine
***Casual dining (pork-free)**
 Persiaran KLCC, 50088 Kuala Lumpur.
 Tel: 03-2181 1001



Park Grill's Offerings



Blackbyrd's Scrumptious Offering

Blackbyrd KL

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN

Blackbyrd KL, a 70's modernist restaurant on the 50th floor of Naza Tower, offers stellar views of the Kuala Lumpur skyline, alongside scrumptious fare. Inside, the interior strikes a beautiful balance of foreign influences such as European lamps and the Malaysian touch through rattan chairs and terrazzo floors. Choose to dine at the semicircle booths with sheer white curtains or at the elegant bar with plush sofas. We started off with the aesthetically-pleasing Blackbyrd signature edibles, the Crispy Nori Crunch comprising tempura nori (seaweed) and spicy salmon parmesan shavings, and garnished with salmon roe and blue pea flowers. A Duck Satay appetiser followed, with a side of peanut sauce and sambal merah.

The Smoked Duck Salad, a new addition to the menu, saw thick slices of smoked duck generously placed around the heap of arugula tossed with almond shavings, radish and drizzled in balsamic orange dressing — refreshing. The mains — King Prawn Saffron Risotto and Honey Wasabi Glazed Salmon — were plated on beautiful artisan ceramic plates sourced from Melaka. The former, cooked in saffron and complemented with red capsicum sauce was buttery and exuded familiar flavours of comfort. Blackbyrd's salmon was a sweet seductress with subtle Asian flavours. It saw an assemblage of Norwegian salmon perched on a medley of Asian mushroom, edamame, miso butter and roasted nori. To finish, the Blueberry Cheesecake with its silky layers of blueberry puree and mascarpone was a hit around the table.

Blackbyrd KL *Fusion *Comfort food (pork free)
 Level 50, Naza Tower 50450 Kuala Lumpur.
 Tel: 012-689 8576



Serving comfort food



Cocktail



Deconstructed Whiskey Coke

Man Tao Bar

BY AGNES AUI

If Man Tao Bar isn't on your list of rooftop bars in Kuala Lumpur, you might want to think of adding it in. This rooftop bar isn't your typical dance-type bar but rather a place you'd go for meaningful conversations with family or friends. With its exciting neighbourhood nook-inspired setting and soothing tunes, the bar makes an ideal spot for Valentine's Day or even a simple yet memorable date night.

The bar specialises in Tsingtao beer cocktails, mixing up some tantalising drinks featuring tropical ingredients and interesting aromas that are sure to spice up your evening. You can select from its vast array of handcrafted signatures like China Doll, Moon Goddess, Spicy Rooster and Tsing Tini. Rest assured that whichever you choose, it'll be one you'd order again and again.

As its name suggests, Man Tao Bar serves man taos of course. These soft and pillowy buns are light and fluffy and filled with a variety of fillings. From familiar and homey ones to unique and innovative kinds, the options are endless. For the ultimate local twist, get the signature ones filled with ayam kunyit for that extra kick in the heat department.

Man Tao Bar is also one that brims with promotions towards the weekend. Thursday nights are ladies' nights where ladies get to enjoy a free flow of bubbly. On Fridays and Saturdays, enjoy house spirits for RM20 nett while house beers and wines are on a one-for-one promotion. Last but not least, gin and kombucha promotions are also available on Saturdays.

Man Tao Bar
The Stripes Hotel, 25, Jalan Kamunting, Chow Kit,
50300 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 03-2038 0000

Tickets Bar

BY AGNES AUI

Located in charming Republik Damansara Heights, Tickets is an intimate theatre-style cocktail bar. Similar to how theatres would regularly change programmes, Tickets brings an all-new experience to KL-ites with its ever-changing themes and flavours inspired by the founders' adventures around the world.

Step past the theatre ticket booth resembling those of yesteryear and wander into the amphitheatre seating area which draws focus to the bar, where the action happens. With 'Maguey' as its debut (and current) theme, the menu is focused on agave, a magical plant which has been at the heart of Mexican culture for centuries, and from which tequila and mezcal are derived.

For a truly immersive experience, the space has been decked out with nods to Mexico, from the luchador to the calaveras. As for the cocktails, order modern classics such as the Paloma, a refreshing, fruity blend of Ocho Blanco tequila, lime and East Imperial Grapefruit Soda, or go for the selection of Signatures, cocktails recreated with Southeast Asian flavours. A favourite from the menu is Beyond Sunrise, the bar's rendition of the Tequila Sunrise made with Ocho Blanco tequila, orange, lemon, yuzu, a port-pomegranate chipotle reduction, egg white and sea salt.

There are also flights, cocktails sans-agave, mocktails and off-menu concoctions, one of the most popular being the Mezcal Negroni. For takeaway or delivery, WhatsApp to 012-5187550, message the team on Instagram or Facebook, email to cocktails@ticketskl.bar or walk in if you're in the area.

Tickets Bar
Lot G05, Ground Floor, Republik Damansara Heights,
1 Jalan Medan Setia 1, Bukit Damansara, 50490 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 03-7622 8765



The Alchemy's Concoction

The Alchemy

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN

The Alchemy's surprising beverage program reflects their passion and dedication to the alchemy of flavourfully-inventive and artfully-presented drinks. Taste the seasons with the bar's exceptional concoctions where gin takes centre stage through craft cocktails, ranging from the classic Negroni and Juniper Sling to innovative cocktails inspired by the revolving four seasons — spring, summer, fall and winter. Venture across the globe and discover The Alchemy's extensive gin collection, featuring gin from different corners of the world from dry gins to fresh gins. Savour these gins on the rocks, with tonic water, or let our mixologists create classic cocktails featuring your favourite gin.

Among the must-tries is the Bittersweet Symphony — a botanical gin comprising three amalgamations which is The Alchemy's tribute to the classic Negroni. This tippable is paired with bitter and orange of Aperol along with the Italian Rosso Vermouth. Another crowd pleaser is the Butterfly — a lovely concoction of butterfly pea infused gin complemented with refreshing citrusy lemon juice and finally layered with elderflower liqueur for a dash of sweetness.

**The Alchemy, Starhill Gallery, 181, Jln Bukit Bintang, Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 018-9298060**



Cocktails and Snacks at Marimbar

Marimbar The Rooftop Bar

BY HIRANMAYII AWLI MOHANAN

There's nothing like spending the evenings with a cocktail in hand while basking in the panoramic view of PJ's skyline at Marimbar The Rooftop Bar. Perched on the 35th floor of Pinnacle PJ Tower and tucked under the umbrella of The Marini Group, this bar is embellished with a wall of foliage, animal print furniture and a stunning vista.

In a true Marini's Group fashion, the menu at Marimbar features a myriad of Italian fare while its signature cocktails remains true to the bar's rainforest theme. Speaking of cocktails, expect the libations to be masterfully crafted and presented for the gram.

Start with a glass of Blue Moon — its hue easily disappears into the backdrop of the sky. This fruity concoction comprises gin as its spirit, sweet and sour, pineapple juice and blue curacao.

For something more refreshing yet still tropical, we suggest the Pisco Disco, a dangerously drinkable cocktail made from a medley of chrysanthemum infused Pisco, lychee liqueur, lime juice, lychee juice and pandan syrup.

Evoke your inner goddess with The Red Rimba — a bold yet sweet tippable made from lemongrass infused gin, raspberry puree, lemon juice, pandan syrup, ginger and egg white to match your persona.

**Marimbar, Ground Floor, ONE KL, No.6, Jalan Pinang, 50450 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 03-2386 6030**

Bar Shake

BY AGNES AUI

Known as Kuala Lumpur's most authentic Japanese cocktail bar, Bar Shake takes solace at platinum park and is headed by Sam Kinugawa - popularly recognised as the city's favourite Japanese bartender. Regulars would be familiar with Bar Shake's classic mixes like the smoky martini, truffle martini and fruit sake. But given the current situation, Kinugawa has levelled up by curating a short and sweet takeaway cocktails menu to enjoy in the comfort of your own homes.

Take your pick from six selected drinks comprising mangosteen saketini, house-made moscow mule, umami clear bloody mary, clarified jungle bird, shake aged godfather and shake sazerac. We recommend the mangosteen saketini - a fruity and light concoction that bursts of tropical flair and sweetness, making it the perfect drink for almost any day. For something richer, try the banana old fashioned that has an instant hit of booze with a mix of caramelised flavours and the slightest hint of spice.

Each hand-crafted cocktail comes with garnishing and a block of ice so you can unleash your inner bartender while staying safe indoors. To enjoy Kinugawa's creations, you can order by sending a WhatsApp text to the number below for delivery or takeaway. Do note that the cocktails are available Monday to Saturday from 12 pm - 7 pm. You can also enjoy 15 per cent off all takeaway cocktails during its happy hour on Monday to Thursday from 2 pm - 6 pm.

Bar Shake
Platinum Park, Unit 3.3A, Level 2, Tower 1,
11, Persiaran KLCC, 50088 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 016-610 3809



Coley cocktail

Coley

BY AGNES AUI

Established in 2016, Coley is known as one of Bangsar's best cocktail bars till today. Tucked along Jalan Abdullah, its modern and aesthetic interior, designed by local designer Karen Mok, will have you naturally gravitating towards the bar for a drink or two.

The bar is named after Ada 'Coley' Coleman, also known as the most famous female bartender in history who headed the bar at the Savoy Hotel in London. Her signature drink, Hanky Panky, is also featured in Coley's menu, besides other uniquely curated drinks.

For fun sips, try the peanut butter and jelly that's a mixture of tequila blanco, blueberries and white vermouth. You can also choose the Malaysian twist with its Milo + negroni made with gin, campari, red vermouth and the Malaysian classic, Milo.

The sky's the limit when it comes to portable cocktails, which is why Coley introduced the 'cocktail in a can' featuring distinct cocktails with tropical local flavours. The options include pisco and roselle, brandy and air mata kucing, gin and coconut, and rum and jambu.

During the Movement Control Order, Coley is closed but offering delivery services every Monday to Saturday from noon to 5 pm. If you wish to indulge in some of the tantalising mixes, feel free to call or WhatsApp to the number provided below.

Coley
6-G, Jalan Abdullah, Bangsar, 59000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 019-270 9179



Mango Martini
 KL LIFESTYLE | 35

Eat Well, Live Well, Be Well.

Healthy Snack Alternatives

BY HIRANMAYI AWLI MOHANAN

If it weren't for cravings, losing weight would be easier and not to mention, faster. In the spirit of new habits or healthier food choices during this pandemic, we bring you this list of healthy snack alternatives for you to consider.

BAKED CINNAMON CARAMEL APPLES

An apple a day keeps the doctor away, so the saying goes. When it comes to daily nutrition, apples contain all the important stuff—vitamin C, B-Complex vitamins, fibre, calcium, potassium and phyto nutrients (which help protect our bodies from free radicals). With baked cinnamon caramel apples, you're fixing your sweet craving while still being healthy. Scoop out the centre of the apple and fill it with decadent caramel sauce and baked, crispy oats. You can kick it up a notch by serving it with a scoop of vanilla yoghurt. Yum!



KALE CHIPS

Kale, a member of the cabbage family, is an excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and potassium. It is quickly becoming a staple in many households for its diverse use. Kale can be added to pastas, salads, stir-fries, soups and stews, and it can be also steamed, sautéed or baked. For a healthy, yet still scrumptious snack, drizzle washed and dried kale leaves (stems removed) with olive oil and sprinkle lightly with salt. Bake on a cookie sheet in a 350-degree oven for 10 minutes, or until crispy and voila, you have yourself healthy chips.

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE BANANA BREAD BARS

You might be wondering, how is a double chocolate banana bread bar a healthy alternative? Well, this bar is an illusion of decadence. It's made from bananas, almond flour and coconut flour. This treat is naturally sweet, moist and flavourful. As an added bonus, the recipe offers substitutes for making it vegan. The best part is that there's no sugar added (besides the chocolate chips). The bananas add the perfect amount of sweetness, and when paired with the melty pools of dark chocolate, it becomes a banana bread of dreams.





SORBET OR FRUIT POPSICLES OR FROYO

A half cup of Haagen Dazs vanilla ice cream has 270 calories and 18 grams of fat and this calorie count only increases with more indulgent choice of flavours such as Belgian chocolate or salted caramel. Instead of denying yourself completely of this sweet indulgence, consider switching to homemade sorbet or froyo with berries atop. Most of these are fat-free but still high in sugar, so indulge in moderation. Fruit popsicles are a good alternative to ice cream and they are pretty easy to whip up. All you need is a popsicle, fruits of your choice like strawberry, watermelon, mango or kiwi and a popsicle stick.

TRAIL MIX

Trail mix is a type of snack mix — a medley of granola, dried fruit, nuts and sometimes chocolate, first created as a food to be taken along on hikes. Now, it can also be consumed between meals, especially when you get the munchies. It's pretty simple to concoct your own blend of trail mix. Simply gather and combine equal parts unsweetened dried fruit and unsalted roasted nuts of your choice.



CAULIFLOWER FRIED RICE

Rice is a staple in most households in Asia — there's something oddly comforting and complete when paired with other dishes. Grate the cauliflower into rice-like bits and cook it like how you would a fried rice. It's a healthy, low-carb dish that's hearty enough to serve as a main course or between meals.

BEET CHIPS

Another healthy option to the sinful potato chips is the vibrant and crunchy beet chips. Packed with essential nutrients, beetroots are a great source of fibre, folate (vitamin B9), manganese, potassium, iron and vitamin C. Cut it into thin slices, douse it with some olive oil, salt and for some punch, add paprika and bake it in the oven. It's so delicious and good for you that you won't feel like you're missing out.



Velvety Bright

The best red velvet desserts

BY AGNES AUI

The classic red velvet and cream cheese dessert was thought to have originated in Maryland in the early 20th century. In fact, what gives red velvet its bright red colour is a chemical reaction between the cocoa and acid. Today, many red velvet desserts have taken the spotlight, with unique twists in cakes, a tinier version of the red velvet cake in the form of cupcakes, and a whole other dessert altogether – chewy cookies. Let's take a look at some of these desserts.



SOUKA

Farah Hasran and husband Afiq Zarim started their sweet journey in 2008 selling baked goods from home, markets and cafes after a day-long office hiatus. In 2012, they opened their doors at a humble neighbourhood of TTDI alongside Mukha Café in the hope of bringing sweetness to one's soul. Three years later, they expanded their passion to the neighbourhood of SS15, Subang Jaya with a bigger kitchen, streams of ideas and wider options. Today, Souka provides some of the freshest and most delicious desserts, including a delectable red velvet cake, generously covered in cream cheese frosting.





JASLYN CAKES

Patronised by many for its rustic, homey desserts, Jaslyn Cakes is a name sworn by many sweet teeth. The dessert spot's first outpost is in the heart of Bangsar, while its second outpost is in Mont Kiara, boasting an al-fresco seating area. The similarities that remain, however, are the luxurious, simply delicious desserts and the laidback ambience. Jaslyn Cakes' red velvet cake with a unique lemon cream cheese filling is evidently one of its best-sellers, selling out almost every day.



DOPE DOUGH

Aptly named Dope Dough, this dessert spot aims to bring Malaysians the dopest doughs, also known as the best chewy cookies in town. Chewy cookies feature a crunchy exterior and chewy interior that typically oozes melted chocolate or other gooey fillings. At Dope Dough, customers can find 12 different flavours that come with or without fillings. The fillings include peanut butter, salted caramel, marshmallows and cream cheese. They also have premium flavours like triple choc with nuts and peanut butter, salted caramel (with added salted caramel filling, yum!), choc chip with nuts and marshmallows, black velvet oreo cream cheese, and of course, the red velvet with cream cheese. The latter is also Dope Dough's best-seller, a highly requested and seasonal flavour.



BISOU

Established in 2007 in Kuala Lumpur by a husband-and-wife team, Bisou started as a small business specialising in homestyle cookies, cakes and cupcakes. Today, Bisou owns five outlets throughout Klang Valley and an online shop that was established during the pandemic. Bisou offers same-day delivery, with cupcake flavours like pistachio rose, cinnamon bun, coconut mango, salted caramel and the iconic red velvet cupcake. Perfect for those who would like to indulge in a good red velvet dessert but prefer to not go overboard, the red velvet cupcake is the ultimate choice.