FOOD ISSUE

Cover Artwork: Chua E Yau Yong | Animation, LASALLE College of the Arts
HO CHI MINH CITY

Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) is Vietnam’s high-octane city of commerce and culture, home to everything from the cheapest guesthouses to the classiest of restaurants, to the hippest of cafes. This chaotic city is full of never-ending energy, where its French colonial past merges seamlessly into its modern-day persona. Wander through interesting alleys and chow down at colourful stalls, before chillaxing in a trendy café or chic boutique in a high rise. HCMC—or Saigon as it’s still known—is an urban collage that excitingly blends old and new.

THINGS TO DO

> Guided Tours:
  - Urban Tales Cholon is a unique half-day tour that combines a murder mystery and a city tour; by following the culprit you’ll enjoy a self-guided tour through HCMC’s Chinatown (aka Cholon), taking you to ancient temples, TCM stores, votive paper shops and hidden lanes. Locals also interact with you along this scripted walking tour, giving you clues to solve the murder mystery.
  - If you like meeting locals, check out free walking, biking and eating tours by Saigon Lovers which is run by students. They will take you to various hot spots and attractions, in addition to trying some local cuisine. Foodies might want to check out Saigon Street Eats, a street food tour run by an Australian/Vietnamese couple who love to share their obsession with Vietnamese food.

> Cafe Hop:
  - Vietnam is a big coffee exporter, and the local brew—cà phê—is a favourite drink which is available everywhere. Coffee lovers can opt for the strong and sweet coffee, Cà phê sữa nóng, which is brewed fresh on your table in a metal apparatus placed over a cup.
  - Over the past decade, there’s a steady rise of trendy cafes too. Chez Vous Coffee Lounge, opposite Ben Thanh Market, is an oasis of French retro chic; La Fenetre Soleil is an airy eclectic space in an old warehouse building; La Rotonde evokes French colonialism with its high beamed ceiling; Mockingbird Cafe’s industrial interior provides great views of downtown; and Fig Cafe is a zen-like space with lotus ponds and Buddha statues. These are just a handful of popular ones, with more opening over the coming months.

> Museums:
  - The Reunification Palace is a time-warp to the 60s, filled with kitschy vintage paraphernalia including a tank that crashed through here in 1975. Great for Instagram; there’s also a café here.
  - Restaurants: Museum has displaying displays of the horrors of war: military hardware, a tiger cage prison, torture chambers, and gruesome photos and documents detailing the horrific effects of Agent Orange.

> Observatory:
  - In the heart of HCMC’s entertainment district is the 68-storey Bitexco Financial Tower, shaped like a lotus.
  - There are retail stores and food outlets on the lower floors, but you can also head to the Saigon Skydeck on the 49th floor to get 360 views of the entire city and Saigon River. There’s a bar on the 52nd floor.

GETTING AROUND

One of the most common and interesting ways to get around HCMC is on a cyclo—akin to our trishaw but with the passenger seated right in front. The sights and sounds of the city are best experienced on the cyclo’s relaxed pace, although passengers have to be mindful of their belongings. Be sure to bargain hard with a cyclo rider beforehand; they can also be rented by the hour.

GETTING THERE

One of the most convenient ways to get to HCMC is by air. The airport is just a short drive from the city centre and offers connections to almost every major city in Vietnam.

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THINGS TO SEE

> French Influence:
  - Under French rule in the 19th century, Saigon was filled with Western architecture, and French villas still remain in the city to this day. Notable French-era buildings include Notre Dame Cathedral (built in 1887 with building materials imported from France), Saigon Opera House (built in 1881), and the splendid Central Post Office (built in 1906), which is an example of French colonial architecture.

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TRIPPING IN TAIWAN

TRENDY EATS

TAIPEI: DA’AN DISTRICT

People will not be disappointed by Da’an District’s offerings. The area is home to a couple of food halls, but there’s a shortage of haskong points for students.

Keelung Street is probably the most popular street when it comes to food, especially for the Floral Island Wind Park. It also has a production of local eateries that serve delicious, low-cost meals. Be sure to check out Bar and an old-school, semi-private hideaway.

Anyone who’s been to Taichung will know that there is no shortage of things to eat. Whether you’re a hipster, a foodie, or just looking for a good coffee, Taichung has plenty to offer. Taichung is famous for its trendy Western District, which is also a destination for the National Taiwan Museum. This area is home to plenty of old residential buildings that have been transformed into art galleries or museums. These include experimental restaurants, clothing boutiques, and cafes. The trendy shops in the largest art museum in Asia with its modern industrial architecture and sculpture park.

TAICHUNG: WESTERN DISTRICT

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When there’s a chance to visit any of these areas that are rich in history and culture, Taichung is small enough to explore mostly on foot. The downtown area contains various small art galleries and museums, and it is filled with plenty of art exhibitions.

TAINAN: SHENNONG STREET

Comprised mainly of 2 areas for visitors - the historic Ting-ping-Dao and the Shennong Street district. In Shennong Street, there is enough to explore and enjoy.

When you go out for shopping in Shennong Street, you will find local shops and stalls selling traditional goods. You can also find some of the best local food in the area.

KAOSHUIUNG: PIER-2

When you do with a bunch of friends, you must experience Pier-2 Cafe. In Kaohsiung, you turn it into a creative space for art exhibitions, performances, and trendy cafes where you can chill out. There are a few of these hidden gems in the area, including Wannian Cafe, which is located within a designer furniture store. For more food, there are many more hidden gems in Kaohsiung, such as the Soba Noodles Cafe and the Green Tea Cafe, which offers a range of Japanese-style dishes.

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EAT TO LIVE: HEALTH FOOD FRIENDS

BY VINCENT TAM

**Memoire**

Cerné in the 20th century, in the face of war, famine, and disease, Dr. Attilio Monicelli wrote a book titled *Memoire*. The book was a personal account of his travels and experiences in the world of health and medicine. It was based on his own research and observations. The book, which was published in 1934, remained a bestseller for many years and became a cornerstone of the field of health and medicine.

**Savoury South Africa**

Savoury, Africa’s favorite dumpling, is the result of ancient culinary techniques. It is a savory dumpling made from a mixture of flour, milk, and vegetables. The dumplings are traditionally served with a side of beef or lamb, and they are often enjoyed as a main course or an appetizer.

**PIE NOGI EASTERN EUROPE**

Pie in the Eastern European tradition is a savory dumpling made from a mixture of flour, milk, and vegetables. The dumplings are traditionally served with a side of beef or lamb, and they are often enjoyed as a main course or an appetizer.

**JiaJian JIAO**

JiaJian is a traditional Chinese dumpling typically filled with a mix of pork, vegetables, and sometimes garlic. The dumplings are steamed or boiled and are often enjoyed as a main course. They are a popular dish in Chinese households.

**GOVINDA**

Govinda is an Indian dish made from a mixture of flour, milk, and vegetables. The dumplings are traditionally served with a side of beef or lamb, and they are often enjoyed as a main course or an appetizer.

**Cocina**

Tortillas are a traditional Mexican dish made from masa, which is a type of flour made from corn. The tortillas are typically served with a mix of beans, meat, and vegetables. They are often enjoyed as a main course or an appetizer.

**Kneppelaken**

Kneppelaken is a Dutch dish made from a mixture of flour, milk, and vegetables. The dumplings are traditionally served with a side of beef or lamb, and they are often enjoyed as a main course or an appetizer.

**Empareda**

Empareda is a traditional Spanish dish made from a mixture of flour, milk, and vegetables. The dumplings are typically served with a side of meat or seafood. They are often enjoyed as a main course or an appetizer.

**What is it?**

Health food trends are a big movement nowadays, motivating people around the world to better their health. As trends spread, healthy food options are more accessible than ever, and people are choosing to eat healthier and live happier lives.

**Why is it popular?**

As more people become aware of the benefits of eating healthy, they are more likely to seek out healthier food options. This trend is likely to continue as people become more health-conscious.

**Where do you get it?**

- Freshly made at home
- Health food stores
- Supermarkets

**Smoothies (Cold-Pressed)**

**What is it?**

Cold-pressed vegetables and fruits juices are gaining more and more attention due to their high nutritional value and anti-inflammatory properties.

**Why is it popular?**

As people become more health-conscious, they are seeking out healthier options for their daily meals. Cold-pressed juices are one such option, as they retain all the nutrients and health benefits of the original fruits and vegetables.

**Who should follow it?**

Anyone looking to improve their health and wellness, including athletes, fitness enthusiasts, and those with specific health conditions.

**Where to get it?**

- Local health food stores
- Supermarkets
- Online health food stores

**Gluten-Free**

**What is it?**

Foods that don’t contain gluten (which is found in barley, wheat, or rye products).

**Why is it popular?**

A gluten-free diet is a popular choice for those who are allergic to gluten or have celiac disease. It is also a good option for those who are looking to improve their digestion or lose weight.

**Who should follow it?**

- Those with gluten sensitivity
- Those with celiac disease
- Those looking to improve digestion

**Where to get it?**

- Gluten-free products are widely available in supermarkets and health food stores.
- Online health food stores

**Biodynamic Food**

**What is it?**

Biodynamic food is grown using organic farming techniques that are employed on an environmentally friendly farm. This type of farming focuses on the well-being of the soil, the health of the farmer, and the quality of the food.

**Why is it popular?**

As more people become conscious about the environment and their health, they are looking for food options that are both good for the planet and good for them.

**Who should follow it?**

Anyone looking to improve their health and wellness, including athletes, fitness enthusiasts, and those with specific health conditions.

**Where to get it?**

- Biodynamic farms
- Organic supermarkets
- Online health food stores

**Whole Grain**

**What is it?**

Whole grains contain the grains and bran parts of the grain, and are not just the starchy endosperm, thus providing more fiber and important nutrients like selenium, potassium, and magnesium than refined grains which have the outer skin polished off.

**Why is it popular?**

Whole grains are considered a healthy diet, as they are naturally rich in nutrients and provide a balanced source of energy.

**Who should follow it?**

Those who need to lose weight or lower their blood pressure, those who want to reduce their chances of heart attacks.

**Where to get it?**

- Brown rice
- Oats
- Whole-wheat bread

**Vegan**

**What is it?**

Vegan food is food that is plant-based, and does not contain any animal products.

**Why is it popular?**

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**Who should follow it?**

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**Where to get it?**

- Vegan supermarkets
- Organic supermarkets
- Online health food stores

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DEATH OF

BY COPERNICUS CHUA

Singapore is the 48th biggest coffee consuming country in the world. We drink 75,000,000+ cups of coffee annually, more than double the coffee consumed by Kenya, a major coffee growing country. So it’s safe to say, we love coffee.

Coffee is the second most traded product globally (after oil) and like many other things, it’s an essential fuel that keeps us going. It is consumed extensively by courts, politicians, diplomats, the clergy, and the general public. It is the economic engine that drives the coffee industry. While everyone’s idea of coffee varies greatly - like the metaphorical distance between a kopi luwak and a macha-blivion hipster - what they all have in common is the key ingredient, coffee beans.

The Origins of Coffee

Coffee beans are the fruit of the Coffee bush, native to parts of Africa and the Middle East. No one is sure who discovered the bush, but legend has it that an Ethiopian sheepherd saw his goats energetically eating the berries, used it himself, and the rest is history.

By the mid 15th century, coffee was actively cultivated in Arabia, where the first coffee houses opened. Mechanical full-scale establishments that were a far cry from a Starbucks or a CaffèNero.

Coffee Goes Global

Coffee came to Europe when the defeated Ottoman army fled Vienna in 1683, leaving behind sacks of beans. Apparently, it was a real sensation, a deal which spread to England and beyond.

Today, those 12 species of coffee in the world, although most of them are on the verge of extinction in their native habitats like Ethiopia or Yemen, thanks to climate change and deforestation.

The Rise of Robusta and Arabica

There are over 120 species of coffee in the world, although most of them are on the verge of extinction in their native habitats like Ethiopia or Yemen, thanks to climate change and deforestation.

Today only 2 species - Coffea canephora (Robusta) and Coffea arabica (Arabica) - account for nearly 100% of global consumption. With the rise of long coffee culture, the Robusta bean (which formerly accounted for 80% of global consumption) has declined in favor of Arabica which now accounts for 80%.

As its name implies, Robusta is a robust type of coffee, and its beans are generally dark brown, robust, and often have a more bitter taste. It’s often used in instant coffee, and it’s the main type of coffee used in most (if not all) coffee shops around the world.

Arabica coffee beans, on the other hand, are much more delicate and have a higher acidity level. They’re often used in specialty coffee shops and are considered to be of superior quality.

The Manufacturers

As global demand for coffee rose, manufacturers needed to standardise coffee production to make it profitable. This meant using mass-production techniques and growing coffee beans in large fields, which allowed them to mass-produce and sell.

It also meant getting consumers to prefer specific kinds of coffee, and standardising taste profiles so that coffee drinkers could identify their favourite coffee beans. This emphasis on mass-production led to the decline of local coffee shops, and led to the rise of large coffee chains like Starbucks and Costa Coffee.

The Crop Issue

Growing and cultivating coffee beans is a complex process that involves many stages, from the harvesting of the beans to the roasting and packaging of the final product. This complexity makes it difficult to control the quality and consistency of the coffee produced.

Consumer choice can help

Despite its many challenges, coffee is a popular beverage that is enjoyed by millions of people around the world. However, the coffee industry faces many challenges, including climate change, deforestation, and the loss of genetic diversity. It is important for consumers to support sustainable and ethical coffee practices, such as those that are certified by organisations like Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance, to help ensure a stable and sustainable coffee supply for years to come.
A trip to South Korea a couple of years back introduced me to one of the country’s most (in)famous delicacies – Sannakaji. I fought the urge to dry heave at the sight of the baby octopus – dismembered while still alive and freshly served – squirming beneath a bed of sesame seeds and sesame oil. Out of courtesy for my Korean hosts, I swallowed a limp tentacle; the feeling of it wriggling down my gullet is indeed a novel experience.

It may have been a culinary novelty for me, but for the baby octopus on my plate, being eaten alive represents an immensely painful and difficult situation. Yet, more and more restaurants around the world are offering a chance to eat animals alive. Copenhagen’s renowned Noma restaurant, for instance, features live black ants on its menu. I personally find this rather stomach-churning, but it has turned out surprisingly popular, with a waiting list of up to 60,000 people all hoping to sample this unique dish.

It’s hard, perhaps, to feel much sympathy for creepy crawlies and mushy octopus. But when the source of protein becomes dog meat, then suddenly, the whole international community is up in arms. The annual Yulin Dog Festival in China sees an estimated 10,000 dogs and cats being skinned alive or clubbed to death, then turned into food for the festival-goers. While this has incurred international outrage at the perceived cruelty and inhumane treatment of the animals, proponents argue that eating dog meat is a traditional practice in China.

Sure, eating dog meat might seem disturbing to many, but that is only because most of us have never consumed it before. Given that approximately only 375 million people in the world are vegetarians, it means 95% of the global population has no such qualms about devouring other animal meats, such as pork, beef and mutton. Why should we spend so much time getting fired up about the Chinese eating dog meat, only to then sit down to a hearty steak dinner? After all, if we are not going to criticise Americans for eating burgers (a quintessentially American meal), then it follows that we should not denounce what is merely part of the day-to-day diet in some parts of China.

There is a grey area when it comes to the ethics of eating: what is considered appropriate by one is thought of as horrifying by another. Undeniably, there also exists a little bit of hypocrisy; many people eat various types of meat without batting an eyelash, but cannot bear to see the gore and blood behind how such meats arrived on their dining tables. There is perhaps no right answer to what constitutes ethical eating, and a little more open-mindedness in this regard can go a long way.

Hollywood films such as Marley and Me and Lassie have served to cement the role of dogs as Man’s best friends. We have thus come to see dogs as our faithful companions, and feel a fondness towards them that we do not extend towards other animals such as pigs or chickens (which are essentially being raised for slaughter). But is it fair that we can get so worked up over eating dogs, but not over the consumption of other domesticated animals, or for that matter, ants and octopus?

Critics of the Yulin Dog Festival paint to the inhumane killing process as to why the festival should be shut down. But what about foie gras, the dish that features in many of the world’s top restaurants, which is obtained by force-feeding ducks to plump up their livers to 10 times their normal size? Even the tender KFC chicken has a gruesome backstory: the chickens are squeezed into excrement-filled cages, bred to be so top-heavy that their legs often break, and dropped in scalding water to remove their feathers even while they are still alive. Yet, KFC remains one of the world’s most popular fast food franchises, and foie gras is still a staple on the menus of restaurants all around the world – chowed down by the same people who have vehemently signed the petition against dog-eating.

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MEAT

THE IMPACT ON OUR BODY

LOWDOWN ON MEAT

We all know that low-carb, high-protein diets like Atkins and Paleolithic can be hard on the body, especially if eating a high fat content raises insulin levels, increases cholesterol and clogs arteries, contributing to issues like coronary disease and even diabetes. But saturated fat is present in all meat—especially the “red” ones like chicken, turkey and fish with the skin.

Experts at the University of Melbourne claim that just even a few days on a low-carb, high-protein diet can result in rapid weight gain for an inactive person up to 3.5kg for a 100kg person. A large-scale NALSA study showed that those who consumed meat gained 3.6kg more than those who didn’t, even though they both ate the same caloric amount.

Meat sometimes contains too much protein for our bodies, straining our kidneys. Much of the protein we consume is converted to fat and sugar. Those who eat a lot of meat are more likely to develop diabetes. Although protein is an essential nutrient, we don’t need huge quantities of it (only about one calorie out of every 11), and legumes (beans, soy) provide sufficient amounts of it in addition to fibre, which is lacking in meat.

Even fish is high in fat (often 30% of its calories) and cholesterol, by weight, carp and salmon contain 35g of cholesterol per 100g, while tuna has 83g, while beef and pork have 79g.

When it comes to dining, it’s fair to say that many of us are omnivores—we love our meat as much as the next person. In parts of the world, meat is seen as a luxury item, and now that it’s accessible to more people, no wonder it’s in demand. But how does meat consumption impact our bodies and the environment?

Everybody knows that meat, dairy products, and eggs all contain cholesterol and saturated fat that contribute to heart attacks, diabetes, and various types of cancer. So why are new diets promoting more meat consumption?

The combined greenhouse gas (GHG) emission of livestock (from methane to enteric fermentation) is 33% of the global total—that is significantly more than cars, planes and all forms of transport put together!

As Singapore imports all its meats, this means that every slice of beef, chicken or pork has to be transported burning more fossil fuels – to get to our plates.

The impact on earth

It turns out that a lot of meat eating is not just bad for our health, it’s also bad for the environment because behind every meat we consume is an energy-hungry system of farming that is responsible for climate change.

POISONING THE ENVIRONMENT

Industrial scale farming means that a single farm can generate as much waste as a city, a cow excretes about 40kg of manure— which funnels into massive lagoon—for every kg of edible meat. These lagoons often pollute water supplies with nitrogen, phosphorus and nitrates, in addition to pathogens like salmonella, E. coli, cryptosporidium, and fecal coliform which can easily transfer to humans. About 80 billion tons of untreated livestock waste flows into the ocean every year.

Annually, an area 25 Times the size of Singapore becomes a death zone when vast quantities of excess nutrients from cattle waste cause algal blooms in the Mississippi. It’s just the US: nearly 100 dead zone in the world. Only 70,000 km2 have now been identified from the Scottia Gyre in the North Atlantic to the South China Sea.

In addition, over 50% of the world’s soil erosion is caused by livestock, which leads to desertification.

FARMING AND GREENHOUSE GASES

The human race eats about 230 million tonnes of animals mainly chicken, eggs, milk, beef, and sheep-year, all of which require the production of water and food, which in turn produce a mountain of waste (poo, greenhouse gases).

TO CUT OR NOT TO CUT?

Cutting meat reduces your risk of disease and contributes to weight loss only if you follow a diet of low processed foods like legumes, whole grains and vegetables, and not processed food like alcohol and sugar. If you’re planning to go vegan—cutting dairy and eggs—then you need to increase the right amount of nutrients, because plants provide every vitamin you need except vitamin B12 and D.

TAKING AWAY LAND AND WATER

Nearly 30% of available land on the planet is taken up by livestock and a majority of the world’s crops are fed to these animals, even as one billion people go hungry every year. While the meat on your plate might not seem like a major problem, the issue is that farm animals are inefficient converters of food to meat. For instance, need is to feed just 1kg of fish, it takes 5 pounds of commercially caught fish (which is not sold to humans) to create 1 pound of farmed fish. Imagine if that food went to feeding people instead— it could feed at least twice as many mouths.

As the demand for meat increases, nearly half of the world’s ecosystems and biodiversity hotspots are at risk of disappearing due to the expansion of livestock farming. Trees are felled and animals will go extinct to make the meat in your burger. About 90% of the Amazon that’s cleared is for livestock farming, while in Australia almost 70% of its land area is arid (for livestock only use). For agriculture for human consumption. The problems with deforestation in Indonesia and Malaysia are the result of a global agriculture that has turned tropical rainforests into palm oil plantations.

On top of that, agriculture and livestock account for 50% of our water use, while one pound of rice requires 1.13 litres of water to produce, a pound of beef needs around 5,000 litres (and 2,000 litres of water to produce one litre of milk). To produce a day’s food for one meat-eater takes over 4,000 gallons of water; for a vegetarian, only 10 gallons.

IAD ENOUGH?

Eating less meat not only improves your health (only if you’re eating unprocessed foods like white grains, legumes and vegetables and not processed junk food laden with sugar) but also has the potential to contribute to mass slaughter of livestock and your food choices can make a huge impact on the environment. It’s the simplest, cheapest, and healthiest thing anyone can do.
Portuguese history can be charted via its sausages. Whether it’s based on what’s on hand. It’s not difficult to find a bit of Portugal in Macao, where there are numerous Portuguese restaurants that serve traditional dishes, like Restaurante Fernando, Miramar Portuguese food and O Santos Comida Portuguesa Taipa, serving dishes from Portugal’s Alentejo region.

Portuguese soups and stews:

- **Caldo verde**: The most traditional of Portuguese soups, it is made with just onions, potatoes and kale, cooked with garlic and olive oil. Usually served in a traditional clay pot with a slice of ‘linguica’ and bread. It’s creamy, thick and hearty, with a hint of acidity from the kale.

- **Feijoada**: A very hearty bean stew, the ‘feijoada’ contains a variety meats. It consists of black beans, served grilled from black pig, called ‘porco preto’). In Portugal, this dish is considered a national dish and is usually served during the 16th century, when pork was a luxury item. The dish consists of a variety of meats, including pork, beef, and chicken, as well as beans and vegetables.

Portuguese sausages:

- **Linguiça**: A typical smoked pork sausage, it consists of coarsely chopped meats like veal, chicken, duck and rabbit, compacted together for maximising the usage of livestock meat, or being part of the annual Portugal’s history can literally be charted via its sausages. Whether it’s based on what’s on hand.

- **Farinheira**: Smoked dough sausage: This unusual sausage has no meat bits - originally invented by House Jew to take the consumption of pork to save them from the Inquisition in the 16th century, the original farinheira contained just flour and spices. These days, they also contain soft pork fat. The taste is tangy with a doughy texture, and it’s often served fried with scrambled eggs.

- **Alheira**: Another sausage made by Portuguese Jews, this time with meat. Instead of pork, the sausage is stuffed with meats like veal, chicken, duck and rabbit, compacted together with bread. The alheira de capi is made with game meat.

- **Linguiça**: A typical smoked pork sausage, it consists of coarsely chopped pork shoulder (both the lean bits and the fat), plenty of garlic and paprika.

Portuguese meats:

- **Leitão**: The term means ‘leitão’; in Portugal, these animals are raised for meat and are fed a diet of grass and straw. The meat is tender, simmered in red wine, and oven-topped along with the rice - which absorbs the duck jus - until the top is crispy.

- **Duck**: The Portuguese love their ‘bacalhau’; or dried cod, and the most popular way to enjoy it is the ‘brás style’ - shredded cod sautéed in a pan with onions and potato strips, and then finished up with beaten eggs.

- **Seafood**:
  - **Cod**: The Portuguese love their ‘bacalhau’, or dried cod, and the most popular way to enjoy it is the ‘brás style’ - shredded cod sautéed in a pan with onions and potato strips, and then finished up with beaten eggs.
  - **Octopus**: Octopus salad with onions, olive oil and parsley and fried till crispy on the outside and top is crispy.

Portuguese shellfish:

- **Linguiça**: A typical smoked pork sausage, it consists of coarsely chopped pork shoulder (both the lean bits and the fat), plenty of garlic and paprika.

Portuguese desserts:

- **Pastel de nata**: The most famous egg tart is probably the ‘pastel de nata’. First created by monks in the 18th century, the recipe was sold to a sugary refinery that opened a pastry shop called Fábrica de Pastéis de Belém. In 1837, located in Belém near Lisbon, the shop is still operational, and is well worth the queue.

Portuguese food:

- **Tamarind Pork With Balichão**: This quintessential Macanese dish is made from pork belly or ribs braised in tamarind-sauce - a nod to Southeast Asia - containing onion, garlic, and soy sauce. Another ingredient is balichão, a Macanese belcan-lime paste made from kaffir fermented with brandy, chilli, bay leaves and lemon.

Macanese desserts:

- **Macanese Feijada**: The Macanese have adapted this traditional Portuguese dish with local ingredients - instead of chorizo, Chinese sausage and blood sausage are used; black beans are replaced with kidney beans (sometimes red beans). The stew here may also contain tomato and sumac.

- **Felicidade**: Then chances are that you’ve probably tried a similar macanese cookie. The most famous vendor is Koi Kee Bakery; its cookies are baked on premises and have a gritty, nutty texture and flavour.
BY CHERRY TAN KAY YIN

TAKing OvER THE wORLD:

With continued growth and expansion of global trade around the world, Singapore has also joined the league of worldwide trading. From grocery shopping to eating out, we are surrounded by hundreds of brands and labels competing for our attention and it seems like we are spoilt for choice... or so we think.

OLIGOPOLY

Truth be told, there are only several global food giants, who through buy-outs, mergers, takeovers, and their sheer size, are able to own as much as 90% of the food brands we see in a typical grocery store! This is known as oligopoly. By selling multiple brands of the same product, they create “competition” that lead consumers to believe they are choosing from different brands, while sales profits flow back to the same source.

Take Unilever, for instance. They make everything from food to home care products. Chances are that every time you go grocery shopping, you see at least one item made by Unilever. They own over 400 food brands around the world, including Ben & Jerry’s, Lipton, Knorr, Magnum, and many others. With a global presence in almost 190 countries and a net profit of US$32.46 billion in 2013, they’re taking over the world one home care product at a time. Oh, and for just an added statistic, they own almost half of the ice cream products sold to us. The other half? Naturally owned by another food giant, Nestle.

QAF Limited

What about local brands, you ask? Yes, we have a pretty vibrant F&B sector in Singapore, but that doesn’t mean monopolies don’t exist on a local scale.

Remember back in 2005, when all drinks were Buying Chinese “New Year” and “Christmas parties”? They are owned by the parent company for Ocean Group. If you thought we had a pretty good range of different brands in the bakery sections of our supermarkets, just know that Gardenia, Boyarde and Farmland all came under the umbrella company QAF so even buying local doesn’t mean your money is going into a single company’s pockets!

BOTTOM LINE

We all want the freedom to choose what ends up on our plate, but when a handful of companies control most of the brands you see at the grocery store, they influence the prices and contents of products we buy. Conglomerates like Unilever, PepsiCo, Kraft-Nestle, Kellogg and F&B often rule our supermarket, and the only difference between their products is not quality or ingredients, but rather the name, packaging and the price.

The only way we can beat the rise of these giants is to continue educate ourselves and keep up to date with company mergers and brand name acquisitions; learn the source of our food products and support local farmers in purchasing freshly grown and harvested produce whenever possible.

Greece

Several open-air movie theathers open up to cater during the warmer months, usually from May to July. During these times, there are plenty of grilled chicken, fish or rice souvlaki – a beloved street food snack that is very much like our satay – to make movie-going into a beer-sipping affair.

BRITAIN

In the Netherlands, the snack of choice for commuters is the kaps, a small type of sausage with a texture reminiscent of that of a sausage. However, it doesn’t contain any meat. It is made of a large amount of sodium chloride, which has a spicy kick. Usually presented with cheese and a “longue-maison” sauce.

RUSSIA

In Moscow, you can find a famous, free, fresh, potato, serve up a borscht. Serve up a borscht. Serve up a borscht. Serve up a borscht. Serve up a borscht. Serve up a borscht. Serve up a borscht. Serve up a borscht. Serve up a borscht.

LITHUANIA

Chalky green in Lithuania often means a grain of rice from street vendors. Before a service, there is the beer-like beverage that is made by pouring hot water over rice of steamed rice, then fermenting it in wooden tanks to make it palatable. It's flavoured with mint, star anise and caraway.

BRASIL

A popular snack for Brazilian schoolboys in the baixa do quios, or fried cheese balls. These originated not part of a traditional ritual, and are made with white cheese from the Minas Gerais region. But only people in your cheese balls, and you can find them of cheddar and/or mozzarella in there too.
SINGAPORE BIENNALE 2016: An Atlas of Mirrors: Curator Tour with Louis Ho

When: 17 Jan 2017
Where: Singapore Art Museum (SAM)
Ticket: $10

Exploring shared histories and current realities within and beyond the region, the exhibition will be a constellation of narratives that provide unexpected ways of seeing the world and ourselves - a vital lens to an expansive behavioural performativity that problematizes and defies the fixed categories of art. Find out more about the artworks as well as the curatorial decisions that go behind the scenes in confronting the nation's pre-existent contemporary art event.

ASSASSIN’S CREED

Callum Lynch (Michael Fassbender) is able to relive the adventures of his ancestor Aguilar, in 15th Century Spain through a revolutionary technology that unlocks his genetic memories. After discovering that he is a descendent of a mysterious secret society called the Assassins, Lynch gains incredible powers and sets out to battle the oppressive Knights Templar in the present day.

RESIDENT EVIL: THE FINAL CHAPTER

February 2


Picking up immediately after the events in Resident Evil: Retribution, Alice (Milla Jovovich) is the only survivor of what was meant to be humanity’s last stand against the undead. Now, she must return to where the nightmare began - Raccoon City, where the Umbrella Corporation is gathering its forces for a final strike against the only remaining survivor of the apocalypse.

CIRQUE ADRENALINE

Adrenaline is a low-automation, high-energy, adrenaline-pumping, family-friendly, interactive circus that is the perfect family-friendly variety show that is sure to have the audience on their feet all night long. The show is filled with acrobatics, animal tricks, fire breathing, contortion, aerials, and much more.

OUT AND ABOUT
BY AZLIN MOHD SALLEH

COSTING THE CARROT: THE PRICING OF FOOD

The Internet. Antibiotics. Netflix and Pokémon Go. There is a lot about the modern world that is good and great.

But there is a wistfulness that sets in when the preceding generations talk of their childhoods. Times when going out for a movie essentially amounted to $0.50 or 16 cents for dinner at local hawker, then 20 cents for a cinema ticket, with any extra to spend on an ice kacang for the walk home.

Now if you are lucky, you would be growing if you spent $5 on lunch. And when you go to the market, you certainly will not be getting fresh veg for anything less than $5 a bundle. So what has happened to food prices?

To understand this, we need to understand the dynamics behind food pricing. Essentially, what determines the price of the carrot in your laksa, the chicken in your rice or the bag of carrots you buy in the supermarket?

COSTING THE CARROT: THE JOURNEY

1. TO GROW OR NOT TO GROW

Before the carrot even gets to generate, the decision must be taken to decide whether or not it’s worth growing in the first place. The farmer considers many things: government subsidies for different crops (e.g., market disease, etc.), calculating what maximizes his restricted acreage, crop rotation, the quality of his soil, the cost of fertilizers, etc. From a financial standpoint, he needs to consider the opportunity cost of his investment in that carrot — how much time it would take, the yield from that crop and essentially what it would cost him by not, say, planting potatoes instead.

2. FROM SEED TO ORANGE VEG

The carrot is subject to the whims of mother nature. Environmental considerations play a huge part in its development, from soil conditions, to average rainfall, exposure to sunlight, diseases and insect damage.

3. FROM FIELD TO MARKET

That bag of carrots you picked up from the grocery store in all likelihood did not say “product of Singapore.” For one thing, land is scarce, and for another, the less than temperate climate has a thing or two to say in the production of our canonical orange friend. If a carrot could speak it would in all likelihood come with an Australian accent. So how that carrot needs to find its way from the outback to your neighbourhood NTUC. So it needs to be packaged, then transported over 5000kmms from its native land.

4. AT THE MARKET

Our well-travelled vegetable now needs to be stocked on the shelves ready for you to pick up on your weekly browse.

CRUNCHING THE CARROT: COSTING THE JOURNEY

At every stage of the process, you have the cost of labour — the farmer, the packer, the drivers, the shaker, the cashier. You also have the cost of “housing” the carrot — the opportunity cost to the farmer of not producing something else, its transport in the refrigerated cars, then in the airplane/airship, and the cost of stocking it in warehouses and then on the shelves of a supermarket, all of which have finite amounts of available space which need to be profitably filled, so there’s also the opportunity cost that’s squeezed by not stocking that carrot, which needs to be accounted for.

Production costs will vary from veggie to veggie because each crop needs unique efforts for land preparation, planting, pest control, water control and harvesting (e.g. you won’t need to dig up a ripe tomato like you do a ripe potato). As they’re also affected by climate/temperature/market conditions, these production costs fluctuate.

So now we get to see the incremental pricing strategy. At every stage there is an element of risk — the risk the farmer runs that his carrots will not be eaten by rabbits, or in the prehistoric age, emu or deformed or not as orange-coloured as Trump. Then if the carrots are harvested, there is the risk of exchange rate fluctuations between the time he ships them and when he finally gets paid, not counting product spoilage en route.

But the drastic changes in price from one generation to the next — how can that be explained? Automation had increased productivity per acreage, so surely food prices should show a steady decline. Yet food prices more than doubled between 2007 and 2008, then peaked again from 2010 to 2011.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND: SKYROCKETING PRICES

As with any commodity, the prices of food are subject to supply and demand. The higher the demand, the higher the price, all other things remaining equal. A similar reasoning applies when you have restricted supply. So if you have both rising demand and falling supply, you have the perfect storm for a spike in prices.

REDUCED SUPPLY

CLIMATE CHANGE — Most crops thrive in temperatures of around 20°C but we are having more days with temperatures exceeding this. Global mean temperatures in July 2016 were the warmest in historical record, dating back to the late 1800s.

TRADE RESTRICTIONS — Protectionist measures employed by countries to shield fledging industries can result in higher prices for imported produce.

RISING DEMAND

THE GLOBAL POPULATION IS GROWING — we are set to exit 2016 with a population of 7.5 billion people. By 2050, it is expected to hit 9 billion — every year the population grows by an average of 80 million people.

ECONOMIC GROWTH — Increasing affluence, especially in emerging economies such as China and India, has led to shifts in dietary patterns towards an increasing consumption of meat, dairy and grains.

Reduced supply

“Who’s up, doc?” That would be carrot prices, Bugs Bunny.
THE WORLD ACCORDING TO

WHAT ARE POTATOES?

They are a vegetable, but generally eaten in place of bread or as a main dish. The potato is a relative of the Solanum, which includes tomatoes, eggplant, and a variety of other vegetables. They are a staple food in many parts of the world, particularly in Europe and North America. The potato is a tuber, which means it stores energy in the form of starch. In addition, potatoes contain a variety of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, potassium, and fiber.

Native to the South American Inka, potatoes were cultivated as early as 6000 BC. However, with the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century, the potato was introduced to Europe and became a staple food. Today, the potato is the fourth most important food crop in the world, after wheat, rice, and corn.

One reason for the potato's success as a food source is its adaptability. Potatoes can be grown in a wide range of climates and soil types, making them a versatile crop. Additionally, potatoes are easy to prepare and can be cooked in a variety of ways, from boiling to frying to roasting.

Potatoes are also a rich source of nutrients. They contain a variety of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, potassium, and fiber. Potatoes are also a good source of carbohydrates, which provide energy for the body.

One of the most popular ways to prepare potatoes is to roast them. Roasted potatoes are a delicious and healthy side dish that can be enjoyed with a variety of meals. To prepare roasted potatoes, simply wash and chop the potatoes, then toss them in olive oil and seasonings. Place them on a baking sheet and roast in the oven at 400°F for 20-30 minutes, or until they are golden brown and tender.

Cheese

We all know that cheese is a food poison and an indicator of spoiled food. But how can you tell when a food is not safe to eat? Some of us may know the basics — rotten eggs, flat in water, and bread should be tossed at the slightest sign of mold. What about preserved food, opened cheeses or even bottles of alcohol? If you don’t drink in a household that has an organized fridge — you live in a dorm, perhaps — then you may want to follow these simple tips so that you don’t waste still-edible food or eat bad food that could make you sick.

Cheese

Honey

Like sugar and salt, commercially produced honey has an indefinite shelf life as long as it’s kept properly. Honey contains a high amount of sugars, low moisture and is acidic — all the conditions that inhibit bacterial growth. So, even if the honey turns dark and crystallizes, it doesn’t mean it’s bad — it’s just the ‘flavour’ that changes. However, if the honey produces an awful smell or gets fuzzy (making the container bulge), toss it.

Yogurt

When sealed, yogurt can last for about 1-3 weeks thanks to its live bacterial population, which act as a preservative. Once those cultures die, mold can begin to form. Telltale signs include a noticeable, fermented tangy smell and an increase in the liquid puddling on the surface, a curdling (or lumpy) texture, and white or gray patches. If any of these occur, toss it out.

Alcohol

Open bottles of alcohol, like vodka, whiskey or rum, technically don’t go ‘bad’ in the bacteria sort of way. It does take more ‘alcoholic’ due to evaporation the longer you leave it. However, preserved beers — like Kolsch and Biloxie contain cream — should be tossed out within 18 months of opening. Wine, on the other hand, takes the vinegar once its exposed to oxygen due to the presence of acetic acid and bacteria. Once opened, some older wines last 1-2 days, while younger wines can last up to 2 weeks in the fridge.

Kimchi

Technically, after you’ve brought your jar of kimchi home, it still continues to ferment — especially if your fridge isn’t really cold. But if you don’t need it necessarily bad (fermentation breeds good gut bacteria), and once you’ve opened it (exposing it to oxygen), you can keep in in the fridge for a month or more. As a general rule of thumb, if it gets more more and more sour (and the cabbage colour goes lighter) — at this stage its still edible, although most people would advise cooking it (i.e. hot) rather than eating it raw. You have to toss out the kimchi if it has a white film on the surface, or has a very pungently sour odour.

Cured Meat

Curing and smoking meats not only remove moisture but also kill bacteria, resulting in a killer and other products that preserve its shelf life. Some very dry sausages, fish, and jerky will keep almost indefinitely; smoked cured meats will keep for 2 to 3 months in the refrigerator as long as there’s no exposure to moisture. If the meat develops block or green mold, smells fermented or weeps moisture, it should be discarded.
ticklish food: explaining ASMR

by Tay Jia Eenn

Chewing with one’s mouth wide open or slapping the table were once considered distasteful and rude. Today, these very same no-
tions have quickly become a topic of interest amongst online communities. It seems as if listening and watching a stranger crunch on a bag of chips brings relief and even pleasure to the viewers.

This wave of euphoria is formally known as Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR). It is described as a tinge-
ing, static-like sensation that spreads across the skull, down the back of the neck and the spine.

Digital materials that are created to induce ASMR responses includes many genres, from putting sound files of eating food. Food-related ASMR videos, in particular, aim to deliver an auditory experience of what is otherwise a process of food consumption.

This is done by highlighting every single sound made in the process of eating: from the unwrapping of a burger to the slapping of ramen noodles. These array of external audio-visual stimuli acts as a stimulus that-induced a response in a way that is unrelated to the immediate actions that are occurring.

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