

ISSUE 45

CAMPUS

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FOOD ISSUE

COOL
OCTOPUS

LEONARDO
DA
FISHY

GET ME
OUT OF
HERE!

Marimette
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SAD
FISH



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 hipsterest 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 cafe 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.

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 1877 with building materials imported from France), **Saigon Opera House** (built in 1897), **Saigon City Hall** (built in 1908), and the splendid **Central Post Office**, built in 1891 by the same architect who built the Eiffel Tower. Today, it's the place to send postcards from.



> **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 cafe here.



The more serious **War Remnants Museum** has disturbing displays of the horrors of war: military hardware, a tiger cage prison, torture chambers, and gruesome photos and documents detailing the horrible 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

Tigerair flies three times daily to Ho Chi Minh City's Tan Son Nhat International Airport, which is 8km from the city centre. **Get 20% off with promo code SGN20**, valid till 14 Feb 2017 for travel between 6 Feb 2017 and 26 Apr 2017. Round trip restrictions apply. For bookings, visit www.tigerair.com.

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Interested? Send us your CV and portfolio (if you have one). Don't be scared – we don't bite. Apply via email to: interns@campus.com.sg.

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TRIPPING IN TAIWAN

TRENDY EATS

TAIPEI: DA'AN DISTRICT

Foodies will not be disappointed by Da'an District's offerings. As the area is home to a couple of universities, there's no shortage of hangout joints for students.

Yongkang Street is probably the most popular street when it comes to food. Ground zero for the famed Din Tai Fung, it's also home to a profusion of local eateries that serve dumplings, beef noodles, bubble tea, and even cute cafes. Most visitors come here for the xiao long bao and Smoothie House mango shaved ice combo. As you head out from Dongmen MRT, you'll immediately notice a number of cutesy and

hipster independent cafes. There's also no shortage of trendy cafes to chillax in, from retro chic to eclectic. Most cafes provide power outlets and free wifi.

If you're looking to get away from tourists, head to Dunhua Street via Zhongxiao Dunhua MRT. There are less cafes here, but each one is unique, like the retro Purrs Cafe, the cutesy Wengu Cafe or the trendy Costumeice. Plus, the area also packs in some trendy shopping at retro skate stores, menswear ateliers and the like. If you're here over the weekend nights, check out hip bespoke cocktail bars like Ounce and Woo Taipei. For traditional eats, try Tainan Dai Zai noodles at the famous Du Xiao Yue noodle store and finish off with beancurd desserts at the Sao Bean Curd Cafe (鹹豆花). They're so old school, they're practically hipster.

KAOHSIUNG: PIER-2

What do you do with a bunch of disused warehouses? At Pier-2 Art Center in Kaohsiung, you turn it into a creative space for artists, of course. Here, you'll find hipster cafes and shops selling designer trinkets, sitting side by side with some truly interesting works of art, gallery spaces and museums.

The group of warehouses along the coastal boulevard is home to artist workshops, galleries, and trendy cafes where you can chill out. These include the industrial chic Now & Then Cafe, and the Cheer For Cafe which is located within a designer stationery store. For proper meals, there's the uber trendy Artco.Cc and Pasadena, a restaurant serving pizzas along with afternoon tea and their famous Longan bread.

Pier-2's other cluster comprising old bicycle warehouses - is home to children's theatres, where you can find local ice cream parlours like CoolPlay. There's also a trendy Balite bookstore here, which houses 2 cafes where you can unwind after an artful day.

Venture out further afield, and you may find some other hidden gems like Bonobo's Cafe (with its arty vibe), Do Good (for coffee and desserts), as well as Mars Mu (with retro chic furniture), and Cottage Kitchen (小木屋廚房) with its eclectic cottage vibe. Drop by Rush Drinker for bespoke cocktails before meandering towards the Love River for an evening stroll.

Anyone who's been to Taiwan will know that there is no shortage of things to eat. Whether you're a hipster cafe hopper, a street food monster, or a convenience store snacker, Taiwan has plenty to offer no matter where you end up or what time you feel peckish. Instagram fanatics will find that plenty of hipster (aka 'wenging') cafes have popped up all over Taiwan - in fact, it's not too difficult to find hipster 'zones' in major cities. Combining the arts and cafe culture, these zones are not only great for ogling Taiwan's creativity, you can kick back and enjoy a hipster cuppa.



TAICHUNG: WESTERN DISTRICT

While Taichung city is spread out, there are pockets of totally unexpected art galleries, cafes and night markets all over town, with some of the city's best concentrated in Taichung's trendy western district which is dominated by the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (NTMOFA).

The trendy NTMOFA is the largest art museum in Asia, with its modern industrial architecture and sculpture park. Art isn't all it offers here: try some bubble tea at the Rose House cafe or Chun Shui Tang Cultural Tea House, which

purportedly invented this drink. Near the museum is a grid of streets with one name: Wuquan. Divided into various lanes, the green corridors - like the Art Park Way - are dotted with cafes. This low-rise area has plenty of old terraced residential houses, many of which have been transformed into cafes, shops or hostels. These include Patio Restaurant, Zebra Crossing Cafe, and Ino Home (this is also a B&B), all gorgeously designed spaces with airy patios. Some of these may be hard to spot, as the signages are discreet by design.

Then there's Zhongxin Market, a gritty maze of alleys that is half wet market and half artist enclave (even the colourful public washroom is a work of art). Dotted amongst the galleries are hipster cafes. Here you can pop into art galleries, and grab a cuppa (or food) at places like Pipe Cafe, 奉咖啡 ('Tai Cafe'), the standing coffee bar Sailing Room, and 1987 which looks more like a jumble of retro furniture than a restaurant.



TAINAN: SHENNONG STREET

Comprised mainly of 2 areas for visitors - the historic Anping district and the downtown area - Tainan is small enough to explore mostly on foot. The downtown area emanates Japanese colonial influence, and is dotted with plenty of old school residential units.

Ask any local about wenging (hipster), and you'll be led to Shennong Street. There's even a shophouse here by the name of 'Funny Wenging' - a hip retro space that's often rented for photography - as a poke to hipster humour. The local authorities have realized the tourism potential here, and have erected custom lighting along this quaint street which comprises mainly old 2-storey residential buildings converted into an array of museums, cafes, and knick-knack shops. Some of these shops and cafes still retain their old school

exterior - including wooden doors and individually designed wrought iron window grills, which are part of Tainan's heritage. Some standout outlets include Dovetail (慢慢端生活木作) that's part cafe, gallery and artist workshop; the industrial-looking Taikoo 101 Pacific Coffee; and a minimalist Japanese curry restaurant called Jinyaori (金曜日). Wander around neighbouring Minquan Road and Hailan Road and you'll find various cafes, bars and restaurants with various menus, price range, and hipster-level. If you're near the historic Dutch outpost of Chihkan Towers (Fort Provincial), check out TCRC Bar, a bespoke cocktail bar that has queues forming (especially in the weekends) by 7pm when it opens.



For more info, check out www.taiwan.net.tw

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AROUND THE WORLD IN DUMPLINGS

Dumplings are our all-time favourite comfort food - don't underestimate the small portion - its rich flavours and hearty fillings pack a punch. Made of small pieces of dough with either savoury or sweet fillings, dumplings can be consumed alone, as part of a dish or in soups and stews and can be steamed, fried, boiled and simmered. Let us take a look at what some countries around the world regard as dumplings.

Momo TIBET

One of the most Tibetan dishes, that looks akin to the Japanese gyoza or Chinese jiaozi, momos can be steamed or fried and usually served with a spicy tomato-based dip or in soup. Momos are stuffed with a variety of ground meat like yak and beef, and vegetables like cabbage, mushroom, and potatoes, or cheese.

Tang Yuan CHINA

Often consumed during Chinese New Year, Lantern and Winter Solstice festivals, tang yuan is now a common Chinese dessert that can be eaten all year round. Made of glutinous rice flour and water, tang yuan is rolled to achieve its round shape, then filled with black sesame, peanut or red bean paste and served in a sweet dessert soup. Some other unique fillings also include chocolate and fruit preserves. Tang yuans differ geographically as well - sweet fillings are popular in southern China, while savoury fillings like minced meat and vegetables in soup, are consumed in the north.

Ovocné Knedlíky CZECH REPUBLIC

These rich fruit dumplings from the Czech Republic have a sweet, tangy flavour. Made of milk, butter, flour, eggs and cheese, the dough is then filled with whole fruits like plums, peaches, apricots and cherries, and then boiled; it's served generously topped with melted butter and sugar. Ovocné Knedlíky is one the staple desserts in many Czech households.

Kroppkaker SWEDEN

Made of potatoes, wheat flour and salt, these mashed potato dumplings are typically stuffed with minced pork and onion, and consumed in the southern regions of Sweden. Kroppkaker is boiled and usually eaten with butter, sour cream and lingonberry to add another dimension of richness and sweetness to the overall experience.

Souskluitjies SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's favourite dumpling is the souskluitjies (pronounced sews-klay-keys), meaning "sauce dumplings". Think piping hot cinnamon dumplings with a custard-like texture coupled with the rich flavours of butter and sugar.

This dish became popular during the depression as the ingredients can be easily obtained and the recipe could be altered to suit the individual's preference of including eggs, or the option to cook the dumplings in eggs or water.

Pierogi EASTERN EUROPE

Hailing from Eastern European, the pierogi is made by wrapping pieces of unleavened dough with a sweet or savoury filling and boiling them in water. The diverse nature of the dumpling allows it to be consumed as an appetiser, main dish or a dessert.

As a national dish in Poland, Ukraine and Slovakia, the dumplings are ingrained in their cultures and widely consumed in several festivals. Pierogi is commonly filled with potatoes, vegetables, ground meat, sauerkraut, cheese and fruits and served with melted butter, sour cream and fried onion. For its dessert version, sweetened cheese, jam or fresh fruits like cherries, berries, peaches, plums and apples do the trick.

Coxinha BRAZIL

Translated as "little thigh", coxinha was originally made of chicken thigh in the past. This deep-fried Brazilian snack consists of shredded spiced chicken meat, vegetables, tomato sauce and cheese covered in wheat flour and mashed potato dough, shaped to resemble a chicken leg. Coxinhas can also be filled with a plethora of vegetables for the vegetarians out there.

Empanada SPAIN, LATIN AMERICA

Originally from Spain, empanadas are stuffed bread or pastry made by folding the dough over fillings and subsequently baked or fried. Savoury ones are commonly stuffed with potatoes, eggs, cheese, meat and vegetables, while sweet ones are made with sugar cane in Venezuela, chocolate, sugar, cinnamon and nuts in Italy, and dry fruits like coconut, raisins and sugar in Asian countries like the Philippines, India and Indonesia. Interestingly, there are many dumplings around the world that bear a resemblance to the empanada, including the curry puff, samosa and strudel.



EAT TO LIVE: HEALTH FOOD TRENDS

BY VINCENT TAN

Health food trends are a big movement nowadays, motivating people around the world to better their health. As trends spread by media or word of mouth, even restaurants and cookbooks are catering to them. Here are 5 hip health trends that are getting the food-conscious excited.

VEGAN

WHAT IS IT?

Food with no meat or animal products (milk and eggs).

WHY IS IT POPULAR?

More and more celebrities are ditching meat products. Fruits and vegetables also provide lots of fibre and nutrients such as antioxidants that boost immunity and fight diseases. These days, there are vegan alternatives for eggs, bacon, burgers, etc, making it easy to transition into this diet.

WHO SHOULD FOLLOW IT?

If you want to cut down on saturated fat, and be friendly to the planet (by eliminating the huge carbon footprint of livestock farming), this is for you. A well-planned plant-based diet can provide the necessary iron, calcium and protein except vitamins B12 (there are supplements) and D which our bodies produce under sunlight, or topped up with supplements.

WHERE YOU CAN GET THEM:

- Fusion
- LovingHut
- VeganBurg



GLUTEN-FREE

WHAT IS IT?

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

WHY IS IT POPULAR?

While widely considered a healthy diet, it is mainly useful for a rising number of those suffering from wheat and gluten allergy. Many bakeries are also offering gluten-free options.

WHO SHOULD FOLLOW IT?

Those with physical sensitivity like celiac disease (which causes inflammation in the small intestine when gluten is consumed), allergy to wheat, or non-celiac gluten sensitivity can benefit from this. It can also protect people from rice-eating regions who have not been exposed to gluten and are unsure if their bodies are sensitive to it.

EXAMPLES

Wheat flour in bread and pasta can be replaced by rice, soy, corn or potato flours.



BIODYNAMIC FOOD

WHAT IS IT?

Biodynamic food is grown via organic farming techniques that are employed on an environmentally-friendly farm. Livestock is raised on organic feed free from antibiotics, while various farm processes rely on natural cycles to produce food with a smaller environmental footprint. An offshoot is the 'Okm food' (slow food) which comprises dishes made with ingredients from nearby bio-organic farms.

WHY IS IT POPULAR?

Vegetables produced this way are said to taste better, while the farms are more environmentally sustainable. Many top chefs around the world advocate slow food for their sustainability and flavours.

WHO SHOULD FOLLOW IT?

This higher quality food is both healthier (additive-free) and more nutritious (due to healthy soil microbiota).

WHERE YOU CAN GET THEM:

- Benchmark Wines
- Bud Of Joy Organic Bakery and Store



SMOOTHIES (COLD-PRESSED)

WHAT IS IT?

Cold pressing vegetables and fruits (juicing them via a porous metal sheet) concentrates the nutrients to create a smoothie rich in antioxidants, live enzymes, natural sugars, vitamins and minerals. The nutritional content can be boosted by adding various 'superfoods' to the mix.

WHY IS IT POPULAR?

Easy to prepare and easy to drink, smoothies can give us some important plant-based nutrients with just a sip. Also, the huge variety of juice-able things means there's enormous room for creative combinations.

WHO SHOULD FOLLOW IT?

If you tend to miss your daily dose of vegetable/fruit goodness, why not take it via smoothie? But drink in moderation as smoothies may contain concentrated fruit sugar.

WHERE YOU CAN GET THEM:

- JOOB Organic Cold Pressed Juice
- A Juicery Cold-Pressed Juice Singapore



WHOLE GRAIN

WHAT IS IT?

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

WHY IS IT POPULAR?

The phytochemicals, antioxidants and plant sterols they contain guard against cancer and aging, and they can reduce the chances of heart attacks. They also release sugar more gradually than refined grains, so they're great for active folks.

WHO SHOULD FOLLOW IT?

For those who need to lose weight or lower their blood pressure, swap your usual carbs with these. Whole grains also have a low glycemic index (GI) which is beneficial for diabetics.

EXAMPLES

- The familiar whole grains include:
- Brown rice
- Oats
- Whole-wheat bread



FROM SPAM TO SLICED BREAD

REVOLUTIONARY FOOD INVENTIONS

Food has evolved drastically since the dawn of humanity. Many of the food items we consume today were created - by accident or on purpose - by people. But amongst the shelves of food out there, some inventions are worthy of mention for the roles they've played in our society and culture and we've all eaten them at one point or another.

SUSTENANCE FOR WAR AND BEYOND



SPAM

Often called 'luncheon meat', SPAM's brick-shaped canned pork was introduced in 1937 when people were accustomed to unrefrigerated meat in the US. SPAM's popularity exploded during W.W.II when it became a ubiquitous part of the US soldier's diet (it also fueled British and Russian soldiers). The SPAM - made with only pork shoulder unlike other luncheon meats - is actually cooked inside the tin, so in theory it lasts a very long time.

Introduced to Asia Pacific via American troops, SPAM became the ideal convenience food and incorporated into local diet. Okinawa's goya champuru is fried with SPAM and some of us top our morning beehoon with it. Interestingly, South Korea produces and consumes more SPAM than any other country except the US (it's very popular as a gift).

INSTANT NOODLES



Fans of the humble instant noodle have Momofuku Ando to thank - he created instant Chicken Ramen back in 1958, and spurred plenty of copycat products in the market today. When Ando invented this cheap, instant food source - made by dehydrating noodles in hot oil and then mass produced - to address the food shortages in Japan right after W'wII, it was epoch-making. By 1971 he came up with Cup Noodles, ready to eat in just 2 minutes in its own container. The styrofoam cup revolutionised the food industry by combining 3 functions: a packaging material, a cooking container, and an eating vessel.

**FOR 'HEALTH',
BY DOCTORS**



COKE

Officially launched in 1886, what we know as Coke today was invented by Dr John Pemberton. His first concoction included coca (aka cocaine), alcohol, and damiana (an aphrodisiac), which was touted to cure headaches, indigestion, and "invigorate sexual organs". Cocaine was removed in 1903 (it was only illegal in 1914), and alcohol was removed during prohibition, both were replaced by sugar and caffeine. Known for their smart marketing that made them a commercial success - they created the image of Santa Claus we know today - the company also invented the 6-pack, now common in the beverage industry, in 1923.

CORN FLAKES



A popular breakfast cereal today, corn flakes were originally invented in 1894 by a fanatic doctor, John Kellogg, who was against sex of all kinds because he thought it was 'impure'. He believed that eating meats and flavoured foods increased the desire for sex, so he prescribed a bland, tasteless diet at the sanitarium he worked at. Together with his brother, Will, they invented corn flakes as a sex-curbing food for the mass market but without much success in terms of profits or libido-stopping. Will then bought the rights to the flakes and added sugar to them, to the chagrin of John, and made himself a commercial success.

CONVENIENCE RULES

TEABAGS



The history of drinking tea dates back centuries, and tea was brewed loose leaf until the invention of the tea infuser (perforated metal containers) in the UK. When American tea merchant Thomas Sullivan sent his customers samples of tea in small silken bags in 1908, they mistakenly put the entire bag into hot water instead of emptying out the contents. Thus, the 'tea bag' was accidentally invented leading Thomas to develop gauze (and later paper) sachets that became the first purpose-made tea bags in the 1920s. This revolutionised tea-making, making it a convenient and easy way to enjoy a cuppa.

SANDWICH BREAD



The sandwich bread we know today combines 2 inventions: the Pullman bread and the bread slicer. While most traditional bread loaves have a rounded top, the Pullman is characterised by clean, square sides – baked in a special pan to create its uniform shape. It's so named because these pans suited the tight space of dining car kitchens of Pullman trains used at the turn of the 20th century. These breads became commercially sliced in 1928 with the invention of the bread slicer by Otto Rohwedder, who with baker Frank Bench sold the very first loaf of pre-sliced bread called 'Sliced Kleen Maid Bread'.

HAMBURGER



Do hamburgers come from America, or Hamburg, Germany? It's actually a bit of both: the original meat came from Hamburg, but it was German immigrants who brought the meat to the US in the 19th century that led to the creation of the hamburger. The meat was commonly chopped, seasoned and molded into patties and sold as the very popular Hamburg steak. But, it was not very practical for factory workers who needed finger foods - so the patty was placed between 2 buns as a 'hamburg sandwich'. It wasn't until 1921 that these became known as 'hamburgers', coined by the founders of White Castle (America's first fast food chain).

THE SALTED EGG YOLK CRAZE

The frenzy over this Chinese ingredient all began when the *lin sha hao* landed on our shores. Singaporeans took a liking to the savoury treat and it became a must-try item. Before we knew it, restaurants started using salted egg flavours in their menus. Salted egg burgers, salted egg waffles, salted egg fries (a must-try!) and even salted egg croissants, which got several bakeries on their toes to improvise their recipes, so as not to lose out to their competitors.

MATCHA ANYTHING

Apart from its antioxidant and slimming benefits, matcha powder has weaved its way seamlessly into the menus of many food establishments in Singapore. We have matcha- flavoured soft serve, waffles, crepe cakes, cookies, lattes... you name it. Though most food fads tend to make their exit eventually, it seems that the matcha craze is here to stay. Recently, the American coffee company Starbucks even incorporated matcha into one of their espresso beverages.

RAINBOW EVERYTHING

A few years back, the rainbow cake made its debut appearance. When pictures of rainbow cakes flooded social media platforms, several cafes and bakeries embarked on their quest to create their own version of rainbow cake and invent a series of other rainbow creations. This year, the rainbow bagel received an overwhelming response at the Geylang Serai Bazaar and one local café even came up with their very own rainbow cheese toast. Heck, we even have paddle-pop shots for all you alcoholics out there!

{THE DELECTABLE}

FOOD TRENDS

BY NATALIE KWAN

Ever found yourself in a remote, hipster neighbourhood on a hunt for the best rainbow cake? Or perhaps, have you found yourself travelling to the other side of Singapore for a bite of fluffy waffles drizzled with warm salted egg yolk sauce? Here are some food trends that have tickled the tummies of us Singaporeans.

BUBBLE TEA

Bubble tea has been around in Singapore for more than a decade, even before the arrival of famous Taiwanese brands like Gong Cha and Koi. In my early adolescence, students would look forward to weekly visits to Sweetalk, a popular bubble tea store back then. Now, with the influx of more bubble tea franchises that offer new and interesting flavours, stores can cater to the likes of more people. It does seem that the demand for bubble tea will never die out, and in fact has very much become a symbol of our adolescent glory days.

TRUFFLE TREATS

Who could forget about truffle fries? The aromatic appetiser has become a must-have for every café visit. A plethora of cafes and restaurants in Singapore include truffle-based items such as pasta, soup, and even mashed potato. What most consumers don't realise is that restaurants often use low-grade truffle oil that is unlikely to contain traces of the real thing, and only emits the aroma of the prized fungi.

FROZEN YOGHURT

From the early days of Yami Yoghurt to the late 2000s when attractive female teenagers promoted the now-defunct Frolic, the froyo craze has never quite left Singapore. We also have shops like Soghurt which allow customers to customise their treats and pay by weight. Most recently, Llaollao has seen Singaporeans of all ages standing in queue for their wildly popular customised parfait, the Samu.

KOREAN BINGSU

This popular Korean dessert made its way to Singapore circa late 2014, and even today, there are several bingsu joints popping up across the island. Bingsu is a cold treat consisting of shaved ice, sweetened condensed milk and other ingredients depending on which flavour you choose. Fresh fruit, soy powder, matcha ice cream and azuki beans are some common toppings. Even though this dessert typically sets one back \$12–\$17 a pop, long queues can still be seen outside popular Bingsu shons.

DEATH OF Coffee

BY COPERNICUS CHUA

Singapore is the 48th biggest coffee consuming country in the world. We drink 7.5 million kg 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 much like oil, it's an essential fuel that keeps us going, from humble kopitiam uncles, to desperately mugging uni students and everyone in between. It comes in literally infinite forms, from our classic kopi, to instant, to high-end espresso.

While everyone's idea of coffee varies greatly – like the metaphoric distance between a kopitiam uncle and a macchiato-quaffing hipster – what they all have in common is the key ingredient: coffee beans.

The Origins of Coffee

Coffee beans are the fruit of the *Coffea* 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 shepherd saw his goats energetically eating the berries, tried it himself, and the rest was history. By the 15th century, coffee was actively cultivated in Arabia, where the first coffee houses appeared – medieval all-male establishments that were a far cry from a Starbucks or Central Perk.

Coffee Goes Global

Coffee came to Europe when the defeated Ottoman army fled Vienna in 1683, leaving behind sacks of beans, launching the city's legendary cafe scene. Within a century, coffee houses were everywhere in Europe, and coffee became the morning beverage of choice over beer or wine.

By then, coffee was a hugely profitable commodity, and as Europeans expanded their colonial presence across the globe, they brought coffee bushes with them, cultivating it everywhere from Brazil and the Caribbean, to Africa and Asia – the legacy of which is seen in over 70 coffee-growing countries today.

The Manufacturers

As global demand for coffee rose, manufacturers needed to standardise coffee production to make it profitable. This meant weeding out coffee with less mainstream appeal, and getting farmers to grow the types that sell best, but aren't necessarily evolutionarily suited to the local climate, soil, etc.

It also meant getting consumers to prefer specific kinds of coffee, and homogenising taste profiles so that how we think coffee should taste and smell is based on what was easiest to mass-produce and sell.

This greatly increased the supply of sellable coffee on the market as entire regions were re-planted with Arabica and Robusta. Manufacturers could now count on a cheap, steady supply of beans, which lowered production costs and retail prices, making coffee affordable to everyone, and raising their profits.

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 our evolving taste preferences. Prior to coffee's globalisation as a commodity, there was a much wider variety being processed and drunk by local communities.

Today only 2 species – *Coffea canephora* ("Robusta") and *Coffea arabica* ("Arabica") – account for nearly 100% of global consumption. With the rise of high-end coffee culture, the Robusta bean (which formerly accounted for 80% of global consumption) declined substantially in favour of Arabica which now accounts for 80%.



As its name implies, Robusta is more robust, and able to thrive in worse conditions, making it less risky for farmers to grow. However, Robusta's higher caffeine levels (2.7% vs. 1.5% for Arabica) that make it pest-resistant also makes it more bitter. Arabica also has 60% more lipids (fatty acids) and twice the sugars, hence its mellower flavour.

Until recently, Robusta was the main bean for instant coffees, but rising consumer affluence has meant that even instant coffee needs Arabica to get sold. However, being Robusta doesn't automatically mean lower-quality coffee; a good Robusta is better than a low-grade Arabica; most Italian-style espresso blends use some Robusta as it imparts a thicker crema.

Coffee, particularly Arabicas, are selectively (in)bred for their flavour and aroma, so they are fragile compared to wild coffee which is far more genetically adapted to survive harsh environments. As climate change takes its toll in the coming decades, these fragile beans won't be able to adapt, and coffee crops – especially Arabica, our favourite bean – are predicted to collapse, sending supply plummeting and prices soaring, spelling the end of readily available, cheap, tasty coffee.

You can't blame a farmer for planting what sells, but ultimately, our unwillingness to drink other coffees has led to their extermination.

The Economics of Coffee Disparity

It's hard to say who makes the most from coffee, but easy to see who makes the least: the farmer. They put in a year's work before a harvest, and bear all the financial risk in the event of a crop failure.

Many coffee farmers in historical coffee growing regions simply inherited a generations-old business model. During colonial times, London, Paris, Brussels, Lisbon and Amsterdam all instituted policies mandating entire regions shift wholesale to the cultivation of a specific commodity, such as coffee. This was then bought at a controlled price by a government monopoly or coffee board* which effectively set the price at which farmers were forced or coerced to sell – usually below the global price – before trading it at a profit on the open market. Many of the disproportionately poor 25 million families who are dependent on coffee farming today are a relic of this system.

* Many colonial coffee boards transitioned into government agencies in the newly independent countries.

It's often the middlemen who buy from small-holding farmers that make the most money for the least risk and effort. They may be the sole market-access for rural farmers, often buying beans when they're cheap, to hold them until

their value goes up – a luxury a subsistence farmer can never dream of. This way, buyers can set their own prices, often below the current market rate simply because farmers need to sell to survive, with buyers then reselling the same coffee later for a large profit.

These buyers bring that coffee to the open market, where it changes hands from wholesalers to roasters and retailers, increasing in price at every step.

For example, the highest-grade coffee, may earn the farmer US\$3-5/kg. An end-user could get 40-60 cups' worth out of the same 1kg, which in Singapore could retail for SGD\$3 upward, meaning a single kilo has a conservative retail value of SGD\$120-180 or more. While a cafe needs to pay salaries, rent, utilities, etc., the farmer's "take" from your \$6 latte may only be pennies.



The Crop Issue

Growing delicate Arabica is risky, as a single heavy rain or bad weather before the harvest can destroy everything – a calamity that used to happen once in a generation, but has happened multiple times in various countries in the last decade, thanks to global warming's erratic weather patterns.

Arabica only grows within a narrow geographic belt at specific altitudes (1,100m-1,900m) near the equator, and 500m to 1,100m further north in countries like Mexico and Brazil. As global warming increases, many mountainous coffee regions will become too hot to support it.

One option for farmers is to move to higher ground where it's cooler – an impossible task for mountainless countries like Brazil (whose coffee crops will fall 25% by 2050), and not a great option in mountainous countries like Colombia, as there's less land to farm higher up. Farmers can plant shade trees to reduce the temperature on the coffee bushes, but trees get in the way of machines, therefore reducing efficiency.

Cross-breeding of hardier Arabica-Robusta hybrids and recreating a genetically unadulterated Arabica DNA are in progress, but these could take decades to develop.

The result is many farmers in major coffee growing areas like Brazil and Colombia have moved onto less risky cash crops, like soy or even coca (the base component of cocaine), which despite its illegality may offer far more stability for a small, struggling coffee farmer, exacerbating the problem.

Consumer choice can help

Despite its flavour, Arabica isn't necessarily the "best" species of coffee – it's genetically weak and extremely vulnerable to minor variations in temperature and rainfall.

South America (Brazil and Colombia) is the biggest Arabica producer, while Vietnam is the biggest Robusta producer (Brazil is second). Ironically, Brazil's coffee industry which grew rich clearing forests to make way for plantations a century ago is set to suffer the most from climate change, as at least 25% of its Arabica growing area will become too warm due to its comparatively lower altitude.

When these crops go, it could spell the end for coffee as we know it. Time to drink more Robusta, perhaps.

You may think cooking rice is second nature to us Asians, but with over 40,000 kinds, and varieties in Europe and the US, the ways to cook rice are diverse to say the least (paella, risotto, onigiri, rice pudding, etc).

Long-grain rices like basmati rice and jasmine rice are firm and dry, and best used for Chinese and Indian cuisine. Medium-grain rices like Arborio and Bomba produce moist, slightly chewy grains and are used for risotto and paella. The short-grain rices become soft and sticky when cooked, and are used for sushi and pudding.

Note: not all are cooked in rice cookers (think Arborio and Bomba).

Cheat Sheet

#45 How to Cook Rice

BASMATI RICE

The long-grained biryani rice is known for its fragrance and nutty taste, and is often paired with curried vegetables, mutton or chicken.

COOKING TIME: Soak for 30 minutes; cook for 15 minutes; sit for 5 minutes

WATER RATIO: 1 cup of rice to 1.75 cups of water

PREPARATION:

1. Wash the rice until the water is no longer milky, and soak for 30 minutes.
2. Boil the rice in a saucepan with a pinch of salt for 15 minutes. Once cooked, the rice grains should be longer and not clumped together.

BROWN RICE

This high fibre staple is rich in minerals like magnesium and manganese which benefit the heart and digestion.

COOKING TIME: Soak for 45 minutes; cook for 45 minutes

WATER RATIO: 1 cup of rice to 2.5 cups of water

PREPARATION:

1. Rinse thoroughly and soak for 45 minutes to soften the rice.
2. Drain and put in the rice cooker (or pot) with 2.5 cups water.
3. Add half a teaspoon of salt.
4. Cook for about 45 minutes (or 35 minutes in pot).

BOMBA RICE

This medium-grained rice is perfect for paella, and soaks about three times its volume in broth.

COOKING TIME: 20 minutes

WATER RATIO: 1 cup of rice to 3.5 cups of broth

PREPARATION:

1. Fry scallions over high flame, add rice and stir fry for 3 minutes.
2. Add half of the broth and cook for 5 minutes over medium flame.
3. Add remaining broth and cook for 8 minutes. Stir when the liquid falls below the rice.



RISOTTO RICE

Boiling this medium-grained rice (arborio, carnaroli, or vialone nano) in vegetable, chicken or beef stock produces the classic creamy Italian dish: risotto.

COOKING TIME: About 30 mins

BROTH RATIO: 1 cup of rice to 2 cups of broth

PREPARATION:

1. Fry chopped onions and garlic in butter.
2. Add risotto rice and fry it until it becomes slightly transparent.
3. Slowly add hot stock. Cook it with medium heat while stirring until the risotto is thick and smooth.

BLACK RICE

This variety's bran hull contains more vitamin E than brown rice, strengthening immune systems and protecting cells from damage by free radicals. Note: black rice may stain ceramic or enamel cookware.

COOKING TIME: Soak overnight; cook for 20-35 minutes; sit for 15 minutes

WATER RATIO: 1 cup of rice to 1.75 cups of water

PREPARATION:

1. Wash the rice 2-3 times and soak in water overnight. This removes the outer starches so the rice won't cling together.
2. Combine rice and water in a pot and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat. Cook for 20-35 minutes until all the water has been soaked up.
3. Let it sit for 15 minutes. Do not stir.



SUSHI RICE

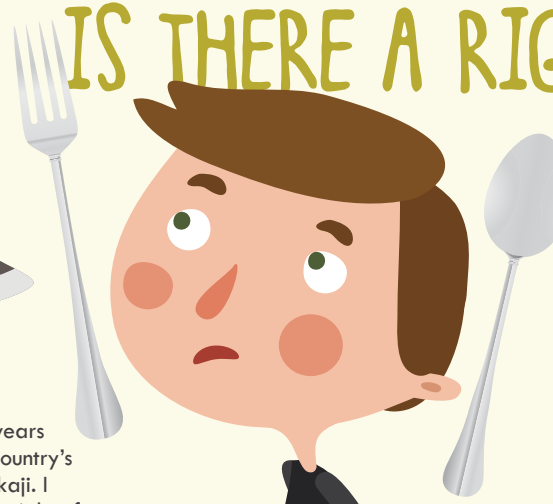
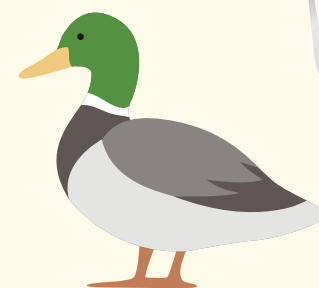
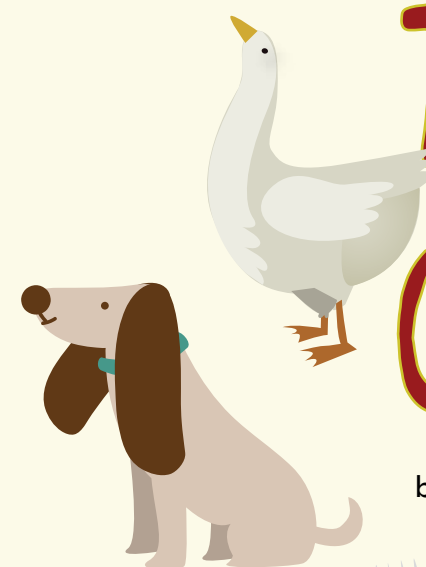
This short-grained sticky rice is perfect for rice balls (onigiri) and is used in many Japanese dishes like sushi and donburi. You can opt for Dongbei or Calrose rice for a cheaper alternative.

COOKING TIME: Soak for 30 minutes; cook for 20 minutes; cool for 1 hour (for sushi)

WATER RATIO: 1 cup of rice to 1 cup of water

PREPARATION:

1. Wash rice until the water is clear. Soak for 30 minutes.
2. Drain and put in rice cooker.
3. To make rice balls: spread rice on top of kitchen towels moistened with cold water and lay another wet kitchen towel on top. Cool for 1 hour and then season with su (vinegar).



THE ETHICS OF EATING:

IS THERE A RIGHT ANSWER?

by Zhao Jiayi

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.

This raises one crucial question: how does one determine whether a culinary practice is unethical?

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.

It is not just the global community that is outraged by the Yulin Dog Festival; Chinese celebrities have also used their star power to bring attention to the issue. Singer-actress Yang Mi uploaded a poster onto her social media account, which features a dog shedding a blood-red tear while pleading, "Please don't eat us. We're your friends."

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 point 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.

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.

MEAT

THE IMPACT ON OUR BODY



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?

LOWDOWN ON MEAT

We all know that low-carb, high-protein diets – like Atkins and Paleo – can be dangerous, because eating a high fat content raises insulin levels, increases cholesterol and clogs arteries, contributing to issues like coronary disease and even erectile dysfunction. Saturated fat is present in all meat – even supposedly “healthy” ones like chicken, turkey and fish without the skin.

protein is an essential nutrient, we don't need huge quantities of it (only about one calorie out of every 10), and legumes (beans, soy) provide sufficient amounts of it in addition to fibre, which is lacking in meat.

Dairy isn't great either. Milk is supposed to give you calcium to combat osteoporosis, but ironically, the more you drink, the more likely you are to have osteoporosis! This is because milk acidifies the body's pH, so to counteract, your body produces neutralisers from your bones (calcium is anti-acid). The effect? You pee out your calcium. Better sources of calcium are plant-based; tofu (350mg) has more calcium than milk (125mg).

WHAT'S LURKING IN MEAT

It's no secret that mass-produced meat like beef and chicken contain vast amounts of hormones and antibiotics to accelerate growth and prevent disease. This contributes to the rise of resistant bacteria which transfers into humans – 65% of known human infectious diseases are transmitted by animals (H1N1, H5N1).

A 2014 Harvard study found that just one serving a day of red meat during adolescence was associated with a 22% higher risk of premenopausal breast cancer, possibly due to hormone residues in beef cattle. In addition, the World Health Organization declared processed meat – ham, bacon, sausage – a “carcinogen” that increases your risk of cancer by 18%.

Farm-bred meat, fish, dairy and eggs are also exposed to industrial toxins, mercury and other heavy metals.

That's not even counting the type of feed they consume – usually genetically modified. Eating meat also means risking food poisoning because animal products are often tainted with fecal contamination during slaughter or processing.

Ocean-caught fish like tuna are no safer due to the presence of mercury, lead and toxic PCB compounds. According to the Environmental Working Group, fish like tuna, mackerel and sea bass have the highest levels of mercury and the lowest levels of Omega 3s.

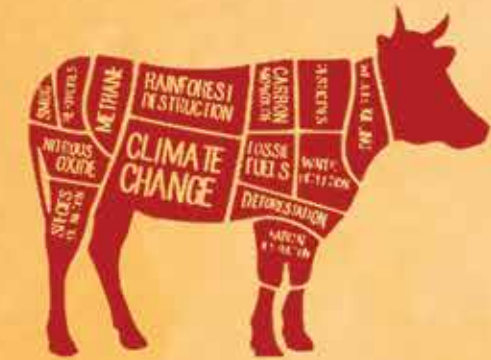
Farmed fish are even scarier: in addition to containing industrial toxins, farmed salmon are fed wild salmon (ground into fishmeal), which already contain environmental pollution. These double-dose toxins bind to molecules in your body when you eat them. Even farmed tilapia has high amounts of Omega 6 fatty acid which causes inflammation.

TO CUT OR NOT TO CUT?

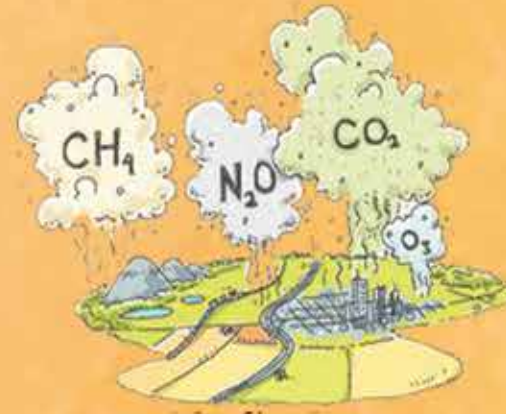
Cutting meat reduces your risk of disease and contributes to weight loss – only if you follow a diet of unprocessed foods like legumes, whole grains and vegetables, and not processed junk food laden with sugar and salt. If you're planning to go vegan – cutting dairy and eggs – you'll need to ensure you have the right amount of nutrients, because plants provide every nutrition you need except vitamins B12 and D.



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.



FARMING AND GREENHOUSE GASES

The human race eats about 230 million tonnes of animals – mainly chickens, cows, pigs and sheep – a year, all of which require vast amounts of water and food, which in turn produce a mountain of waste (poop, greenhouse gases).

The combined greenhouse gas (GHG) emission of livestock (from methane to manure and other gases) is 18% of the global total – which is astoundingly 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.

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 lagoons – 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 ‘dead zone’ when vast quantities of excess nutrients from animal waste are swept downriver in the Mississippi. It's not just in the US – nearly 400 dead zones up to over 70,000sq km have now been identified, from the Scandinavian fjords to the South China Sea.

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



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 much, the problem is that farm animals are inefficient converters of food to flesh – pigs, for instance, need 8.4kg of feed to produce just 1kg of flesh, and it takes 5 pounds of commercially caught fish (those 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 ecoregions and biodiversity hotspots are at risk of disappearing due to the expansion of livestock farming. Trees will be 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 60% of its land area is for livestock (only 3% for agriculture for human consumption). The problems with deforestation in Indonesia and Malaysia are the result of a global agribusiness that has turned tropical rainforests into palm oil plantations.

On top of that, agriculture and livestock account for 70% of our water use. While one pound of rice requires 103 litres of water to produce, a pound of beef needs around 9,000 litres (and 1,000 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 vegan, only 300 gallons.

Farming is already in direct competition for water in cities – water-starved countries like Singapore and Saudi Arabia consume meat grown in other countries which affects global water supply and if this continues, there will be global water scarcity by 2030; Australia's livestock industry is already feeling the pinch from drought.

HAD ENOUGH?

Eating less meat not only improves your health (only if you're eating unprocessed foods like whole grains, legumes and vegetables and not processed junk food laden with sugar and salt), it means you're not contributing to mass slaughter of livestock and your food choices can make a huge impact on the environment. It's the simplest, cheapest and most humane thing anyone can do.



Even fish is high in fat (often 60% of its calories) and cholesterol; by weight, mackerel contains 95mg of cholesterol and tuna has 63mg, while beef and pork have 70mg.

Experts at the University of Melbourne claim that even just 8 weeks on a low-carb, high-protein diet can cause rapid weight gain for an inactive person – up to 15kg for a 100kg person. A large scale PANACEA study showed that those who consumed meat gained 2kg more than those who didn't, even though they both ate the same caloric amount.

Meat sometimes contains too much protein for our bodies, stressing our kidneys; much of the protein we consume is converted to fat and sugar – those who eat a lot of meat are 22% more likely to develop diabetes. Although



a taste of Portugal



Arroz de pato

Located at the edge of Europe with the Atlantic on its shores, Portuguese food is a hearty combination of seafood – particularly cod – and an interesting variety of sausages. Pork and duck also feature heavily in their cuisine.

SOUPS & 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 cornbread.



Caldo verde

Feijoada: A very heart bean stew, the 'feijoada' contains a variety meats. Created when people couldn't afford to waste anything, meats included vary based on what's on hand.

Sausages

Portugal's history can literally be charted via its sausages. Whether it's for maximising the usage of livestock meat, or being part of the annual matanza (slaughter) ritual, 'enchidos' – sausages – come in all shapes and flavours; they could be stuffed, smoked, and stored for the long run.



Alheira

Farinheira (smoked dough sausage): This unusual sausage has no meat bits – originally invented by Portuguese Jews to fake 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 caça' is made with game meat.

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

Chouriço: Originating from Spain when paprika was brought in during the 16th century, locals found that the spices both preserved and flavoured sausages, thus it was quickly adopted around the region. Portugal's popular 'chouriço' is garlicky and spicy, made with pork meat (sometimes from black pig, called 'porco preto'). In Lisbon, houses of 'fado' (venues specialising in Portuguese soul music) serve grilled chouriços brought to the table and flamed to produce a crispy skin and juicy flesh.



Chouriço

meats

Leitão: This is basically roast suckling pig, basted with seasoning to create a crunchy skin and tender, juicy meat.

Duck: The Portuguese love rice, and in their version of duck rice ('arroz de pato'), the meat is tender, simmered in red wine, and oven toasted along with the rice – which absorbs the duck jus – until the top is crispy.

Seafood

Cod: The Portuguese love their 'bacalhau', or dried cod, and the most popular way to enjoy it is the 'Bras style' – shredded cod sauteed in a pan with onions and potato strips, and then finished up with beaten eggs.



Bacalhau a Bras



Another cod dish is the 'bolinhos de bacalhau', or cod croquette. Here, the shredded cod fish is battered with potatoes, eggs and parsley and fried till crispy on the outside and smooth on the inside; it's served as a starter or snack.

Shellfish: Shellfish are very popular, particularly in coastal towns. Ameijoas, or clams, are popularly served Bulhao Pato style, cooked til tender in olive oil, garlic, salt, pepper and plenty of coriander.



Percebes

However, if you're looking for a unique dish, look no further than gooseneck barnacles, or 'percebes'. Resembling prehistoric dinosaur claws, these little creatures are twisted and pulled out of their shells (messy!), and taste full of briny goodness.

Octopus: 'Salada de polvo' (octopus salad with onions, olive oil and parsley) is a common starter in restaurants. For mains, there's the Polvo à Lagareiro, roasted octopus drenched in olive oil and served with baked potatoes.

desserts

Pastel de nata: The most famous egg dessert is probably the 'pastel de nata'. First created by monks in the 18th century, the recipe was sold to a sugar refinery that opened a pastry shop called Fábrica de Pastéis de Belém in 1837. Located in Belem near Lisbon, the shop is still operational, and is well worth the queue.

Plenty of Portuguese desserts are made with egg. This is because historically there were many monasteries that used egg whites to starch their clothes, so the yolks were used for desserts, including 'pastel de nata' (egg tarts).



a taste of macao

Portuguese in macao

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.



These include the ubiquitous bacalhau (cod) served in a variety of ways including **Bacalhau cakes** (bolinhos de bacalhau) and **Fried Bacalhau** (Bras style).

Other Portuguese staples here include grilled sausages (particularly the **chouriço**), **octopus salad**, and Portuguese Green Vegetable Soup (**caldo verde**). Not to be missed are Roast Suckling Pig (**leitao**), Roast Duck Rice (**arroz de pato**), and fried clams.

When it comes to dine-in desserts, the most popular hands down is the '**serradura**' (meaning "sawdust"). An original Portuguese dessert, this is made with soft whipped cream and layered with powder-fine cookie crumbs.



African Chicken



Serra dura



Pork Chop Bun

Portuguese egg tarts: These are definitely an iconic Macanese dessert. While the tarts have a Portuguese origin, the Macanese are happy to believe that Lord Stow (an Englishman) actually invented it in Macao in 1989 – to be fair, he did alter the original recipe to rave reviews. Today, you can get them at the original Lord Stow's Bakery on Coloane's main square (there's also a new cafe at the back).

Macao is definitely for foodies – its distinctive cuisine seamlessly blends Portuguese dishes with Cantonese and the rest of Asia, and has come up with unique Macanese fusion dishes that pair local ingredients with spices brought over by the Portuguese.



Bacalhau Cake (bolinhos de bacalhau)

macanese food

The creativity of the Macanese really shines in their food. With 450 years of history, Macanese food is typically seasoned with various spices including turmeric, coconut milk, and cinnamon which were brought in with the Portuguese community. There's also a heavy Chinese influence in some of their dishes.

Minchi

A simple dish of fried potatoes, onion, cheese and minced meat, it is eaten while mixing them with the egg yolk on top. This dish is thought to have been influenced by the British via Hong Kong.



Minchi

Tamarind Pork With Balichão

This quintessential Macanese dish is made from pork belly or ribs braised in tangy tamarind sauce – a nod to Southeast Asia – containing onion, garlic, and soy sauce. Another ingredient is balichão, a Macanese belacan-like paste made from krill fermented with brandy, chilli, bay leaves and lemon.

Macanese Feijoada

The Macanese have adapted this traditional Portuguese dish with local ingredients – instead of chouriço, 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 turmeric.

African Chicken (Galinha à africana)

African Chicken has been claimed to be invented in Macao in the 1940s. This is a grilled chicken dish topped with piri-piri sauce (a mix of pepper and herbs), and served with bread or potatoes to mop up the drips.

Pork Chop Bun

A well-known street snack, the pork chop bun is just a seasoned pork chop, tucked into a hard-crusted bun. Simple but satisfying, the most popular place to get them is at Tai Lei Kok in Taipa which opened in 1968; it only serves the buns in the afternoon.

Almond cookies

If you're wandering around Rua da Felicidade, then chances are that you've probably tried a couple of almond cookies. The most famous vendor is Koi Kee Bakery; its cookies are baked on premises and have a gritty, nutty texture and flavour.



Almond cookie

FOOD GIANTS

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 spoiled for choice... or so we think.

OLIGOPOLY

Truth is, there are only several global food giants, who through buy-outs, mergers, takeovers, and their sheer size and wealth, own up to 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 "competitors" that lead consumers to believe they are choosing from different brands, while sales profits funnel 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 buy at least one item made by Unilever. They own over 400 name 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\$5.26 billion in 2013, they're taking over the world one home care product at a time. Oh, and just for 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.



Here are some more major players in the F&B industry: Kellogg's cornflakes, a household name in the cereal world which we've all eaten at some point in our life; PepsiCo and Coca-Cola, both occupying the empire of soft drinks and fruit juices alike; and Nestle, known for their tinned Milo chocolate powder drink we love to drink both hot and cold. Nestle has softened its corporate image by moving into healthy-sounding drinks, buying up sophisticated water brands Perrier and San Pellegrino to bolster its sales, netting them US\$12 billion in profits last year.

Alright, hold up, hold up. Since most of the processed foods in supermarkets are owned by these giant companies, I'm sure buying organic food would mean it has to be produced by smaller, independent companies, right?

Wrong. Kellogg Co., PepsiCo, Kraft, Danone, Coca-Cola and other big names are way ahead of the game in buying over established and trusted organic food companies, knowing that consumers will not question product quality and the integrity of brand names that they have bought into over the years. "It's very common that when an organic food brand is acquired, that the new parent corporation reduces its commitment to organic ingredients and seeks out cheaper substitutes," says Michigan State University professor Philip Howard, who studies the food system.

[HITTING CLOSER TO HOME]

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

Remember Yeo's, those packet drinks we buy during Chinese New Year and Christmas parties? They are owned by the parent company Far East Organisation. If you thought we had a pretty good range of different brands in the bakery section of our supermarkets, just know that Gardenia, Bonjour and Farmland all come under the umbrella company, QAF. So even buying local could mean your money is going into a single company's pocket!



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's and P&G often rule out innovation, and the only difference between their products is not quality nor ingredients, but rather the name, packaging and the price.

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



THE LIST

MOVIE SNACKS AROUND THE WORLD

To many of us, stopping by the concession stand before a movie has become a habit. But apart from sugary drinks and the ubiquitous popcorn, what else can moviegoers munch on while enjoying a movie? Here are some interesting movie snacks from around the world - so the next time you find yourself in one of these countries, try a local snack!

SOUTH KOREA

In Korea, dried shredded cuttlefish (like ones we have here) is popularly served in movie theatres, but it's actually served with popcorn - Koreans apparently like the chewy and crunchy texture combination that seem to go well together. Moviegoers tend to also go mad for roasted chestnuts.



Shredded cuttlefish

JAPAN

Theatre patrons in Japan can often be seen munching on iwashi senbei, or dried sardines. These prepackaged small fish - often prepared whole including the skeleton - are coated with soy and sugar, and then baked. Topped with sesame seeds, these dried snacks have a sweet and savoury umami flavour.



Iwashi senbei

COLOMBIA

Moviegoers across South America, including Colombia, snack on the crunchy hormiga culona - basically roasted leafcutter ants. Eaten like peanuts, the ants are also considered an aphrodisiac, and are a good source of protein. There's also a chocolate-coated variety for those who are a bit squeamish about bugs.



Hormiga Culona

NORWAY

In the Sami town of Kautokeino 450 km north of the Arctic Circle, there is a drive-in theatre that actually caters to snowmobiles during Easter for a film festival! The whole theatre is made of snow - including the screen - with reindeer skins to sit on. When it comes to snacks, they serve low-fat, high-protein, dried reindeer meat.



Dried reindeer meat

GREECE

Several open-air movie theatres open up in Greece during the summer months, usually from May to July. During this time, cinemas offer traditional lamb or beef souvlaki - a beloved street food staple that's very much like our satay - to make movie-going into a barbecue-ing affair.



Souvlaki

NETHERLANDS

In the Netherlands, the snack of choice for cinemagoers is the 'drop' - a salty type of liquorice with a texture likened to that of ear wax. Bizarrely, 'drop' doesn't actually contain any salt, but instead has a large amount of ammonium chloride, which has a spicy taste vaguely resembling table salt and a "tongue-numbing" sensation.



Liquorice drops

TAIWAN

While cinemas these days offer the usual popcorn fare, movie patrons used to bring in a bag of braised foodstuff from Jiantianlu into the cinema. Best-sellers include dried tofu, flavourful duck gizzards, duck tongues and wings with a solid and chewy texture, nicely braised and soaked in rich marinade.

Braised duck tongue



RUSSIA

In Moscow, you may find a Russian favourite served: beluga caviar. Many local cinemas in Russia - especially Moscow - now offer posh VIP areas which feature waitstaff and a large cafe menu.



Beluga caviar

LITHUANIA

Cinema goers in Lithuania often grab a glass of kvas from street vendors before a movie. Kvas is an ancient beer-like beverage that's made by pouring hot water over cubes of stale rye bread, and then fermenting it in wooden tubs. To make it more refreshing (or palatable), it's flavoured with mint, berries or raisins.

Kvas



BRAZIL

A popular snack for Brazilian cinemagoers is the bolinha de queijo, or fried cheese balls. These originated as part of a pre-dinner ritual, and are made with white cheese from the Minas Gerais region. Add salty popcorn to your cheese balls, and you may find bits of cheddar and/or bacon in there too.

Bolinha de queijo



OUT AND ABOUT

EVENTS

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN TICKETS AND PREMIUMS, CHECK OUR SOCIALS!

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Siloso Beach Party 2016

When: 31 Dec 2016 / 6PM
Where: Siloso Beach, Sentosa
Tickets: \$48 - \$55

Party to a night of non-stop music by both local and international DJs. Groove to hits by Quintino (No. 32 in DJ Mag top 100 DJs), Shawn Shawn (winner of Sentosa DJ Spin Off 2016) and more! Pen your resolutions on our Resolution Wall, indulge in Foam Pool Partying, and enjoy the fireworks at the stroke of midnight.



Singapore Art Week 2017

When: 11 - 22 Jan 2017
Where: Various locations

In its fifth edition, the 12-day celebration of the visual arts takes place in venues across Singapore, from galleries and museums to art precincts and non-profit spaces. It offers a myriad of quality art experiences which span the visual arts, from traditional to modern to contemporary practices. Expect art fairs, gallery openings, exhibitions, lifestyle events, public art walks, and enriching discussions on art and culture.

Save the dates!

Singapore Art Week 2017

11 January to 22 January 2017
#sgartweek

MOVIES

Assassin's Creed

(December 22)
Cast: Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard, Jeremy Irons

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 finding out that he is a descendant of a mysterious secret society called the Assassins, Lynch gains incredible knowledge and skills to battle the oppressive Knights Templar in the present day.



SINGAPORE BIENNALE 2016: An Atlas of Mirrors: Curator Tour with Louis Ho

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

Exploring shared histories and current realities within and beyond the region, the exhibition will be a constellation of artistic perspectives that provide unexpected ways of seeing the world and ourselves. Join Louis Ho in an exclusive after hours tour that focuses on and examines the subtheme of An Endlessness of Beginnings. Find out more about the artworks as well as the curatorial decisions that go on behind the scenes in organising the nation's pre-eminent contemporary art event.

Resident Evil: The Final Chapter

(February 2)
Cast: Milla Jovovich, Ali Larter, Shawn Roberts, Ruby Rose, Lee Joon-Gi

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 final stand against the undead. Now, she must return to where the nightmare began - The Hive in Raccoon City, where the Umbrella Corporation is gathering its forces for a final strike against the only remaining survivors of the apocalypse.



GIGS

30 Dec 2016 | 7.30PM
Resorts World Convention Centre
Tickets: \$118 - \$338

Rain Tour in Singapore: The Squall

The King of Korean pop music, Rain is finally staging his latest concert "THE SQUALL" in Singapore. To date, he has performed it in 18 cities across Asia and received rave reviews for "THE SQUALL". His ability to deliver a spectacular performance through his music, dance, energy, and connection with audiences confer him the best of the best in the Korean music industry.



31 Dec 2016 | 8PM
The Float@Marina Bay
Tickets: \$48 - \$218

Rock On 2017

Spending New Year's Eve with R&B queen and Grammy-winner Alicia Keys, who'll perform at the heart of Marina Bay alongside American rock band Hoobastank and regional and local pop acts such as Taiwan's Rainie Yang and our very own Joi Chua. An 8-minute opus of light is timed to go off once we're into 2017.



13 Jan 2017 | 8PM
Esplanade Theatre
Tickets: \$68 - \$148

Mosaic Music Series: PJ Harvey

Musician, poet, artist, and only two-time winner of the Mercury Music Prize, PJ Harvey has earned numerous Grammy and Brit Award nominations and Artist of the Year awards from Rolling Stone and Spin. Harvey presents music from her acclaimed latest release The Hope Six Demolition Project, together with her 10-piece band.



20 Jan 2017 / 7.30PM
Esplanade Concert Hall
Tickets: \$12 - \$33

Rachmaninoff 3

Regarded as the "Everest of piano concertos", Rachmaninoff's 3rd Piano Concerto combines virtuosity, romance and epic grandeur. Scaling this work is Juilliard-based Malaysian piano prodigy Tengku Irfan. In addition, Saint-Saëns' blockbuster Organ Symphony will showcase the Esplanade Concert Hall's magnificent 4,740-pipe Klais organ.

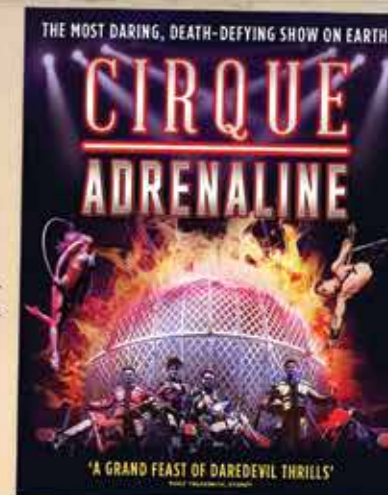


PRODUCTIONS

15 - 25 Dec 2016
Mastercard Theatres (MBS)
Tickets: \$38.50 - \$155

Cirque Adrenaline

Adrenaline is a jaw-clenching show featuring the world's most dangerous and death-defying theatrical acts, guaranteed to get the adrenaline pumping. The world's most exciting theatrical show will include heart-stopping motorbike stunts, high-flying trapeze artists, strong men, aerial acrobatic displays and a blazing fire act to heat up your holiday season.



4-5 Jan 2017 | 8PM
Esplanade Theatre Studio
Tickets: \$25

Labels

Labels is a funny, moving and true story about mixed heritage and multiculturalism. It charts Joe Sellman-Leava's childhood in 1990s rural England, and uses family stories to examine the differences between curiosity and fear, the words and numbers we stick on each other, as well as to answer where he is really from.

14 Jan 2017 | 2PM
Esplanade Rehearsal Studio
Tickets: \$12

M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2017: Fresh Fringe

Witness three plays on contemporary issues in Singapore. Deep in the Heart of Me explores love letters, mundane SMSes, hate mail never sent. Chrysanthemum Gate interrogates contemporary rituals of sexuality, power and race in Singapore, and Bitten Looks at the experience of falling prey to the Aedes mosquito and raging against dengue.



21 Jan 2017 | 10AM
The Meadow, Gardens by the Bay
Tickets: \$185 - \$200

St Jerome's Laneway Festival Singapore 2017

The Singapore Laneway Festival is back for the seventh year with 30 eclectic gigs & awesome food for 14 hours of fun at this Melbourne-originated indie music festival. Singapore marks the first leg of the 7-city, 3-country festival circuit. Performers include Aurora (Norway), Bob Moses (Canada), as well as a host of artists from Australia, UK, US, Japan, Indonesia as well as local performers Astreal, Sam Rui and T-Rex.

BY AZLIN MOHD SALLEH

COSTING THE CARROT

THE PRICING OF FOOD



The internet. Antibiotics. Netflix and Pokemon 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 50 cents: 15 cents for dinner at local hawkers, then 20 cents for a cinema ticket, with any extra to splurge on an ice kacang for the walk home.

Now if you are lucky, you would be crowing 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 \$1 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 taukeh in your laksa, the chicken in your rice or the 1kg 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 germinate, the decision must be taken to produce that carrot in the first place. The farmer considers many things: government subsidies

for different crops (if there are), market demand, calculating what maximises his restricted acreage, crop rotation, the quality of his soil, the cost of fertilisers, 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 conical orange friend. If a carrot could speak it would in all likelihood come with an Australian accent. So now that carrot needs to find its way from the outback to your neighbourhood NTUC. So it needs to be packaged, then transported over 5,000kms 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 packager, the drivers, the stacker, 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/on the ship, 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 squandered 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, weed control and harvesting (eg. you won't need to dig up a ripe tomato like you do a ripe potato). As they're also affected by climate/regulations/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 set upon by rabbits, or in this perfectionist age, emerge deformed or not as orange-coloured as Trump. Then if the carrots are exported, 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 28°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 fledgling industries can result in higher prices for imported produce.

RIISING ENERGY COSTS – As we deplete our fossil fuels, rising oil prices impact the production and transportation costs of agricultural products.

It is estimated that a family of four living in Singapore spends in excess of \$1,000 a month on food alone (about 25% of total household expenditure). Yet it is unlikely that we have seen the last of food price increases. As populations get ever bigger, and land becomes ever scarcer, and the world heats up by incremental degrees, we can expect that we will soon see the last of that \$2 bag of carrots.

"What's up, doc?" That would be carrot prices, Bugs Bunny.

RIISING DEMAND

THE GLOBAL POPULATION IS GROWING – we are set to exit 2016 with a population of about 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.



THE WORLD ACCORDING TO

POTATOES

Bland. Plain. Starchy. These are just some of the unkind adjectives we label the potato with. Yet despite our insults, the humble, unassuming tuber has given us everything from french fries (or truffle fries if you're a hipster), to Mr. Potato Head®, to the energy to create the industrial revolution and launch modern agriculture. Here's a quick look at the history of the all-important potato.



1 POTATOES CONQUER SOUTH AMERICA

Native to the South American Andes, potatoes were cultivated as early as 8000BC. Packed with nutrients, they were a key staple, with thousands of local varieties developing over the years, making them the continent's most important food source.

Some ancient varieties contained solanine and tomatine, toxic substances that killed invasive fungi (potatoes are related to the poisonous nightshade plant). Early indigenous peoples had a clever solution: chemically neutralising the toxins by coating them in edible clay. Toxicity has been bred out of modern potatoes, but some heirloom varieties in the Andes are still eaten dipped in clay.

Today we think of baked, mashed, and fried potatoes, but early peoples were far more creative, with traditional Andean dishes like *chuño*, made from repeatedly freezing and thawing mashed potato, turning it into pasta; and *tojosh*, basically a potato version of stinky tofu, which could keep for years and was insurance against a bad harvest.



2 POTATOES CONQUER EUROPE

Conquistadors brought potatoes back to Europe after conquering the Incas in 1536.

Weirdly, Europeans regarded it with a mix of fascination and horror - it was grown from bits of root, rather than seeds - unlike anything they'd ever seen. This led to claims it was a Satanic conspiracy, a Roman Catholic plot (against England), an aphrodisiac and caused leprosy.

The potato was introduced to Ireland in 1840, and became an immediate hit as 1 acre fed 10 adults; within a year, 40,000 acres were planted. Within decades, it became a staple for Europeans. Proof of how important it was is the havoc created by the Irish potato famine in the 1840s, which killed over 1,000,000 people and caused another 2,000,000 to emigrate (totalling nearly 50% of the country's population), making it one of the most destructive famines in human history.



WHAT ARE POTATOES?

They are a vegetable, but generally eaten in place of starch, so we don't view them as veggies. Potatoes are easier to grow and harder than grains like corn or wheat, and there's no limit to their size. A wheat stalk will fall over if it's too heavy; a massive potato needn't fight gravity.

Today there are over 5,000 varieties, ranging drastically in size, colour and flavour, making potatoes the world's fourth largest food crop by volume after rice, wheat and maize. They can yield 2-4 times more food per hectare compared to other grains, and are 7 times more efficient for water usage (by volume of food) than oats or wheat, and can grow almost anywhere, from the arctic to 4,000m in altitude.

Potatoes are fat- and cholesterol-free. They have 45% of your daily allowance of Vitamin C. They're a good source of vitamin B6, dietary fibre, iron, and potassium (if eaten with the skin on), all at just 110 calories per serving.

If you're thinking potatoes can make you fat, research shows that unless you're overeating, you won't put on weight with potatoes.



3 POTATOES CONQUER THE WORLD

They say an army marches on its stomach, and with its high nutritional content and durable packaging, potatoes were the K-rations that powered the Incan conquest of South America, before being turned around by Europeans.

Historians claim that by putting an end to the recurring cycle of famine in Northern Europe, potatoes gave Europeans the stable food supply they needed to fuel the industrial revolution, and subsequently go forth and colonise the world. In a sense, the world was conquered on potato power.

4 POTATOES LAUNCH MODERN AGRICULTURE

Potatoes also created our modern agricultural model. As a good, easy food source, their popularity led to mass planting, and the world's first widespread use of fertiliser (bat guano) and pesticides (arsenic) to insure crops flourished. Planting new potatoes from existing roots (unlike new seeds) also meant new potatoes were clones, creating the world's first mono-culture GM farming model before we even understood the concept. In time, other crops benefited from the same know-how, but it was the power of the potato that made it all possible.

It also made history, conquering the final frontier by becoming the first vegetable grown in space - by NASA (in 1999), not Matt Damon (in 2013).



by Nina Gan

When Food Goes Bad



Cheeses

Singapore doesn't have a strong history of cheese consumption and lots of us suffer from lactose intolerance, but for some strange reason, many of us seem to love cheese. When it comes to assessing leftover cheese, look out for smell, appearance and taste; toss it if it smells different from when you purchased it, or if it looks darker. If in doubt, cut a small piece and taste it. If there's mold on hard cheese, you can simply trim it off and eat the rest (but toss soft cheeses with mold). After opening, soft cheeses (brie, ricotta) can last about a week in the fridge and should not smell sour, while hard or aged cheeses (cheddar, Swiss) can last up to 6 months.

Cured Meat

Curing and smoking meats not only remove moisture, but also kill bacteria, resulting in a saltier and drier product which increases its shelf life. Some very dry sausages, fish, and jerkies 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 black or green mold, smells fermented or weeps moisture, it should be discarded.



Bread

You probably know bread can go moldy - and that's generally when you toss it out. Even if you spot mold spores on a single slice, you should toss the entire loaf out because bread is porous, and mold can easily spread throughout. Penicillin comes from moldy bread, but so do hundreds of thousands of other molds, and there's no way you can tell which ones are dangerous, causing food poisoning (or worse).

We all know that bacteria is a cause of food poisoning 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 float 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 live in a household that has an organised 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):

Honey

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



Yogurt

When sealed, yogurt can last for about 1-3 weeks thanks to its live bacterial cultures, which act as a preservative. Once those cultures die, mold can begin to form. Telltale signs include a rancid odour, larger-than-normal amount of liquid puddling on the surface, a curdling (or lumpy) texture, and dots of mold. If any of these occur, toss it out.

Alcohol

Opened bottles of alcohol, like vodka, whiskey or rum, technically don't go 'bad' in the bacteria sort of way. It does taste more 'alcoholic' due to oxidation the longer you leave it. However, premixed booze - like Baileys which contains cream - should be tossed out within 18 months of opening. Wine, on the other hand, tastes like vinegar once it's 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 this isn't necessarily bad (fermentation breeds good gut bacteria), and once you've opened it (exposing it to oxygen), you can keep it in the fridge for a month or more. As it continues to ferment, it'll get more and more sour (and the cabbage colour goes lighter) - at this stage it's still edible, although most people would advise cooking it (ie. hotpot) 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.



explaining asmr

This is similar to the experience of synesthesia where an individual is able to

Research has shown that 98% people who seek out such materials agree that ASMR is a means for them to relax and

That being said, psychologists are optimistic about the untapped potential of this field and its therapeutic applications.

RELIEF

Own your lack of control! Can't decide what to eat next? Play our simple game and let fate decide.

What you'll need:

1. 1x 6-sided dice
2. At least one more player (since binge eating alone is really sad)
3. 1x player-token for each person in the game
4. A partially full refrigerator
5. An empty stomach





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