

Eating Out With Wong Ah Yoke



GO on, try these noodles

Malaysian chain GO Noodle House offers noodles in fish broth, with toppings such as pork balls, meat and frog legs

Many Singaporeans enjoy eating in Malaysia and travel there just for the food.

Yet, not many Malaysian eateries have opened here. And among those that did, a number of them have closed, including well-known names such as Madam Kwan and Oversea Restaurant.

Here is hoping that one of the latest imports from across the Causeway will hang around longer. GO Noodle House, which started in 2014, already has 37 outlets in Malaysia and Australia. It opened in Singapore at the basement of 313 Somerset in Orchard Road about three weeks ago.

GO stands for "Got One" and as the eatery's name suggests, it specialises in noodles. But its menu is more extensive than the average mee jiao.

It serves mostly noodle soup and hain mein, which come in different variations and with a choice of toppings. There are also a la carte dishes and snacks to go with them.

Its signature is noodle soup, with a broth made with reportedly 40 types of fish bones. This is cooked in Shah Alam in Selangor and transported to Singapore in frozen blocks.

There is also a spicy soup, which is slightly sour – almost like a mild tom yam. It is decent, but not as good as the original broth.

You choose the soup – spicy or non-spicy – then one of two noodles to go with it. There is mifen, or regular beehoon, and mizuna, a rice noodle that looks like thick beehoon.

Then you pick the toppings, which include pork balls, fish balls, meat and frog legs.

Hain mein or pan mee comes in soup or dry versions, with a choice of thin or thick flour noodles tossed in dark soy sauce – with or without chilli sauce.

There are also different toppings such as omelette and century egg.

Side orders are good for sharing. They include some of the toppings served in soup, but without noodles. Also available are deep-fried items such as crispy fuchuk (fried beancurd skin).

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 • Follow Wong Ah Yoke on Instagram @wongahyoke

• The Sunday Times paid for its meals at the eateries reviewed here.

Hits



Hakka sauce pan mee with century egg (\$9.90, left)
 This may not be a signature dish, but it is my favourite. It comes only with thin noodles.

There is a spicy version, which includes a fiery chilli sauce that is delicious. But the non-spicy version is even better because you can smell and taste the aromatic lard used to toss the noodles.

There is a generous portion of crispy lard bits too, as well as fried fish balls, minced pork, sliced century egg, fried shallots and thin slices of crunchy black fungus.



Handmade west saury fishball (sai toh) (\$8.90, above)

This comes with noodles as an option, but I suggest getting just a bowl of fishballs to go with your pan mee instead.

They boast the distinct flavour of sai toh fish or wolf herring, something you do not find in the factory-made variety. They have just the right amount of springiness too, unlike the overly bouncy texture of mass-produced balls.



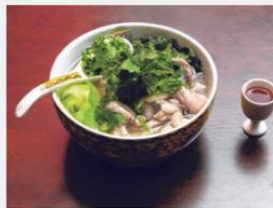
Signature bursting mearth (pork) noodle soup (\$8.90, above)

The noodles come in a fish broth, which is not as concentrated as one would expect from something brewed with 40 types of fish bones. Instead, it is clear and light, but with a distinct sweetness often found only in homemade soup.

At the table, the server pours in

a small cup of hain rice wine and that turns what would have been a decent noodle soup into something intoxicatingly memorable.

The bursting pork balls are similar to Fuzhou fishballs, with a filling of juicy minced meat in the centre of the springy globes.



Fresh (whole) frog superior soup (\$16.90, left)

Many Singaporeans know an omelette about eating frogs, but I find them sweet and delicious.

The best way to describe the white meat is that it is like chicken, but more tender if cooked right.

You get two frogs in this a la carte dish that is exclusive to the Singapore outlet. They are moist and smooth, unlike most of the stringy, overcooked ones found in restaurants here.

The broth is the same as that for noodle soup, with hain rice wine added as well.

Miss



Trio platter (\$12.90, left)

It is tempting to order this platter of five-spice meat roll, crispy fuchuk and gold coin for a break from noodles and soups. They are good, but nothing to shout about either. The crispy fuchuk is a little oily and needs to be dipped in chilli sauce for flavour.

The five-spice meat roll is a mediocre open hing, while the gold coin – the best of the trio – is a decent bak kwa.

Order this only for the sake of having some variety in the meal.

Ambience



The casual eatery is decked out like the setting for an inn in Chinese martial arts television dramas, with square wooden tables and beige walls. But the walls are inconspicuously decorated with portraits of Qing dynasty emperors such as Yongzheng and Qianlong.

GO NOODLE HOUSE

83-87 313 Somerset, 313 Orchard Road (no reservations), open 10am to 10pm daily

Food: ★★★★★
 Service: ★★★★★
 Ambiance: ★★★★★

Price: Budget about \$20 a person

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