



INSIDER TIPS

A Malaysian in... Singapore

Singapore-based multi-hyphenate Pak Yang, who runs F&B pop-up concept Club Sando, shares his favourite places to dine and enjoy heady beats in the Lion City

BY STEPHANIE YEAP



My mother is from Sarawak and my father is from Hong Kong, so I spent my early childhood years between the two cities. I have many nostalgic memories of eating at *pasar malam* (night markets) in Malaysia. My family and I moved to Singapore when I was eight, as my father wanted me to study there.

After completing National Service in 2009, I carved a career in the music industry and moved to Hong Kong for a job in music distribution. During a chance encounter, I met Chef Nurdin Topham at my favourite jazz bar, sense99. When he learned I was growing disillusioned with the music industry, he invited me to work in his two-star Michelin restaurant Yardbird as a junior chef in 2012. I rose to the rank of sous chef around the two-year mark.

I also worked in other roles in the Hong Kong F&B industry – my last stint was operations manager with the Meraki Group in 2021. In 2022, I returned to Singapore to work at a private members' club. Initially, I was a development chef for the club's Japanese restaurant.

Over time, I realised I could combine my experiences and create a concept that centres around food and music. This led me to start Club Sando (@club_sando) in February 2023, a pop-up concept that hosts music nights and serves up unique spins on comfort food. We've organised 15 editions since our launch. Our signature dishes include the katsu chicken sando, accompanied with a side of curry to dip in (similar to how you can dip sandwiches into beef jus) and salad *youtiao* (deep-fried dough fritters stuffed with prawn paste and topped with salad dressing).

Since returning to Singapore a year ago, I found myself thinking, there's so much to do and eat here! Deciding on my favourite places in Singapore is always difficult, but here they are.



Little India



Steamed fish

The best place for a night out

*The Riverwalk, Boat Quay
(20 Upper Circular Road, #B1,
#01/06)*

There's an izakaya on Boat Quay called **IKIGAI**, which was a nightclub in past iterations. Some may have known it as the club Canvas, or as Home or Mad Monks. The beauty



Rempapa

but my favourite is either the grouper or pomfret, steamed simply with soy sauce, scallion and ginger.

The trendiest 'hood

Dempsey Hill
(canchita.sg, comodempsey.sg, doverstreetmarket.com, claudinerestaurant.com)

For great food and unique shopping experiences, I always recommend visitors to pop by Dempsey Hill. A must-visit is Peruvian restaurant **Canchita**, which serves delicious *patacones* (plantain crackers with guacamole), *octopus a la brasa* (grilled octopus with beans and avocado), as well as classic ceviche dishes. I also highly recommend **Candlenut**. This one-star Michelin restaurant serves authentic Peranakan cuisine with a modern touch.

For really cool fashion streetwear, there's **Dover Street Market**. And if you're looking for a nightcap, head to the French restaurant, **Claudine**.

For comfort food

Little India
(5-7 Upper Dickson Rd)

There's a plethora of food at **Little India** – especially vegetarian and tandoor dishes. For comfort fare, I head to the Indian vegetarian restaurant **Komala's**, where the food is simple but executed well. Here, the flavours are clean, and the food is made with love.

I especially love the rice with dhal curry, though other must-tries are the *masala poori* (a type of Indian snack), *dosai* (thin pancake made with a fermented batter), and the vegetarian biryani. They even serve *teh tarik* (pulled milk tea) out of the classic tin cups here.

Where I'd take someone visiting Singapore

Park Place Residences at PLQ
(2 Paya Lebar Rd, #01-01/02/03)

Rempapa in Paya Lebar serves dishes that represent the four main ethnic groups in Singapore as well as Peranakan flavours. I personally like the Nyonya fish dishes, *ayam buah keluak* (traditional Peranakan dish consisting of chicken, tamarind gravy and buah keluak nuts), and platters of assorted kuih.

Simplicity is best

Dunman Food Centre
(271 Onan Rd)

One of my favourite hawker stalls is **Fu Xing Steamed Fish** at Dunman Food Centre. While there are three steamed fish stalls here, Fu Xing – located on the second floor next to a store selling *kway chap* (noodles served with offal and gravy) – is my personal favourite. Here, the cooking reminds me of those I grew up eating in Hong Kong. You can get it prepared with black bean sauce, Hokkien-style,

of this place is that, despite numerous revivals, it has never changed hands.

The owners pivoted to an izakaya concept during the pandemic but decided to bring the club back six months after the izakaya took off, in the form of Iki by Ikigai – club nights that run on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The music is always a sure bet.



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore 63x weekly and between Kuching and Singapore 7x weekly.