

# THE HAWKER LEGENDS

## Garden Street Kway Chap

Stall 21, Serangoon Garden Market  
Opens: 8am to 3pm, closed on Mondays

After arching over his chopping board for half a century, 67-year-old Koh Ah Soon is now hunchbacked.

He started selling kway chap with his father when he was just 12, in the now non-existent Garden Street in the Beach Road area. After he moved the stall to Blanco Court in 1980, it became commonly, but erroneously, called 'Blanco Court kway chap'. It attracted 30-minute queues and spawned copycat stalls.

Many have tried, but few have achieved, his cleaning and stewing techniques. Pork innards are stripped of their offensive odour and coaxed into a super smooth and tender consistency.

He took a short hiatus in 2002 and re-opened in Serangoon Gardens food centre in 2003. His son, Jason, 32, helps out.

## Nam Sing Hokkien Fried Mee

Block 51 Old Airport Road, #01-155J  
Opens: 11.30am to 8pm daily

Ng Hock Wah learnt his skills from his father when he was 12 and set up his own stall in Hougang when he was 17.



Now 58, he says the secret to his noodle dish is the attention he pays to the stock and his control over the fire.

Ingredients like prawn shells, ikan bilis, clams and garlic are added one by one at accorded times. The result is a taste so rich that he does not need lard, the short cut used by lesser hawkers.

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## Ah Chuan Oyster Omelette



TWO IN ONE: Ah Chuan Oyster Omelette boasts both crispy and mushy textures in one fabulous dish -- PHOTOS: MAKANSUTRA and DESMOND FOO

Block 22 Toa Payoh 7 #01-25  
Opens: 3 to 9pm, closed on Tuesdays

Tan Hun Chua, 59, is the hawker whom other oyster omelette sellers admit is the one to beat.

Since learning the recipe from his brother more than 30 years ago, he has perfected a dish that boasts both crispy and mushy textures in one fabulous dish.

He laces his sweet potato flour mixture with a secret ingredient. He also uses only fat, juicy Korean oysters, and makes his own chilli sauce.



## Hai Sing Ah Balling



Block 335 Smith Street, #02-90  
Opens: Noon to 6pm, closed on Sundays

Loh Yeow Seng, 59, started helping at his father's stall in the now-demolished Ellenborough market, near Clarke Quay, more than 30 years ago.

The average waiting time was one hour because every glutinous rice ball was hand-made upon each order.

Eschewing machine-made convenience, he still makes them by hand today, and the difference is clear. The texture of the rice ball is so smooth that your lips could clamp down on one and it wouldn't stick to you.



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## Ah Kow Mushroom Minced Pork Mee



Block 531A Upper Cross Street, #02-43  
Opens: 9am to 7pm daily

Cher Hang Peng, 59, has helped his father dish out this Teochew recipe since he was 10.

His expertise in noodle-blanching is awe-inspiring. It's so perfectly cooked that even if you let the bowl sit for a few minutes, the noodles would not clump up. Dig them up with your chopsticks and they will unravel beautifully.



Unlike other stalls that go heavy with the vinegar, he dashes just enough - he uses the same brand from China's Tianjin which his father used - for a balanced taste of savoury, spicy and sour.

## Haji Kadir & M Baharudeen Sup Tulang



#B1-13/15 Golden Mile Food Centre  
Opens: 12.30pm to 1.30am, closed on alternate Wednesdays

The father of 44-year-old Mohd Iqbal is said to have invented sup tulang - mutton bone with marrow stewed in an explosive sauce of chillies, tomatoes and mutton stock - in the early 1950s.



In those days, his father threw in a free mutton bone with every order of mee kuah (spicy noodles). Slowly, customers started asking for only the mutton bone - and the dish was born.

This Indian-Muslim stall stands out from other tulang vendors for serving big bones packed with marrow and meat.

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## Hill Street Fried Kway Teow

Block 16 Bedok South Road, #01-187  
Opens: 10.30am to 7.30pm, closed on Mondays

Along with his sister, Ng Chang Siang, 60, helped his father run the stall when he was 16.

After moving from Hill Street hawker centre to Bedok South a few years ago, he still draws huge crowds every day with delicious noodles that boast an impeccable consistency that is neither too moist nor too dry.



It is achieved through his mastery over the flame. Using a custom-made flat wok which distributes heat evenly to the noodles, he is able to inject all the flavours of Chinese sausages, lard and chives into the noodles.



## Leng Heng BBQ Seafood & Claypot Deluxe



Stall 6, East Coast Food Village  
Opens: 2pm to 1am, closed on alternate Thursdays

Started in 1979, this stall has done what many consider impossible - offer over 100 items of restaurant-quality dishes from a tiny hawker unit.

Lee Jim Kim, 55, counts among his signature dishes the duck and salted vegetable soup (\$8 or \$16). Stewed for at least 45 minutes, the duck meat practically falls off the bone.



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## Mattar Road Seafood Barbecue (chairman's favourite)

Block 51 Old Airport Road, #01-131G  
Opens: 3 to 11pm, closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays



Ng Hung Leng, 58, started out 14 years ago in Mattar Road, the location that spawned another famous chilli crab name - No Signboard Seafood.

But while the latter had gone on to open swanky restaurants in the city, he has stayed put in a hawker centre, selling his deliciously robust chilli crabs **at \$28 per kg.**(good and cheap)



(PHOTOS: MAKANSUTRA)

He takes two days off - Tuesdays and Wednesdays - just to make his own chilli paste, a fiery concoction of chillies, dried shrimps, garlic and shallots.

## Meng Kee Satay Bee Hoon

KEE's SECRET: Meng Kee's satay bee hoon boasts more than 30 herbs and spices.



Stall 17 East Coast Food Village  
Opens: 6 to 11.30pm, closed on Tuesdays

Ng Siaw Meng, 57, and his brother took over a business which their father founded in 1961.



No other stall comes close to offering a satay gravy that is as smooth or tasty - it boasts more than 30 herbs and spices and takes three hours to cook.

Accompanying ingredients like pork, prawns, cuttlefish, kangkong and beansprouts are also perfectly prepared and presented.

To locate this stall in East Coast Food Village, just look out for the perpetually long queue.

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## Lau Hong Ser Rojak



#02-14 Dunman Food Centre  
Opens: 4.30pm to 1.30am, closed on Sundays  
Expect to wait for at least 30 minutes for your dish to be ready.

Lim Khai Ngee, 45, who started learning his craft from his father 32 years ago, painstakingly prepares every ingredient upon each order.



This includes cutting vegetables, grilling taupok and cuttlefish and mixing the gravy with top-grade shrimp paste from Penang. Nothing is prepared beforehand.

## Shukor Stall

Stall 30, Serangoon Garden Market  
Opens: 9.30am to 9.30pm, closed once a month on Thursday

Norhayati Shukor's father invented roti john in 1975 when the stall was located in Taman Serasi hawker centre, opposite the Botanic Gardens.



The idea was to attract expatriates who lived in the nearby Cluny Road area, by pan-frying slices of French loaf with eggs and onions. But locals grew to love it instead.

Since then, Norhayati, 37, and her brother have introduced chicken, beef and cheese to the dish to make it a more satisfying bite.



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## Tian Tian Hainanese Chicken Rice

Stall 10, Maxwell Food Centre  
Opens: 11am to 8pm, closed on Mondays



This is the stall that had American TV chef Anthony Bourdain and Australian celebrity chef Tetsuya Wakuda raving.

Madam Foo Kui Lian, 56, learnt to cook from her late brother, a hawker who had perfected the recipe over many years.

She is fussy about the type of grain she uses, insisting on the same grade and batch of Thai fragrant rice every time. As a result, her rice is plump, velvety and not too oily.

She only uses chickens heavier than 2kg, to ensure the texture is smooth and tender.



## Inspirasi Stall



Block 207 New Upper Changi Road, #01-11  
Opens: 12.30 to 9pm daily

Sermi Karjiwalawi, 75, has been selling soto ayam for several decades, using her late husband's Indonesian-style recipe.

There is no stinting of ingredients. The deliciously rich soup is made with bones, coconut milk and secret spices. The chicken pieces are hand-shredded - not cut - to retain their juicy texture. And the sambal chilli is made fresh at the stall.



Every day, a queue forms at her stall even before she raises the shutters at 12.30pm.

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## Warong Sudir Mampir

Block 14 Haig Road, #01-19

Opens: 10am to 7pm (weekdays), 10am to 5pm (weekends);  
closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays



Gunawan Baajoan, 49, and his four siblings uphold a family recipe that has been passed down from their grandfather, a street hawker in the 1940s.

Their satay follows the Indonesian style, which has bigger chunks of meat than the average variety.



The meats are carefully chosen, which contributes to their juicy texture. They are grilled over charcoal to a perfect charred-ness.

Their peanut gravy is robust, nutty and wonderfully thick. When you dig a stick in, the sauce stays on top of the meat and doesn't drip.