



RAPS UK

SPRING-SUMMER 2023
FOOD MAGAZINE





Spring has finally Sprung!

There is nothing more uplifting than seeing the first of the Spring produce hit the stores, with the hope that the weather may soon follow suit! This year we have been lucky with a mid April Easter and three May bank holidays – all of which point to extra time to luxuriate over meal occasions with friends and family, from the simple and flexible picnic to the more formal sharing table-top platters.

The retailer aisles are full to the brim with meal solutions to fulfill those empty trollies, and with new products being launched every couple of weeks, we have had a lot of fun tasting some of the new formats and flavours out there. Some have undoubtedly been on the somewhat quirky side, but it is refreshing to see lesser known ingredients and cuisines making it onto the mainstream stage.

The coronation and the drive to get everyone out with the picnic rug has spored some interesting formats from a Thai Chicken Curry sandwich, a complete Ploughman's quiche to Turkish fritters and Shawarma empanadas – all great examples of some of the nation's favourite cuisines. With the better weather promising to finally make an appearance, retailers have slowly started to stock chillers and shelves with BBQ products – again a real eclectic mix of products, but one theme that seems to be coming through is colour and texture. Vibrant colours straight from the catwalk have made it into food – yellows, oranges and red from mango, habanero, jalapeno and chipotle chillies, capsicum peppers and blends of mayo's and ketchups across all MFP and veggie ranges. These coupled with flavoured melt inclusions and crunchy crumbs, toppings and sprinkles offer a great opportunity to deliver flavoursome combinations.

We have also noticed many of the cuisines and ingredients that we have recently seen in the street food and restaurant scene come through and take their rightful place in the stores. Northeast and Central Asian recipes using flavour combinations such as tamarind and coconut, miso and honey, chilli and lime, and of course gochujang-style pastes pair perfectly with bbq-ready and sous vide summer products. Mediterranean and Middle Eastern flavours continue to prove popular with all the earthy, sweet and fragrant spices and herbs synonymous with that region. With over 650 summer MFP products, we have had a busy time tasting and analysing some of the key winners of the season.

If you are in the planning stages for Spring Summer 2024 briefs and are looking for new flavours, formats and applications, and would like to find out more about our consumer and market insights, please get in touch. Our 2024 Insights and Product Innovations presentation entitled a Journey of Exploration encompasses the key future influences in our sector and our Chef's Table will lead you through a true sensory experience of flavours, textures and cuisines. To book, please email tracey.moulder@raps.com. In the meantime, we hope to take you on a little journey through some of the latest cuisines and topics in this newsletter!

A Summer Trip to the Cuisines of Malaysia

Inspired by the rich and varied Far Eastern dishes we see in the UK, in street markets, restaurants and in the press, we have delved deeper into the culinary history and development of one of the region's prominent countries.

Traditional Malaysian Cuisine has had many influences throughout its history with the most noticeable coming through the trading partnerships of neighbouring countries such as Indonesia, India, the Middle East, Thailand and China. In a nutshell, a wide variety of ingredients and techniques influence Malaysia's eating style.

One recurring ingredient that is synonymous with Malaysian food is coconut milk, the rich creaminess and intense exotic fruitiness marries beautifully with the typical chilli, onion and garlic bases of most dishes, often layered with lemongrass and galangal. This intense aromatic spicing is well balanced and appears in many guises throughout Malaysian cookery to give us wonderfully varied curries, fry's and salads. As for the more exotic ingredients, Belacan – a rich prawn paste, provides a perfect savoury element against the sweet fruit bases.

Malay culinary traditions also allow the use of intensive spicing, typically turmeric root, ginger, coriander seed and cardamom. Spices such as allspice, nutmeg and clove can also be seen, although not originally native to Malaysia they show a clear nod to the historic trading of spices with the Middle East.

Regionality is also a huge differentiator within the cuisine. We can break it down into 6 main groups, Bruneian Malay Cuisine – often spicy and commonly eaten with rice or noodles. Malay Indonesian – runs down the east coast of the country where traditional cooking techniques such as steaming in banana leaf are still maintained. Fish dishes are common place, as are slightly richer tomato based dishes with intense spicing of red chilli. Malaysian Malay – influenced by Chinese, Indian and Thai cuisine. This is where we see the likes of Nasi Lemak, a coconut sweet baked rice, rose syrup and floral spicing as well as lots of dry fry dishes. Singaporean Malay – influenced by the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, the dishes tends to be slightly more meat based – dried meats, meat based curry, slower cooked dry curries. Cape Malay – delivering an influence from settlers from Malaysia to South Africa. Sambals, spicy curries, pickled fish and fish based stews to name a few formats that have made their way to this continent. Adaptations of Cape Malay cuisine are eaten regularly within households. Sri Lankan Malay – both Sri Lankan and Malay cuisine have seemingly poached influences from each other over many centuries – vegetables, fruit, fries, sweet, sour and spicy flavours dominate both cuisines.



It is safe to say that Malaysian Cuisine has been a firm favourite to investigate and we will see plenty of influences moving into the UK market over the next few years as we extend our knowledge of cuisines in and around the Indian ocean. We have chosen a couple of recipe ideas for you to try – Selamat menjamu selera!

Well Worth A Read

AMAZING MALAYSIAN:
RECIPES FOR VIBRANT MALAYSIAN
HOME COOKING

AUTHOR – NORMAN MUSA

PRICE – £10.00 – £23.00



If you want dazzling, flavoursome and healthy recipes, look no further. With over 100 recipes using ingredients you can easily access here in the UK, Norman has given a great insight into the flavours, textures and techniques of Malaysian Cuisine without it being daunting. From beginner to slightly more complex recipes, there is plenty to get your teeth into with these delicious recipes.

Born in Malaysia, Norman Musa has won multiple awards including Young Asian and Oriental Chef of the Year and has more recently been appointed as the Kuala Lumpur Food Ambassador, credentials surely strong enough to give us a great understanding of the cuisine and its history.

Amazing Malaysia not only celebrates Malay cooking, it also gives us an insight into the importance of food in Malay culture as a whole. From his mother's kitchen to the delicious street foods, he truly delivers the vibrancy and variety that Malay cuisine offers. Anyone interested in Malay food should most definitely purchase this gem of a book and recreate some of our favourites; Crispy Soft Shell Crabs, Malay Crispy Fried Chicken and Prawn Curry Laksa to name just a few.

We feel this is one of the most comprehensive guides to this vibrant culture and we could not think of a better book to share with you.



Recipes From Our Kitchen

Rendang Breaded Chicken Thighs

Ingredients

For the Breaded Chicken

500g Chicken thigh fillets, skinless
100g Gluten free flour
100ml Water
150g Gluten free breadcrumb (Panko works best)

For the Rendang Paste

6 Shallots, peeled
2–3cm Piece of galangal
3 Lemongrass stalks
4 Garlic cloves
2–3cm Piece of ginger
10 Dried chillies

For the Rendang Sauce

1 Large white onion, thinly sliced
50ml Vegetable oil
1 Cinnamon stick
3 Cloves
3 Star anise
3 Cardamom pods
2 Lemongrass stalks
1 cup Coconut milk
5 Kaffir lime leaves
5 tbsp Toasted coconut (Kerisik)
1 tbsp Palm sugar
Salt to taste
3 tbsp Rendang Paste

Method

1. For the paste, blend all of the ingredients in a blender until smooth.
2. In a heavy duty pan, fry off the paste for 4–5 minutes. Add in the star anise, cloves, cardamom and cinnamon stick and continue to fry for a further 3–4 minutes. Add the coconut milk and bring to a boil, stir frequently until reduced by half (around 15 minutes).
3. Add in the remaining sauce ingredients and continue to simmer for another 15 minutes. Place a lid onto the pan and place to one side.
4. Mix the flour and water together in a large bowl and decant the breadcrumbs into a second bowl. Place the chicken, one piece at a time, into the flour and water mix and then into the breadcrumbs. Repeat until all the chicken is coated. Place in a deep fat fryer or in a heavy duty frying pan and fry until golden (7–8 minutes). Place onto a lined baking sheet and pop into an oven at 200c/ 180c Fan/ Gas 6 for 15–20 minutes, until cooked through.
5. Place the chicken onto a plate and douse in the rendang sauce. Top with chopped chillies and some pickled onions for an extra boost.



Sweet & Sour Mango and Cucumber Salad

Ingredients

Salad

- 3 Ripe mangos, peeled and diced
- ½ Cucumber, deseeded and diced
- 1 Small bunch of coriander, chopped
- 1 Small bunch of mint, shredded
- 1 Red onion, thinly sliced
- Toasted Black Sesame Seeds (Optional)

Dressing

- 2 Limes, juiced
- 2tbsp Demerara or palm sugar
- Good pinch of salt

Method

1. Combine all of the salad ingredients in a bowl.
2. Mix the dressing ingredients in another bowl and stir until the sugar has dissolved.
3. Combine both together and serve.



Restaurant Review

Kolamba

Kingly Street, London



Wondering down Kingly Street, as your gaze is taken up by the unmistakable triple frontage of Dishoom, you may be forgiven for missing this little gem. Still very much a family-run establishment, this compact, yet airy restaurant is a great stop off point for a quick lunch or a longer, relaxed dinner. Serving some of the tastiest Sri Lankan dishes in the capital, Kolamba strikes the perfect balance between authenticity and modern simplicity.

As with many of today's eateries, the menu is divided into bites, meat & fish, veg dishes and sides – all of which are served in sharing bowls and platters. Based on recipes from Sinhalese, Tamil and Malay kitchens, we plumped for an array of bites and bowls. Whilst we contemplated the differences between the hoppers on offer (from plain crispy bowl shaped pancakes to string hoppers which resemble noodles more than bread), we happily munched on Mutton Rolls which are essentially a deep fried croquette made from finely shredded mutton, potato and lots of Sri Lankan spices.

Being a largely coastal country, it goes without saying that fish features on many menus. The Black Pepper Grilled Prawns caught our attention – a simple concept, yet hugely flavoursome with black pepper, spices and burnt lime – a great reminder that pepper of any colour should not be underestimated for its fruitiness and big flavour.

Confident, that the mutton would not be too overpowering, the next dish we ordered, Jaffna Mutton Poriyal was a superb example of the contradictions of flavour that are so well blended in Sri Lankan cuisine – the sweet and tangy, earthy and light: deep fried onions, warm green chilli, creamy coconut milk and zesty lime married well with the mutton. Next up was the Jaggery Beef (Kari), a very moresish, rich slow cooked beef dish which blends fragrant spices including cardamom, cinnamon, turmeric and curry leaves with the sweetness of jaggery (unrefined palm sugar). No meal would be complete without a selection of chutneys and sambols (sauce or condiment) to dip and sprinkle: the Date and Lime Pickle and Seeni Sambol – both familiar paste-like chutneys with sweet and tangy flavours. One, however has found its way into our 2023 favourites list. With its vibrant yellow-orange colour and coconut flakes and the unmistakable, long lasting chilli heat, Pol Sambol is a must-have addition to sprinkle on any plate of food!

Mention Sri Lankan cuisine and most people would recommend Hoppers, the tour de force in this area and now onto its third restaurant in London. Whilst its menus are undoubtedly a great introduction to Sri Lankan dishes, this little rising star shines through with its small, punchy choice of dishes.





New in Store

WITH
LEILA LAWRENCE – RAPS UK MARKET DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

This time of the year the main focus is towards outdoor eating – whether at home in the form of a BBQ or further afield on a picnic rug. According to AHDB, sausages and burger/grills are the nations favourite BBQ food, and this summer there is plenty on offer – from American imports such as Chilli Cheese Hot Dogs (Aldi), Maple & Bacon (Tesco), Mini Pizza Dogs (Sainsbury) and the somewhat ostentatious Hog Roast Donut (M&S) to the more European flavours of Fennel & Chilli (M&S), Tomato, Basil & Cheese and Truffle & Parmesan (both Asda). Looking for a lighter, healthier option, then Chicken and Salmon Sausage and Burgers are plentiful this season – Buffalo Chicken Burger (M&S), Cajun Chicken Burger (Aldi) and Buttermilk Chicken Burger with Scotch Bonnet Jam (Sainsbury) top the poultry selection whilst Lidl is offering the widest fish selection of Red Thai, Maple and Lemon & Herb Salmon burgers.

What would a BBQ be without a bread bun? Flavour inspiration and colour have certainly seen a boost this year with seemingly ever savoury bakery form on show. Bloomers with Coronation seasoning & Mango Chutney or Sundried Tomato, Jalapeno & Cheese (both Sainsbury), Brioche Buns with Turmeric, Onions (both Tesco) or Katsu (M&S), Chipotle flatbreads and Naan-style thins (Aldi) just to name a few. This category is firmly on our 'to watch list' as it grows and diversifies.



Sprinkles and Toppers to give flavour and texture to almost any food seem to be all the rage. With the added benefit of healthy seeds, Schwartz, recently launched savoury 'Seeds and Spice Toppers' including Italian, Indian and Thai.



German-based, Just Spices which only last year gained a major stakeholder in Kraft Heinz, entered the UK retail market and is now also available in Waitrose. Whilst the listed lines are still limited to the Avocado and Salad Topping, there are further Scrambled Egg, Sandwich and even Oatmeal, Coffee and Banana Bread toppings on offer through its online portal.

A glance at the sauces and condiments aisles reveal our continued love of those popular summer flavours, but maybe in somewhat different formats – Maple & Mustard (Salad Dressing, Tesco), Korean Mayo (Tesco) and Sriracha Dressing (Sainsbury) and Cola Ketchup (Tesco). Brands have also made a splash with the like of Ella 'Plants' Chilli & Lime and Miso Dressing as well as Aldi's Bramwell take on the Peri-Peri family of condiments. And, finally our very own Tingly Ted's has finally made its way to the UK with 2 sauce varieties.



Focus on Cheese

Comfort food and rich source of calcium, easy sandwich filler and indulgent platter staple, hidden ingredient and visual finishing touch – cheese ticks and crosses as many culinary boxes as you care to mention. As a nation (apologies to those unable to indulge in this delicacy), we love cheese and although we have access to so many varieties, cheddar remains supreme leader of the pack with 49% of all sales of dairy cheese.

As with many categories, cheese has not been spared the wrath of inflation, and with average price increases of 13.6% (Feb 2022–23, Kantar) sales volumes are down by 4% over the past year. Still, with an average weekly cheese consumption of 150g per person and annual sales of £3.7bn, this remains an important category in our industry, with a few bright stars shining through.

Needless to say own brand labels have seen an increase in sales, as consumers move away from branded varieties and switch or trade down, and now account for 64% of the market. Another category experiencing a mini boom and increased exposure in shelves and in recipe is the Continental and Speciality cheese varieties, with a sales increase of 7.6% over the past year. Where we lag behind our European neighbours in the depth and breadth of flavoured hard and soft spreading cheeses, we certainly make up for it in the formats and applications of the cheeses we have adopted in this country.

What started as a TikTok craze has turned the humble feta cheese into a flavoursome star. With over 1.3bn views tomato and feta bake has become many household's go-to pasta dinner. Feta and alongside its Mediterranean cousin, Halloumi are now flying off the shelves as consumers are realising the diversity of flavours these cheeses can absorb and turn a humble bite into the star attraction on the dining table. Flavours such as pesto; olives; sundried tomato; and Herbes de Provence are obvious favourites for tapas and salads, but as halloumi is proving its worth on the BBQ, skewer and burger formats with marinades such as chilli; honey and mint; and chimichurri with herbs, red peppers and jalapenos are to be seen in many retailers.

Other varieties and blends of cheese are springing up in other aisles, namely the party & snack and frozen categories, as consumers become more adventurous with 'baking and dipping' camembert, goats cheese and cheddar/mozzarella blends, breaded deep fried cheese bites and fries, all of which come with dips and chutneys, drizzles and sprinkles. Not far away in the ready meals sector, cheese such as marinated paneer is also become more widespread as pizza toppings or as a vegetarian curry or side dish option. In short, cheese is making inroads in most of our food categories, and thanks to our long established European in-house technical expertise in the dairy sector, we are able to offer tailored marinades and seasonings for different varieties of hard and soft cheese as well as cheese inclusions within vegetarian and MFP products. If you would like to find out more about our capabilities or would like to discuss specific NPD projects, please do get in touch.





Are you following?



@thesaladlab

With simple minute long videos, the Salad Lab shows you how to make restaurant worthy salads. Inspiring everyone to experiment with new flavours, traditions, cultures and have fun making different types of salads. Often taking idea from celebs' blogs, there is a salad for almost every mood and occasion!

If Tik Tok's not your thing then there is also a website with all the recipes – <https://www.thesaladlab.net>
From Grilled Fresh Peach and Mozzarella to Vodka Watermelon and Broccoli, Bacon and Date, these recipes are ideal for warmer days.



@empress1908gin

#summercocktails

If you're looking for a vibrant cocktail to impress friends and family this summer then check out @empress1908gin on Instagram. With its indigo hue and "Live Colourfully" tag line, it's a gin that's sure to get your party guests talking. Their Instagram has a wide range of recipes for cocktails, from a cherry gin cream slush to "The Garden Party" with recipes to suit all occasions and they're sure to add some wow factor to your gathering. They even have a selection of canape ideas to compliment the cocktails and recipes for gin ice lollies!



On the Box

It would not be Summer without a reference to the BBQ, and with the growing market for pizza ovens here's a couple of Netflix series' worth a watch:

Barbecue Showdown Season 2 (Netflix)

Launched last weekend, just in time for the start of Summer, the Barbecue Showdown Season 2 (previously called the American Barbecue Showdown) follows eight competitors worldwide who create boundary-pushing barbecue in an attempt to win the \$50,000 prize. The show is big on flavour and even bigger on flames, and if you were a fan of season one then you are sure to enjoy this latest season.



On the show's rural Georgia set, each chef has their own tented barbecuing and prep area, and this season the cooking areas have been expanded to include "The Trench," where they have all kinds of open-fire options. Once again, contestants use various grilling and barbecuing techniques to cook not just slabs of raw beef and other proteins, but sides and accompaniments.



Chef's Table: Pizza (Netflix)

Dig into the best pizzas from around the world, prepared by renowned chefs who bake passion, creativity and hard work into every slice. That is the tag line from Netflix and the latest series (launched in 2022) uses a combination of family history, archival footage and talking head interviews, blended together with some gorgeous shots of food to hammer home the main theme here - how to cook a wonderful pizza!

The episodes themselves focus on each individual chef, and the show is as much about the people as it is about the food.





Key Contacts

Craig Woodhall – Sales Director
E: Craig.Woodhall@raps.com
T: 07867 497632

Tracey Moulder – Key Account Manager
E: Tracey.Moulder@raps.com
T: 07887 554226

Leo Bowers – Executive Development Chef
E: Leo.Bowers@raps.com
T: 07376 177075

Leila Lawrence – Market Development Manager
E: Leila.Lawrence@raps.com
T: 01280 845 206

Instagram – [@raps_uk](https://www.instagram.com/raps_uk)
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