

DR LESLIE TAY



**THE IEAT·ISHOOT·IPOST GUIDE
TO SINGAPORE'S SHIOKEST HAWKER FOOD***

* and the best *ieat* guide to durians ever!



“Dr Leslie Tay is passionate and knowledgeable about Singapore’s unique hawker food. This is an excellent guide.”

—Prof Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-large



“Leslie Tay has done it again! This is the best guide for serious street food aficionados. Truly the best that Singapore has to offer the world!”

—Peter A Knipp, *Cuisine & Wine Asia*



“Leslie has his finger on the pulse of Singapore’s unique hawker cuisine. This is an essential guide.”

—Yukari Sakamoto, author of *Food Sake Tokyo*



“Written with passion and dogged determination, this is the Ultimate Guide to the best hawker foods in Singapore!”

—Ronnie Tan, chef and owner of Tatsuya



“*ieatishootipost* has taken food photography completely by storm. Leslie’s ability to infuse life into every photo makes good food look even better!”

—William Teo, former Honorary Secretary of The Photographic Society of Singapore

★ ★ ★

“Leslie-san is like a samurai food warrior who builds the bridge for world foodies to meet!”

—Hisato Hamada, top restaurateur in Japan

★ ★ ★

“Leslie doesn't just love great food, he loves great food stories, and nobody talks about these two things with as much authority as he does.”

—mrbrown, *mrbrown.com*

★ ★ ★

“Reading Leslie's stories about food is like reading a love story. Such is his passion for Singapore's favourite foods.”

—Benjamin “Mr Miyagi” Lee, *miyagi.sg*

★ ★ ★

“Our hawker stories are a reflection of who we are and that unique facet of Singapore culture is beautifully presented in this book!”

—Tan Chuan-Jin, Acting Minister for Manpower and Senior Minister of State for National Development



DR LESLIE TAY

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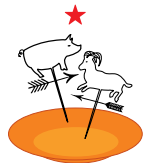
Also by Dr Leslie Tay

The End of Char Kway Teow and Other Hawker Mysteries

FOR MY PAPA AND MAMA

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INTRODUCTION

THIS IS A UNIQUE GUIDE TO HAWKER DISHES IN SINGAPORE. EVERY DISH presented here has been tasted and found to be exceptional. It is my ongoing passion to eat and write about Singapore's greatest hawkers. My merry band of makan kakis and I have been eating around the island since 2006. We have nitpicked our way through the good, the bad and the awful. We have savoured the fat, spit out the rest, and then I rave about it on my blog. You won't find any of the bad stuff in this guide. You won't even find the average stuff. No, in this guide, I curated the thousand-plus stalls I've eaten at and present to you only the best! Seriously, why should you want to know about an average nasi lemak, when there is a much shioker version just 10 minutes away?

You will find that I have added little nuggets of information all over the book. These are little stories and facts I have collected over the years through my interaction with the hawkers and they

represent a very important part of Singapore's culinary heritage. I hope you will have a few "Aha!" moments reading them.

But wait, there's more! I have also included a very handy durian guide that lists popular durians in Singapore, together with photos and a list of reliable stalls, so that when you go out for durians, you won't come back with lemons! There are also two food trails covering Chinatown and Joo Chiat/Katong, which I have put together with visitors in mind. These neighbourhoods have a great concentration of excellent hawkers, all within walking distance, and would give you a good introduction to Singapore food.

Now, even though we only present you the best, there are some stalls which are "more best" than others. So, we rate them as follows (all ratings are out of 5):

- Below 4.0** Did not make it to this book. Nuff said.
- 4.0** Eat at this stall when you are in the vicinity.
- 4.25** Shiok! But just lacks that something to give it a 4.5.
- 4.5** Really Shiok. Even if you live in Pasir Ris and the stall is in Boon Lay, go try it!
- 4.6** Shioker than Really Shiok, but just shy of an epiphany.
- 4.75** Moment of epiphany when the earth stops rotating and for one moment in time, you are at peace knowing that you have found what you have been looking for.
- 4.8** I can't think of how the dish can get any better, but somewhere out there in this big big world, there might

just be another dish that can top this. I just haven't found it yet.

- 5.0** Talk to even the best hawkers who have been making the same dish for 50 years and they will tell you that there is still room for improvement. Perfection can never be reached. It is always another step away.

One final thing. For every dish, I have selected my favourite. Called "Leslie's Pick", these are the stalls that I would introduce to visitors. Most of the time, "Leslie's Pick" would be the stall with the highest rating. At times, I would choose to bring visitors to a stall with a slightly lower rating because that stall has better ambience, better service, or there is an interesting story attached to it. These are places I feel most confident recommending and they should not fail to impress.

So get ready! Armed with this guide book, you are now ready to embark on a culinary adventure to find the Holy Grail of gustatory pleasure. I am well ahead in the journey and I can tell you that it is going to be a wonderful ride. And along the way, remember what I always say: Never waste your calories on yucky food!

DR LESLIE TAY

ieatishootipost.sg




BAK CHOR MEE

BAK CHOR MEE AND MEE POK TAR ARE SIMPLE NOODLE DISHES, BUT THE simplest things are often the hardest to do right. A good quality egg noodle and fresh ingredients are essential. With each mouthful, you should be able to enjoy the aroma of the noodles that has been lightly flavoured by pork lard, with the vinegar cutting through the oil and getting the salivary glands working. I prefer my noodles QQ (al dente), with a firm bite and sufficient curl to give you that serrated feel as you slurp them up. The balance of chilli and vinegar has to be just right, and the combination of pork and sauce really shiok.

DID YOU KNOW?

❶ Bak chor mee is the third favourite dish among Singaporeans, after Hokkien mee and chicken rice. ❷ It can be eaten anytime—for breakfast, lunch, dinner and supper! ❸ The keys to a great bak chor mee are fresh ingredients, great noodles and enough zing from the black vinegar.

LESLIE'S PICK



CHIA KENG KWAY TEOW MEE

4.75 I have finally found a mee pok tar that is one head above all the rest, both in taste as well as in the amount of passion going into preparing it. Most ingredients are hand-made by Uncle who has been perfecting his craft for the last 50 years, and his skill shows—from the handmade fishballs, to the pork made from quality pork loin, to the excellent quality prawns and sliced abalone. The homemade chilli sauce is packed with umami from dried prawns and tipoh (dried sole fish), and it is not overly spicy. As for the noodles, they are served perfectly sauced and al dente. Finally, while most fishball soups are made from the water that held the fishballs while they were being formed, Uncle's soup is sweetened with pork bones that have been cooked overnight.

Chong Boon Food Centre • Blk 453A
Ang Mo Kio Ave 10 #01-11 S561453

• 5am to 2pm, closed on Mondays and Fridays • 96446338, 93591838

HILL STREET TAI HWA PORK NOODLE

4.5 This is perhaps the most famous bak chor mee stalls in Singapore, and is perhaps as good as bak chor mee can get! The noodles are really QQ (al dente), the chilli shiok, the lard fresh, and the black vinegar just gets your salivary glands working overtime. Delicious!

466 Crawford Lane #01-12 S190466 •
9.30am to 9pm, closed on 1st and 3rd
Mondays of the month

SENG KEE MUSHROOM MINCED PORK NOODLES

4.5 At this stall you will find the famous “clop clop” man, Mr Lee, who throws his bowls and makes a lot of noise as he cooks his wonderful QQ (al dente) noodles—the thin, flat type with excellent eggy flavour. Another thing that stands out is the unique sauce that Mr Lee creates by slicing up the mushrooms, and leaving them overnight to extract the juices before combining them with his secret blend of herbs and spices.

Serangoon Garden Market & Food Centre
• 49A Serangoon Garden Way Stall 4

S555945 • 7.30am to 3pm, closed on
Mondays • 84390434

AH GUAN MEE POK

4.5 If tradition is not your thing, try this New Generation mee pok tar, based on Japanese ramen concepts. Here, you can only order mee pok as the owner, Eric, feels that his recipe does not work with mee kia, exactly the same kind of thinking that the Japanese apply to their ramen. You also have the option of adding really good stuff, like scallops, crayfish and fish slices, making this New Generation dish all the more delicious!

69 Syed Alwi Road S207648 • 7am to
9pm, open everyday

AH KOW MUSHROOM MINCED PORK MEE

4.5 The one characteristic of good bak chor mee is freshness of the ingredients, and the piping hot bak chor mee at Ah Kow tastes really fresh. Those who like their bak chor mee with a bit more vinegar will appreciate the unbridled use of black vinegar here, reportedly a special brand of traditional black vinegar from

China. They are also generous with the crispy tipoh (dried sole fish)—I simply love the stuff!

Hong Lim Food Centre • 531A Upper Cross
St #02-42 S051531 • 9am to 7pm, open
everyday

132 MEE POH KWAY TEOW MEE

4.5 The Uncle here is the original mee pok man of East Coast, having first started his business at the old Siglap Market almost 40 years ago. Everything from the pork to the prawns is very fresh, and the chilli is rumoured to have buah keluak (Indonesian black nut) in it, which gives it that special smoky, savoury flavour. No wonder this stall was voted the best mee pok stall in the East Coast area by *The Straits Times*.

MP 59 Food House • 59 Marine Terrace
#01-105 S440059 • 7am to 3.30pm,
closed on Mondays and 3rd Sunday of
the month

XING JI ROU CUO MIAN (INNER STALL)

4.25 Located side by side, Xing Ji and Seng Hiang Food

LESLIE'S TIP

Here is the key to cooking great noodles with that al dente, springy texture: the water needs to be on a furious rolling boil. Watch out for this the next time you're ordering noodles!

Stall (next door) have been long-time bak chor mee rivals at Fengshan Food Centre. Xing Ji seems to have a longer queue of people than Seng Hiang. Although Xing Ji's bowl is slightly smaller, the soup is just slightly more tasty, but the difference is so small that unless you ate both stalls' bak chor mee at one go, I doubt you would be able to tell the difference. If you ask me, I would just order from whichever stall has the shorter queue.

Fengshan Food Centre • 85 Bedok North St 4 Stall 7 S460085 • 5pm to 1am, closed on Mondays

SENG HIANG FOOD STALL (OUTER STALL)

4.25 Located side by side, Seng Hiang and Xing Ji Rou Cuo Mian (next door) have been long-time bak chor mee rivals at Fengshan Food Centre. Seng Hiang has slightly more minced pork but tastewise, the noodles of both stalls are similar. I wouldn't be surprised if they shared the same supplier!

Fengshan Food Centre • 85 Bedok North St 4 Stall 8 S460085 • Tuesdays to

Saturdays: 6pm to 5am, Sundays to Mondays: 6am to 1am

MACPHERSON MINCED MEAT NOODLES

4.25 Bak chor mee, if done well, can give you the same feeling of shiokness as a yummy bowl of ramen, at a fraction of the price. This stall's bak chor mee comes close, but for the strong kee (lye water) smell of the noodles. Still, the soup is something to behold. It is a veritable bowl of protein rich broth that is likely to induce gout!

1382 Serangoon Road (Opal Crescent) S328254 • 6.30am to 2.30pm, open everyday

PUAY HENG BAK CHOR MEE

4.25 The noodles here are just right, and have the ability to soak up just the right amount of black vinegar, chilli and mushroom sauce. I also love the way the chilli was made with pounded dried shrimps and crispy tipoh (dried sole fish), designed to create an umami tickle on the tongue. Pity the fish dumplings aren't handmade, but as with all things, bak chor mee is all about

LESLIE'S TIP

If you prefer bak chor mee mai hiam (no chilli), look for stalls that serve this non-spicy version using mushroom sauce and a dash of good quality black vinegar, instead of just tomato sauce. Seriously, why waste your calories?



balance, and Puay Heng's bowl is very much in equilibrium.

Far East Square • 23/24 China St #01-01 S049565 • 9.30am to 9pm, closed on alternate Sundays

TEOCHEW STREET MUSHROOM MINCED MEAT NOODLE

4.25 The mee pok tar here redefines the meaning of chnggee (fresh). The uncle will turn aside while cooking the noodles to make some dumplings, then turn back to toss the noodles a few times before moving to the chopping board to slice a few pieces of meat. Though the ingredients are excellent, the noodles and sauce lack a bit of flavour. Yet, this is probably the best value, most elaborate and freshly made bak chor mee that I have ever come across.

Chinatown Complex Food Centre • 335 Smith St #02-23 S050335 • 12.30pm to 9pm, closed on Mondays and Tuesdays

DID YOU KNOW?

Bak chor mee is a uniquely Singaporean dish. While noodles with various toppings exist everywhere, you will not find the same combination of minced pork with stewed mushrooms and crispy tipoh (dried sole fish), laced with a generous dash of black vinegar and chilli anywhere else in the world.

SENG HUAT EATING HOUSE

4.25 A good bak chor mee should taste good even without chilli and this depends on there being a good mushroom sauce and a dash of good quality black vinegar, exactly what Seng Huat does so well. Unconventionally, this stall also uses tomato ketchup to flavour the noodles, but only a small amount so that the taste does not dominate but adds a well balanced complementary tang and sweetness to the noodles.

492 North Bridge Road (opposite Parco Bugis Junction) S188737 • open 24 hours daily

JOO HENG MUSHROOM MINCED PORK MEE

4.0 This is indeed a fine bowl of bak chor mee. The flavours are nicely balanced and you can whiff the eggy aroma of good quality egg noodles with that first mouthful. The texture of the noodles is QQ (al dente). However, the bak chor mee does not really stand one head above the rest.

Ang Mo Kio Market & Food Centre • 628 Ang Mo Kio Ave 4 St 61 #01-86 S569163 • 7am to 2pm, open everyday

LAI HENG MUSHROOM MINCED MEAT MEE

4.0 The ingredients are very fresh, the noodles QQ (al dente) and the sauce well balanced. Also, the crispy tipoh (dried sole fish) is very fragrant. However, there is a

40-minute wait at this stall and for me, the stall's dish does not seem to justify such a long wait.

Blk 51 Lorong 6 Toa Payoh S310051 • 8.30am to 4pm, closed on Wednesdays

PUNGGOL NOODLES

4.0 The hawker is a really nice guy who, having lost his right hand in an industrial accident, has never let his handicap get in the way of making a great bowl of bak chor mee. The highlight of this bowl is the meatballs, which are soft, tender and have a lovely bounciness. However, the noodles and sauce are not the best.

Hainanese Village Centre • 105 Hougang Ave 1 #02-24 S530105 • 7am to 2.30pm, closed on Sundays

NOI'S MUSHROOM MINCED MEAT NOODLES

4.0 If you like your bak chor mee to have a strong vinegar kick and a toothy bite, you will love Noi's. But if you like your ter kwa (pig liver) and prefer QQ (al dente) noodles, you will be disappointed (the liver is replaced with prawns). There are people who will enjoy this stall's bowl of bak chor mee and others who will complain about it. But if I'm around Balestier and hankering for bak chor mee, it's Noi's for me.

588F Jalan Datoh (off Balestier Road) S329899 • 8.30am to 4pm, open everyday

TOM'S CITIZOOM MEE POK TAR

4.0 Tom is a young man who likes mee pok. So he left his engineering career to set up this stall—and it's got great potential! The mee pok here is top quality, sourced from Lau Boon Hong, one of the more reputable noodle makers in Singapore. Tom also tries to make his mee pok special by frying his fish cakes fresh and cutting them into slices, just before serving. Eaten piping hot, the fish cakes are still oozing with juices and the texture is light and bouncy! Another of Tom's innovations is the addition of crumbled fish crackers sprinkled on top of the noodles just before serving. Although I appreciated the crunchy texture, I thought a few slivers of crispy fried tipoh (dried sole fish) would have complemented the dish better.

Blk 57 Lengkok Bahru S151057 • 8.30am to 3pm, closed on alternate Sundays and public holidays • 97420865

DID YOU KNOW?

The noodles used for bak chor mee and mee pok tar do not contain any egg while those used for wanton mee do. That is why wanton mee noodles get a quick dip in water during the cooking process, but not mee pok!



BAK KUT TEH

BAK KUT TEH IS MY PICK FOR THE DISH THAT BEST REPRESENTS SINGAPORE.

It is a dish of heritage and ceremony. The key to an excellent bak kut teh is the soup. Only four ingredients are required—pork, water, garlic and pepper. The broth and the meat have to be cooked separately. For the broth, you need a good amount of pork ribs and a long slow simmering boil in order to coax all that natural pork flavour out of the meat and bones. For the meat, it is cooked in a pot of soup that boils away furiously. The trick is to get the pork to the stage where it is just cooked, so that the texture is tender and the meat reverberates when you chew on it. At this point, garlic and pepper are added and this peppery pork soup is then added to the slow cooked broth in order to produce a bak kut teh soup that is slightly cloudy but velvety smooth, with a satisfying pepper punch at the beginning and a natural sweetness at the end.

LESLIE'S PICK



SONG FA BAK KUT TEH

4.5 Second generation owner Yeo Hart Pong modified his father's Teochew style bak kut teh recipe to appeal to the new generation, who prefers pork ribs with a fall-off-the-bone texture. Yeo sticks to his father's tried and tested recipe for soup which involves using a particular garlic from China and pepper from Sarawak. I like the soup because it is not overly peppery but nicely balanced with the natural sweetness of pork bones. The modern retro ambience of both branches make them great places to be introduced to bak kut teh. Plus, you can enjoy Pek Sin Choon teas there too!

11 New Bridge Road #01-01 S059383
• 7am to 10pm, closed on Mondays •
6533 6128

UE BizHub East Unit • 6 Changi
Business Park Ave 1 #01-38 S486017
• 10.30am to 9.15pm, open everyday •
66948098

OUTRAM PARK YA HUA ROU GU CHAR

4.5 The soup here is very good—robust, but not overly peppery. It has a sweet, savoury taste that comes from boiling the pork bones until they are almost crumbly—that's when all the rich stuff from the marrow gets released into the soup. When I tasted the dish, the ribs were cooked until they were very tender. Frankie Gwee, the owner, is also extremely hospitable. Great bak kut teh with great service to boot!

Tanjong Pagar Complex (PSA) • 7 Keppel
Road #01-05/07 S089053 • 6am to
3pm, 6pm to 4am, closed on Mondays •
62229610

OLD TIONG BAHRU BAK KUT TEH

4.5 This bak kut teh soup is smooth, with a satisfying pepper punch at the beginning and a natural sweetness at the end. Here's a tip for you: get to this stall at 11am, when the soup is sufficiently flavourful and the you char kway (fried dough fritter), fresh. And you will be able to get the prized long gu, which are the thicker, more tender pork ribs closer to the backbone.

Blk 58 Seng Poh Road #01-31 S160058 •
6.30am to 9pm, closed on Mondays

TIONG BEE BAH KUT TEH

4.5 Straightforward, no-nonsense bak kut teh that has been around for years. Auntie is over 70 years old and only cooks three pots

of soup a day. The pork ribs are simmered in the pot long enough to ensure that the meat is excellently tender, with very well balanced soup that has oomph without being overly peppery. Good old bak kut teh at its best.

588F Jalan Datoh (off Balestier Road)
S329899 • 7am to 3pm, closed on
alternate Mondays

SIN HENG CLAYPOT BAK KOOT TEH

4.5/4.25 Hokkien version/
Teochew version

At this stall, the Teochew version's soup is sweet and peppery, and a tad darker than the typical Teochew bak kut teh. The Hokkien version is reminiscent of Malaysian bak kut teh, but I found the taste of the herbs a bit too mild. The store also serves yam rice that is flavoured with dried shrimp and yam—this is really nice to eat, even on its own! A traditional pot of gong fu tea is served with your soup.

439 Joo Chiat Road S427652 • Tuesdays
to Saturdays: 7.30am to 4am, Sundays:
7.30am to 1am, closed on Mondays

FOUNDER BAK KUT TEH RESTAURANT

4.25 The Uncle did not learn to cook bak kut teh from a master. Instead, he loved eating it so much that he started experimenting and came up with his own recipe! So, he chose the name "Founder" for his restaurant. A former pig farmer, he knows his pork very well and sources only the best for his bak kut teh. The pork ribs are done very well—tender but not overcooked, retaining some bite. The soup is also good—sweet, peppery, and quite light and refreshing.

New Orchid Hotel • 347 Balestier Road
S329777 • noon to 6pm, closed on
Tuesdays

154 Rangoon Road S218431 • 9am to
3pm and 5.30pm to 10.30pm, closed on
Wednesdays

NG AH SIO PORK RIBS SOUP EATING HOUSE

4.25 What is so special about this bak kut teh that made politicians risk potential embarrassment just to get a taste of it at this stall? Both Donald Tsang

DID YOU KNOW?

The light, peppery version of bak kut teh came from the Teochews, while the dark, herbal version, from the Hokkiens. The term "bak kut teh" is Hokkien, but the practice of serving gong fu tea with this dish is Teochew. Hence, bak kut teh was born out of the meeting of the two dialect groups in Singapore.

and Thaksin Shinawatra were publicly spurned at Ng Ah Sio (the former was denied a bowl of this delicious soup because he arrived after closing hours, and the latter made the mistake of arguing with the owner about his food, and got himself thrown out!) The soup here is very enjoyable. It is a robust and spicy, peppery blast, typical of Teochew style bak kut teh.

208 Rangoon Road S218453 • 7am to 10pm, closed on Mondays • www.ngahsiobkt.com

RONG CHENG BAK KUT TEH

4.25 Rong Cheng has opened a new branch, just down the road from its original Sin Ming eatery. Both locations serve very good soup which doesn't contain soya sauce, so you taste more of the original flavour of the pork. Owner Lionel Lim, the son of the founder, has designed the new branch with tea culture in mind. Not only is every table designed to have access to a pot of boiling water and traditional tea sets for you to brew your own gong fu tea, Lionel has also worked with Pek Sin Choon, a tea merchant, to come up with a light tea, called double blossom tea. Its delicate

LESLIE'S TIP

Ask the hawker to serve you the long gu, the rib cut nearer the backbone. Compared to the pai gu (the part of the rib comprising the rib cage), it is thicker, more tender, and the flavour really develops in your mouth because of the extra bit of fat.

taste is supposed to appeal to the younger generation.

Eng Ho Hup Coffeeshop • Blk 22 Sin Ming Road S570022 • 7am to 4pm, open everyday

Mid View City • Blk 26 Sin Ming Lane #01-114/117 S573791 • 7am to 9pm, open everyday • 96681412

LEONG KEE (KLANG) BAK KUT TEH

4.0 If it is Malaysian style bak kut teh you are looking for, then this is it. The soup was a bit bitter (rather than sweet) the day I tried it, and lacked the oomph you would expect in a good bak kut teh. The pork ribs were very tender though. The real star of Leong Kee is the ter kah (pig's trotters): soft, sticky, sweet and savoury, the fat and tendons simply melt-in-your-mouth—very shiok.

321 Beach Road (Jalan Sultan Gate and Beach Road) S199557 • 11am to 9pm, closed on Mondays

HONG JI CLAYPOT PORK RIB SOUP

4.0 The special thing about this bak kut teh is that it is



PEK SIN CHOON

Founded in 1925, Pek Sin Choon Tea Merchants currently supplies teas to 80 per cent of bak kut teh stalls in Singapore. Run by fourth generation owner, Kenry Peh, Pek Sin Choon still hand wraps its teas at its Mosque Street shophouse. The original style of wrapping is still followed—there are two layers of paper: the slip of pink paper which forms the inner layer is a throwback to the post-war years when white paper was not easy to get hold of, but there was plenty of pink medicinal paper around! And, the people who hand wrap your tea include Aunties like Madam Lim, who has spent over 50 years of her life packing tea. Amazing! Top marks to Pek Sin Choon for maintaining tradition!

the herbal type which is served in a claypot. The bak kut teh was good, but it didn't have that extra something that would induce me to drive all the way up north just to have it again. All in all, a nice bak kut teh to try if you are around the northern part of Singapore.

Blk 19 Marsiling Lane #01-329 S730019 • 8am to 9pm, open everyday • www.hongji-bkt.com

HENG HENG BAK KUT TEH

4.0 Fancy a \$128 bak kut teh? If you are an abalone aficionado or have a craving for abalone, pop over to Heng Heng to order abalone bak kut teh! Or, if you wish for a more affordable meal, just stick with the pork ribs: the meat is nice, with some chew. The soup here

is good for those who don't like their bak kut teh with a peppery kick. It is sweeter, with strong hints of cinnamon and star anise.

107 Owen Road S218914 • 7.30am to 2.30pm, closed on Tuesdays

DID YOU KNOW?

Older folks will insist on the importance of observing the gong fu tea ceremony which accompanies bak kut teh. Take time to make the tea and enjoy a few cups before starting on the soup. A good Chinese tea pairing can elevate the flavour of the soup, just like a good wine pairing for gourmet food.



FIVE BAK KUT TEH TEAS

Here are short descriptions of the five different types of teas usually paired with bak kut teh:

1) **XIN CHUN SHUI XIAN** (new spring water fairy)—an oolong tea with a smooth aged flavour. The colour is very deep and the tea contains lots of tannin. This is an excellent tea to pair with soup that is more peppery.

2) **TIE LUO HAN** (iron warrior monk)—one of the *si da ming cong*, i.e., one of the four famous rock teas from the region of the Wuyi mountain. Pek Sin Choon's version is blended with aged teas to give it a more mellow flavour.

3) **TIE KUAN YIN** (iron goddess of mercy)—an oolong tea that tends to be a little heavy and unrefined, but it appeals to older folks as they are familiar with its taste.

4) **BU ZHI XIANG** (unknown fragrance)—a premium tea which costs five times more when it was introduced in the 1960s, this tea is a blend of Wuyi oolong and Anxi tea. This is currently the most popular bak kut teh tea in Singapore, outselling the others 10 to 1. This tea is strong enough to cut through the oil, leaving the palate with a bittersweet aftertaste, which is favoured by seasoned tea drinkers.

5) **XIANG JI JI**—introduced in the late 1970s, this tea was named after princess Xiang Ge Ge from a popular TV series at that time. This tea is stronger than Bu Zhi Xiang and has more aged teas blended in for a smoother taste. Like Xin Chun Shui Xian, it is a good tea to pair with more peppery soups, and is the most expensive of the five teas.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bak kut teh's origins are closely tied to Singapore's immigrant history—it was a dish our forefathers ate as coolies to get an energy boost as they did the backbreaking work of carrying cargo off the bumboats into the godowns.



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I would like to thank God for His bountiful blessings. Above all, for the gift of His Son Jesus Christ, who loved me and gave Himself for me. In Him, I live and breathe and have my being. In Him, I find meaning and purpose in all I do. I have seen Him do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that I can ever ask for or dream of.

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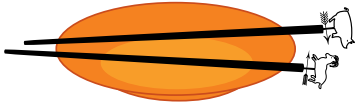
The person who kept insisting that I had to write another book even though I kept telling her I had no time was my editor, Ruth Wan. She and her editorial team went through all my blog posts, handed the manuscript to me to edit, and said we are going to press within two months! She's worse than my mom! But looking at the final product, I have to thank her for her vision. Thanks very much to her and her wonderful team at Epigram Books who worked so hard to put this book together: Ruth, Josephine, Sasha, Aditi, and most of all, Siew Huey, my designer, whom I have worked to the bone with my exacting standards and constant revisions, all for the sake of putting out only the best for the reader. Thanks guys!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Singapore's most talked-about food blogger is a doctor. Dr Leslie Tay is the winner of Asia Pacific's Best Food Blog Award. His first book, *The End of Char Kway Teow and Other Hawker Mysteries*, is a national bestseller and won the Best Food Literature Award for Singapore at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards in 2011. He continues to eat his way through Singapore's cornucopia of hawker stalls. He specialises in street food photography, where all shots are taken without the use of props or studio lighting. More of his work can be found on ieatishootipost.sg.





“The insider’s guide to Singapore’s best hawker food.”

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“NEVER WASTE YOUR CALORIES ON YUCKY FOOD.”

From Bedok to Beo Crescent, Jalan Sultan to Joo Chiat, celebrity food blogger Dr Leslie Tay and his merry band of *ieat* foodies have spread out across the island in search of the most drool-worthy hawker food Singapore has to offer, guided by Leslie’s mantra, “Never waste your calories on yucky food.” Their quest for hawker food paradise is documented in this blogbuster, capturing more than half a decade’s worth of eating, shooting and posting. This is Singapore’s ultimate insider’s guide to the shiokest hawker food—the only guide for the truly discerning foodie.

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