

Malay Cuisine

Nasi Briyani Gam

Steaming hot, fluffy golden grains of rice contrasting the bright red curry and colourful palate of acar (pickled vegetables) – ah, the nasi briyani is a lovely sight to behold and its aroma, a fragrance pleasing to the Gods. Briyani Gam originates from Johor and differs from other types of briyani in the way the rice is cooked. Both meat (usually chicken or mutton) and rice are sealed in a pot using rice-starch (gam) and cooked together so that the meat juices are fully absorbed into the rice grains. Tumeric powder is added to give that golden yellow hue.

Onde-onde

Onde-onde is a sticky, chewy dough ball with a surprise within – the sweet gula Melaka (palm sugar) syrup that oozes out unexpectedly. Finely chopped gula Melaka is wrapped in glutinous rice flour and shaped into little balls. They are cooked in boiling water and then rolled in freshly grated coconut.

Assam Laksa

This northern speciality is so popular that every region in Malaysia has invented its own version of it. White, rice noodles are boiled and served in thick and sour fish gravy with a generous dose of shredded pineapple, cucumber and salad leaves. Into this mixture, a prawn paste, onions and chillies are thrown in as well, to produce a most aromatic dish. Like most Malaysian dishes, the Assam Laksa too can be found anywhere from the roadside stall to restaurants. Try the popular Penang Laksa at one of the many hawker stalls there; it's something you would never have tasted before!

Sup Ekor

This Malaysian version of 'Oxtail Soup' is enjoyed as a side dish during meals or as a snack with bread at any time of the day. Richly flavoured with juicy pieces of meat and bits of vegetables, it is available at both the common roadside stalls as well as restaurants. If you are in Penang, look for the famous soup stalls at Upper Penang Road; you can't miss the sight of patrons slurping up from steaming bowls at the tables by the roadside.

Mee Jawa

It may have originated in Jawa but has now become one of the many popular local dishes. The versatile yellow noodles are served this time in a thick, rich orange-coloured soup made of prawn or meat stock with a dose of vegetables, potato, boiled egg and bean curd. The slightly sweet soup is a pleasant change from the savoury items that are more common. Topped with red chillies, fragrant fried shallots and spring onions, this light meal is often consumed as a snack.

Nasi Lemak

One of the most loved Malaysian cuisine is the Nasi Lemak. If there is one dish that has transcended cultural and racial barriers, it has got to be this! Malaysians of all backgrounds simply love this simple dish of rice cooked in coconut milk served with cucumbers, fried peanuts, fried anchovies and sambal, a local chilli paste. The Nasi Lemak will definitely whet your taste buds with its unique rich fragrance. It is also sometimes served with chicken, beef, seafood or mutton curries.

Kajang Satay

Satay permeates Kajang. In fact, it is synonymous with the town. It is featured at every turn from entire hawker centres dedicated to satay alone to signboards advertising the ‘best’ joints and even a Satay Museum! Skewers of marinated beef, chicken, chicken gizzard, tripe and deer are barbequed over open fire, and served with a spicy peanut sauce and side dishes of cucumber, raw onions and ketupat (rice). Two entrepreneurs set up the first satay shop in Kajang after World War I and the rest, as they say is history! Today billowing smoke emanating from hot charcoal pits, the aroma of barbequed meat, large hordes of diners waiting impatiently for a table are the familiar sight and sounds of Kajang, the satay town.