



Chef Zahiddin

Malaysia is at the forefront of the international halal (pork-free) food movement. Here, our very own Chef lists his 10 most favourite halal restaurants which serve the most authentic dishes; with all its beautiful array of aromatics and gastronomic tastes retained - be it Chinese, Indian or Western.

1) Cheng Ho Restaurant (Chinese)



Photo credit: Google Images

Block 3b-15-17g, Opposite Carefour Wangsa Maju, Seksyen 4, Wangsa Maju

The restaurant is owned by Malaysia's number 1 rock star, Amy (Search). The Chinese-Muslim restaurant is located in a busy area in Wangsa Maju, Kuala Lumpur. Everything here is reasonably priced & with a medium budget you can enjoy truly authentic Chinese cuisines from some of the more remote provinces of China.

"I came to know about this restaurant with my family when the restaurant had just opened its doors somewhere in 2008 and the response was amazing at the time. Even now, you will still see a huge crowd and would have to wait a while to be seated because the restaurant is always packed! What comes to mind as I list this down is Cheng Ho's Chili Crab, Salted-Egg Prawn and off course, Sharks Fin Soup. Never leave the restaurant without tasting these & don't forget to make reservations!"

2) Rebung Restaurant (Malay)



Photo credit: Google Images

4-2 Lorong Maarof 59000 Kuala Lumpur, Bangsar

Rebung is a well-known restaurant for authentic Malay food lovers. The restaurant is owned by celebrity Chef Ismail and Malaysian first astronaut, Sheik Muzaphar Shukor. Selection of traditional food prepared usually by the native Malays will take you down memory lane as any local will easily remember their happiest *kampung* life as they take their journey through every bite of Chef Ismail's Malay cuisine.

"I often eat lunch here when I have to run some errands in Bangsar, a must-have meal in my head is Asam Pedas Ikan. The finest of the aroma and flavor is so tempting and will make your stomach growl, non-stop."

3) Bangsar Seafood Garden Restaurant (Chinese-Seafood)



Photo credit: Google Images

One bangsar, no 63, jalan ara, bangsar baru 59100
kuala Lumpur. Tel: +603 2282 2555
www.bangsarseafood.com

Touted as one of the best seafood restaurants in town! It offers a variety of fresh seafood cooked authentic Cantonese style. The best ever, is the king crabs with black pepper & dried chili dish that makes your temperatures rise to a maximum. All food served are halal.

4) D'Tandoor (Indian)



Photo credit: Google Images

52 Jalan SS21-62 Damansara Utama Petaling Jaya 47400
Tel: +603 7728 2020
www.dtandoor.com

When I hear anyone talk about Indian food, restaurant d'Tandoor always comes to mind with its comfortable and relaxing dining area decorated with old Indian artifacts, automatically transports me to the hustle and bustle of the city of Mumbai, indeed. Excellent customer service by their front liners more often call for extra tipping as they interact very well and are very descriptive when it comes to explaining everything on the menu. This results in a better understanding of the food that's coming to the table before the customer actually experiences the meals.

"Although some people I know who have dined here have said that the dishes are often too dry, but being one of KL's oldest restaurants serving one of my best and favourite entrees - nawratan kurma and prawn masala, and at a reasonable price, too, D'tandoor will never go wrong with me."

5) Medan Hang Tuah (Malaysian Food)



Photo credit: Google Images

100 Jalan Putra 4th Floor the Mall. Kuala Lumpur 50350

Plenty of food court situated on the top floor of the Mall, which is a shopping haven smacked right in the middle of the city. If you choose to have a meal here, you will definitely come into contact with a variety of Malaysian, Chinese, Indian and other popular Malaysian cuisines.

"I don't mind travelling miles for a meal at the Mall. The food court is huge with ample seating and is my favorite place to eat after a busy day at the office. It also becomes a hang-out place for me to meet and catch-up with friends. A plate of Char Kueh Teow (fried flat noodles) and soda-bandung cincau (syrupy and milky drink) would just complete my hectic day."

6) Restoran Buharry (Peranakan-Malay)



Photo credit: Google Images

22-24 Jalan Doriasamy Asian Heritage Row
Kuala Lumpur 50300

When the hunger pang strikes during lunch, and if you're looking for some Nasi Kandar, this restaurant serves the best nasi kandar in town. Accompany a plate with a mug of 'teh tarik' (pulled tea), and it will make you smile the entire day.

"Other tempting dishes throughout my dining experience here are nasi ayam (chicken rice) and fish head curry (prepared with half the fish, not just the head but also other valuable parts of a red snapper). Simply satiating!"

7) Ikan Bakar Stall (Malay)



Photo credit: Google Images

Jalan Bellamy Kuala Lumpur

This is a popular 'ikan bakar' eatery located behind the National Palace. With a variety of Malay dishes, you must feast yourself on its traditional marinated ikan pari (stingray fish) wrapped in banana leaf and grilled over a hot-round pan.

"Accompanied with the ever so popular northern 'air assam' (spicy-tamarind gravy) and other selected dishes such as masak lemak nangka (braised young jackfruit in spicy coconut gravy) to complete the meal, this is what I call wholesome!"

Auntie Aini's Garden Café (Fusion – Malay)



Photo credit: Google Images

Batu 16, Jalan Sepang, Kampung Chelet Nilai Negri
Sembilan Tel: +603 06 799 1276

This is a very nice café in Nilai. Celebrity Chef Anthony Bourdain had his lunch here once, and it was featured on the Travel & Living programme - No Reservation.

"Its gulai lemak udang galah (prawn in coconut gravy) and pucuk paku goreng belacan (stir fried fern top leaves with shrimp paste) are unforgettable dishes. End those with ais krim tapai pulut (vanilla ice-cream with fermented glutinous rice), this café' will also soon be your favourite when you take a drive down to this state."

9) Sri Melaka Restaurant (Traditional – Malay)



Pantai Dalam Kuala Lumpur

This is the place to be when you crave for authentic Malacca dishes. With a huge selection of gulai assam ranging from gulai assam daging (sour braised beef) , assam pedas ikan merah (hot and sour red snapper) and sambal mangga (young mango shrimp chili dip) as well as a variety of ulam kampung available to complete your meal, ***“you will never leave the State without enjoying another round of fresh ‘assam pedas’ here.”***

10) Haji Dris Food Stall (Johorean – Malay)

Taman Puteri Wangsa Johor Bahru

Pure coincidence? The name of this stall may be similar to my name but my family and I are definitely not its owners. Haji Dris is my preferred food stall during my holidays in Johore. I bundle my family in our car and drive down South to this place to experience real, southern peninsular Malay cuisines.

“It offers a variety of dishes such as Assam Pedas Ikan (hot and sour fish), botok-botok ikan (marinated fish with herbs wrapped in banana leaves), sambal udang petai (prawn sambal) and masak lemak ketam (crab in spicy coconut gravy). We often complete our eating spree here with Haji Dris’ most popular black coffee- kopi kampung.”

Note:

Chef Zahiddin Dris is the Executive Sous Chef at Malaysia Airlines Inflight Operation. His day on the job include studying passengers’ profiles to decide the most suitable menu for each route, ensuring all meals are of premium quality while adhering to nutrition and hygiene guidelines, designing pre-plating guidelines for dishes served on First & Business Class as well as brainstorming, testing and planning all inflight meals before they are introduced onboard.

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