



Manila, Philippines

**Title:** Anthony Bourdain Promises That His NYC Market Won't Sell 'Bullshit'

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After a police escort and a few San Miguel beers, Anthony Bourdain arrived at the World Street Food Congress 2017 in Manila yesterday. As he addressed the assembled crowd of chefs, food writers, and academics inside the speakers' hall, droves of Filipino fans gathered outside hoping to meet the famed author and television host.

Then this morning, on the third day of the Congress, Bourdain held a press conference to update the media here on his much-anticipated, yet long-delayed, New York City food market. Originally announced in 2015, the project was envisioned as a platform where the internationally-minded multi-hyphenate would curate and shine a spotlight on some his favorite foreign foods and street stands he's come across on his trips around the globe, all inside the new "super-pier" on Manhattan's west side. However, after a series of setbacks, from not yet having signed a lease to losing the company's CEO, the future of the project at times seemed somewhat in doubt. But the market's website still lists 2019 as its opening date and Bourdain matter-of-factly addressed these issues and more with a group of food-focused reporters today. Here's what he shared:

**Bourdain Market will be "the real deal":**

"Is there a market in New York for char kway teow? I don't really give a shit," Bourdain said. "I love it and I'm pretty sure that if New Yorkers are introduced to good char kway teow, they will love it, too. The determining factor to me is that if a Singaporean grandmother and her hipster grandson come to this market, that both of them will immediately recognize this to not be bullshit. This will not be some Disneyland version of McHawker or HawkerWorld. We're talking about the widest selection of the real deal."

He also assured the crowd that he wants to "introduce New Yorkers to the ways things have been enjoyed in their [the hawkers'] home countries for years. Not a modern, Westernized take. ... We will need open flame. We need the smells. We're looking for a sense of controlled chaos. We're creating a living, breathing, stinking market."

He wants the price point to be accessible:

Bourdain said he wants to keep the pricing in line with Maxwell Center in Singapore or markets in Taiwan or Hong Kong, and used the example of an NYC janitor being able to pay the same amount for lunch at Bourdain Market as they would have otherwise. To get there, Bourdain said he is considering finding ways to subsidize vendors to help keep their prices low.

### **Expect Filipino food:**

“Filipino food is definitely underrated worldwide. In New York, it doesn’t have hipster credibility yet. But things are changing, and I hope to be a part of that change.” Bourdain also thinks Americans will go crazy for sisig, predicting it will be a “breakout dish,” fit “into the current pork-centric zeitgeist.” “Best. Thing. Ever,” says Bourdain.

### **More food details:**

Bourdain said he hates the word “authentic” and says the food in the Market will be “old school.” “I think it is a given we will have lechon in the Market,” he told reporters.

Given his comments about vegans in the past, Bourdain said: “I don’t know if the Bourdain Market will be the first place a committed vegan will come to enjoy their food of choice.” But the market will have vegetarian options if the hawkers are known for cooking flavorful vegetarian dishes, like those from India. He’s happy to have — and said “the market should have” — plenty of the delicious vegetarian and vegan options that are available around the world.

At this point, the team has not started thinking about how to source the ingredients hawkers will need: They still need to sign up the vendors first.

### **Bourdain knows he walking a tight rope:**

Bourdain told the crowd that it was not his idea to have his name on the project, and that he is still embarrassed by it, even as he’s excited about the work. He assured local press that he is not interested in stealing hawkers from their countries: He knows that would be anathema to the international food world. His goal: All invited hawkers need to have the means to open a second shop in NYC in addition to running their original businesses back home.