



Manila, Philippines

Title: Makansutra: Manila street food festival packs big flavours

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When I first saw and ate it without a hint of hesitation, I knew I had to take that Soi Lum, an "ah boling" of sorts to the World Street Food Congress (WSFC) now being held in Manila.

The extraordinary element here is not just the soft, smooth gumminess with a flawlessly balanced bean paste inside (by way of texture and sweetness), but the flecks of dried candied chrysanthemum leaves over the light syrup.

So the folks from Guangzhou, among the 30 stalls from 13 nations are dazzling them all at the WSFC, which runs until June 4 at the Mall Of Asia Concert Grounds, presented again by the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines.

This is the fourth edition of the WSFC. This international food festival has been drawing crowds numbering over 70,000 since its inauguration in 2013.

The heart of the event is the World Street Food Dialogue, where over a dozen entrepreneurs, chefs, hawkers, educators, food tourism operators, students, celebrities and thinkers congregate for a culinary discussion.

Food and travel TV icon Anthony Bourdain has been a supporter of this movement and will be sharing an update on his mega Bourdain Market in New York.

The World Street Food Jamboree, a massive feast of spectacular heritage street and comfort chow, offers a memorable culinary experience.

Singapore's very own KEK Seafood boys are hawking their zi char Curry Chicken Burgers.

And from Indonesia, the popular Chocolate Martabak is back. It is a sweet pancake topped with four types of chocolate, including crushed green tea chocolate KitKat bars.

Mexico chef Alam Mendez and his mother Celia Florian from Oaxaca have brought their traditional braised trotter and fried fish tacos.

The Taiwanese oyster omelette, loaded with crunchy greens and a sourish savoury sauce, from Chiayi city is making its debut.

Also a first is Vietnam's banh loc, a little rice cake steamed in a small sauce plate, much like chwee kueh, and topped with dried shrimps, greens and a sauce.

RARE

From India, we will be seeing the return and the first time in Manila, aloo tiki, a new style of Indian dhal croquette, slathered with three chutneys and fruits.

A rare halal fare from Davao, Philippines, of Junay rice with egg, and spicy black grated coconut grilled chicken from Satti Tausug restaurant, is also being exhibited.

Six regions from the Philippines have stalls featuring rarely seen (even in Manila) dishes and progressive takes on them. The "national dish", the Sisig - a hot plate of chopped pig head and chicharon tossed in lime, soy sauce, onions and chillies - is being reinterpreted as a Sisig Paella, suggested by WSFC and created by chef Sau Del Rosario - captain of the host nation - from Pampanga province.

These are just a few of the 60-plus items being sold. For more information, visit <http://wsfcongress.com>.