



Manila, Philippines

Title: Recap: Day 1 of World Street Food Congress 2017

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For the second time in a row, Manila welcomed the World Street Food Congress (WSFC), Asia's biggest convergence of the best street food offerings being sold locally and in other countries.

WSFC is a five-day immersion into the street food culture by way of the World Street Jamboree where over 30 food hawkers showcase their prized dishes; the World Street Dialogue where food advocates and leading industry representatives listen to concerns and share innovative ideas about moving forward the culture and heritage of street food; and the World Street Food Awards where due recognition is given to street food professionals who have shown perseverance in growing the heritage of street food cuisine.

WSFC opened on Wednesday, May 31, at the Mall of Asia Concert Grounds with the theme, "Re-imagine Possibilities." During the Dialogue, Greg Drescher, VP, Strategic Initiatives and Industry Leadership at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), spoke about the world heritage of street food and its excellent possibilities.

He noted that before, casual dining in America meant a McDonald's burger and fries meal. Now, the dining public, top chefs and food critics have embraced the casual excellence of street food, with Michelin starting to award stars to notable street food vendors.

Drescher reported that chefs have opened restaurants using concepts that take after world street food traditions, a clear indication of how the biggest creativity happens when cultures mix and ideas evolve. The CIA's Digital Media team has gone on trips around the world showcasing street food vendors and top chefs at par with the gold standard of world cuisine.

Next to talk about the heritage of street food was K.F. Seetoh, founder of Makansutra and creator of WSFC.

A strong advocate for the constant evolution of street food while staying true to its heritage cuisine, Seetoh recognized the growing presence of street food in different countries, be it in street food markets, hawker centers, food trucks or mercados.

He extolled the perseverance and hardship experienced by so-called one-dish entrepreneurs who have risen from their poverty because of their steadfast belief in their heritage recipes. He noted

that this explosion of street food awareness from different countries has paved the way for culinary branding or recognizing one's country by food association, trade manufacturing and online presence.

But to Seetoh, the most important outcome of this awareness is the opportunity of job creation for all.

The Team captain of the Philippine contingent, Chef Sau del Rosario, went on stage to do a cooking demonstration of his highly applauded revamping of Pampanga's sisig, the Sisig Paella.

While the application is certainly an adaptation of a Spanish dish, the spirit and authenticity of sisig is intact as Del Rosario presented the ingredients consisting mainly of pig's face, snout and all.

With the addition of paella rice and pork broth, the sisig, a humble dish enjoyed in many of Pampanga's carinderias, takes on new life and becomes one of the most anticipated street food dishes in the Jamboree.

Del Rosario spoke of his mother and grandmother's influence on his life as a chef and that by cooking these heritage recipes handed down to him, he is continuing their legacy even as he transforms them into new dishes that still capture their essence and heritage.

WSFC 2017 will run until June 4. It is organized by Makansutra and presented by Tourism Promotions Board Philippines.