



Manila, Philippines

Title: Sisig paella and Bourdain: The World Street Food Congress is a can't-miss event

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The momentum of highlighting and bringing Filipino cuisine to the global stage continues well after the successful staging of the 2017 Madrid Fusion Manila and its accompanying Flavors of the Philippines series of events wind down. At the end of May and start of June, the spotlight now turns on street food from all over the world as the World Street Food Congress (WSFC) holds its 4th edition at the SM Mall of Asia Concert Grounds in Pasay City.

The bigger venue, expanded line-up of 40 different street food dishes from 13 countries, a better line-up of speakers and even a 90-minute pitch box “hack-a-thon” awaits Jamboree and Dialogue participants.

Learning from the problems, challenges, and feedback from last year’s edition held at Bonifacio Global City (BGC) in Taguig, Makansutra and WSFC creator and curator KF Seetoh proudly says that the bigger space allows for better crowd and queue control (queuing system, more information through signs and directions, etc.) and gives participating hawkers the chance to sell more than one item.

The multi-hyphenated Singaporean added that unlike the 2016 edition, if you line up for an hour or two this year, you be able to at least buy two items and even shared a “strategy” on how to maximize your WSFC experience. Go to the event with four or five of your friends, delegate each member to queue at a station, and then meet up afterwards for a picnic, boodle “fight”, or party.

The five days of feasting (Jamboree), with street food cuisine and dishes coming from Germany (currywurst), Mexico (tacos), the United States, Thailand, Japan, India, China, Taiwan, Malaysia (Claypot Apom Manis), Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, and the Philippines, promise to showcase street food not as something that is literally sold on sidewalks and alleyways but as a cuisine. Dishes like satay (Malaysian/Indonesian skewered meat) or Pad Thai originated from street peddlers, but are now found in five-star hotels and Michelin-star restaurants cooked by professional chefs.

For those wondering what Filipino regions or cuisines will be included in the 40-dish line-up, Seetoh shares that your favorite street food from Davao City, Bicol, Iloilo, Ilocos, Bacolod (piaya), and Pampanga (sisig paella) got his personal seal of approval; bringing the best of the provinces right at the heart of Manila Bay.

Bourdain incoming

On the more serious side of WSFC, with the theme: "Re-imagining Possibilities," is the two-day Dialogue conference and networking event where participants can view live cooking demos, interact and talk with chefs, industry experts and leaders, and each other regarding the state and future of street food as an industry.

Invited dialogue speakers include a who's who of the food industry: Greg Drescher, Strategic Studies and Industry Leadership vice president at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA); Michelin-star chefs Malcom Lee of Singapore and Andy Yang of Thailand; and my personal food god and idol, Anthony Bourdain of CNN's Parts Unknown and the soon-to-open Bourdain Market (New York City) fame. The presence of Bourdain, or "Uncle Tony" alone with worth the \$250 standard ticket price (\$180 for 3 adults and above, \$150 for 10 or more, \$100 for students) for entry into the two-day dialogue or congress sessions of WSFC 2017.

The 90-minute pitch box "hack-a-thon" meanwhile is an open-forum, open-discussion type of event where delegates can step up onto the stage, pitch their ideas, visions, concepts and goals to the media, government, food industry, entrepreneurs, and the younger generation. Unplanned and unfiltered, this segment takes the concept of out-of-the-box and unconventional thinking and turns it into something useful and concrete.

Entry fee for the Jamboree is just P150 per person, while the prices of the dishes themselves cost P150 and above, depending on the stall. May 31 to June 2 operating hours are 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., 1:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on June 3, and 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the last day, June 4.

Aside from finally getting my hands on last year's crowd favorites and much-talked/back-by-popular-demand items BBQ Pork Ribs from Bali and Chocolate Martabak Pancakes, Seetoh also teased my imagination and taste buds as he mentioned Guangzhou "adobo", Mexico tostadas, hand-made German currywurst and bratwurst, salted-egg yolk pork ribs, and a spin-off of a Singaporean staple, fried chicken with cereal.

That enough talk of food right now. Better get your wallets and appetites ready as WSFC 2017 is just a few weeks away. — BM, GMA News

- See more at: <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/food/610253/sisig-paella-bourdain-the-world-street-food-congress-is-a-can-t-miss-event/story/#sthash.ToZtYDo9.dpuf>