

Singapore Hawker Centers: Food, Heritage, and Culture

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Special Academic Programs
Food and Culture Symposium



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Menu

- About Singapore
- Hawker Centers
- Inscription on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list
- Hawkerpreneurs
- Future of Hawker Centers

Our SG Hawker Culture

LET'S SUPPORT
SINGAPORE HAWKER CULTURE

SCAN HERE

Join us in nominating Singapore's Hawker Culture onto the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

PLEDGE YOUR SUPPORT NOW!
CLICK HERE





City of superlatives

One of the world's most costly cities to live in.

Range of dining, from cheap to staggering

- Less than \$2 for a plate of chicken rice
- More than \$450 for a tasting menu



Tiong Bahru Market & Food Centre

Tiong Bahru Market & Food Centre

- 1951, 83 stalls
- Market on ground floor; meats, vegs, fruit
- Food Centre on L1
- Oldest public housing estate areas
- Gentrification with trendy cafes nearby



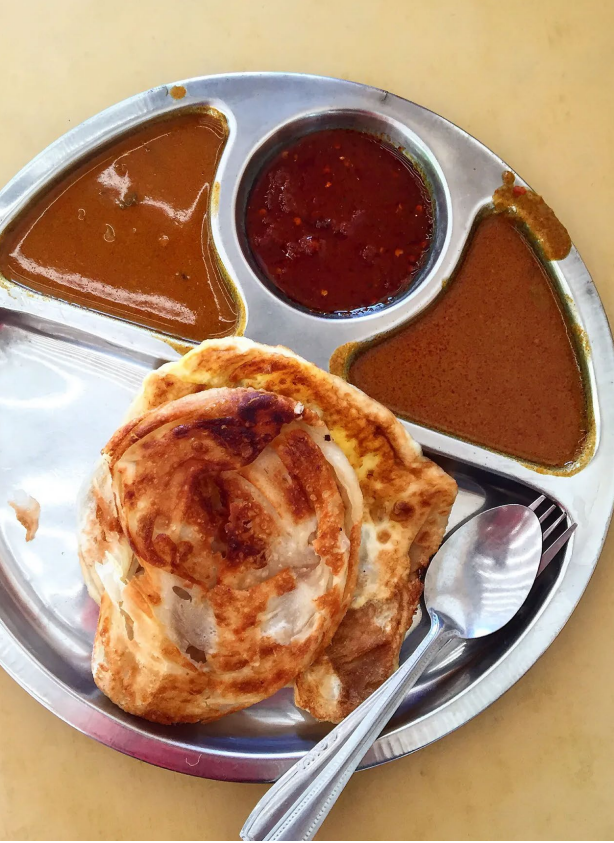


Traditional Hawker Stall

Hong Heng Fried Sotong Prawn Mee

- one dish, cooked to order
- prawn mee (Hokkien origins, favorite of Malaysia and Singapore)
- Michelin Bib Gourmand
- cheap (\$3-5)
- family stall, 3rd generation

Yellow noodles stir-fried with squid and prawns



Vibrantly delicious
yet affordable
hawker fare

- Roti prata
- Kaya toast
- Chicken rice
- Chili crab

UNESCO

- “community dining rooms”
- Inscribed on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list, 2020

The screenshot shows the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage website. The header includes the UNESCO logo and the text 'Intangible cultural heritage'. A navigation menu contains 'NEWS', 'EVENTS', 'CONVENTION', 'LISTS', 'SAFEGUARDING', 'ACTORS', 'THEMES', and 'COUNTRY'. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: 'UNESCO » Culture » Intangible Heritage » Lists » Hawker culture in Singapore, community dining and culinary practices in a multicultural urban context'. The article title is 'Hawker culture in Singapore, community dining and culinary practices in a multicultural urban context'. It is inscribed in 2020 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The article text describes the multicultural urban context of Singapore, where hawker centres serve as 'community dining rooms' for people from diverse backgrounds. It mentions that hawker centres have become markers of Singapore as a multicultural city-state, comprising Chinese, Malay, Indian, and other cultures. The article also notes that hawker centres continue to serve the needs of diverse communities in residential, recreational, and work districts. A video thumbnail shows a man and a child giving thumbs up. The caption for the video reads: '© National Heritage Board (NHB), National Environment Agency and the Federation of Merchants' Associations, Singapore (FMAS), 2019'. The video title is 'Let them come back with their hands, with their children, using their skills.'

BUT, the future of hawker centres is uncertain

HAWKERS:

- Aging hawkers
- Loss of skill
- Rising costs in rent
- Hard physical work

LOCALS:

- Shifting lifestyles
- Desire for air conditioning
- Desire for healthier food
- Other choices! High competition

Hawker Centres- high competition



Why is it important to preserve hawker centers? And then, how?

- Hawker centers are considered unique to Singapore
- The nation is trying to establish a sense of national identity and create traditions, so preserving it through food is one way to do this.



Hawkerpreneurs

Hawker + Entrepreneur

- Millennials, educated
- Savvy in business, digital marketing, social media
- Hawker stall → restaurant, franchising, more stalls



Tasty Street:
Our Little Red Dot



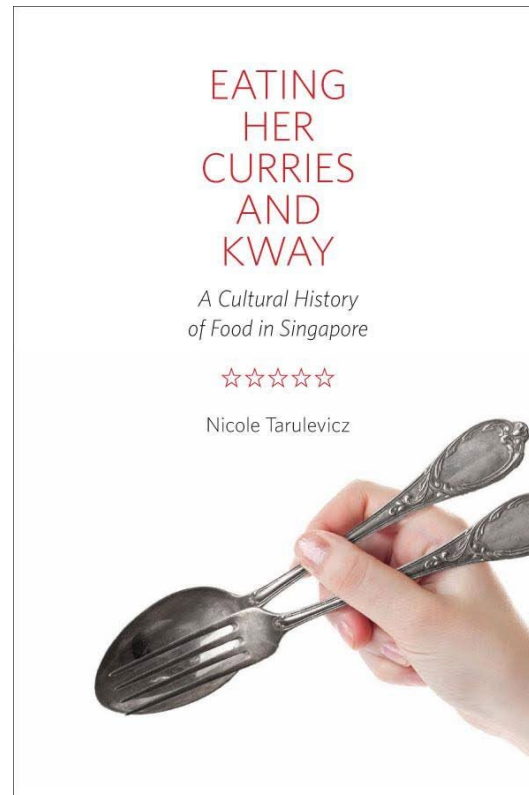
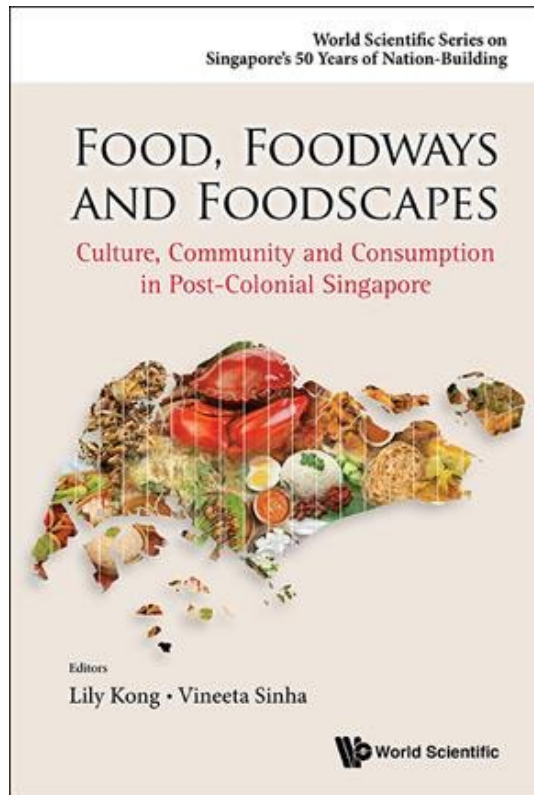
Pasir Ris Central Hawker Centre

Future of Hawker Centers

Yet, can these newer versions still
be considered hawker food?

What makes food 'authentic'?





Hungry for more?

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Want to connect or read more of our work?
