

Taipei night markets hold a very special place in our hearts.

Taipei Night Market
Street Food Festival

Annual

Taipei Night Market
Gourmet
Special Edition

2023

2023
台北夜市

打牙祭

Taipei night markets hold a very special place in our hearts.

Taipei Night Market Street Food Festival



Night markets allow us the freedom to go whenever we want without the need for reservations. During the evening to late-night operating hours, the bright lights and delectable aroma waft through the streets and alleys provide solace to souls returning home after a hard night's work.

CNN once published an article on "10 things that Taiwan does better than anywhere else", and night markets topped the list. Statistics also show that 70% of foreign tourists who come to Taiwan want to visit the renowned night markets. These humble, local delicacies are the heart and soul of the night markets and city life and guarantee an experience like no other.

Follow us as we uncover the stories behind the top ten must-try street foods and their makers at the 2023 Taipei Night Market Street Food Festival.

10 NIGHT MARKETS PARTICIPATING IN 2023

01

Q **Shilin Night Market** Search

Tamsui-Xinyi Line / Red Line (R)
Jiantan Station

02

Q **Yansan Night Market** Search

Zhonghe-Xinlu Line / Orange Line (O)
Daqiaotou Station

03

Q **Ningxia Night Market** Search

Tamsui-Xinyi Line / Red Line (R)
Zhongshan Station, Shuanglian Station

04

Q **Huaxi Street Night Market** Search

Bannan Line / Blue Line (BL)
Longshan Temple Station

05

Q **Wuzhou Street Night Market** Search

Bannan Line / Blue Line (BL)
Longshan Temple Station

06

Q **Guangzhou Street Night Market** Search

Bannan Line / Blue Line (BL)
Longshan Temple Station

07

Q **Bangka Night Market** Search

Bannan Line / Blue Line (BL)
Longshan Temple Station

08

Q **Nanjichang Night Market** Search

Bus Stop: Nanjichang Apartment
(Wanda-Zhonghe-Shulin Line,
Under Construction)

09

Q **Gongguan Night Market** Search

Songshan-Xindian Line / Green Line (G)
Gongguan Station

10

Q **Linjiang Night Market** Search

Tamsui-Xinyi Line / Red Line (R)
Xinyi Anhe Station



ABOUT

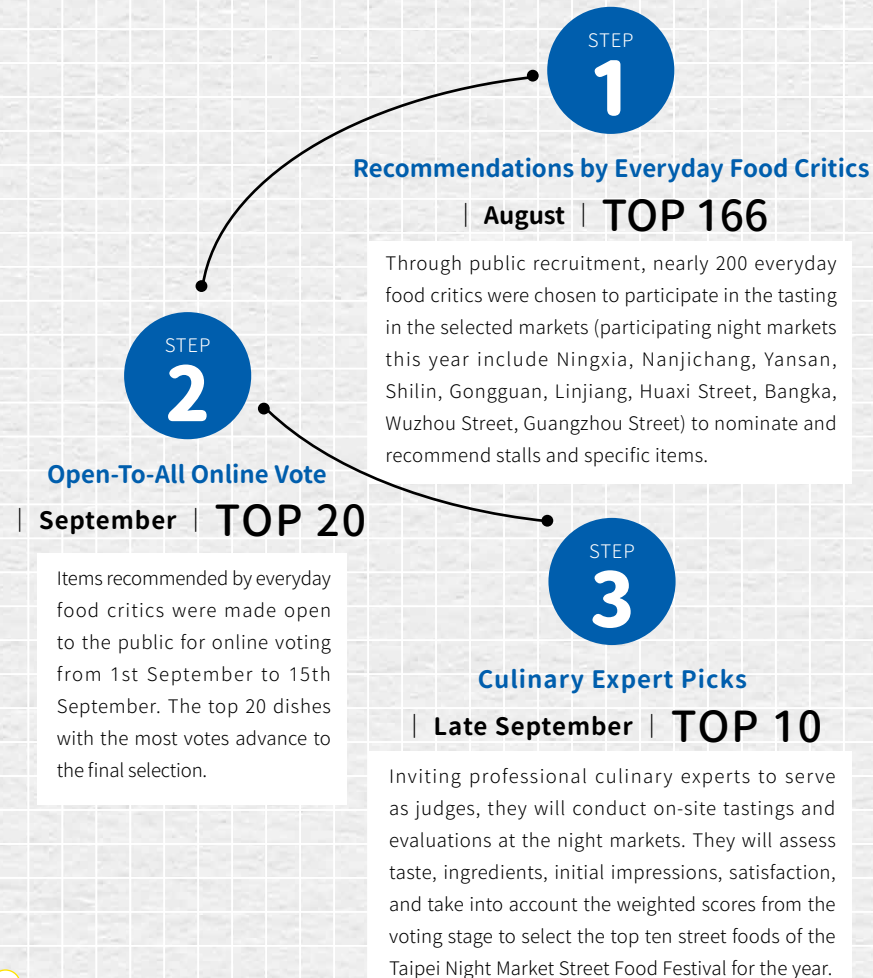
The 2023 Taipei Night Market Street Food Festival

The Taipei Night Market Street Food Festival has been held since early 2010. Initially, it was held as a warm-up for the Taipei International Flora Exposition, using the globally renowned night market cuisine to welcome guests from afar. It aimed to drive consumption through media marketing and highlight Taiwan's unique night market and culinary culture. Now in its 14th year, it has become a highly anticipated event every year.

In 2023, the theme is "Everyday Food Critics: Discovering Night Market Delicacies." For the first time, the event is open to the public, calling on nearly 200 people who love night markets and enjoy street food to become advocates for the night market gastronomic delights. Together, they will uncover hidden gems, allowing more carefully crafted and earnestly operated stalls and their passion to be seen.



THE BIRTH OF THE BEST NIGHT MARKET STREET FOOD



FINAL JUDGING PANEL

* in order of Chinese surname stroke count



| **Lin Jiarong** |
Entrepreneur
Chef of The Studio



| **Chen Yifang** |
National Mom
Founder of YIFANG's handmade



| **Ted** |
Chef of Michelin
Recommended Restaurant
Monsoon, Food Artist

FINALISTS TOP 20



NINGXIA NIGHT MARKET

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>Mochi Shaved Ice</p> <p>Lin Zhenchao
Roasted Mochi
(097)</p> | <p>2</p> <p>Churros</p> <p>Pangnaji Churros
(047)</p> | <p>3</p> <p>Golden Sticky Tofu</p> <p>Lizhangbo
(110)</p> | <p>4</p> <p>Flaming German Pork Knuckle</p> <p>Flaming German
Pork Knuckle
(086)</p> |
|--|---|---|--|

NANJICHANG NIGHT MARKET

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>5</p> <p>Mentaiko Takoyaki</p> <p>Zhang Xue You
Octopus Balls
(077)</p> | <p>6</p> <p>Signature Egg Cake with Cream Filling</p> <p>Kitsutaro Egg Cake
with Super Rich Fillings
(073)</p> | <p>7</p> <p>Pork Knuckle with Rice</p> <p>Min Xian Pork
Knuckle with Rice
(045)</p> | <p>8</p> <p>Chicken Curry Roti</p> <p>MUSA Curry Roti
(070)</p> |
|--|--|---|---|

YANSAN NIGHT MARKET

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>9</p> <p>Seafood Rice Noodles</p> <p>The Hung's Congee
(Rice Porridge)
(050)</p> | <p>10</p> <p>Pork Knuckle Bento</p> <p>Shen Yuan Herbal
Pork Ribs</p> | <p>11</p> <p>Everything Soup</p> <p>Shantou Four
Herbs Soup
(026)</p> | <p>12</p> <p>Vegetarian Sticky Tofu</p> <p>Vegetarian
Sticky Tofu
(008)</p> |
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SHILIN NIGHT MARKET

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>13</p> <p>Japanese Souffle Pancake</p> <p>Shilin Night Market
Dorayaki</p> | <p>14</p> <p>Prince Club & Cheese Potato</p> <p>Prince Cheese
Potato</p> | <p>15</p> <p>Barbecue Chicken Cutlet</p> <p>Wellyen Hometown
Barbecue Chicken
(018)</p> | <p>16</p> <p>Candied Tomato Tanghulu</p> <p>Taiwan Old-Fashioned
Tanghulu (047)</p> |
|---|--|---|---|

WUZHOU STREET

- | |
|---|
| <p>17</p> <p>Braised Pork Knuckle with Peanuts</p> <p>Seventh Grade
Braised Pork
Knuckle with
Peanuts (031)</p> |
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- | |
|---|
| <p>18</p> <p>Braised Pork Knuckles</p> <p>Lao San Pork
Knuckles
(004)</p> |
|---|

GUANGZHOU STREET

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>19</p> <p>Rose Tteokbokki</p> <p>Red Hat Tteokbokki
(113)</p> | <p>20</p> <p>Chocolate Chips Bubble Waffle & Bag of Bubble Milk Tea</p> <p>Poke Bubble Waffle
(123)</p> |
|--|---|

*Sort by online voting number
*Stall changes or temporary
adjustment of stall status
without prior notice



Lin Zhenchao Roasted Mochi— Mochi Shaved Ice

Ningxia
Night Market
(097)



Imagine a shave ice vendor so popular that their menu now includes Chinese, English, Korean, Japanese, and Thai is on the way! Lin Zhenchao Roasted Mochi has become a sensation both domestically and abroad. After the reopening of the borders 3.5 years following the pandemic, international customers returning to the stall excitedly told the boss lady, "I've waited for three years for this!"

They say Taiwan's beverage scene is where the real money's at. Ice cream parlors, bubble tea joints and chains sprout up like mushrooms after rain. Lin Zhenzhao, holding down the fort at Ningxia Night Market for nearly three decades, knows this isn't a walk in the park. The boss lady recounts their epic battles, from the melamine scandal to the COVID-19 saga, nearly pushing them to the brink. Back then, while she was still punching the time clock, the boss was single-handedly shouldering the stall's operation from dawn till dusk. His better half, a marketing maven and a customer charmer, would join him after her shift. The two now move in sync, like a dynamic duo.



Judge's Comments

The combination of hot mochi and ice gives it an extra chew. The homemade peanut and sesame powder gives it a unique flavor!

The stall used to go by "Lin Mochi" and offered only shaved ice and noodle jelly ice. After the melamine incident, change was in order if they wanted to go on, and it was then the icy idea of mochi ice sparked to life! The delicate dance between ice and heat, jazzed up with a sprinkle of peanut and sesame powder, was a hit. Raving reviews and positive feedback boosted the couple's confidence, leading them to trademark their brainchild. "Lin" was a no-go, so they decided to put the boss's name right on it, and thus "Lin Zhenchao Roasted Mochi" was born! It was unique and easy to remember. Now, even their two sons have hopped on the ice wagon.



Such icy indulgence is meant to be enjoyed while sitting down. Although the stall's space is limited, customers willing to wait in line for a seat are constantly coming. The boss lady said she hopes that every customer who sits down can enjoy their ice in peace, find it novel and delightful, and have a jolly good time!

Stall Information



Business hours | 17:00-00:30

Address | No. 97, Ningxia Road, Datong District, Taipei City

Phone | +886 936-839-290

Operator(s) | Lin Zhenzhao, Zhuang Shujuan

Ningxia Night Market Lin Zhenchao Roasted Mochi - Original Lin Roasted Mochi

Zhang Xue You Octopus Balls— Mentaiko Takoyaki

Ningxia
Night Market
(077)



This stall cheekily borrowed its name from the Heavenly King, Jacky Cheung, and the dashing Mr. Zheng, the owner, does indeed rock a bit of a celebrity-worthy face. But don't let that fool you. He's a bit of a bashful one. When he serves up those takoyaki smothered in rich mentaiko sauce and generously dusted with bonito flakes, it's like he's saying, "Just eat up!"

This stall is only a year old. Before Mr. Zheng delved into the world of takoyaki, he didn't even have the faintest clue as to what these octopus-filled dough balls were. A chance encounter during a visit to his sister in Hong Kong introduced him to this delightful snack. Intrigued, he decided to learn from a Japanese master, and voilà! He decided to turn takoyaki into his game. Right before this, Mr. Zheng had been toiling away on Australian construction sites for years. Going from the rough and tumble of construction to grilling takoyaki was quite the leap. "If I stuck with construction in Taiwan, I'd still be all over the place. I've been away from home for years, and now I want to spend time with my parents," said Mr. Zheng candidly.



Judge's Comments

Crispy on the outside, soft on the inside, with large chunks of octopus and a special sauce. It takes you on a delightful Asian culinary journey!



Returning from Australia to Taiwan, from construction sites to night markets, and from engineering to grilling, these changes initially dampened Mr. Zheng's enthusiasm. For the first three months, he meticulously followed the recipes and techniques of his Japanese master. But the result? Business was more flop than flip, with customers deeming it too gooey. That's when it hit him. It turns out the Taiwanese are not big fans of Japanese-style takoyaki. He then adapted the recipe to make the texture crispier to suit Taiwanese tastes, just the way the locals love it.

And that mentaiko? It's Mr. Zheng's own creation after trial and error, a little bit of this, a little bit of that, and maybe a touch less of this and that. The process was a rollercoaster of experiments, and he hopes that when folks take a bite, they'll taste a bite of wonder and excitement!



Stall Information



Business hours | 17:00-23:00 (Closed on Mondays)

Address | Stall No. 77, Lane 313, Section 2, Zhonghua Road,
Zhongzheng District, Taipei City

Operator(s) | Zheng Conghan

Zhang Xue You Octopus Balls

Kitsutaro Egg Cake with Super Rich Fillings— Signature Egg Cake with Cream Filling



Ningxia
Night Market
(073)



As soon as we came up to Kitsutaro Egg Cake with Super Rich Fillings, it was as if the owner read our minds. "I sell egg cakes because I love kids, and they can have egg cakes for breakfast!" said Mr. Li right away.

Mr. and Mrs. Li have only been running their stall in the night market for three years. They had no prior experience in selling street food. It was the impact of the pandemic on their original business that led them to switch tracks and delve into the small world of egg cake

baking. Despite the lack of experience, the couple had a long-term vision in mind. They even cooked up some special molds and got them registered. These little chicks popping out of their eggs will certainly brighten up your day at first sight!

Those who have savored these creamy, custardy, cute little confections, including Mr. Li himself, have a nifty tip: Pop them in the freezer! The texture turns into a velvety ice cream dream. Forget egg cakes. Mr. Li practically sells birthday cakes and ice cream cakes, and the couple has admitted that their base recipe is essentially the same for cakes. The secret? Just milk, eggs, and a smidge of flour.



Judge's Comments

Every bite is filled with satisfaction. Beneath its simple exterior lies endless surprises, letting you feel the magic of food!



But here's the scoop. Unlike a cake shop or an indoor bakery, night markets don't come with air-conditioned cake cocoons where temperature can be controlled. So, over these three years, Mr. Li has had to meticulously manage the temperature and fermentation levels of the ingredients in different seasons to keep the quality of the egg cakes popping.

Running the cake hustle together brings in the dough, but making extra isn't a cakewalk. Still, Mr. Li isn't exactly gunning for stall stardom. Over the years, they've built a loyal customer base. If media coverage were to generate a sudden surge in business,

turning their stall into a hotspot, the business might boom, but loyal customers might miss out on their egg cakes, "That would make us very sad!" the crowd lamented.



To Mr. Li, these egg cakes are more than a means of livelihood.

These confections are a heartfelt connection between him and his customers.

Stall Information



Business hours | 16:45-23:00 (No fixed days off)
Address | Stall No. 73, Lane 313, Section 2, Zhonghua Road,
Zhongzheng District, Taipei City
Operator(s) | Li Xuxiong, Zhu Zujian

Kitsutaro Egg Cake with Super Rich Fillings

Min Xian Pork Knuckle with Rice— Pork Knuckle with Rice



Ningxia
Night Market
(045)

At around 6.30 p.m., dozens line up at the tiny booth of Min Xian Pork Knuckle with Rice. Mr. Li, his wife, daughter, and son-in-law worked together seamlessly. They skillfully cut the pork hock, packed the boxes, and served the rice dish. The warm pork with rice is a comforting dinner for many nearby residents returning home from work.



This hearty bowl of pork rice

consists of thick slices of pork shank, along with the boss lady's staple sides: a fried egg, Chinese cabbage or Napa cabbage, and vermicelli, all piled up to create a taste of home served up on a platter. The stall owner mentioned that they used to offer braised eggs, but some customers left them behind because the yolks were too dry. Now, that was a great shame. So, the boss lady came up with an alternative. They also sold omelets, so they started frying the eggs on the spot using a griddle. Customers could get their eggs however they liked, sunny-side up or runny.

The petite and energetic stall owner has been running this stall for over twenty years. If you add up her years of experience selling other street food delicacies, she's got over



Judge's Comments

Simple yet filled with layers of flavors, this dish perfectly demonstrates the profound flavors of traditional Taiwanese cuisine!



three decades of culinary capers under her belt. The first ten years were almost all about accumulating experience through failures. Duck meat with glass noodle soup, tube rice pudding, and qiezai noodles. She's tried them all but came up empty-handed. But hailing from a family of chefs, she did not give up. She persevered and eventually found her culinary calling under the guidance of a master and ultimately perfected the art of pork hock. It turned out to be a turning point in her career.

And here's the secret to her success – a dash of spicy, sassy customer feedback. As they say, those who criticize keep coming back. It takes a big person with a big heart to be so receptive and positive towards criticism. But this boss lady is her own toughest food critic, all to serve the perfect bowl of pork knuckle with rice. She aims to wow every customer at the first bite!



Stall Information



Business hours | 16:30-23:30 (No fixed days off, mostly on Tuesdays)
Address | Stall No. 45, Lane 311, Section 2, Zhonghua Road, Zhongzheng District, Taipei City
Phone | +886 930-840-640
Operator(s) | Lin Xuefen, Li Wenlong
f Min Xian Pork Knuckle with Rice

MUSA Curry Roti— Chicken Curry Roti

Ningxia
Night Market
(070)



Before even stepping into the MUSA Curry Roti stall, my attention was caught by a handsome little boy. His name is Musa, and his mother, along with his Pakistani father, named the stall after him. This curry roti stall, brimming with Middle Eastern charm, is managed by Ms. Li, a Muslim.

Ms. Li was originally an ordinary office worker, eagerly anticipating her husband to complete marriage formalities and settle in Taiwan. After the birth of their little boy, Musa, she quit her job to become a homemaker, taking care of the child and managing household chores. Yet, the pressures of everyday life always bring more challenges. When little Musa was just over a year old, she had to explore a second source of income for her family.

Ms. Li had a penchant for her mother-in-law's all-natural, no-nonsense, straight-out-of-the-jar spices, especially those lip-smacking, authentic curries. She convinced herself and pitched the idea to her husband, "Indian cuisine with the



flavor of your hometown. It's the real deal. The folks will love the authentic and exotic flavors!" So, with little Musa by her side, she got down and doughy. She prepared the ingredients, made the fillings, rolled out the dough, and baked the rotis all by herself while her husband would help out after work.

Insisting on top-notch ingredients and serving up nothing but the most authentic and genuine rotis has been quite the ride. But Ms. Li confidently declares with gusto, "We make them the same way our family enjoys them!"



Judge's Comments

Abundant use of aromatic spices. The flavors are distinctive, exotic, and layered. A must-try for both taste and creativity.

Stall Information



Business hours | 16:00-22:00
Address | Stall No. 70, Lane 313, Section 2, Zhonghua Road, Zhongzheng District, Taipei City
Phone | +886 975-528-777
Operator(s) | Zharimah Li

f MUSA Curry Roti

The Hung's Congee (Rice Porridge)— Seafood Rice Noodles

Ningxia
Night Market
(050)



A steaming bowl of seafood rice noodles is served, brimming with shrimp, slices of milkfish, clams, oysters, and squid — talk about a showstopper! This bowl is a sumptuous delicacy that Mr. Hung and his wife have been dishing out day after day for forty years at the night market. Every

morning, the couple goes to the market to pick up fresh ingredients, then they prepare and organize them. Mr. Hung is in charge of the simmering soup, while his wife works her magic behind the wok and pots. But the flavorful seafood rice noodles didn't start out like this. Customer feedback plays a pivotal role in creating this bowl of goodness. With an open heart, they perfected their soup and noodles through a labor of love.

One could say the seafood rice noodles were a collaborative creation between the owners and the patrons.

Mr. Hung's culinary skills were passed down from his master chef father. It's as if he was destined for this profession. He was a cook in the military, and after retiring, he spent twenty years refining the art of sugarcane peeling. He even tried his hand at running a dining table. But in the end, he decided to start a business with his wife. They encountered many challenges on their entrepreneurial journey. Originally, the couple didn't want to break their backs anymore, so they switched to selling candies and melon seeds. However, with big supermarkets popping up one after another, it left almost no room for their small stall to survive. So, back to the kitchen they went!

"I hope that when customers taste our rice noodle soup, they'll be reminded of their mother's cooking. This way, no matter where they are or what they're doing, they'll find a little slice of warmth in our bowl of noodles."



Judge's Comments

Flavorful broth and fresh ingredients, you can taste the ocean blossoming in your mouth with this bowl of seafood rice noodles!



Just as we were enjoying the rice noodle soup and chicken rice, the owner brought out a plate of freshly fried braised pork. This is the dish they are most proud of. Even though it wasn't recommended by the connoisseur, they wanted us to taste it anyway. Mrs. Hung said that the texture of the meat is tender and not tough, which is the result of continuous tinkering with every cut. She doesn't like to see customers spitting out parts they can't chew. "I want our customers to savor every morsel."

Their kids have all flown the coop, and Mr. and Mrs. Hung should be kicking back with their feet up. No more working their fingers to the bone every day, right? But to that, Mrs. Hung simply said, "A little extra pocket change and serving up smiles for our loyal regulars sounds like the good life!"

Stall Information

Business hours | 16:00-24:00 (Closed on Tuesdays)
Address | Stall No. 50, Lane 311, Section 2, Zhonghua Road,
Zhongzheng District, Taipei City
Phone | +886 932-345-727
Operator(s) | Hung Tiancheng, Hung Dingyumei

Shen Yuan Herbal Pork Ribs— Pork Knuckle Bento



Yansan
Night Market



When the giant pork knuckle bento was served, we couldn't help but exclaim in surprise. Who'd have thought that a pork knuckle bento could come with three colossal chunks of meat? Let's not forget the never-seen-before thick piece of braised tofu, along with the vibrant dried bamboo shoots and baby bok choy. It was truly a feast for the eyes.

The stall is manned by a pair of siblings—a brother and a sister in their thirties. The stall had been operated by their parents for over thirty years. Their father decided to take a breather due to health issues, and they hit the pause button for a good seven years. A few years back, their father got the idea of selling the stall. The siblings were not thrilled at the proposal and began considering carrying on their father's legacy.

"This stall is where our family has spent the most time together. We have had many wonderful moments here. It carries countless memories for our whole family!" Mr. Tsai couldn't bear to part with the stall, and neither could his sister. Originally, they worked in the world of finance and electronics, but after many discussions, they decisively returned home to take over their parents' stall. Little did they know that the most opposition would come from their parents, who'd been through the whole rollercoaster of running a stall.

However, in the end, the determination of Mr. Tsai and his sister's won them over. It wasn't until a few days before the grand



reopening that their father finally caved and stepped in as a consultant, helping his children tackle all the problems that came their way. Their mother, on the other hand, made sure they were able to secure the finest and freshest ingredients.

The stall was famous far and wide for their father's medicinal herb pork ribs and their mother's legendary braised pork rice. Never in his wildest dreams did Mr. Tsai expect the recommended dish this time around to be the pork knuckle bento of his and his sister's creation. Turns out, the regulars had nothing but high praise for their parents. That piled on the pressure as the siblings had high expectations to live up to, and the fear that they might tarnish their parents' reputation loomed over them. But winning this round gave the brother and sister the confidence boost they needed to whip up even more delicious dishes in the future.

With prices that won't break the bank, generous portions, and flavors that'll make your taste buds dance, Mr. Tsai wants you to treat this stall like your own kitchen. "I want them to have a full, satisfied tummy and a heart filled with joy after eating our pork knuckle bento. That's the true taste of home."



Judge's Comments

The pork knuckles have a luscious color and rich flavors. Paired with the fragrant sauce, it's the perfect combination filled with the taste of a mother's cooking. Every bite leaves you wanting more.



Stall Information



Business hours | 17:30-23:00 (Closed on Sundays and Mondays)
Address | No. 32, Section 3, Yanping North Road,
Datong District, Taipei City
Operator(s) | Tsai Weilun, Tsai Xinlin

f Shen Yuan Herbal Pork Ribs (Daqiaotou Yansan Night Market)

Shantou Four Herbs Soup— Everything Soup

Yansan
Night Market
(026)



This is a stall that was established in the 48th year of the Republic of China by a veteran who came to Taiwan with the Nationalist government. Initially, they sold four herbs soup, steamed buns, and shumai. However, they eventually had to stop offering shumai due to how labor-intensive it was. The daughter, Ms. Weng, who grew up with her father's stall, officially

took over the business on 17 May 1991, marking the second generation of operation for "Shantou Four Herbs Soup."

In Taiwan, four herbs soup is a national street food dish. But to make it truly delicious, it requires a special touch and finesse. After taking over, the boss lady's husband hits the market daily to purchase the freshest ingredients. When he returns, the real work begins. Not only does she prepare the soup base, but she also personally cleans all the dirty innards, removing all unwanted funk. She's straight-up about it—this gig is no walk in the park. Even some regulars have teased her about it, but she's got grit and a motto: Keep going!

In addition to the meticulously stewed soup base, the key ingredient that makes this four herbs soup the real deal is her father's secret angelica wine. A dash of this exclusive formula sets their soup apart from all other soups on the market, putting it in a league of its own. The "everything soup" includes small intestines, tripe, and



Judge's Comments

The handling of the innards is precise and clean, with just the right tenderness. The broth is flavorful, light, delicious, and astonishingly nostalgic.



pork stomach, and surprise, surprise, sometimes you might even find some raw intestines—a real connoisseur's delight that's kept the regulars coming back for decades now.

This boss lady is confident in her cooking: "When you come to my place, it's impossible to just have the four herbs soup or the "everything." You've got to round out your meal with other sides!" As of this year, she has been running the business for thirty-two years, matching her father, the founder's length of hustle with this stall. She's no quitter, and she's got plans to outlast her father in operation, bringing comfort to the stomachs of even more with her "everything" soup.



Stall Information

Business hours | 18:00-23:00 (Closed on Mondays and Thursdays)
Address | No. 40, Section 3, Yanping North Road, Datong District,
Taipei City
Phone | +886 922-210-065
Operator(s) | Weng Shih-Hui, Shen Jin-Long

Wellyen Hometown Barbecue Chicken— Barbecue Chicken Cutlet



Shilin
Night Market
(018)

Make chicken cutlets trendy again! Wellyen Hometown Barbecue Chicken, with over thirty years of history, is managed by a tall, slender young man wearing a duckbill cap that's as swift as a swallow with his movements. You'd almost mistake him for a part-timer, but guess what? He's the boss, the son-in-law who took over the business from his father-in-law, marking the dawn of the second generation of the family food business, with Mr. Lü inheriting his father-in-law's flavor-packed legacy.



Once a sales champ, now happily hitched for over six years, whenever a gap in his schedule pops up, Mr. Lü's off rallying at the stand with his father-in-law until about a year ago, when his father-in-law popped the question, hoping he'd take over the business that's been blazing for three decades. No second thoughts, Mr. Lü said yes. In a twist of events, this past year has his missus singing a different tune, "Never did I expect to be busier than a bee! Back when I had a job, I had days off. Now, I can hardly spend any time with my wife."

Now running his father-in-law's grill, Mr. Lü keeps it honest and humble. He's not aiming to expand the barbecue chicken empire, just holding tight to the old man's spirit—fresh, legit ingredients, and consistent portions are the name of the game. If a cutlet doesn't quite hit the mark between frying and grilling, he'd rather ask the customer to wait a little longer than serve them anything less than A-grade.

"For men, business isn't the same as a grind! My father-in-law wanted his legacy

to live on, and for me, pushing papers was a dime a dozen. Now, when I tell people I sell barbecue chicken cutlets, they go, 'Wow, that's cool!'" Mr. Lü's zest infuses a new lease of life into the tantalizing taste his father-in-law spent a lifetime perfecting. It's what keeps the hometown barbecue chicken crusade standing tall and going.

Mr. Lü's ultimate wish is that when customers get their hands on a chicken cutlet, they take a bite without hesitation, even if it's piping hot. Life is hard enough as it is, and one can always do with a bit of indulgence. No worries, no counting calories here. "Just enjoy it!"



Judge's Comments

Flavorful sauce. The chicken is thick but not dry, and the batter remains crispy after grilled. Excellent chicken cutlet.



Stall Information

Business hours | 16:00-00:00
Address | No. 1, Jihe Road, Shilin District, Taipei City
Phone | +886 921-125-187
Operator(s) | Lü Zheng-Lun

Lao San Pork Knuckles— Braised Pork Knuckles

Wuzhou
Street
Night Market
(004)



Wuzhou Street Night Market has a stall that has been serving up pork knuckles for forty-three years. This three-generation affair is currently helmed by the second-generation, with the grandmother who's half-retired but all in for keeping an eye on her three grandkids. Their open-air dining table doubles as a study nook for the little ones. The name, "Lao San Pork Knuckles," is a nod to the grandfather, who is the third eldest in the family.

The daughter-in-law, the second-generation boss lady, gave us a show of the braised pork knuckles magic herself right there at the stall. When asked if she was worried about leaking trade secrets, the earnest, down-to-earth boss lady replied, "True skills can't be learned just by watching."

She starts by caramelizing the rock sugar. Then, she adds ginger for that zing, then stir-fries the star, the pork knuckles. Next comes soy sauce and other seasoning ingredients, such as scallions. The air is soon filled with a delectable, sugary aroma. She tells us the sugar glaze is the secret to achieving that golden, glossy perfection.



Judge's Comments

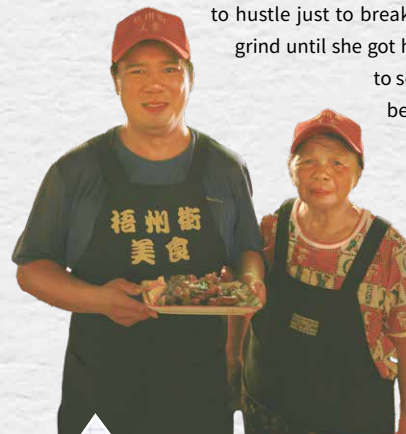
Pork knuckles with a tender texture, simple and tasty. The traditional braising sauce sure brings back memories!



The boss lady's culinary prowess comes from her mother-in-law's teachings, while her mother-in-law's skills were inherited from her father-in-law. The braised pork knuckles developed by the previous generation of the

Tsai family in Beigang, Yunlin, were already a legendary delicacy. From there, the torch was passed down to the mother-in-law and then to the son and daughter-in-law.

The grandmother's heart swells with pride as her son and daughter-in-law have been able to sustain the business to which she devoted her whole life. Back in the day, she'd sprint away from the law in her mobile vendor days. In the 1970s, a ticket meant a fine of NT\$1,200, and she didn't even dare to tally how many portions of pork knuckles she needed to hustle just to break even. But that didn't deter her. She worked the grind until she got her stall, which, for her, is also a home and a place to settle down. So, when she says, "If this stall goes, I'll be heartbroken," you know she means it.



Now and then, the three lively kids of the Tsai family gather around to sneak a peek into the world of grown-up talk. The seven-year-old big brother proudly tells us, "I can cook instant noodles, but I need help turning on the gas." Without a doubt, he's the descendant of a family that runs a food business. It seems the fourth generation is already in preparation.

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FB Taipei Market

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