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ASIAN FOOD INVASION! GASTRONOMES GO GA-GA OVER LAKSA

Tom Tom Noodle House Only U.S. Restaurant to Serve Delectable Delight from Singapore

DALLAS (November 5, 2003) – Prepare to dine and go to heaven. Laksa heaven.

With the debut of Laksa on its lunch and dinner menus, Tom Tom Noodle House owners tout it is the only restaurant in the United States to serve up this one-of-a-kind Asian culinary sublimity for lunch and dinner.

Originating in Singapore centuries ago, Laksa has evolved across Malaysia, Thailand and Borneo into nothing less than food art exquisitely crafted for pure self-indulgence. Throughout Southeast Asia, there are countless Laksa stalls on street corners (where it is said you'll find the best Laksa) or in restaurants where it is considered a staple.

In fact, it's the kind of food that arouses so much passion it can start a fight.

“We researched recipes from all over Asia to create the ultimate Tom Tom Laksa. In Sydney, a discussion around Laksa can even launch an argument,” says Russell Hayward, owner of Tom Tom Noodle House. Hayward first tasted the dish in the late 1970s when he worked in Sydney as a young ad exec. “Australian friends compete to discover the best Laksa place the way Americans traditionally scout out the best hamburger joints.”

Laksa's ingredients innocently seem simple. Rice vermicelli noodles are flash-cooked, placed in a bowl, and covered with Laksa broth. The doused noodles are then garnished with sliced omelet, bean sprouts, large shrimp and shredded chicken breast, all of which is topped with a layer of thinly sliced Laksa leaves.

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Getting Laksa just right, however, is extremely challenging with many, many precise steps, Hayward adds. Three to four hours are needed just to make the sharply-flavored curry paste that forms the base of the dish. Measurements and chopping must be precise or the paste can go awry and threaten the entire batch. Tom Tom even makes its own “special ingredient” chili powder, which is one of the secret parts of its proprietary Laksa curry paste. Finding the elusive Laksa leaves was another challenge. Tom Tom discovered the only North American grower of Laksa leaves was located in Northern California. Deliveries arrive twice a week from this special resource.

Done right, every mouthful of Laksa is its own riotous orgy of subtle flavors: candle nut, lemon grass, sour tamarind, garlic and blended together with the curry paste to form a liquid that seems to possess a hundred different flavors simultaneously. The Laksa leaves add another unique, habit-forming (albeit legal) flavor dimension. Rounding out this sumptuous feast in a bowl is a lime quarter, the juice of which should be squeezed into a spoon and gently agitated into the other ingredients.

Laksa traditionally is eaten with chopsticks and a spoon, all the better to finish every drop. Since adding the dish to the menu, it has quickly become one of the top requests—and, no one is sharing.

In addition to the \$6.95 lunch Laksa, Tom Tom Noodle House also serves Laksa dinners starting at \$8.00 for vegetable and tofu, \$9.95 for chicken, and \$10.95 for shrimp and chicken.

Tom Tom Noodle House (www.tomtomnoodlehouse.com) is a contemporary Pan-Asian restaurant – a modern New York noodle house that blends the distinctive flavors of the Pacific Rim and the Asian markets of Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Sydney, Australia. As in the “street foods”, grills, noodles and rice bowls menu, the theme of detailed simplicity is carried throughout the restaurant, from a rock garden in the front to the blond and citrus colors and clean lines of the interiors. Tom Tom restaurant is built with organic materials, such as wood, silk and other fabrics – a little bit of stone, a little bit of steel. At present, Tom Tom Noodle House in Dallas’ West Village offers dine-in, takeout or delivery. Owned by Triple R Group, plans include expansion of the concept within North Texas and across the United States.

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