



SARAWAK FLAVOURS

Talks of Sarawak food bring up images of exotic delicacies of the multi-ethnic communities here. But there's more to Sarawak's epicurean offerings than *pansoh manuk*, *nuba' laya*, *linut*, *kasom ikien*, etc. Sure, exotic foods are a must when you come to this part of the world, but if you're not ready for extreme flavours or textures, there are less exotic dishes that are just as lip-smackingly delicious and distinctively Sarawakian.

A must-try dish is **Nasi Goreng Dabai**, for which the *dabai* (*Canarium odontophyllum*) fruit is used. Often likened to black olives due to its shape and colour, it is described as tasting somewhat like avocado. The fruit is often eaten on its own, but also makes a great addition to fried rice, lending creaminess to the dish.

Sarawakians love their **Midin**. This tasty wild fern grows abundantly all over Sarawak and can even be seen on roadsides. Depending on your preference, you can have your *Midin* cooked with just garlic, with *belacan* (fermented shrimp paste), or even a la Thai salad. A must-try if it's your first time visiting Sarawak.

For the Chinese community of Sarawak, **Kacangma** Chicken is the go-to confinement dish, although these days it has become a favourite everyday dish among the locals. Its main ingredients are dried *kacangma* (Chinese Motherwort) leaves, ginger, chicken and Chinese cooking wine. It's especially great on cold days as it warms up the body.

Nasi Aruk, a Sarawakian Malay dish, is essentially fried rice minus the oil, save for the frying of ingredients like anchovies and onions. Once brought to a crisp, the anchovies and onions are introduced to rice, and the mixture is wok-fried without oil to allow the flavours to permeate through the rice. The end result is a fragrant dish that is savoury, slightly briny and most importantly, a lot less greasy compared to fried rice. At Window on the Lake, a restaurant at Pustaka Negeri Sarawak, you can order the dish on its own or add a side order of Bandung Goreng (Deep Fried Tapioca with *Sambal*).

Check out these
F&B joints for
delicious Sarawak
flavours:

1. **I-Café, Kuching (Halal)**

For stir-fried *Manicai* and *Midin* dishes. Also try their Sarawak Nyonya style Assam Fish and four beans with dried shrimp.

Address: Lot 295-296, Rubber Road & Lorong 9, Kuching.
T: +6082 428 878 FB: I-Cafe-178745012207673

2. **Apple Restaurant, Bintulu (Halal)**

For *Midin* dishes. Order up their *Empurau* fish dishes, which are super expensive but worth a try.

Address: No. 78-79, Lot 3364, Parkcity Commercial Centre, Jalan Tun Ahmad Zaidi, Kuching.
T: +6086 333 377

The *Baba Nyonya* of Sarawak have their unique ways of preparing food, often blending Chinese and Malay elements just like the *Baba Nyonya* of Penang and Melaka, but at the same time using a combination of ingredients and techniques that make them uniquely Sarawakian. i-Café Kuching's *Nyonya* style **Assam Pedas** is an amazing combo of sweet, sour and spicy. The fish of choice is a species locally known as *Ikan Jan*. Preparation is essential to eliminate the strong fishy smell of *Ikan Jan*, and i-Café does it so well that they can easily have non fans of the fish fall in love with it at the first bite.

Traditionally, sago is a staple for the Melanau. Harvested from sago palms, which grow especially abundantly in Mukah – the Heartland of the Melanau, sago can be enjoyed in several ways, including *Linut* (coagulated sago resulting from adding boiling water into a mixture of sago starch as well as room temperature water). However, if you're not ready for the gooey consistency of *Linut*, you may opt for **Tumpik**. It's essentially a pancake made with sago and dried coconut flakes. Simple, fragrant and delicious!



Manicai (Chinese), **Cangkuk Manis** (Malay) or Sweet Leaf as it is called in English, is much adored by pretty much every Sarawakian. It has a rather fancy scientific name - *Sauropus androgynus*, although the locals pay no mind to it. All that matters is that it tastes good! The best way to enjoy *Manicai* is to have it stir-fried with garlic and egg.

Do these make your mouth water already? Try some of these local delicacies for yourself when you come visit Sarawak, and see if you like them as much as the locals do.

3. **Window on the Lake, Kuching (Halal)**
For Nasi Goreng Dabai, Nasi Aruk & Tumpik. Also try their Bandung Goreng (Deep Fried Tapioca) with Sambal.
Address: Window on the Lake, Pustaka Negeri Sarawak, Jalan Pustaka, Off Jalan Stadium, Petra Jaya, Kuching.
T: +6082 442 000

4. **Payung Café, Sibul (No Pork & No Lard)**
For Kacangma Chicken. Try also their Payung Rojak.
Address: 20F Lanang Road (In front of Kingwood Hotel multi-level carpark), Sibul.
T: +6016 890 6061 FB: PayungCafe

5. **Madli's, Miri (Halal)**
For Nasi Aruk. Don't forget to try their satay, which has received rave reviews.
Address: Lot 1088 Ground Floor, Jln Merpati, Miri.
T: +6085 426 615 FB: madlisrestaurant

TASTE OF THE WILD



It's lunchtime in a village somewhere in Sarawak, and inviting aromas fill the air as you walk past the houses along a narrow street. You step inside one of the houses to find a mother carrying a bowl filled with terong asam soup and placing it on the dinner table for her family to enjoy. On that same table are other bowls and plates filled with various vegetable and meat dishes such as pansoh manok, sambal serai, and stir-fried tapioca leaves. Each of the dishes give off a different and unique set of smells that make your mouth water.

Surely most Sarawakians, as well as those who have been to Sarawak, are familiar with the wonderful array of local dishes such as those mentioned above. Those of you who have tried them love their taste and their aroma, but have you ever wondered what ingredients are used to give them their uniquely distinctive taste and smell?

For centuries, the local population especially the indigenous folks have depended on the jungle for many things, including food. Sarawak's jungles are rich in many varieties of plant species that can be used either as main ingredients, such as bamboo shoot, jungle ferns, and wild mushrooms, or as flavour and aroma enhancers. We list some of them here:



Tepus

Also known as tuhau or upak kechalak among the locals, Tepus (*Etlingera coccinea*) is a particularly versatile wild herb that has grown to become a favourite among many. It grows wild in the jungles of Sarawak, although the tepus has found its way into people's gardens where they are kept as decorative plants.

Incredibly aromatic, tepus is often eaten raw with sambal belacan, along with a serving of white rice. That alone is adequately satisfying. But the tepus can be enjoyed in many more ways than one.

The tepus shoot is also crushed and stir-fried along with tapioca leaves and anchovies, or cooked with meat, poultry, or fish in soups and pansoh dishes. The amount used in these dishes really depends on one's personal preference. Some don't mind just a hint of its aroma and taste, while some prefer a huge dose in their dishes. Remember though, that tepus has a rather pungent smell that some have likened to an insect the locals call kesing (*Pentatomoidea*), so it's not really everyone's cup of tea.



Isip leaf

It is scientifically known as *Phrynium maximum* Blume – a rather lengthy name. But to the people of the beautiful Kelabit Highlands, it is simply known as Isip leaf. Commonly found in the wild, Isip leaf is also being cultivated, particularly around Pa Dalih area in the Kelabit Highlands.

Isip leaves are commonly used by the Orang Ulu to prepare their iconic wrapped rice known as Nuba Laya. Cooked Bario rice is first mashed while still piping hot. The mashed rice is then wrapped in a single Isip leaf before it is served along with other dishes. The result of this is a fragrant mashed rice that also has an "enhanced" flavour.

Terung Asam

The name simply translates as sour eggplant, and it is also called terung Dayak perhaps because it is a common ingredient used by the Dayak folks in Sarawak.

Unlike the common aubergine, terung asam is round and has dark green skin that turns yellow when the fruit ripens. The flesh is firm and bright yellow in colour, while the soft central cavity contains small seeds that can be easily scooped out and discarded.

Rich in vitamin C, calcium, fibre, phosphorus, and potassium, terung asam is sour with a hint of sweetness, making it perfect for soups. Cut up some and throw it in a pot of water with some lemongrass, chilli, ginger, and your choice of protein (fish, poultry, or meat) and you've got yourself a delicious Sarawak-style sour and spicy soup. Some like to use smoked fish to give their soup a more intense flavour.

Another popular way of eating terung asam is by grilling it over an open fire until the skin gets charred, and the flesh turns soft. The flesh is then pounded in a pestle and mortar along with belacan (shrimp paste), chilli, anchovies, and other ingredients to make it into sambal. Perfect over steamed white rice.

Today, you can even find terung asam flavoured ice cream, although it is a rare item.



Asam Embang

Scientifically known as *Mangifera pajang*, this wild mango endemic to the island of Borneo goes by several different names. Asam Embang is what the Malay of Sarawak call this fruit. Another Malay name for it is Bua Embawang. The Iban folk call it Bua Mawang. The Bidayuh call it Asom Bawang.

Asam Embang is distinctive in a number of ways. Firstly, the fruit is round and about the size of a cannonball. A single fruit can weigh up to 1kg.

Unlike most mango species that have yellow or reddish skin when fully ripened, Asam Embang has thick brown skin. When ripe, the flesh of the Asam Embang is not overly sweet and has a more unique flavour compared to the common mango. Its flesh is also very fibrous as opposed to that of the common mango.

Asam Embang can be enjoyed as is, juiced, or mixed with belacan, dried anchovies, chillies, etc. to make sambal. It's not just delicious to eat, but its rich antioxidant content is also good for the skin, protects against coronary heart disease, and has anti-cancer properties.



Ensabi

This one's not for those who can't handle intense flavours. Ensabi (*Brassica juncea* (L.) Czern. var. *Ensabi*) is basically local mustard, and a very bitter one! Like a lot of the unique vegetables in Sarawak, the ensabi thrived in the wild but is now being cultivated by the indigenous communities here, primarily the Iban and Bidayuh. They can also be found in farmers markets all over Sarawak.

Ensabi leaves are often bruised and stir-fried with just garlic and anchovies. A substantial amount of salt can be added to counter the intense pungency and bitterness of the ensabi leaves. Some add fried pork fat bits for texture and extra flavour.

A popular way to enjoy ensabi is to preserve it in some salt and water from boiled rice. Some add sugar for a tiny bit of sweetness. After several days of fermentation in a well-sealed jar, you have yourself some kasam ensabi (preserved ensabi). Simply stir-fry with some garlic, anchovies, and chili for a satisfying meal!



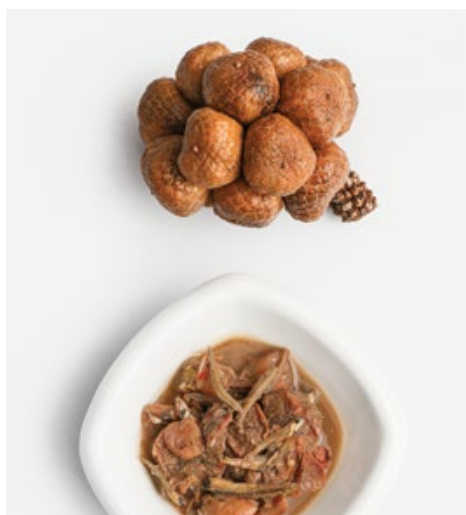
Asam paya

Asam paya is a type of palm that thrives in swampy areas. Its fruit is also known as maram fruit or asam kelubi. It appears almost 100 percent similar to the sweet salak fruit. They both have scaly skin and are about the same size. But don't let its familiar appearance fool you.

Peel off the skin to find that the flesh of the asam paya (*Eleiodoxa conferta*) is slightly brownish in colour. And instead of being sweet, the flesh of the asam paya is extremely sour! But that sourness is something the locals just can't get enough of. In fact, a mere mention of asam paya can induce drooling in avid fans of the fruit!

Asam paya is often made into sambal, with some belacan (shrimp paste), anchovies, sugar, and chilli. Submerge the fruit in sugar water and let it sit for several days, and you'll have a delicious sweet and sour snack. The Melanau folk in Igan traditionally use asam paya to make their ceviche-like fish dish called umai. No onions, ginger or other ingredients necessary.

Besides the ones mentioned here, there are plenty other wild flavours of Sarawak that are a delicacy to the locals, such as kepayang, midin, paku, umbut, engkala, terap, as well as the unique durian nyeka and durian isu. Some are seasonal while others can be found all year round. Now that travelling is possible again, do feel free to come to Sarawak and experience these uniquely amazing wild flavours yourself. They might just turn out to be your most favourite foods ever!



DELICIOUS HALAL

Nonton



Yoo Tiao

Mee Sua



Kacangma



Kampua Mee



Bao



Kampua Mee with chili sauce



Ang Ku Kueh



Twelve Crispy Mee



Kampua Mee with soy sauce



Min Chiang Kueh (Apam balik)



CHINESE DISHES (HALAL VERSIONS)

Like your favourite ice-blended cold drink, Sarawak blends and mixes the tastes and cultures of all its residents, local and foreign, to create a unique fusion of flavour that is displayed in Sarawakian food. People from all backgrounds that have journeyed to and settled in Sarawak have had a hand in lending flavours from their motherland to create new types of food and delicacies uniquely Sarawakian for all of us to enjoy.

As Sarawakians live harmoniously in unity, love happens and so do intermarriages, and not only do these give birth to racial harmony among Sarawakians, it also translates to what we put in our plates. Today, it's not difficult to find halal versions of food that are originally non-halal, especially Chinese cuisine. Here are some examples:

Kampua Mee

Kampua Mee has Foochow origins and uses straight noodles instead of curly ones. *Kampua Mee* is usually coated either in soy sauce or chilli sauce, or you could have it white. Halal ones are topped with chicken slices instead of pork. So, the next time you want to try something different for breakfast, give the *Kampua Mee* a shot.

Sadiqin Lim Kampua • Jalan Kampung Tupong Batu, Kampung Tupong Tengah, 93050 Kuching, Sarawak . Tel: +60 16 666 3278

YS Café • Kampung Nangka, 96000 Sibul, Sarawak (open every day except Friday from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm) . Tel: +60 19 876 4848

Tomato Crispy Mee

A sizzling thick, sweet and sour tomato gravy is poured over deep-fried crispy noodles. The heat of the gravy will soften the noodles as they soak up the tasty tomato sauce. This might take a couple of minutes, but it's worth the wait!

Tomato Mee Kampung Stampin Baru • Lor 4, Kampung Stutong Baru, 93350 Kuching, Sarawak (opening time: everyday 6:30 am to 10:30 pm)

Ang Ku Kueh

Resembling a tortoise, *Ang Ku Kueh* is made from glutinous rice flour with a sweet mung bean, red bean or sometimes peanut butter paste filling. Banana leaf on which it is placed lends a beautiful aroma to the 'kueh'. Halal ones are easily available now and are a favourite for teatime.

Kacangma

What started as a Hakka confinement dish is now regarded as one of Sarawak's most unique and must-try food. Halal versions are now available too, without cooking wine added in.

Aroma Cafe • 126, 122, Jalan Tabuan, Taman Budaya, 93100 Kuching, Sarawak . Tel: +60 82 417 163

Yoo Tiao

One of the more famous street foods in Sarawak is the Yoo Tiao or *Cakoi*. It is a very simple yet delicious Chinese delicacy.

It is basically a strip of dough, deep-fried until golden brown and enjoyed as a snack or with a bowl of rice porridge.

I Love Yoo • Permaisuri Imperial City Mall, Jalan Merpati, 98000 Miri, Sarawak . (open everyday from 10 am to 10 pm)

Min Chiang Kueh (Apam balik)

It may come as a surprise to many people that the *apam balik* actually originates from China, despite having a widely known Malay name. Made halal by the Malays, the *apam balik* is now one of Sarawak's favourite desserts and can be found easily in many street markets of Sarawak.

Bao

This quintessentially Chinese steamed bun is traditionally white in colour and packed with a delicious meat filling. Halal versions of Chinese steamed buns have been around for a while now, filled with a variety of sweet or savoury fillings such as black pepper chicken, BBQ chicken, chocolate and many others.

Dim Sum & Co. Kuching • 92, Lor Duranta 2, Taman Sejoli, 93050 Kuching, Sarawak (opening time: Sunday to Thursday from 4 pm to 10:30 pm . Friday and Saturday from 4 pm to 11 pm)

Mee Sua

This almost thread-thin noodle has been adopted and altered by the Malays to accommodate the community's beliefs. The halal version is served in light chicken broth, mushrooms, egg, scallions, and a chicken drumstick, minus the Chinese cooking wine.

Sadiqin Lim Kampua • Jalan Kampung Tupong Batu, Kampung Tupong Tengah, 93050 Kuching, Sarawak . Tel: +60 16 666 3278

Wonton

Another Chinese classic is the famous wonton. While it originally contains pork and shrimp, the halal version is made using chicken instead, with chicken broth poured over it.

MUSLIM-FRIENDLY FOODS THAT WOW

Looking for Muslim-friendly food outlets? Here are some go-to outlets for awesome Muslim-friendly food that will make you go **“Wow”!**

kuching



Takeaways Sim pang Tiga Grilled Burger

These guys cook up burgers that trump the big timers anytime! Among Kuching's first street burgers that feature homemade patties. Inexpensive, super simple and super delicious, their lamb burger with a slice of pineapple ring is a must!

Where: Next to Bangunan Koperkasa (Opposite Swinburne University), Jalan Uplands, Kuching **When:** Mon-Fri from 7pm to 10pm

Nasi Lemak Ganja

Interesting name choice and honest-to-God huge portions are their main pulling factors. Their Nasi Lemak Biasa (normal) comes with deep-fried chicken thigh or drumstick and a heaping scoopful of their legitimately delicious spicy *sambal*. You can opt for *sambal sotong*, *sambal udang*, *sambal paru*, etc. for a few Ringgit extra. The name's starting to make sense now, huh?

Where: Stall No. 22, Kubah Ria food court, Jalan Matang, Kuching **When:** Mon-Sat from 5pm to 11pm



Ayam Mak Entek™

“Legendary” some call it, the dish consists of a whole deep fried spiced chicken leg, white rice, half an egg, baked beans and sweet chilli sauce. It is simple, cheap and oh-so-good that people would actually have a craving for it. Ayam Mak Entek™ is Javanese for “mum’s chicken is finished”.

Where: Warong 2000, Desa Ilmu Pedestrian Mall (Opposite Summer Mall), 94300 Kota Samarahan **When:** Daily from 5pm until midnight



Rojak Kucei

An old time favourite for their Indian style *rojak* famously known by many as *Rojak Kucei*, which is made up of tofu, vegetable fritters, beansprouts, cucumber, fried chicken and a delicious sweet and spicy gravy.

Where: No 1, Jalan Batu Lintang, 93200 Kuching, Sarawak **When:** Mon-Sat from 6am to 1pm **Contact:** +6019 816 0238

miri



Laksa Lolita

Touted as one of the best Laksa Sarawak in..., well...Sarawak, the laksa here is to die for. It's creamier than the original Chinese version, but most who have tasted it are head over heels in love with it.

Where: 349, Jalan Miri - Lutong, Lutong, 98000 Miri, Sarawak **When:** Mon-Sat from 7am to 2pm / Sunday from 7am to 12 noon

Restoran Muara

Think "lalapan", think Restoran Muara, one of the first eating establishments in Miri to offer the famous Indonesian dish consisting of rice, fried chicken, vegetables, tofu and a spicy *sambal*. Great food and perfect location just by the river.

Where: Near Miri Waterfront, Jalan Pala, 98000 Miri, Sarawak
When: Sat-Thurs from 11am to 2.30pm **Contact:** +6019 333 0904



Nasi Ulam Kampung 883

If you have a longing for Semenanjung (Peninsular Malaysia) style dishes, this is where you should head for mouth-watering *Masak Lemak Cili Api*, *Gulai Kawah*, an assortment of curries, *ulam-ulam* (local style salad) and many others.

Where: Lot 537 Jalan Kipas, Miri, Sarawak
When: Daily from 8am to 10.30pm
Contact: +6010 408 5526

sibu



Nasi Ayam Ori Kampung Baru

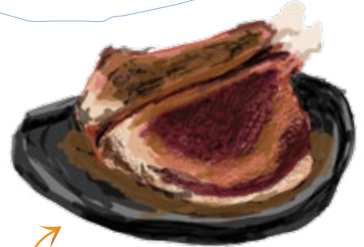
Prepared using a special family recipe, their chicken rice has received rave reviews from the public and is always sold out. It's a good idea to book ahead just to be sure it doesn't run out when you get there.

Where: Popular Café, 2-20, Jln Morshidi Sidek, Pekan Sibul, 96000 Sibul, Sarawak **When:** Daily from 9am - 4pm **Contact:** +6013 829 4699

Satria Cendol Pulut

They're new but they have been making waves with their insanely delicious *cendol*. Their signature *Cendol Pulut* is a must. Try their *Cendol Durian*, if the King of Fruits is in season. Worth the 30-minute-or-so drive from Sibul Town centre.

Where: Satria Cendol Pulut, Kampung Jeriah, 96000 Sibul, Sarawak
When: Tues-Fri from 2pm to 10pm / Sat & Sun from 12.30pm to 10pm
Contact: +6019 866 6046



APN Manok Tunuk Station 8

Sink your teeth into some delicious charcoal BBQ chicken that's chockfull of flavour. Their *Ayam Panggang Madu* (Honey BBQ Chicken) is splendid. You can try their satays and other BBQ meats as well.

Where: Stall No. 8, Taman Harmoni, Jalan Awang Ramli Amit, 96000 Sibul, Sarawak
When: Daily from 6pm to 12am **Contact:** +6010 907 9936

ICONIC FOOD OF SARAWAK'S CHINESE DIALECT GROUPS

Scan me to watch the video!



The Chinese migrated to Sarawak before the second World War. Their migration occurred in stages, with one dialect group arriving after the other, bringing with them their skills and expertise that would eventually result in them contributing immensely to the growth of Sarawak and the local economy, through rice farming, trading and many more.

They also brought with them their traditional cuisines, which have stood the test of time and are today enjoyed by people from all walks of life here in Sarawak. No, we're not talking about Kolo Mee or Laksa Sarawak – we're referring to traditional food of the different dialect groups of Chinese who now call Sarawak home. Here we list some of those iconic dishes:

LEI CHA (HAKKA)

Hakka is one of the largest Chinese dialect groups in Sarawak. Their heritage is still kept intact in the old town of Siniawan, where some of them still speak fluent Hopoh Hakka and prepare traditional Hakka cuisine just like their Taiwanese counterparts.

One of the most famous dishes brought by the Hakka Chinese to Sarawak is Lei Cha. Translated to English, Lei Cha means 'thunder tea rice'. The name is derived from the process of making this dish, which includes the "thunderous" pounding of its ingredients.

Traditionally Chinese and once consumed only by the poor, Lei Cha is enjoyed today by Sarawakians from all walks of life, especially among the health-conscious. This healthy, all-vegetable, nuts-and-grains dish consists of rice, toasted peanuts, and different kinds of vegetables. Though the ingredients may vary, Lei Cha is traditionally made up of nine items, including rice, soup and seven types of vegetables and nut-based toppings. The dish can be eaten at any time of the day, even though traditionally it was consumed by the Hakka people on the seventh day of the Lunar New Year.

MEE SUA (FOOCHOW)

Sibu's Foochow community stepped foot on Sarawakian soil in 1901 in a large-scale migration from China to Sibu, led by Chinese Revolutionary leader Wong Nai Siong. They have since contributed immensely to Sibu's growth turning it into one of Sarawak's most prominent towns.

The Foochow people also brought with them some of their traditional cuisines, which have become part and parcel of Sarawakian food culture today. One of those iconic Foochow foods is Mee Sua (long-life noodles) - a long thin noodle made from just wheat flour and salt and is typically served on birthdays and other special occasions.

Although its production has been made more efficient through the use of modern machinery, a handful of Mee Sua producers still make traditional hand-pulled Mee Sua.



Henghua Noodle (Henghua)

Cantonese Mee (Cantonese)

Mee Sua (Foochow) by @pennspantry

Chinese Chicken Rice (Hainanese)



Lei Cha (Hakka)



Toppings (Mee Tiochew) by @igate_pomelo



Hokkien Mee (Hokkien)



When in Sibü, make it a point to try their Red Wine Mee Sua, which is long-life noodle in a red wine broth and comes with chicken and hard-boiled egg. But Mee Sua is not only available exclusively in Sibü. You can also find it in Kuching, Miri, Bintulu, Sarikei and many other places throughout Sarawak, although Sibü's Mee Sua is as authentic as it gets.

HENGHUA NOODLE (HENGHUA)

The Henghua are among the smallest Chinese dialect groups in Sarawak and were mostly fishermen. Those who lived in the more urban areas were initially rickshaw peddlers. But after the second world war, some Henghua folks got into the business of trading bicycles and spare parts.

Where cuisine is concerned, the Henghua of Sarawak are largely known for their Henghua Noodle. It is a very simple dish of rice noodles braised in a clear soup base, with some meat, seafood and vegetable added in. The dish is seasoned with just salt and light soy and topped with seaweed and roasted peanuts.

Henghua Noodle is light but satisfying, and is perfect at any time of the day. It is not as widely sold as Kolo Mee or Laksa Sarawak, but you can find it at some of the coffee shops here.

TEOCHEW MOEY (TEOCHEW)

Sarawak's Teochew community originated from the Shantou seaport in Guangdong Province of China. They sailed to Kuching on invitation from Rajah Brooke to start an agricultural settlement here. The Teochew of Sarawak are primarily business owners that operate grocery stores and other small businesses.

The Teochew people of Sarawak are known for a number of delicious dishes such as kway chap (rice sheets in a herbal pork soup) and Pak Lo Ngap (braised five spice duck). But a large part of their daily meal is Teochew Moey, which is simply plain rice congee eaten with a variety of side dishes.

Depending on the time of the day the porridge is eaten, side dishes can be just salted egg and pickled vegetables in the morning, or heavier ones like braised duck or pork, fried fish in salted black beans, fermented bean curd and pork mince with bean paste for lunch and dinner. Perfect on cold days!

HAINANESE CHICKEN RICE (HAINANESE)

The Hainanese arrived at the shores of Sarawak later than the other Chinese dialects. During this time, businesses were mostly already run by other ethnics. Therefore, the Hainanese had to settle with becoming helpers of officers during the Colonial rule and doing electrical works.

Over time, they became very good at making coffee, kaya and the Chinese style curry many Sarawakians grew to love. And they

started selling these in push carts at first before eventually setting up coffee shops along Carpenter Street and selling them there.

But there's one dish that's more iconic than the coffee, kaya and curry, and that's the famous Hainanese Chicken Rice. It's a simple dish that is an adaptation of the Hainanese dish Wenchang Chicken and comprises poached chicken (although many call it steamed chicken), flavoured rice and cucumber slices, served with a special chilli dip, thick soy and soup.

Today, one can find roasted or fried chicken rice in most shops in Sarawak, but none of these are as good as the original Hainanese Chicken Rice.

HOKKIEN MEE (HOKKIEN)

The Hokkien were among the earliest settlers in Kuching and were mostly businessmen who occupied the urban areas. Many of them stayed near the Tua Pek Kong temple and ran most of the trading companies in Kuching.

Like the other Chinese dialects in Sarawak, the Hokkien also have their signature food. One of the most famous ones is Hokkien Mee.

While not very commonly served in Sarawak, one can find KL, Penang and Singapore versions of the noodle dish sold at eating outlets here. However, there are some outlets here that serve a more localised version of the dish, whereby the noodle is drenched in a dark soy-based broth.

CANTONESE MEE (CANTONESE)

Like the Henghua, the Cantonese is also among the smallest dialect groups in Sarawak. Their arrival in Sarawak happened rather early, primarily during the opium war in China. Business-wise, they mostly owned grocery stores, sold shoes, repaired watches and became goldsmiths.

Culinary-wise, despite their small population here in Sarawak, their dishes are among the most highly sought after. One of the most popular Cantonese dishes in Sarawak is none other than Cantonese Mee.

Sarawak's version of Cantonese Mee is unique in that crispy deep fried egg noodles like the ones for kolo mee is used. Those who do not like crispy noodles can also opt for kway teow, yellow noodles or rice vermicelli. The noodle is drenched in sizzling hot egg sauce with meat slices, some seafood and mustard greens. Perfect for those who want something simple, delicious and not too heavily seasoned.

There you have it – some of the most iconic Chinese dishes of the different dialect groups you can find here in Sarawak. If you haven't tried any of them, make a point to do so on your next trip to the Land of the Hornbills!

Busak Luduh Kerabu Mangga

(Mango Salad With Torch Ginger)



A perfectly balanced dish comprising thinly sliced young mangoes, green chillies and Bunga Kantan drizzled with lime juice.

Abbeng Arur Layun

(Minced Fish from Arur Layun)



Essentially a deboned fish prepared in traditional Kelabit style, this version of Abbeng is mixed with Bunga Kantan (Torch Ginger) to give it a more zesty flavour.

Bua' Petar Pa' Mada

(Minced Chopped Petai Beans & Anchovies)



Even if you're not a fan of Stink Beans, which we call Petai here, this dish is a must try! Finely minced and fried with small anchovies, it's amazing when served on hot rice.

HIGH-LANDER SET

Sarawak Cultural Village



Sarawak Cultural Village, dazzles with a new authentic ethnic set that will surely excite your taste buds. Experience the meal of the Highlanders with a set of ethnic dishes available only at Sarawak Cultural Village's Budaya Restaurant.

Food of the Highlanders is unique in the sense that no salt was used in any of the dishes, unless it's their very own Highland salt. These dishes are replicas of age-old recipes from villages in the Kelabit Highlands, located at the farthest reaches of the Baram and Limbang rivers. As tribute, the names of the villages are included in the name of the dishes.

Labo Belatuh Pa Lungan

(Shredded Beef)



Beef is salted and smoked over an open fire before being boiled and pounded into strips. The meat is then cooked with Bario cinnamon and fried with Tepus (Red Gingerwort) and Biji Kucai (Chive Seeds), giving it a mild ginger taste along with the smokiness.

Urum Ubi Palungan

(Tapioca with Palm Sugar)



End your Highlander meal with a set of Urum Ubi Palungan, which is fried tapioca that is crispy on the outside and fluffy on the inside, served with Gula Apong (local palm sugar).

Nuba' Laya'

(Rice wrapped in Isip Leaf)



Wrapped in Daun Isip (Isip leaves), Bario Rice is one of the finest rice produced in Sarawak. Cultivated traditionally, it is high in thiamine and low in fat, not to mention delicious!

The Highlander set also contains other signature dishes such as Abeng Arur Layun, Arur Dalan, Tempoyak Sarawak, Puluh Semaag and Young Cucumber Leaf Soup as well as a special Calamansi Lime drink.



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