



AS IT IS

Vietnam Hotel Offers Less Costly Gold Steak Meal

December 13, 2021

A hotel in Vietnam is offering people the chance to try gold leaf-covered **steaks**. The move comes after a government minister was caught on camera eating the food at a London restaurant. Such steaks can cost over \$1,300.

Last year, the Dolce Hanoi Golden Lake Hotel used large amounts of the metal during a building improvement project. During the work, gold plating was added to everything from **bath tubs** to toilets.

Now, as part of a business plan, the hotel has changed the name of one of its eating places to the Golden Beef Restaurant. The restaurant put the famous gold-coated "Tomahawk Wagyu" steak the Vietnamese minister ate in London on the **menu**, charging about \$45 a person.

Nguyen Huu Duong is head of Hoa Binh Group, which owns the hotel. He told Reuters, "We have served more than 1,000 guests who came to try out the golden steak."

Turkish cook Nusret Gokce, also known as "Salt Bae," published a video online of himself feeding Vietnam's Minister of Public Security To Lam the gold-covered Tomahawk steak.

The video, released last month, received wide attention back in Vietnam. People were surprised that the official would eat a steak that can cost up to \$1,914 at some restaurants.

Many in the Southeast Asian country questioned how such a high-ranking Communist Party official could eat such costly food. Especially when his restaurant visit came as the Vietnamese government was carrying out a large campaign against corruption. Officials in Vietnam have not commented on the incident.

The event led to more publicity in Vietnam when police called in a beef noodle seller who filmed himself copying, or imitating, Gokce. Police in Vietnam sometimes call in for questioning activists and people who publicly criticize the ruling Communist Party. The noodle seller denied he was trying to make fun of anyone.

Even though the hotel in Hanoi had already been serving gold steaks, the recent incident in London was the reason for the restaurant's new name, said Duong. He is a Vietnam War veteran and former taxi driver who made his money in building projects and property.

The restaurant imports its gold leaves and uses about 10-15 on each Tomahawk steak, which can serve about four people.

"I thought, why don't I open a restaurant that sells golden steaks that are affordable," Duong said.

Affordable is a term that means less costly.

At \$45, the dish still costs too much for many, however. Monthly earnings in Vietnam average about \$183.

Still, people at the restaurant appeared to feel they were getting good value for their money.

Pham Duy Bach was one visitor who enjoyed the time at the restaurant, describing it as "one of the most memorable experiences of my life."

I'm John Russell.

Ed Davies reported on this story for Reuters. John Russell adapted it for Learning English. Bryan Lynn was the editor.

Words in This Story

steak – *n.* a thick, flat piece of meat, especially beef

bath tub – *n.* a large and long container in which people take baths or showers

menu - *n.* : a list of the foods that may be ordered at a restaurant
