



ARTS & CULTURE

Singapore-style Food Center Opens in New York

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For the first time, a Singapore-**style** cooked food center has opened in New York. It brings flavors from the Southeast Asian island's mix of Malay, Chinese, Indian and other cultures to an American food court.

Urban Hawker, in midtown Manhattan, has 17 food sellers that were chosen by KF Seetoh, the food center's **curator**. Eleven of the sellers come directly from Singapore. Each seller has a well-known dish such as crab chili, oyster omelet, Hainanese chicken rice or nasi lemak, a rice dish.

Seetoh said, "I came across Singaporeans who had been living in the United States in New York for like 20, 30, 35 years, and they still miss Singapore food."

He added, "Street food in Singapore is not something you burn or deep fry. It's fairly complex. They take six hours just to prepare a meal to get it ready at 10 a.m. or 11 a.m."

The idea for the food hall was born when Seetoh met the famous U.S. cook Anthony Bourdain in 2013 at a street food event in Singapore. Bourdain liked the idea of a cooked food center, also called a hawker center, in New York.

Seetoh later discussed the idea with Eldon Scott, president of Urbanspace. Scott, a property manager who curates public markets, quickly agreed.

"The amazing thing about him saying yes was that he's never been to Singapore," Seetoh said.

Seetoh hopes that this hawker center will be the first of many in the U.S. "It's just like exporting grandmother's **deliciousness**, the food that I grew up with," he said.

Magdalene Sim, a Singaporean, said on social media about the new hawker center: "Food was good but something was missing without plastic plates, **cutlery**, and sweltering heat." Sweltering is a term that means very hot. Sim added that the lines of people "were the same though."

Julie Lee, on her third visit, praised Hainan Jones' chicken over rice. "Everyone should give it a try. So much flavor, so tender," she said.

I'm John Russell.

Roselle Chen reported on this story for Reuters. John Russell adapted it for VOA Learning English.

Words in This Story

style -- *n.* a particular way in which something is done, created, or performed

curate – *v.* to select and organize (artistic works) for presentation in (something, such as an exhibit, show, or program)

deliciousness – *n.* the quality of having a very pleasant taste

cutlery – *n.* forks, spoons, and knives used for serving and eating food

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