

WHAT'S FOR DIN?

THE "NOT SO NEW ZEALAND" FEAST

I gotta level with ya... when I originally planned the menu for this meal (advertised as a NZ picnic), I wasn't very thrilled. It was filled with all the NZ classics: trifle, fish cakes, bacon and egg pie, sausage rolls. It seemed fiddly and difficult to make for 300 people, and (to me) a little boring.

So, one night after a particularly nice Malaysian meal, I announced I was going to change the NZ dinner to Malaysian. Only problem is, I've never stepped foot in Malaysia before, never cracked open a Malaysian recipe book, and I don't have any particularly deep connections to the Malaysian community back home. My only exposure to Malaysian food is through the cheap student fare you can find back in NZ. Pretty good food in my home town of Dunedin, and really excellent in our biggest city Auckland (a giant cultural melting pot- at one point it had more cultures represented there than any city in the world).

In many ways, the Malaysian food that was in my mind was not Malaysian food at all. It's New Zealand food, cooked by people who tend to look different and speak a different language to most other New Zealanders. After all, what is New Zealand food anyways? My more 'traditional' NZ menu isn't actually New Zealand food, but British food. New Zealand, like America, is mostly made up of immigrants, and so its cuisine is made up of many different strands and peoples and ways of life. Indigenous Maori food is just as important as British food, Indian, Chinese, Malaysian, Japanese, Fijian and Japanese. NZ food is not just one thing, and to represent it as just 'British food' would be doing an injustice to the many peoples who live in NZ.

After realizing that my Malaysian meal was really just another kind of NZ food, I got wacky. I mimicked the flavor of NZ mince pie in the roti, I put two of my mum's puddings (NZ word for dessert) in the main courses, and made a menu that really looks like nothing like anyone has made before. And that's when I felt truly satisfied. I really represented a slice of NZ, lots of different disparate parts and people coming together into a little corner of the world, to make something unique.

And I suppose that's what this whole project is really about: bringing people together and creating new things, new opportunities. It's why we're all here- whether we're launching a cheese business in Ethiopia, uniting Rochester through a community-driven coffee shop, or experiencing new flavors as a way to explore and support. Thank you for being a part of it all. With you, we can continue creating, connecting, growing opportunities, and spreading agency. Learn more about our project at spreadincheese.com.

Cheers,
Liam and Jackie

MENU

FIRST COURSE:

Wine pairing:

Vipra Rosso Dolce- Sweet Red

BEACHY PINEAPPLE

Pineapple made for the beach. Marinated in rum and Malibu, it's then glazed with a tangy and smoky tamarind sauce with dried pineapple. Served on top of a braised peanut paste.

MAIN COURSE:

Wine pairing: Grounded by Josh Phelps Cabernet Sauvignon V. 2019

(1) CHICKEN CURRY WITH APPLE CRUMBLE

Two favorite things to eat in my home in NZ is chicken and potato curry, and apple crumble. Why not smash them together? Creamy and fragrant chicken curry is topped with the 'crumble': toasted coconut and apple with cinnamon, chillies, curry leaves, fish sauce and raw sugar.

(2) MINCE PIE ROTI

When making this roti, I thought the flavors of it tasted awfully like the classic NZ mince pie: a flaky pastry filled with peppery beef mince, but in flatbread form. This is a flaky flatbread flavored with smoky butter and three kinds of pepper.

(3) PICKLED CUCUMBER WITH KAFFIR LIME

Cucumbers pickled in a liquid packed with lime leaf, cilantro, basil, lemongrass and black pepper. A nice little refreshing bite.

D-SERT:

Drink pairing: order a "Naughty Negroni" cocktail

BREAKFAST ICE CREAM WITH CINNAMON ROTI

Fiddlehead coffee master, Patrick, said it tastes like "cereal milk, but in the best way." Homemade almond, caramel, banana and coffee ice cream with smoked caramel sauce.

Served with dessert version of the traditional savory roti. A perfect crispy spoon for your ice cream. Eat with your hands! Just do it!

SECOND COURSE:

Wine pairing: Grounded by Josh Phelps

Sauvignon Blanc V. 2019

MUM'S RICE PUDDING

Sticky rice slowly cooked with milk and smoked fish, a twist on my mum's rice pudding, usually made as a dessert with raisins. Finished with a spicy eggplant paste, a sweet mango and cashew paste, a sour whole lime and coconut chutney, and BBQ-flavored rice crispies to garnish.