

Philippines Pavilion at Expo 2020 to roll out 'Bangkóta meals' across restaurants in the UAE

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The Philippines brings its most popular dishes all the way from the country to the UAE in an all-new reimagined twist that is set to elevate the traditional taste of Filipino cuisine.

The ongoing Philippines Food Festival teamed-up with 13 Filipino-owned restaurants from the League of Food and Beverage Entrepreneur (LFBE), a sub-committee of the Philippine Business Council of Dubai and Northern Emirates (PBC-DNE), to collaborate and present specially curated dishes inspired by the 'Bangkóta' theme of the Philippines pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.

Philippine Department of Trade and Industry (PDTI) Assistant Secretary and Philippines @ Expo 2020 Dubai Alternate Commissioner General Rosvi C. Gaetos said that the collaboration of these Filipino-owned restaurants will help amplify the message of promoting the authentic taste of Filipino cuisine to the UAE's growing community of 10 million strong residents spanning over 200 nationalities.

"We are delighted to be working with these Filipino-owned restaurants who have successfully presented and promoted much-loved Filipino dishes. Their participation in the Philippines Food Festival embody the spirit of 'Bayanihan' (a Filipino word that best describes uniting as a community) among Filipinos in the UAE to present the potential of Filipino cuisine in today's day and age to UAE's diverse audiences," said Gaetos.



Philippine Department of Trade and Industry (PDTI) Assistant Secretary and Philippines @ Expo 2020 Dubai Alternate Commissioner General Rosvi C. Gaetos during her opening remarks at the 3rd leg of the Philippines Food Festival

With the convergence of cultures in the UAE, the Philippines intends to highlight its traditional flavorful dishes that bring families and friends together at the dining tables of each Filipino home. The organizing committee of the Philippines pavilion conceptualized the Philippines Food Festival to run alongside the Expo 2020 Dubai, dubbed as the world's greatest and most connected show this year with an expected footfall of over 25 million visits by the end of March 31, 2022.

PBC-DNE Chairperson Marian "Bobbie" Carella shared that the success of the Philippines Food Festival lies not only in the taste of these dishes but also in the strong social network of Filipinos in Dubai, their ability to influence the rest of the emirates and enticing friends from other nationalities to give these dishes a try.

"We urge our fellow Filipinos to help us spread the word about these exciting new dishes that provide our expat friends with an insight into the look, taste, and feel of the real Filipino cuisine. These dishes highlight the ongoing success of our Filipino businesses here in the UAE and this is our time and opportunity to show the utmost support for our fellow Filipinos by patronizing these homegrown brands," said Carella.

Filipino food crawl experience

Each of the participating member restaurants of the PBC-DNE League of Food and Beverage Entrepreneur at the Philippines Food Festival will be offering specially curated dishes as part of the 'Bangkóta Meal' offering.



(6th from left) Philippine Department of Trade and Industry Assistant Secretary Rosvi C. Gaetos together with the restaurant owners and guests at the event



One of the specially curated "Bangkóta Meal" for the Philippines Food Festival

Last February 3rd, the dinner launch took place at the Paluto Restaurant in Dubai, where all guests participated on an amazing food crawl that took them through each of the restaurant's distinct specialities. Each participating restaurant exhibited a sneak preview of their "Bangkóta Special," which are custom made menu item inspired by Bangkóta.

Panadero created three classic 'pandesal' (sweet bread rolls): the Plain Pan de Sal, the Pan de Coco, and the Ube Pan de Sal. Agemono created a version of the popular 'Baked Sushi' for the Philippines Food Festival's amuse bouche menu.



One of the dishes presented at the launch of the "Bangkóta Meal" for the Philippines Food Festival

For the appetizer course, diners began their meal with Kubyertos' Chicken Adobo Confit (soy-vinegar braised chicken) with Pickled Papaya, Mesclun Salad, and Cherry Tomato drizzled with Balsamic Reduction together with Shokuji's Vegetarian Ensalada Starter. Zutto Suki also combined ramen with the Filipino Kare-Kare (peanut-gravy-based dish) to create the 'Ramen Kare-Kare' for the Philippines Food Festival Soup offering.

Off the Hook's Coco Cream with Lemongrass, Paluto's Sweet and Sour Hamour, The Catch's Chicken Inasal (seasoned grilled chicken), and The Desert Wok's Stir Fry Vegetables and Sinangag (garlic fried rice) comprised the Philippine Food Festival's Main Course menu dishes. These were complemented by refreshing drinks including Ounce's Calamansito and Manchara, as well as Joy Bubble's special Buko (coconut) Pandan Milk Tea.

Wrapping up the Philippines Food Festival's menu was a wide variety of desserts from Draft Corner's Pili Nut Cheesecake, Mango Cake, and Ube (purple yam) Velvet Cake as well as Face Café's Bibingka (rice cake) and Ube Biko (purple yam rice cake).

These menu items will be available for the public across all of the restaurants' branches until March 31, 2022 to coincide with the final day of Expo 2020 Dubai.

For her part, PBC-DNE LFBE Chairman Gina Valbuena said that they have carefully selected each of these menu items so that all of the participating restaurants will get their opportunity to feature their finest works that have brought their respective businesses to success.

"We assure each and every visitor that they will savor the flavors of the Philippines on each of these dishes when they visit our participating restaurants. From appetizers to desserts, we have

prepared an entire plethora of tasty dishes that will stimulate your palate and hopefully entice you to place the Philippines in your bucket list of food travel destinations in the future,” said Valbuena.

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