

# National Day Special: How to incorporate Latvian and Greece products in Malaysian dishes according to Chefs

*This National Day, two award-winning chefs blend Malaysian flavors with premium European ingredients from Latvia and Greece.*

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, August 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As Malaysians across the country celebrate National Day with family gatherings, parades, and beloved local dishes, two award-winning chefs are bringing a fresh perspective to the culinary table—infusing traditional Malaysian flavours with premium European ingredients from Latvia and Greece.

Through the EU-funded “Premium European Products” campaign, Chef Amir Gani and Chef Jia Le Woh are showcasing how European-quality products, such as Greek extra-virgin olive oil, raisins, saffron, and Latvian dairy can be seamlessly integrated into festive dishes—enhancing aroma, texture, and colour while respecting local taste.

Merdeka Flavours, Modern Touch  
In celebration of Malaysia’s National

Day, Chef Amir Gani—renowned for his expertise in Malaysian and Nusantara cuisine—invites you to reimagine classic dishes through a creative lens. With more than a decade of culinary experience and a deep respect for traditional flavours, Chef Amir believes that even the most



Premium European Products: Better Knowledge  
Better Choices



Chef Amir Gani

beloved dishes like ayam percik, daging bakar, and kerabu can evolve without losing their soul.

### The Power of Greek Olive Oil in Local Cooking

One of his key recommendations is the use of Greek extra virgin olive oil as a smarter alternative to traditional saturated fats. In medium-heat cooking, such as the tumis technique used to prepare rich spice bases, olive oil excels. Its high monounsaturated fat content not only helps retain the full aroma of spices. For grilled dishes like ayam percik and daging bakar, Chef Amir notes that Greek olive oil absorbs spice marinades beautifully while

keeping the meat moist and flavourful during grilling. Even raw preparations such as kerabu and ulam-ulaman can benefit from a light drizzle of olive oil—enriching flavour and mouthfeel without the heaviness of coconut milk-based dressings.

Chef Amir also encourages home cooks to explore high-quality dairy from Latvia as a substitute in lemak-based recipes. While coconut milk is a cherished staple in Malaysian cooking, using European milk in part can help achieve a creamy texture with better balance. Dishes like masak lemak, sayur lodeh, and lemak cili api take on a fresh twist while staying true to their traditional roots.

Through these simple yet meaningful adaptations, Chef Amir demonstrates that Malaysian cuisine can stay rooted in culture while embracing global-quality ingredients. His approach is not about replacing tradition, but enhancing it—bringing out the best in heritage dishes with European excellence.

### Naturally Sweet & Beautiful: Raisins & Saffron in Local Dishes

In Malaysia's spice-rich cuisine, a delicate balance of heat, aroma, and sweetness defines many of the nation's beloved dishes. Greek PDO Corinthian raisins (Vostizza variety), with their natural sweetness and chewy texture, serve as an ideal ingredient to enhance this balance. Traditionally, recipes like rendang or kurma on gula Melaka or white sugar to soften bold spices. Raisins offer a more wholesome alternative, contributing both flavour and nutritional value without overpowering the dish.

Saffron, another prized ingredient, serves as a natural substitute for artificial food coloring often



Chef Jia Le Woh

used in dishes such as nasi minyak or traditional kuih like talam and kuih lompong. Beyond its signature golden hue, saffron brings subtle floral notes that complement the rich, coconut-based flavours common during Malaysian festivities.

Similarly, milk can be used as a substitute for coconut milk in certain creamy local dishes. While coconut milk lends richness and aroma, European dairy milk, particularly from Latvia, offers a smooth, creamy texture that works well in recipes such as masak putih, lemak cili api, or traditional kuih. This substitution provides chefs and home cooks with another option for reinterpreting familiar dishes.

Through these thoughtful pairings, Malaysian cuisine finds new dimensions, where familiar heritage recipes are enriched by premium international ingredients without losing their cultural essence.

#### A Celebration of Culture and Quality

This National Day, the fusion of local recipes and European ingredients represents more than just creative cooking—it's about preserving Malaysian heritage while embracing global-quality alternatives. Whether it's using Greek olive oil in satay sauce or Latvian milk in kuih seri muka, the "Premium European Products" campaign shows that tradition and innovation can taste great together.

#### Rooted in Culture, Open to the World

As Malaysians celebrate 68 years of independence, this fusion of local recipes with European-quality ingredients highlights the country's openness, creativity, and appreciation for global culinary excellence. Whether it's olive oil in sambal tumis or milk in kuih talam, this modern twist honors tradition while embracing innovation.

#### About Chef Amir Gani

A seasoned culinary innovator with over 12 years in the F&B industry, Chef Amir is known for blending modern technique with traditional Malaysian recipes. He co-founded The 3 Dukes Publika and leads AG Food Lab, which focuses on content creation, private dining, and consultancy. His new kampung dining concept in Penang reflects his commitment to local flavours with a modern sensibility.

#### About Chef Jia Le Woh

Chef Jia Le has trained in some of Malaysia's most prestigious hotels, including the Mandarin Oriental. Winner of the 2019 Global Culinary Challenge Malaysia, he now focuses on digital content and television, amassing over 700,000 followers with his creative, approachable food videos that celebrate Malaysian cuisine and

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