



DELICACIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

.....
with Chef Vincent



ASIA

Phew, I'm driving, travelling, hotfooting it... So many kilometres behind and in front of me, so many people all around, so many flavours on my tongue. It's enough to send one's head spinning. No wonder – right now, I'm driving through Asia, the largest and most populous continent in the world, full of wonderful culinary delicacies and interesting things. Asian food is renowned, well-balanced, and simply divine.

↓ Have you had rice today?

Where to get rice? Definitely in China. That's where it began to be grown eight thousand years ago, and that's where its consumption is the highest. Chinese make flour or noodles out of rice. Rice is even a part of their greeting. So when you're asked "Have you had rice today?", it actually means "Hello, how are you?"



The spices

Curry, turmeric, saffron, coriander, cinnamon, ginger, cloves – pretty much every corner of India is suffused with the smell of spices. What have I learned? To not use utensils for eating, but rather three fingers of my right hand. Instead of plate, a banana leaf will do perfectly. There's something to simplicity, don't you think?



Cooked while you wait

You can eat almost anywhere in Vietnam. Can you see that woman over there with those large scales thrown over her shoulder? She carries all necessary ingredients, and even a small mobile cooker in their bowls. All you need to do is ask and she'll whip up any goodie you want for you.



→ Raw, or dried?

Japan was another test for my taste buds. The locals love fish and seafood of all kinds. But would you believe that they like raw fish most of all? I even managed to buy dried lizards at a local market. Delicious!



HOW DO PEOPLE DINE?

In East Asia chop-sticks are used for eating.

At home, Indians usually eat with their hand – the right one! They use their left hand to hold a ladle and put food on the plate. Belching once you're finished signals to the chef that you enjoyed your meal!

Japanese are airtial to rich breakfasts: usually rice, fish, vegetables, a fried egg, and green tea. Slurping and smacking your lips while you eat shows you're satisfied with your food. When you eat in Japan, don't sneeze or blow your nose.

Vietnamese eat three meals a day. Finishing everything that's put in front of you is extremely impolite!

Slap-up meal

Beautiful landscape, vast steppes, but brr... so cold! It's as clear as day that Mongolians prefer rich dairy products and meat. We're in Asia where rice is the staple food, but Mongolians are an exception to this – they love dough, specifically dough filled meat pastry. What am I bringing back home? Goat and sheep cheese, dried in the Mongolian summer, duly fatty and very hard.



← Dondurma – the hanging ice-cream

I had some ice-cream in Turkey. This particular kind doesn't melt and is so solid that it hangs in stores from hooks attached to the ceiling. It's made from sugar, goat milk, and salep – sweet juice from orchid tubers. Incredible, but delicious in that special Turkish way!

ASIA

1.

Coffee & Baklava

There's nothing like authentic Turkish coffee. Turks prepare it in special containers called **cezves**, and believe me, it's quite a ritual. They serve sweet **baklava** with the coffee. This typical Turkish dessert consists of very thin slices of dough interlaid with nuts and well sweetened with honey syrup. Turkey's national dish is called **kofte** – grilled or baked balls made from ground meat. There are also a lot of hazelnuts and sultana raisins growing in the country.

2.

Have a pancake!

When I was in the Asian part of Russia, I had traditional **blins** – pancakes topped with thick cream and sprinkled with red caviar, salmon fish eggs. Then I dug into shashlik – mutton or lamb meat in a seasoned sour pickle, skewered and grilled until crispy. Russia is also rich in grain, and so people there bake a lot of traditional bread and cook porridge in large quantities.

3.

Have a no-fair-weather meal

Mongolians live in a harsh natural environment which means they have no time to mess around with cooking. They utilize everything around. **Buuz** is a typical dish – steamed dumplings filled with mutton. They may remind you of Chinese dim sums, but also of Italian ravioli. Adults wash them down with **kumys** – fermented mare milk. I also had a tea prepared in the Mongolian style which means seasoned with butter and salt.

4.

Smoked fish & sweet Mors

Brr, it's so salty and rigid! What should I do? Oh, I know! I'll use it to season some meal or soup. What am I talking about? Fish which have been smoked in cold smoke for a long time. This method of fish preparation has a long tradition in Russia. And because the surrounding dense forests are full of cowberries, raspberries, and blueberries, the locals came up with **Mors**, a delicious beverage. You simply boil the forest fruit in water – either separately, or together –, sweeten it, and then just drink and drink.

4.

5.

Mulberries

Morus have been grown for more than five thousand years in China and Asia in general. Morus leaves are well-liked by the silkworm moth – caterpillars of this night butterfly eat them and then turn their fibres into silk. But the morus plant also produces sweet, juicy, raspberry-like fruits. Not only do they taste great, but they're also rich in vitamins and minerals – a very healthy snack, indeed. I've just plucked a handful of **mulberries** – yummy!

9.

7.

There's nothing like soup

Where can you have the famous **pho** soup? Here in Vietnam, of course. This strong beef or chicken broth with rice noodles, seasoned with chilli peppers and ginger, is simply cracking, just like the **canh** soup with bamboo shoots. Soups are an important part of the local diet. What are those packages on my table? The traditional **bánh chung** – pork with rice, eggs, and mushrooms wrapped in a banana leaf. **Durian**, Vietnamese fruit, may smell funny, but tastes great.

6.

Dumplings here, dumplings there

Chinese people love their dumplings! There's so many kinds, made from various types of flour and with many fillings, meat and vegetable ones. Some are fried, others prepared in special bamboo steamers. I sampled **dim sum** dumplings and the New-Year's **jiao-zi**. What did I wash them down with? Tea, of course. That's because China is the birth place of this beverage. And what else Chinese foodies can't do without? Soya cheese called **tofu** and the sweet fruit known as **lychee**.

8.

Flat bread & legumes

What am I doing, you ask? Making the typically Indian **chapatti** – flat bread. It's served freshly baked with each meal. I had **tandoori chicken** with it. Tandoor is a special oven in which meat is prepared. Can you see it? Can you smell it? The wonderful smell of **curry**. Indians are also very fond of **dhal** – a legume mash or thick soup. It's both healthy and incredibly good.

9.

Adrenaline on the plate

Japanese love raw fish. No wonder, then, that the fugu fish is immensely popular in Japan – served raw, of course. However, this little scam is highly poisonous; if the chef makes a single mistake while preparing it, you can pay for your exquisite taste with your life. To stay on the safe side, I opted for tea – this is yet another place where it has a long-standing tradition.

10.

The smell of spices

In Vietnam, food is wrapped in banana leaves while people in the United Arab Emirates wrap their grub – seasoned rice – in grape leaves. This delicacy is called **warak enab**. Street vendors sell **shawarma** with **tabbouleh**: shawarma is grilled meat in pita bread while tabbouleh is a renowned Arabian salad made from bulgur, tomatoes, and herbs. Arabs are also partial to other seasoning than just herbs – you can see it packaged in little bags at almost every corner.

11.

Mango

There's nothing like fruit. While in India, I had fresh **mango** every day – the large sweet fruits of hefty mango trees. People eat them like crazy around here, prepared not only sweet, but also savoury. Can't imagine it, you say? There's nothing simpler. In India, mango is a common side dish served with meat. You can also make delicious jam out of it. Just like mulberries, mango too is literally stuffed with vitamins and minerals.

8.

7.

THE HIMALAYAS

PACIFIC OCEAN

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

GULF OF OMAN

BAY OF BENGAL

SOUTH CHINA SEA



ASIA

Mysteries! Sour, bitter, sweet, savoury, and spicy – a single meal must contain all five flavours at once. If it does, it's good both for human body and health. The secret of Chinese and Asian cuisine overall lies in harmony. Note: apart from flavours, a menu should contain various meals – juicy, crispy, sticky, and dry. I must focus on that.

↓ Oops, that's pretty spicy!

When you see this green seasoning on your table, for example as a supplement to sushi, beware – it's pretty spicy. No wonder – it's wasabi which is basically Japanese horseradish. And it really has a bite! But wasabi also contains substances beneficial to human health, and so enduring a little bit of spiciness is definitely worth it.



→ Not all mushrooms are created equal

Enoki – have you ever heard this word? I had no idea what it meant until I came to Japan. Enoki are local fragile mushrooms which are often added to salads or soups. Those who prefer their food raw can eat it immediately after picking. Enoki shouldn't be cooked for too long – otherwise they become hard and lose their delicious taste.



← I finally know what cinnamon is

Cinnamon is the dried bark of Chinese cassia. It's a very favourite seasoning here in Asia.

→ Korean kimchi

Incredible! Unbelievably healthy and unbelievably good! Yet it's pretty much just ordinary vegetables, only properly pickled. Korean kimchi is a traditional local side dish, greatly beneficial to the human body. But it also contains all kinds of vitamins: C, A, B1, B2 + calcium, iron, and zinc. Simply put, health served on a plate. It's basically pickled Chinese cabbage, carrot, ginger, onions, garlic, and chilli peppers.



All the things called curry:

- The leaves of an Indian, bay-leaf resembling plant
- A mixture of Indian spices: curcuma, coriander, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, cumin, and pepper
- A meal of meat and rich sauce made from coconut milk



AFRICA

I didn't know what cassava was before travelling to Africa. Since cassava is a pretty important crop in Africa and can prevent the worst famines from occurring, I felt the need to check it out a bit.



An African tip

Local mint tea. A very popular drink in Africa. This delicacy is a strong, well sweetened infusion of black tea and mint. It is drunk lukewarm. It may be difficult to believe, but it can slake the greatest thirst.



↑ Cassava

A tall tropical bush which is incredibly adaptable. Its autumn tubers are rich in starch, and therefore can fill up those eating it and provide them with necessary nutrition. And its young stalks can replace vegetables.



CASSAVA CHIPS

cassava tubers

oil

salt, pepper

1.



LET'S START...

Remove the brown peel from the cassava tubers and thinly slice them. Rinse, and then let them get dry.

→ Mash & chips

I've had cassava mash and tasted flat bread made from cassava flour. Once I get home, I'll hold a cassava party... and serve cassava chips.



← Juice

With juice from freshly squeezed oranges and coconut water... it will take you back to Africa in no time.

2.

Heat up oil in a deep frying pan, place individual slices into it, and fry them. Careful! The slices must be fully submerged in oil!



3.

Once they're nice and golden, take the fried chips out of the oil and season them with salt and pepper. Hurray, the party can start!





AUSTRALIA

If nothing else, I jotted down a variation on yeast spread from a Czech emigrant. I also discovered a recipe for a local delicacy – lamington. A square of sponge coated in chocolate and rolled in coconut. Tum!



YEAST SPREAD

50g yeast

4 eggs

salt, pepper, herbs

2 spoons butter

1 spoon butter

1.

LET'S START...

Melt the butter in a pan and lightly fry the onion in it. Once it smells nicely and is golden, add yeast which will melt in the heat. Stir diligently, of course.



2.

Add eggs and continue stirring. As soon as the eggs are nicely fried and not runny, season with salt and any herbs you have lying around.



LAMINGTON

1 packet baking powder

5 eggs

1 vanilla sugar

130g powdered sugar

500g plain chocolate

coconut flour for coating

20ml milk

1.

LET'S START...

Firstly, whip together eggs and sugar, add melted butter, and continue stirring until you have a fluffy mixture. Take a bowl and mix together flour, baking powder, vanilla sugar, and powdered sugar. When you're done, pour the blend into the egg-butter mixture, and stir together.



2.

Grease a baking tray, dust it with coarse flour, and carefully pour the batter into the tray. Heat the oven to 180°C and bake for ca 30 minutes. Let the baked cake cool and then cut it into small cubes.



3.

Melt chocolate in a water bath. Once it's melted, add milk or cream and mix so that everything blends in nicely with the chocolate. Dip the cake cubes in this chocolate icing and immediately coat them in coconut flour.





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"Cooking, frying, stirring, baking, and tasting – I love all those things!" thought Vincek the little kitchen helper as he set out to find the most interesting flavour of all. And he'd like to learn how to become a great cook as well, because one day he'll open a choice restaurant and win lots of medals – maybe even the Michelin star! Vincek has just left Europe and is heading further and further. So what are you waiting for? Prepare your bellies for all the meals in the world, and rush to join him! Maybe you'll manage to catch up with him on the pages of this book, written for all sweet-tooths.



6 foldings maps packed
with amazing
flavours

Booklet full
of recipes
& culinary
tips



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