



STREETSIDE FEASTS



Devour the most authentic local foods at these five food markets around the region. Fried grasshoppers, anyone?

WORDS NELLIE HUANG

Some say the best way to travel is through your stomach. By exploring a country's cuisine, you'll find yourself easing your way into its heart. Eating in Asia is quite an adventure, with outrageous aromas, rich colours and vibrant flavours to perk up your palate. Forget fine dining and plush restaurants — food markets bring a whole new meaning to street gastronomy, reinventing your culinary experience. Bring an empty stomach and a sense of adventure, and get ready for the rush.

How to get there:
Catch the MRT Danshui line to the Jiantan Station or Xiaobei Street Station

Address:

Between Wenlin Rd, Jihe Rd and Zhongshan North Rd; tel: +886 (2) 2882 0340

Opening Hours:
5pm-1am daily

TAIPEI
Shilin Market

Wander through a labyrinth of food stalls and bright neon signs, basking in the chaos of Taiwan's most famous night market. From candied haws to golden crispy chicken steaks, this is where you go to taste Taiwan inside out. Locals rave about it as the cheapest and the biggest food hub in the country. Hao Da Chicken Steak is famed for its original crispy chicken, while San Xiong Mei Dou Hua's tofu pudding has a well-earned reputation. And that's not all; you'll also find clothes stores, souvenir shops and even arcades and karaoke lounges in the market. This is the best place to hang out with the locals.



CLOCKWISE:
Shilin hawkers
ready to serve
you the best
street eats; spoil
for choice at
Chatuchak; care
for stinky tofu at
Temple Street?
INSET: all sorts
of Shilin skewered
delights for
eating on the run

Photo: Age Fotostock



Photo: Corbis

How to get there:
Take the Skytrain to
Mo Chit station or subway
to Chatuchak Park station

Address:
Kamphaeng Phet 2 Rd,
Chatuchak Park

Opening Hours:
8am-6pm on
weekends

BANGKOK

Chatuchak Weekend Market

The queen of all markets, Chatuchak features more than 15,000 stalls with a fraction dedicated to food. At Chatuchak, expect to be awed by edible creepy-crawlies such as crunchy deep-fried grasshoppers, scorpions and caterpillars. Whet your appetite on these before tucking into powerful green curry, *pad thai* (stir-fried vermicelli) and sizzling *tom yum goong* (spicy seafood soup) that cost a fraction of usual restaurant fare. Then wash it down with an icy *lod chong* (coconut dessert with jelly). A simple meal in the market can cost as little as THB40-60 (\$\$1.70-2.60).

HONG KONG

Temple Street Night Market

This signature street chockful of roadside hawkers is well known in the region as a location for gangster films shot in the '90s. These days, it is no longer plagued by crime; instead, bargain goods stands and *dai pai dong* (cooked food stalls) pack the bustling street. Grab simple and traditional wonton noodles and century egg congee, especially in the morning. By 8pm, Temple Street comes alive — crowds surge in for fresh seafood at the outdoor seating. From the island's resident stinky tofu to meat skewers, pork chop noodles and claypot rice, there's something for everyone. Or take a seat at one of the many tea cafés, famed for the best milk tea and buttered toast in town.

How to get there:
Take the MTR
to Jordan or Yau Ma
Tei stations

Opening Hours:
4pm – midnight



Photo: Nellie Huang

EAT BEAT
STREET FOOD



EAT BEAT
STREET FOOD



Photo: Nette Huang

SINGAPORE

Geylang Road

Singaporeans' favourite supper haunt doubles as a red-light district by night — where one vice meets another. Unlike the usual market layout, this wide stretch of road has the nation's best-kept secrets scattered along its thoroughfare. In contrast with the island's cosmopolitan cityscape, Geylang Road holds on to the city's past. Durian stalls are aplenty, side by side with soy beancurd stalls and old-fashioned coffee shops. No Signboard Seafood (414 Geylang Road) started its legacy here, winning the vote for the best chilli crab in town. Lorong 9 beef *hor fun* stall (S\$5-10) and its neighbouring frog leg porridge stall (S\$5-8) have got the most loyal followings.

How to get there:
Catch the MRT to
Kallang or
Aljunied stations

Opening Hours:
Most stalls are
opened 24 hours



Photo: Photolibriary

INSET, TOP: Chilli crab and a seafood spread in Geylang; **BELOW:** Need a Ben Thanh snake tonic to perk you up?

HO CHI MINH CITY

Ben Thanh Market

For a smorgasbord of local Vietnamese fare, the Ben Thanh Market won't disappoint. Step into the colonial building and pass through the string of Vietnamese silk and handicraft stores to find the food section at the market's core: it's surprisingly calm and organised. Florescent-lit stalls display fresh red prawns, steamed rice rolls and brewing internal organs. Grab a stool to slurp some *beef pho* (rice noodles cooked in broth) and cool off the heat with an icy *che ba mau* (shaved ice dessert). Bottles of scorpion-soaked liquor on sale in the neighbouring alley make a great souvenir to bring home. By night, check out the hundreds of stalls lining Phan Boi Chau Street

outside the market. You won't find crispier fried frog legs and steamier hot pot anywhere else, but bargain for the price before the dishes arrive. ★

How to get there:
Cross 23 September Park to the main cross-junction in the city's centre

Address:

Le Loi Blvd, District 1 (at the junction of Ham Nghi, Le Loi and Tran Hung Dao)

Opening Hours:

6am to 7pm daily
(Night food stalls open at 7pm)

For all your travel choices, book online at Jetstar.com



Photo: Age Fotostock

