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CASE STUDY

Serving Singapore Flavour in the USA

Prima Taste brings the humble Mee Siam to SIA flights out of Los Angeles

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Singapore is known for its concoction of varying Asian delights and Prima Taste offers authentic Singapore food in ready-to-cook pastes and premixes. This gives local favourites such as Laksa, Hainanese Chicken Rice, Chilli Crab and Singapore Curry the potential to be readily available to food lovers all over the globe.



Prima Taste adopts a three-pronged strategy to promote Singapore food internationally: restaurant franchise; retail products; and food service solutions. Operating in 7 cities, including China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Ho Chi Minh City and Singapore, Prima Taste restaurants allow consumers to sample Singapore food and be acquainted with Singapore's food heritage. Prima Taste's products has a wider reach, being exported to more than 25 countries including USA, Canada, UK, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Australia, China, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

International Enterprise (IE) Singapore has identified Prima Taste as one of the pioneering Tasty Singapore Food Ambassadors to represent and promote Singapore's unique food identity worldwide. Prima Taste has been lauded for product quality, innovation and design. Awards include the Merit Award for Innovation by the Singapore Institute of Food Science & Technology, as well as the AsiaStar and Singapore Star awards for outstanding products.

IE Singapore's Los Angeles Overseas Centre (LAOC), together with SIA HQ engaged Hancor Catering, which oversees catering operations for Singapore Airline (SIA) flights out of Los Angeles Airport, to understand their preferences and presented several food products that might interest them. Hancor showed particular interest in using the food item, Mee Siam, for their 2009 meal program for SIA's business and first class flights.

Prima Taste was then linked up to Hancor through IE Singapore. Prima Taste sent their Mee Siam paste samples to Hancor and the deal was confirmed in early March. Hancor placed their first order soon after via Prima Taste's US distributor.

The Mee Siam dish has since gained popularity in the business class with about 30 portions per flight, accounting for more than one-third of all business class meals.

"Our products serve as a reliable comfort food for Singaporeans living in the US. They also give a snapshot of what Singapore cuisine is all about for the overseas visitors," Willis Heng, Senior Manager for Business Development and Marketing at Prima Taste, said.

With this successful integration, IE LAOC has progressed to arranging an initiative with Hancor Catering. In mid April, Makansutra author K.F. Seetoh and Chef Yong Kuat will present on new dishes that can be offered on board using Singapore F&B products, which includes Prima Taste's Beef Rendang, Yeo's Peanut Satay for Gado Gado, AHG Laksa, and Seah's Spices' Bak Kut Teh. This full-day food demo is also part of the Culinary Mission to Canada & the USA, a follow-up event from Tasty Singapore Culinary Mission (TSCM) 2008.

This and other efforts by IE LAOC will pave the way for more Singapore F&B companies to enter and sustain their presence in the US market.

"IE Singapore has always been looking out for potential customers to link us up with. From retail to food service sectors, they have tirelessly presented our products to them and helped to bridge us together. They are like our marketing rep in the US and we really appreciate all the help they have rendered us," Heng said.

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