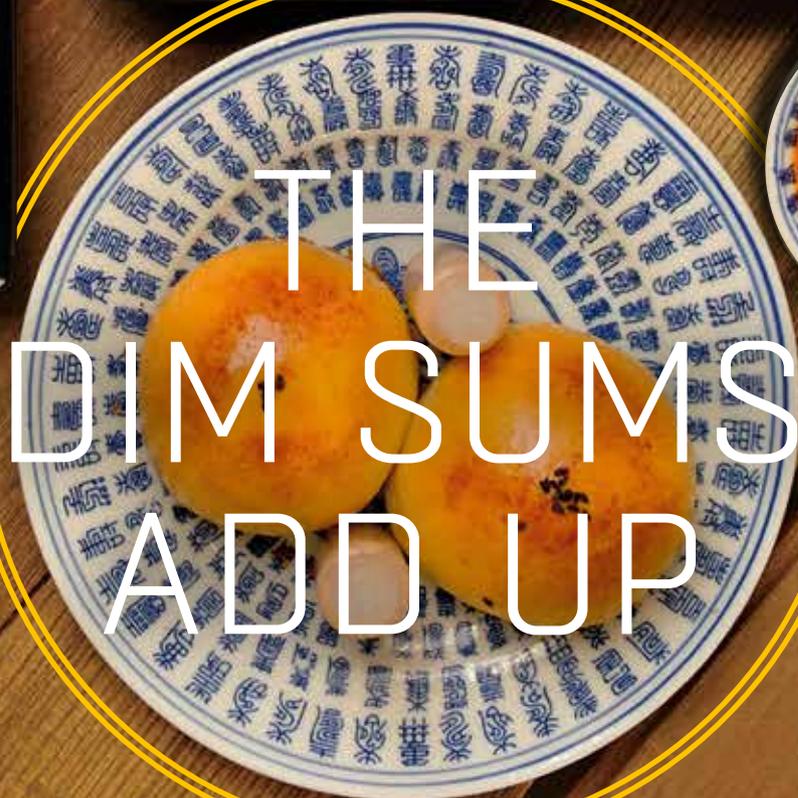


Hong Kong's foodie scene runs the full gamut from rustic Chinese street food to Michelin-starred gastronomic flair. **Clare Voight** picks out her favourite spots and dishes



THE DIM SUMS ADD UP



Breakfast: a big, steaming bowl of brothy, meaty rice porridge. I'll admit, congee, or jook, is a pretty punchy breakfast decision, but ask the Chinese and

they'll tell you they always start the day with something hot and savoury. The Scots salt their porridge, and us Brits love a full-on cooked breakfast with sausages, bacon and extra hash browns. As a recent convert to the breakfast burrito, I'm all for this full-on hearty, glutinous sustenance, which has to include rice, but beyond that can have meat, veg, seafood – the lot. It's pure PJs-and-blanket comfort food before the day even begins.

Cantonese is the biggest regional style of cooking in Hong Kong, championing freshness, less seasoning, steaming and stir-frying. Think vegetables in oyster sauce, wonton noodles and dim sum.

If any food were made for sharing, it's dim sum. And in China it's all about sharing food – and lots of it. Families and friends share tables that are stacked up with plates of fluffy steamed buns injected with barbecue pork, hot noodle soup with big shrimp wontons floating in it and glass-like jellyfish with sesame. I find the Michelin-starred Duddell's in Central makes a satisfying feasting stop – the gallery-cum-restaurant serves free-flowing *Veuve Clicquot* with a dim sum brunch menu.

For a lunchtime meal, wandering the streets of any of Hong Kong's unique neighbourhoods should turn up a gem or two. Fiery Szechuan; sugary, booze-laced Shanghaiese; and delicate, pescatarian



Chiu Chow are all easy to find, and restaurants dishing up

Peking duck are ten a penny.

Cosmopolitan Hong Kong is also a decent bet for international cuisine, and after a month-long schlep round mainland China that involved eating a whole spectrum of unidentified meats – some good, some not so – I found the city's varied French, Italian, Spanish, Thai and Japanese offerings surprisingly welcome. French-Cantonese fusion is also a thing here.

Western influences are, not surprisingly, everywhere in Hong Kong. Thanks to the UK's 99-year-long lease, fish and chips and pub food in Hong Kong are really quite good. And wherever you are, you're not far from a decent coffee house. I'm told to

head to the ultra-hip Coffee Academics for an afternoon hit of milky latte, sweetened with New Zealand manuka honey. They're so serious about their blends here that they offer customers classes on latte



LUK YU TEA HOUSE

24-26 Stanley Street, Central

Hong Kong's most famous tea house Luk Yu is elegant and known for its traditional colonial style. There's delicious dim sum on the menu, which changes often, and a large assortment of exquisite Chinese teas. The tea house takes its name from a Tang Dynasty poet, somewhat confusingly named Lu Yu.

FOOK LAM MOON

Shop 3, Newman House, 35-45 Johnston Road, Wanchai

This traditional, one-Michelin-star restaurant offers a luxurious setting for diners to enjoy a wide variety of seafood and meat dishes such as giant grouper, giant eel, pigeon and seasonal seafood. It made number 19 on Asia's 50 best restaurants 2014, and it's well worth a stop off on your Hong Kong foodie adventure.

fooklammoon-grp.com



HO LEE FOOK

1 Elgin Street, Central

With a name like this, you know you're in for playful cooking at Ho Lee Fook, inspired by New York's old-school Chinatown hangouts. Come along with "an open mind and a strong appetite" to enjoy Taiwanese-born Jowett Yu's clever dishes, including octopus with wakame seaweed. holeefook.tumblr.com

SEVVA

10 Chater Road, Central

Alfresco rooftop bar Sevva overlooks the Hong Kong Harbour, which also means it's a great place to watch the nightly Symphony of Lights show. It serves signature cocktails and has an impressive wine list, with small tapas dishes alongside smooth jazz music in its Taste Bar and famous terrace.

sevva.hk





ABOVE: The garish neon lights and colourful buses of Mong Kok, Kowloon. INSET: You'll find dim sum on every corner in Hong Kong

PIERRE

5 Connaught Road, Central

Housed on the 25th floor of the Mandarin Oriental hotel, this two Michelin-starred restaurant showcases excellent modern French cuisine in a stunning environment. Led by chef Pierre Gagnaire, diners can expect inventive twists on classic French dishes. mandarinoriental.com

Kowloon peninsula, is home to the cheapest restaurant in the world to snare a Michelin star: Tim Ho Wan. Locals, and now knowledgeable tourists, queue up to eat in the canteen-style dim sum joint.

This hotbed of culinary action, colours and aromas is worth a wander for an authentic, local idea of food in Hong Kong. The hectic streets around Sham Shui Po MTR station are filled with street food stands hawking fish balls, and roasted eggs and potatoes, plus a huge choice of noodle bars and dim sum canteens.

For a sweet ending to dinner, head to one of the many dessert bars. French-style cakes, pastries and macarons are big here, as are fruity tapioca-based treats.

Months later, I still think of the dim sum in Hong Kong whenever I'm in the mood for Chinese food at home. So far, though, I'm still on the hunt for a pork steamed bun that lives up to the ones I gorged on in HK. 🍡

>> THE STREETS OF SHAM SHUI PO ARE FILLED WITH STREET FOOD STANDS

art and making the perfect brew. Visitors are encouraged to take time and consideration over their caffeine hit.

Michelin-starred restaurants are also plentiful in Hong Kong: at last count it has 62. Sham Shui Po, on the city's fast-climbing

FOODIE TOUR

Sham Shui Po, Kowloon

Take a foodie walking tour through the vibrant Kowloon neighbourhood of Sham Shui Po. It will take you to family-run restaurants to taste Hong Kong specialities, from pineapple buns, milk tea and tofu desserts to wonton and hand-pulled noodles. By the end, you'll have learned how to work your way through Hong Kong food like a Kowloon native. hongkongfoodietours.com

MAN MO CAFE

40 Upper Lascar Row, Sheung Wan

Man Mo Cafe isn't your typical ten-a-penny dim sum restaurant (and there are many in Hong Kong), rather giving an innovative, East-meets-West twist on the classic Cantonese dish. Swiss-born chef Nicolas Elelouf makes dim sum an art form at this trendy Sheung Wan eatery – think delicate glazed buns, truffle brie dumplings, foie gras *xio long bao* and an Asian spin on onion soup – delicious.