

Rempapa



Papa of Our Culinary Soul

Rempapa, Damian D'Silva's personal contribution to the ongoing story of cuisine in Singapore



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Papa of Our Culinary Soul

Chef Damian D'Silva's new all-day restaurant draws on a lifetime of custodianship and elevation of our culinary heritage, to engage the young and further the discourse on Singapore food

When Damian D'Silva was just 11, his grandfather who was teaching him recipes asked him why he wanted to learn them. Damian replied, 'So that I can still eat the food you cook when you die.'

Precocity had told the child that heritage was not so much for the dead as for the living. It also told him that it would take energy and dedication to keep that heritage alive; make it relevant; and pass it on. In a nutshell, that describes Rempapa.

Rempapa celebrates, connects, and empowers. As a restaurant, it distils into a single dining experience a lifetime's worth of advocacy, soul-searching, and passion from the man they call 'the grandfather of heritage cuisine'. Rempapa bridges time and looks forward to a future it hopes to create.



Multi-cultural Singapore Heritage Feast

Rempapa is multi-cultural, serving the flavours of the Chinese, Peranakan, Eurasian, Indian and Malay kitchens. 'Rempah' is Malay for spice paste – the aromatic seasoning that all ethnicities in Singapore use as a base in their cooking. 'Papa' honours Damian's reputation. And so 'Rem-papa' is the name of the restaurant, and the latest milestone, in the journey of Chef Damian D'Silva.

Rempapa

Rempapa is an all-day dining concept offering Breakfast/Brunch, Lunch, Afternoon Tea, Bar Snacks, Drinks, and Dinner. On the menu are the classic heritage recipes of Pop, Grandma, Auntie Zainab and others, some older than 100 years. Among these are Sambal Udang, Babi Pongteh, Debal Chicken with Roasted Pork and Hakka Fried Pork.

Then there are 'new' old heritage recipes that Damian had kept in his head for years, presented here for the first time, including Fried Nyonya Fish Cake (\$18), Sri Lankan Chicken Curry and Tomato Chutney with String Hoppers (\$16), Ayam Bakar (\$17), Baca Assam (\$38), and Lamb Leg Rendang (\$38).

Under the line-up of heritage one-dish meals are familiar and less familiar items – Peranakan Yong Tau Foo with Chee Cheong Fun (\$18), Seafood Bee Hoon (\$48/\$68 – 2/6 pax) – and hawker fare such as Kai Fan (\$18), and Nasi Lemak (\$17). To spur fascination among his team, Damian features heritage recipes drawn from the younger members' families, leading to Stir-Fried Chee Cheong Fun (\$13), and Slow-cooked Belly Pork with Ah Seng Sauce (\$23).

Come mealtime, diners can look forward to a new focused menu featuring Dhal or Chickpea Curry with Roti (\$16/\$18) at breakfast or brunch; Kueh Platter at tea; and bar snacks such as Chi Pao Kai (\$15), Ayam Kalasan (\$17), and Limpeh Sliders (\$22 – 2 pcs), to accompany drinks. The bar serves specially selected craft beers, wines, spirits, sakes, and crafted cocktails.

Rempapa also offers takeaway meals so families can bond at home over heritage flavours. And to mark the holidays, special festive recipes bring cheer on Chinese New Year, Easter, Hari Raya, Deepavali, Christmas, and even National Day.

And for those seeking a truly immersive heritage cuisine adventure, there's the 'Chef's Menu' that changes according to produce and seasonal catch available in our local waters throughout the year. Chef Damian will personally present a heritage feast with an evolving menu to be enjoyed in the Rempapa's private room for up to 10 guests.



Rempapa Lunch

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Dawn of a new cuisine

Damian grew up in a kitchen where fidelity to correct 'form' was sacrosanct. Where shortcuts and compromise were taboo; and where food was crafted by hand from scratch – he walked the path of the artisan long before the word became fashionable. He propagated our food values; told our stories; stood in custody of our traditions. He kept faith with the cause.

Now with his new personal philosophy – 'Singapore New Heritage Cuisine' – he takes it a step further.

Singapore New Heritage Cuisine is born from the soul of tradition to seduce the palate of today. Each recipe, the culmination of much thought and effort, contains various ethnic elements in intricate harmony. Damian describes it thus: 'It's my grandfather's recipe; and I have taken the soul of that recipe'.

His Rempapa's Pork Chop Curry Rice (\$18) is a superb example. Knowing that pork katsu-don is a favourite amongst young Singaporeans, Damian created a dish that took inspiration from 'Hainanese curry rice'. The result is familiar by sight but with a different flavour, which he hopes will entice younger guests to 'come and eat' and 'let's talk' later. Damian crumbs the pork with hand-pounded cream crackers as per the classic Hainanese recipe before deep-frying. He believes that the typical curry cooked at home today contains only curry powder without dry spices; so he re-works the curry gravy into something familiar but with more nuance and depth of flavour – that would strike a chord with youth and open a conversation on what a true curry is.

Damian cooks the curry by first tempering dry spices of cardamon, coriander, cumin and fennel – a more toned down reflection of traditional Indian flavours. However, unlike traditional practice, he removes these spices before adding the curry powder, so as not to overwhelm the palate, especially of the less experienced. The curry also contains garam masala, reflecting its Indian, Eurasian, and Malay influence. Damian finishes it off with refreshing radish pickles – something all heritage races in Singapore are familiar with.



Rempapa's Pork Chop Curry Rice

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A similar creation is Chicken Curry (\$28). Damian knows that thick, overly rich gravies do not appeal to young eaters; but neither do they like ones that are too watered down (seen as 'lacking punch'). Through deep research into various ethnic versions of the dish, Damian has isolated the key flavour elements and experimented on them. Therefore in his Singapore New Heritage iteration, the makeup contains Indian and Eurasian curry powder mixes; a rempah base adopted from the Malay gulai; coconut water instead of plain water (as the Chinese would do); and more coconut milk following the Indians of Sri Lankan descent; with blue ginger and lemon grass (borrowings from the Peranakan larder).

Using this approach Damian tempts the diner with dishes such as Fried Chicken Curry Rice (\$16), Braised Beef with Raita and Roti (\$25), Seafood Curry Mee (\$18), and Coconut Custard with Gula Melaka (\$14).

Singapore New Heritage Cuisine is the vehicle for discourse, achieving what Damian terms 'cultural sustainability'. He feels it incumbent upon himself to make the 'first conscious step to elevate our cuisine, to a level where someone younger can come and carry on to the next level'.

Rempapa is a labour of love, in pursuit of a dream. Damian knows that as a multi-racial nation, we are bonded by, identify with, and take huge pride in our food. Convinced that our heritage flavours deserve a place among the gems of world cuisine, he works towards their recognition as such.

Damian envisions Rempapa as a catalyst for such a transformation: for a changed perception of our food and its legacy. But in his heart of hearts, he is still that little boy tugging at Grandma's kebaya sleeve at the stove, insisting on answers.



"Heritage should always run deep in our blood"



Chicken Curry

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Rempapa's Soulful Cuisine

Breakfast, Brunch & Lunch

The **Sri Lankan Chicken Curry and Tomato Chutney with String Hoppers (\$16)** offers a traditional thin curry that becomes a sublime match with the steamed hoppers when soaked with gravy. In Singapore these string hoppers, referred to as idiyappam or putu mayam, are commonly eaten with coconut and sugar. Traditionally, however, they are eaten with curries or chutney.

For curries, Indians from Sri Lanka usually use both whole and ground spices – in this dish, dry spices such as whole cloves, cinnamon, and star anise are first tempered in ghee; this is followed by the addition of sliced and blended Bombay onions, Bentong ginger, and garlic. Coconut milk is also added in a manner typical of Sri Lankan curries as Indians prefer yoghurt. The curry and hoppers are served with a tangy tomato and date chutney made of golden raisins and mustard seeds, bound together with a fruity coconut vinegar that is often used by Indians and Eurasians for pickling.



The **Braised Beef with Raita & Roti (\$25)** is a seemingly ordinary bowl of beef goulash until one's first mouthful of the tender brisket, revealing elements from Eurasian and Indian cuisines. The **Singapore New Heritage dish** offers nuances of ground cumin and coriander seeds, usually present in Indian and Eurasian cooking. While Eurasians typically add bay leaves to braises and stews, Damian chose to use daun salam, a local bay leaf native to Indonesia that imparts earthier notes with a hint of citrus. More Eurasian flavours are extracted from the inclusion of sweet paprika powder, fresh red tomatoes, and blistered red bell peppers. Raita, an Indian side dish, is a refreshing pairing for the braised beef and roti.



Damian believes that chickpea is food for the future – a wonderful balance of soft texture without mushiness which absorbs flavours well. The vegetarian-friendly **Chickpea with Roti (\$18)** is cooked with blistered red bell peppers, fresh red tomatoes, Kashmiri chilli powder, and turmeric powder, and the result is an amalgamation of Indian and Eurasian curry flavours. To complete the dish, mustard seeds are quickly popped in ghee and added to the chickpea mixture.



The recipe for **Stir-Fried Chee Cheong Fun (\$13)** came from a young chef at Rempapa – Ah Seng – who hails from Penang. He had cooked his hometown's hawker dish for the team. The original dish uses dried shrimps; here, the chee cheong fun is wok-fried with prawns and eggs, as well as yellow chives.



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Nasi Lemak



Sri Lankan Chicken Curry and Tomato Chutney with String Hoppers



Braised Beef with Raita & Roti



Stir-Fried Chee Cheong Fun



Kai Fan

The Nasi Lemak began with Damian’s desire to share its rare flavours with the next generation. Damian presents it here as a simple version for an easy breakfast (\$5), or as the full works (\$17) for a hearty lunch or weekend brunch. Traditionally the banana leaf-wrapped parcels contained only coconut rice, sambal, and fish caught the same morning. Broken rice was used as it was more economical; to make it flavourful, it was cooked with coconut milk – first by steaming the grains dry so that they would absorb the liquid, then cooking them a second time. Sambal, synonymous with Malay cuisine, was made with tamarind or lime as the lemak rice called for an accompaniment that would counterbalance its richness. Ikan bilis were later additions.

At Rempapa, Damian draws on these childhood memories to present flavours that the Singaporean palate today will enjoy.

Damian substitutes broken rice with ‘old’ jasmine rice that is soaked overnight, then cooked in a laborious 3-hour process with fresh coconut milk. The accompanying sambal is made with a base of classic rempah titek and finished with sugar, salt, and finally a dash of lime at the end for restrained acidity tailored for today’s tastebuds. Instead of ikan bilis, the rice is paired with Japanese silver fish for a delicate crisp. Eggs are offered as either a 7-minute egg or a sunny side-up. For lunch and brunch, a choice of either chicken or fish is offered. The kampong chicken thigh is coated in a dry rub of ground coriander seed, fennel seed, cumin seed, Kashmiri chilli powder, and turmeric powder for at least 36 hours before it is deep-fried, while the selar fish is coated with turmeric powder and tamarind juice for 30 minutes, then pan-fried.



In the 1960s, Boat Quay and Clarke Quay were a foodie’s paradise where hawkers peddled their ware along the streets to feed coolies working at the docks. It was also a favourite haunt of office workers from the vicinity. Grandad had brought young Damian to sample some of the dishes, which included kai fan (kai refers to ‘street’; ‘street rice’). Its simple flavours lingered in Damian’s mind through the years; transformed today into a soulful bowl of Kai Fan (\$18) with shredded chicken, char siew, lup cheong, and chye sim immersed in comforting chicken stock.

Plated like a Japanese curry with karaage, the **Fried Chicken Curry Rice (\$16)** combines the essences of Eurasian, Peranakan, Indian, Malay, and Chinese cuisines.

Chicken is seasoned with a 12-spice house-blended masala for at least 48 hours before it is coated lightly in cornflour then deep-fried into crispy morsels. Dry spices in the curry include ground cumin and coriander seeds (from Indian and Eurasian curries), turmeric (from Malay and Chinese curries), while the wet spice paste is a classic rempah titek – a Peranakan touch. Light soya sauce (influenced by the Chinese) is added to taste.

The familiar visual of this Singapore New Heritage dish entices the younger generation, with the bigger goal of introducing heritage flavours. Damian believes that heritage food can only be promoted when people like it in the first place. When they do, the food then becomes a story that the next generation wants to listen to. Otherwise, it will be a lost cause.



Rempapa's Seafood Curry Mee (\$18) evolved from a Hokkien hawker dish served during the 1920s and 1930s, with the additional flavour of curry powder that differentiates the dish from Hokkien Prawn Mee. Singaporeans are familiar with chicken curry mee; however, the seafood version whose intense flavours stem from seafood rather than coconut milk, is less familiar. In the past, the ingredients that made this dish unique were pig blood curd, blood cockles, pork skin, and of course, prawns and fish cake which were thrown in for good measure. An important add on is mint, which cuts through the richness and cleanses the palate in anticipation of the next mouthful.

For this Singapore New Heritage rendition, Damian uses his own blend of curry powder that features spices with less potent flavours, such as tsao ko, star anise, and cinnamon. The addition of curry powder and curry leaves reflects the Indian influence on the dish. The sambal and coconut milk are drawn from Malay cuisine and are added to balance the flavours, giving them wider appeal. The sweetness of fresh sua lor (sand prawns) and dried shrimps – Damian's addition – are extracted into a stock used in the pot of curry. Yellow noodles, bee hoon, fried pig skin, prawns, fish cake, fresh cockles, tau bian, and beansprouts are served with the immensely flavoursome seafood curry.

Dinner

The **Fried Nyonya Fish Cake (\$18)**, offered as an appetiser for dinner or as a bar snack, is an introduction to a heritage Peranakan dish that may not be familiar even to Peranakans. In Peranakan households, cherished heirloom recipes vary according to family origins – whether ancestors hail from Penang, Malacca, Terengganu, Thailand, or Indonesia. Damian concocts his rempah from chillies and belacan and other ingredients, mixed with a spotted mackerel fish paste. It is quickly steamed, then deep-fried. The flavour is a combination of otah and fish cake that is springy, moist, and slightly burnt at the edges for textural crisp – just like how a young Damian loved it.



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Seafood Curry Mee



Fried Nyonya Fish Cake



Baca Assam



Lamb Leg Rendang



Seafood Bee Hoon

Baca Assam (\$38) – a "lost" Eurasian heritage dish that is almost a mix of Peranakan and Indian flavours. Eurasians typically relish sour food, made with vinegar or tamarind, which cuts through richness and whets the appetite. In the past, the sourness also acted as a preservative. Grandad did not serve this dish very often as it took long hours to prepare, and beef was expensive then; so that when it was cooked on special occasions, Damian savoured every bite. In this dish, a fine paste of dried chillies, shallots, turmeric, galangal, and candlenuts is fried. Once fragrant, point end beef brisket is added and slightly browned then cooked with beef stock and tamarind water till the meat is tender. The resulting flavour is slightly sour from the tamarind, with hints of sweetness, saltiness and fragrance from the fried garnishes of lemongrass, garlic, chillies, and shallots making it a moreish dish.



Lamb has always been Damian's favourite choice of protein because of the flavour and subtle sweetness arising when it's cooked. The **Lamb Leg Rendang** (\$38), based on the classic Minangkabau dish with Malay and Indonesian influences, includes a wet spice blend as well as a masala spice blend, cooked in fresh coconut milk. Damian adds herbs such as daun salam (Indonesian bay leaf) and kaffir lime leaves, then it is left to cook over a low to medium flame until the sauce thickens and the lamb meat is tender. In the D' Silva household, when Grandad was around, rendang was always cooked using lamb.



Damian learned how to cook the heritage **Seafood Bee Hoon** (\$48/\$68 – 2/6 pax) from Grandad. The medley of seafood is cooked with Heng Hwa fine bee hoon as a dry version with some gravy, with flavours reminiscent of Hokkien mee. The intense seafood stock is made with 3 different stocks of fish, prawn, and clam, and the seafood includes fish belly, cuttlefish, prawns, clams, and scallops. The Chinese would insist on this dish for special occasions such as birthdays and weddings; and in Chinese restaurants, meals typically are completed with noodles. This is Rempapa's dish for celebrations – the combination of textures, comforting flavours, and sumptuous ingredients will not only be memorable, but relished with delight.

Slow-Cooked Belly Pork with Ah Seng Sauce (\$23) begins with pork belly that is slow-cooked with cumin and 5-spice powder till done and then chilled. The meat is sliced before serving and accompanied by a sauce made with Szechuan peppercorn, garlic, chillies, cumin powder, light soya, vinegar, and black bean. This dish is Ah Seng's heritage Hokkien dish from Penang. In the past it was peddled by the street; today it often sits proud as a home-cooked recipe for a guest.

Bar

Ayam Kalasan (\$17) is a Malay dish of Indonesian heritage from Auntie Zainab, whose husband is best friends with Damian's dad. Auntie Zainab would cook for her kids, and whenever Damian visited, she would cook this dish too. Diners sipping on heritage cocktails will find it a complementary snack with familiar flavours. The chicken wings are slowly braised in coconut water flavoured with a blended paste of candlenut, galangal, chilli, fresh turmeric, and tamarind juice, simmered till near evaporation. The chicken is then removed and dried before being deep-fried. The leftover liquid is not wasted, but turned into a flavourful sambal made of chilli, onion, and candlenut that's served with the dish.



The moreish Limpeh Sliders (\$22 – 2 pcs), served with pickled cucumber, is a fresh way to enjoy heritage flavours – a Singapore New Heritage dish. The beef brisket is cooked in the same rempah used for the lamb leg rendang, then stuffed into a crispy pastry parcel. This local take on sliders captured a loyal following during Damian's pop-up, South-East Sliders, which ran from 2015 to 2017. Damian presented 2 types of sliders then – The Big D and the Limpeh Slider. A new expression of the latter can now be enjoyed at Rempapa.

Tea-Time

5 heritage desserts are served in the afternoon as a Kueh Platter (\$6/\$10/\$15 – 4/8/12 pcs). The selection will be drawn from the dessert menu which includes favourites such as Kueh Kosui and Kueh Ku, Kueh Bengkah, Pulut Bengkah, Talam Keladi, Sago Ubi, Lapis Pulot, Rempah Udang and others available on the day.



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Dessert



The Durian Bengkah – a fragrant union of the classic Kueh Bengkah and the King of Fruits. Damian grew to understand Kueh Bengkah after making it many times over and thought of tweaking it by adding his favourite fruit. He made an early version of this recipe and gifted it to his mother, not telling her that it was from his own hand. She loved it so much that she wanted to buy another one of these cakes for herself. That was the moment Damian knew it belonged on the menu of Rempapa.



Talam Keladi, meaning 'tray' and 'yam' respectively, is a traditional Malay steamed kueh comprising two layers: gula melaka custard on top, and mashed yam cake on the bottom. Yam was a nutrient-dense staple in Singapore after World War 2, during a time of limited food rations such as rice. Gula melaka adds a natural caramel yellow to the custard layer. This heritage dessert is based on a recipe from Damian's aunt, and he often enjoyed the kueh while growing up.



When Damian tasted koka (a Basque caramel flan) for the first time, he was inspired by its texture and felt that a local version using coconut milk and gula melaka would be sublime. And thus, Coconut Custard with Gula Melaka (\$14) was born. The first experiment was some 10 years ago; since then it's gone through changes to achieve the right balance of texture and flavour – silky smooth on the palate with sweetness and richness complementing each other, and gula melaka adding an earthy caramel touch.



Retail

Retail selection will be launched in early 2022.

Items:

- Sambals
- Pickles
- Curry powders
- Frozen ready-to-eat meals

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Fact Sheet

About Rempapa

The name Rempapa comes from 'rempah', Malay for 'spice paste' – the aromatic seasoning at the base of all Singaporean ethnic cuisines, and 'papa', in honour of Chef Damian D'Silva's reputation as 'the grandfather of heritage cuisine'. Rempapa is a new all-day-dining restaurant that showcases Singapore heritage food and extols

its place in our national identity. Chef Damian introduces his new philosophy 'Singapore New Heritage Cuisine', in which recipes drawn from the soul of tradition are re-invented with elements of different ethnicities, to create flavour profiles that resonate with today's diner. Rempapa is not just a restaurant. It is the place where

Chef Damian elevates Singapore heritage food to a status among the great cuisines of the world. And where 'cultural sustainability' is nurtured through engaging the next generation of diners and mentoring fresh talent, seeing them take pride in Singapore cuisine and driving it to the next level.

Rempapa is a restaurant partnership between Chef Damian D'Silva and OUE Restaurants (OUE), the food and lifestyle division of OUE Limited.

About OUE Restaurants

OUE Restaurants (OUE) is dedicated to creating genuine dining experiences that cater to a diversity of diners in Singapore and overseas. The group's portfolio of extraordinary brands and establishments range from the fine and upscale to the novel and contemporary. Whether it's a trendy night out or a glamorous dinner for two that you seek; or a casual brunch with the family or a chill-out-over-drinks session with friends, you will find it within the OUE ambit. Savour life at VUE, Takayama, Hashida Singapore, or Shisen Hanten by Chen Kentaro. Dive into hearty and sensational flavours all day long at Chatterbox, Chatterbox Café and Chatterbox Express. And enjoy the wide world of culinary delight at Chen's Mapo Tofu, FuFu Pot, DéliFrance, Maxx Coffee, Alfafa, Lippo Chiu Chow, and Rempapa. For more information on OUE Restaurants, visit ouerestaurants.com.



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Reservation
[https://www.sevenrooms.com/reservations/
rempapa](https://www.sevenrooms.com/reservations/rempapa)



[Rempapa.sg](https://www.rempapa.sg) / @Rempapa_Sg

Opening days / hours: Daily

Monday to Friday

Breakfast: 10.30am to 12pm

Lunch: 12pm to 3.30pm

Afternoon Tea & Bar Snacks: 3.30pm to 6pm

Dinner & Bar Snacks: 6pm to 10.30pm

Saturdays, Sundays, and Public Holidays

Brunch: 9.30am to 3.30pm

Afternoon Tea & Bar Snacks: 3.30pm to 6pm

Dinner & Bar Snacks: 6pm to 10.30pm

Seating capacity:

Full House at 110pax; Social Distancing at 65pax



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