

Eat Out

Eat Out

New moon (cakes)

The yearly mooncake rush returns with new and more unusual flavours. The **TOS** team rounds up the season's standout entrants

Having *yue bing* ('moon cake' in Mandarin) used to be a once-a-year treat, eaten traditionally on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, when the moon is at its most rotund. Early mooncakes were baked in simple varieties: round or square, filled with lotus or red bean paste and often came with a salted egg yolk; the sweet paste symbolising good tidings, and the yolk representing the moon. Family and friends would gather to gaze up at the sky while sipping on Chinese tea, often reflecting on recited poetry. The occasion, and in effect the moon, gradually became a symbol for reunions, and the Mid-Autumn festival became one of the most important family occasions in the Chinese household.

Today, the tradition has stretched into a month-long indulgence, and it's little wonder that mooncakes have evolved from their original versions, with a host of different shapes, sizes, colours and flavours. Here's a taster of the current phase:

1 Baked Mooncake with Mixed Berries Fresh cranberries, blueberries and cranberry lotus paste encased in traditional baked dough. This antioxidant-, vitamin- and fibre-rich cake has the tartness of a glass of cranberry juice, alleviated by the sweetness of the lotus paste. \$59 for four pieces. *Jiang Nan Chun, Four Seasons Hotel, 190 Orchard Blvd (6831 7220 www.fourseasons.com/singapore). Until 12 Sep.*

2 Durian Red Bean Snowskin Mooncake The king of fruit is tamed, a little, by the earthy qualities of the red-bean paste. \$55 for four pieces. *The Fullerton Hotel, 1 Fullerton Sq (6733 8388, www.fullertonhotel.com). Until 12 Sep.*

3 Endless Night This mini snowskin mooncake is made with Rocher dark chocolate, a milk chocolate couverture and a big handful of almonds. Tastes like a very nutty mochi. \$50 for eight pieces. *Fairmont Singapore, 80 Bras Basah Rd (6338 8785 www.fsfestiveorders.com). Until 12 Sep.*

4 Lychee with Lime Marshmallow Snowskin Mooncake In the centre, a home-made marshmallow made from fresh lime. The soft pillow is surrounded by a mousse-like purée containing bits of lychee fruit, and

then wrapped with a refreshing lime snowskin. Despite the sweetness, a bit of the citric acid peeks through. \$25 for two pieces, \$45 for four pieces. *Goodwood Park Hotel, 22 Scotts Rd (6730 1867, festivepromotions.goodwoodparkhotel.com). Until 7 Sep.*

5 Mini Kopi Luwak In-your-face, coffee-infused white lotus seed paste in snowskin. The heady scent is that of *kopi luwak* (civet coffee) – the most expensive coffee in the world. Naturally, these come in an elongated gold lacquer box. \$208.80 for eight pieces. *Marina Mandarin Singapore, 6 Raffles Blvd*

(6845 1118 www.meritushotels.com). Until 12 Sep.

6 Mini Baked Pineapple Paste Like a pineapple tart, but bigger, with drier filling and less crumbly dough. \$54 for eight pieces. *Shang Palace, Shangri-La Hotel, 22 Orange Grove Rd (6213 4473, www.slsdining.com.sg). Until 12 Sep.*

7 Mini Fresh Milk Snowskin with 'Yuan Yang' Paste Hong Kong's everyday drink – milk tea and milk coffee – is mixed into smooth white-bean paste, then wrapped in a creamy yellow snowskin. The skin is made of fresh

milk but has the sweetness of condensed milk, and surprisingly, the tea's flavour stood out more than the coffee in the paste. \$48 for eight pieces. *Majestic Restaurant, 31-37 Bukit Pasoh Rd (6511 4718, www.restaurantmajestic.com). Until 12 Sep.*

8 Mini Snowskin Mooncake with Korean Black Garlic One, maybe two, cloves of fermented garlic is encased in a paste made with white lotus and mung bean. We thought that black centre was an olive. \$56.80 for eight pieces. *Jewels Artisan Chocolate, #02-31/32 Orchard Central, 181 Orchard Rd*

(6509 8998, www.jewels.com.sg). Until 11 Sep.

9 Passionfruit Snowskin with Custard Paste and Yolk The slightly tart passion fruit-infused snowskin, lightly sweetened custard paste and heart of salted yolk makes a pleasant, refreshing whole. Not at all cloying. \$57.60 for eight pieces. *Yan Ting, St Regis Singapore, 29 Tanglin Rd (6506 6888, www.stregissingapore.com). Until 12 Sep.*

10 Pink Diamond-Delicate Love Snowskin Mooncake A rich, indulgent white lotus-seed paste

mooncake stuffed with shreds of bird's nest. Licorice menthol in the paste gives this decadent treat a lift at the end. \$68 for eight pieces. *Resorts World, 8 Sentosa Gateway (6577 8888, www.rwsentosa.com). Until 12 Sep.*

11 Snowskin Salted Caramel with Dark Crunchy Chocolate Pearl A creamy, butterscotch-like caramel filling studded with crunchy chocolate pearls, this child-pleasing, milk candy-infused treat neatly balances sweet and salty. Make sure you eat it cold and fast; it loses its shape quickly. \$29 for two

pieces, \$52 for four pieces. *Peony Jade, Blk 3A, #02-02 Clarke Quay (6338 0305, www.pjmooncakes.com). Until 5 Sep.*

12 Snowskin Durian Mooncake A mixture of pure *mao shan wang* (high-quality bittersweet durian) flesh and fresh cream. It comes in a pink tin box that helps contain its pungent aroma. \$68 for eight pieces. *Raffles Hotel, 1 Beach Rd (6412 1122, www.affleshotelmooncakes.com). Online sales available until 12 Sep.*

13 Talisman Snowskin Mooncake The creamy-textured cinnamon and

orange mousse hides within it a truffle chocolate heart infused with Lucky Tea – a warm-spiced black and green tea blend. It cuts like a dense cheesecake but melts in the mouth. \$60 for four pieces, \$68 for a two-mooncake gift set. *TWG Tea Company, #B2-89/89A The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands, 2 Bayfront Ave (6535 1837, www.twgtea.com). Until 12 Sep.*

Photography by Lester Ledesma. Compiled by Alyssa Ong, Amelia Chong, Emily Badiozaman, Margaretha Hartanto and Viny Halim. Text by Celine Asril.