

Cosy Corner Poh Piah: Grab and Poh Piah and Relac One Cosy Corner!

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Poh Piah \$2.20

My definition of good vegetarian food is the kind which you enjoy without even realizing that it is vegetarian.

Poh Piah falls into this category.

Ok, some Poh Piah contain sliced prawns, but for me the sliced prawns actually add little value to the Poh Piah and I can easily do without them. What I enjoy about Poh Piah is the way the chewy skin contrasts with the crispy bits and warm savoury stewed turnip. If you enjoy chilli, then the addition of a super spicy chilli padi paste would give you that extra dimension of pleasurable pain that make you go "Siiiiiii...!"

I have known about the Poh Piah at Cosy Corner for a while now. The thing that really sets this Poh Piah apart from the others is that unique crunch which sounds louder than a lot of other places. When I say "sound louder", I mean the sound of the crunch while you are chewing the Poh Piah. In case you don't realize it yet, your sense of hearing is crucial to your enjoyment of food. The louder the crunch, the crunchier the food. Imagine opening a bag of potato crisps. Your perception of how fresh those chips are starts with the rustling sound of the aluminum packaging as you open the pack and ends with the sound of the crisps crunching in your mouth. If you should suddenly lose your sense of hearing, even fresh crisps might be perceived as stale!

I finally managed to interview Mr Leong of Cosy Corner and found out the secret of his Poh Piah crunch! It was something that he came up with through persistent experimentation.

After speaking to so many great hawkers, I have come to realize that the secret to success lies more in the passion of the hawker rather than a special recipe. In order to preserve our hawker culture, a few agencies have been proposing to link the heritage hawkers with a new generation hawker so that the skills can be passed down from one generation to the next. It is a good idea but its success lies in the quality of the disciple, not the master. A passionate hawker who wants to produce good food will succeed whether he has someone to teach him or not. Of course, under the supervision of

a good teacher, he will take less time to achieve success.

A good example of this is Mr Leong who was somewhat forced to go into the food business after being retrenched from the automobile industry. With hardly any cooking skills, he took over the present shop in Coronation Shopping Centre and started learning to cook. His only source of instruction was through a cooking book by Mrs Leong Yee Soo who happened to be related to him. She had already passed away when he started Cosy Corner, but what he had were her recipes and the memory of what her food used to taste like whenever she invited the relatives to her home for a cookout.

Sometimes it is good not to have old baggage as it forces you to think out of the box. This is the case with Mr Leong when he was trying to figure out how to add that crunch to his Poh Piah. He finally came up with the idea of using flavoured rice crisps which he makes himself from parboiled rice. One bite of the Poh Piah and you will agree with me that it is a stroke of genius.

The skin of the Poh Piah is bought from Hup Kiat who makes excellent traditional Poh Piah skin. It is soft yet resilient and chewy such that the sweetness slowly develops as you chew on it. Mr Leong is very generous with the boiled eggs which is the only source of proteins. He doesn't use prawns or lup cheong. The turnips are usually wonderfully tasty and juicy although on the last occasion, it was just a tad dry. Being peranakan, he uses the typical Nonya style fiery chilli padi sauce which adds a quick burst of fiery zing to your palate which quickly dissipates. Overall, a good Poh Piah which I wouldn't mind just traveling there to eat. **4.25/5**

Conclusion

These little food shacks in old shopping centres are easy to overlook as places which cater only to the students and locals. But there are gems to be found and Cosy Corner is one of them. The Poh Piah here is the star, but I was told that the laksa, mee siam and mee rebus have quite a following too!

My Cosy Corner

587 Bukit Timah Road #02-02

Coronation Shopping Plaza

Singapore 269707

Mon-Sat 10am to 7pm

Sunday/PH 11am to 4pm

64638286