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life's refinements

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HOW TO
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17 MUST-TRY
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NEW YORK'S
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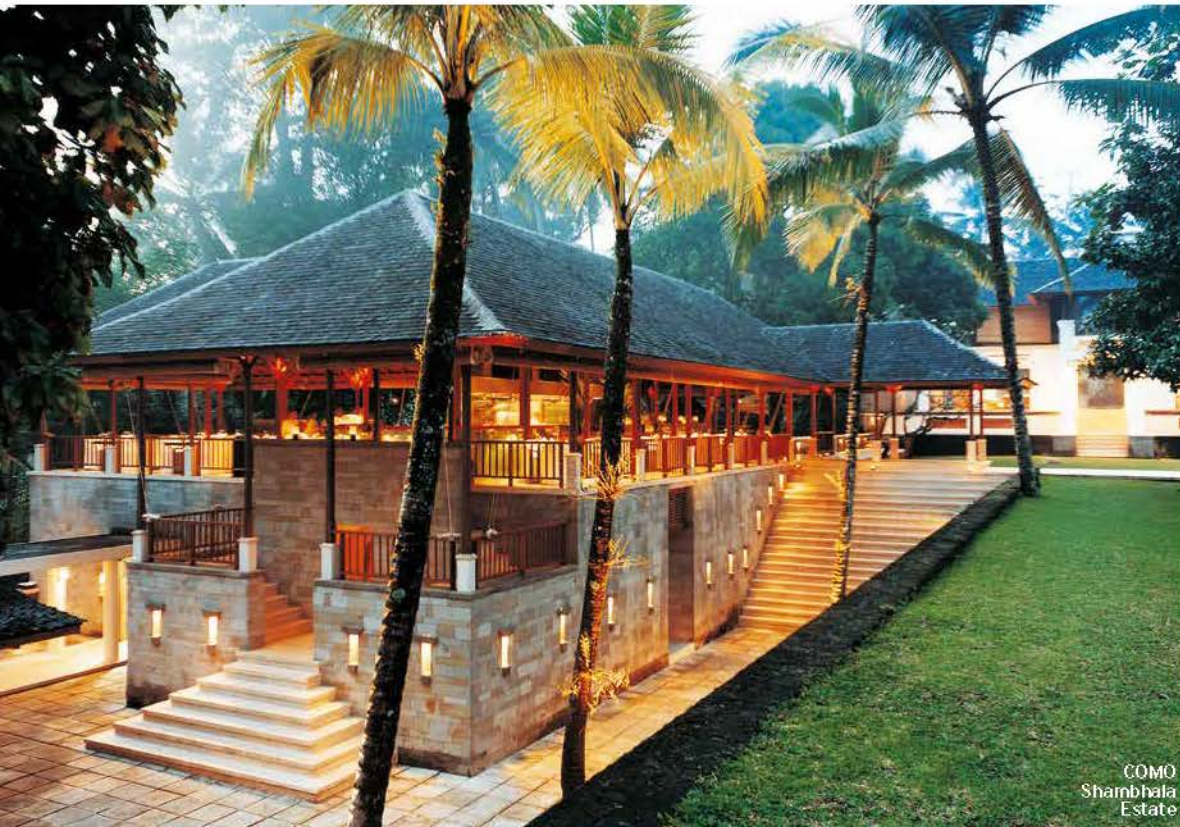
In with the old

3 OLD-SCHOOL F&BS THAT WILL NEVER
GO OUT OF STYLE



JACKFRUIT CURRY, INDIAN MEE SIAM
AND OTHER FORGOTTEN RECIPES





COMO
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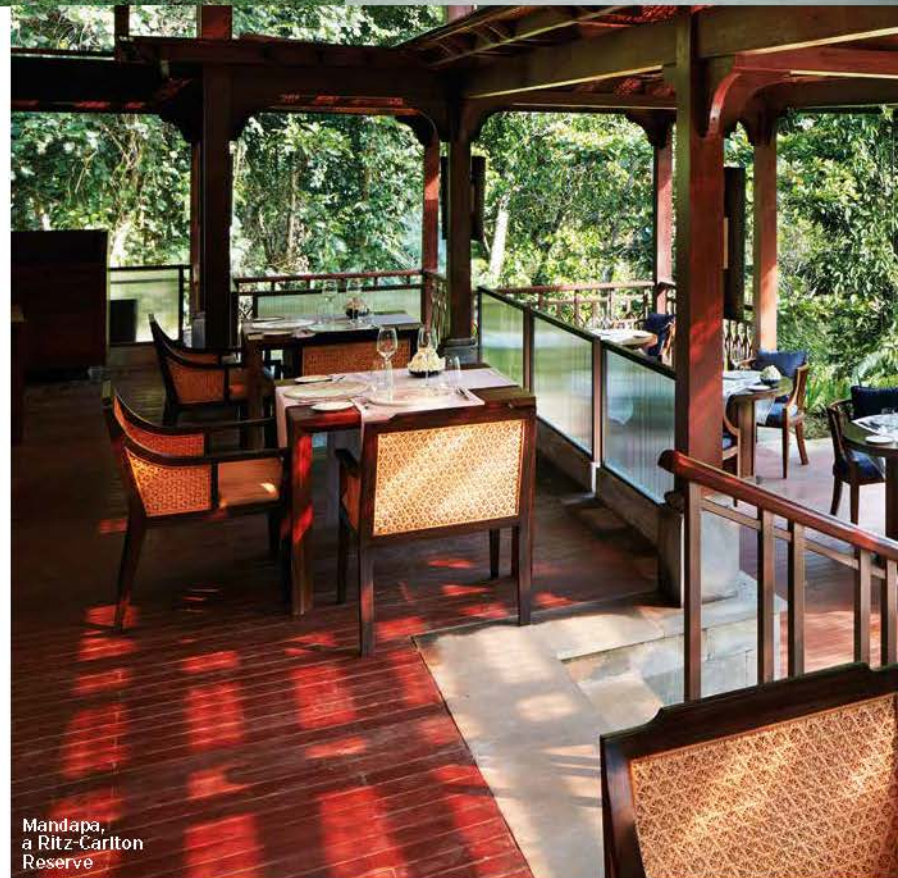


Locavore

Getting back to the roots

Samantha Coomber unearths chefs and kitchens that are committed to farm-to-fork practices.

Like merchant traders captivated by Indonesia's Spice Islands on the ancient Spice Route, today, an increasing number of restaurants in Bali and Jakarta are inspired by Indonesia's abundance of amazing and diverse natural produce. Many have joined the global farm-to-table bandwagon, which is still a relatively new movement in the country but a well-established one originating in the U.S. that champions the use of natural, organic, fresh, locally sourced and sustainably farmed ingredients. Frustrated at importing irregularly supplied expensive products, more



Mandapa,
a Ritz-Carlton
Reserve

open pavilion nuzzling the rice fields, with menus of Indonesian and Balinese dishes and Western classics with modern twists. “Having instant access to these ingredients gives us real freedom with our menus,” says Dean.

Dean sources produce from Bedugul and the archipelago, finding gems like Javanese ducks and Sumbawan barramundi; he also makes his own truffle sauce, sunflower-seed bread and rosella salt granules. Just a few necessary proteins are imported. Refined yet simple creations, such as house-smoked salmon with fennel, tangerines and Balinese saffron, are exquisitely presented. “In Bali, there are many fine ingredients, but I’m most inspired by basil and I cultivate lemon, sweet, cinnamon and purple types,” he says, which, along with other herbs, transform salads (like red quinoa) and garden-inspired beverages such as a vodka-based, purple basil cocktail. This Singapore native is so passionate about his gardens that he even lives full-time in a small house on the garden plot.

Elsewhere in Bali, newcomer AZUL Beach Club not only stands out in Legian for its three-level, bamboo restaurant-bar structure beside the beach, but also for its sophisticated comfort and coastal cuisine menus, which are created for sharing and casual dining. Masterminded by Javanese executive chef Arief Wicaksono, the creations are replete with Middle Eastern, Thai, Japanese and Mediterranean influences, which are inspired by his travels and culinary stints, and yet incorporate around 80 percent of local fresh produce. AZUL’s farm-to-fork commitment extends to sourcing Indonesia’s finest produce:

Lombok clams, Papuan vanilla bean pods (for divine ice cream), West Java’s hand-picked berries, and Wagyu beef from Sumatran-reared Australian cows. Wicaksono also grows leafy greens in kitchen gardens; his favourite is the “fantastic and fresh” coriander, showcased in the White Snapper Ceviche as a flavour-packed, dehydrated component. Homogenised natural extracts from spices, fruits and flowers are transformed into deliciously flavoursome beverages.

Over at Jimbaran Bay, Cuca’s offering of tapas, cocktails and desserts are made using 100 percent premium natural produce, personally sourced across Indonesia. Only the wines are imported and everything is made in-house from scratch. Cuca’s co-creator and chef, Canadian Kevin Cherkas, is a passionate supporter of archipelago farmers and says the abundance of homegrown produce inspires him to come up with delicious new recipes made with Western cooking techniques. Dishes burst forth with tropical flavours and freshness, such as Honey-baked Pumpkin Salad with granola, creamy green beans and tarragon. “Indonesia offers so many underrated ingredients like cashews, papayas, wild line-caught fish and ginger blossom, which all work amazingly well in our dishes,” says Cherkas, who also swears by unusual finds like lontar tree vinegar from North Bali, a fantastic natural citrus substitute.

MOTHER NATURE RULES

Albeit to a lesser extent, some restaurants in Jakarta have jumped on the farm-to-fork bandwagon – even sophisticated



AZUL Beach Club
Potato Head
Jakarta

Cuca