



A PEARL FROM THE ORIENT

Situated off the west coast of West Malaysia lies the beautiful island of Penang – known throughout the region as the “Pearl of the Orient”.

Penang is famous throughout Asia and beyond for its unique blend of gastronomic cultures that developed through its location as regional spice market and from the influx of cultures from surrounding regions. “Foodies” come from far and wide to experience the huge variety of flavours and in particular the Malaysian Nyonya Cuisine that is unique to this area.

The Nyonya culture is the result of a mix between Chinese immigrants, who came in during British administration from the late 17th century, and the Malay. The result is a unique blend of the two food traditions and influences much of the Malaysian cuisine. Amazing spice blends with focus, not on the heat, but on the range and depth of flavours, textures and colours.

Penang is also home to the Penang Cooking School and its host Madam Pearly Kee, known locally as “The Nyonya Queen”. Pearly’s award winning recipe books sell worldwide and she has appeared with numerous international TV chefs as they discover the secrets of Penang, The Food Island.

At Frankenberg we are constantly looking for ways to improve the authenticity of our dishes and to widen our understanding of international cuisine so for us, it was a perfect solution to invite Pearly to our product development kitchen in Aachen for a workshop.



Pearly arrived to a rather cold climate, but a very warm reception from our team who were eager to learn and experience the food. We first took a look through the available ingredients. Malaysian cooking is very much dependent on fresh spices and fortunately at Frankenberg we have access to a wide variety of these. Pearly had also brought some interesting products like yam bean, fresh galangal, and some special local sauces as well as blue flowers from the island for making the unique blue rice.

Recreating the Magic

Once into the kitchen Pearly was joined by our research Chef Reinhard Winterhalter who together with Chef Ratchada Hüppe did the majority of the cooking with Pearly. They were ably supported by Chefs Christian Quadflieg, Matthias Schweissinger, Christian Goerne, and Head Chef Uwe Quitter.

Over the next three days, they produced no less than 40 recipes of all types from Penang Street Food offerings to highly complex Curry and Rendang dishes recreating a totally authentic eating experience. Dishes included a very famous Penang Mee Goreng (A fried noodle dish with tofu, belachan and spices) and the uniquely flavoured Chicken Curry Kapitan, a fragrant dish that uses only fresh chilli, lemon grass, galangal, candlenut, garlic and turmeric finished with lime and coconut cream.

“It’s so important to us when we offer ethnic cuisine suggestions to our clients, that we present something that is almost indistinguishable from what they would experience in their homelands wherever they may be” says Laura Friedrichs, Assistant to the Frankenberg Management. “Pearly has a huge knowledge base that we can learn from and re-create as closely as possible here in Germany”.



For Pearly it's also something new – not just another cooking lesson. Having worked with western celebrity chefs as well as consulted to hospitality organizations and performed for Curry Festivals etc, this was her first time creating ideas for the Airline catering industry. "It's really exciting for me to imagine my food being served to passengers" she says, and adds, "this style of food is particularly well suited to airlines as the strong flavours and spice blends all help to compensate for the loss of taste at altitude – and it smells so good!".

The resulting three day workshop produced a library of ideas and components for us to use in the future. Helga Friedrichs, no stranger to tasting food from every corner of the world in her role working closely with our R&D Team says – "I believe after this experience with Pearly, anyone tasting our Asian specialties will be impressed with the range and original taste we are able to create here. It has been a wonderful experience for our chefs and we look forward to experimenting further with what we have learned".

We believe our clients and their passengers deserve the best. The Pearls of Wisdom that Pearly Kee has left us with, will help deliver authenticity in everything we do – even when you're flying to Penang, the Pearl of the Orient itself!