

Tasting Australia

Written by JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR-REYES
Friday, 27 January 2012 20:21



CROCODILE CEVICHE OF MANGO, PUMPKIN, BEET, POMELO AND PEPPERY TARTARE

Did you know that crocodile meat is a natural cure for asthma?

And that kangaroo meat, aside from being a high protein, low fat meat, contains conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) which has a wide range of health benefits like reducing obesity and atherosclerosis, and contains anti-carcinogenic and anti-diabetes properties?

Did you also know that the older the kangaroo, the tastier its meat is?

While crocodile meat could be eaten raw like sashimi or even kilawin?

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The Australian Embassy and Peninsula Manila brings together a rare chance for Filipinos to get a taste of this authentic treats from Down Under through the week long "Tasting Australia" festival from Jan. 27 to Feb. 3.

The Peninsula flies in Australian Chef Adam Mathis, the Executive Chef of Peninsula Tokyo, to join fellow Aussie and Escolta Chef de Cuisine, Chef Anthony Craven, specifically for the celebration where they not only get to prepare authentic Australian dishes that include kangaroo and crocodile meat but also introduce the "bush" ingredients like lemon myrtle, bush tomatoes, aniseed myrtle and Davidson's plums, that Australian aborigines had foraged and used for thousand of years.

"We are proud to be a partner of 'Celebrate Australia 2012' Our food festival is the perfect opportunity to learn more about the culinary experiences available in Australia. We will be introducing Australia 's sun-kissed produce, its melting pot of cuisines and award-winning wines. Throughout our 'Tasting Australia' festival, you can try a little bit of everything from a seafood platter, a sweet Riesling, modern Asian-fused meal to a crocodile ceviche. We guarantee you many memorable meals with us," said Sonja Vodusek, General Manager of the Peninsula Manila who herself is an Australian native.

Try appetizers like the Crocodile Ceviche with Wild Herbs and Flowers, Pumpkin, Beets and Mango; or its variation of Crocodile Ceviche of Mango, Pumpkin, Beet, Pomelo and Peppery Tartare; or the Lemon Myrtle-seared Tasmanian "Petuna" Ocean Trout with Herbed Meredith Goat Cheese, Asparagus and Rosella Sauce.

These best complements a main course of Mountain Pepper-Seared Kangaroo Loin, Quandong Jus, Down Under Dukkah-Dusted Kumara, Asparagus and Yakajirri Hollandaise; or the Crisp-skinned Barramundi with Blue Swimmer Crab Flakes, Aspen Fennel Carpaccio, Scallop Potatoes and Avocado Cream; Wild Thyme-crust Lamb Loin with a Cutlet and Shank Pie Parsnip Velvet, Baby Pea Pods, Macadamia and Bush Pepper Berries; or an Alpine Pepper-scented Tenderloin and Braised Cheek, Parsley Purée, Baby Potato Tempura in Field Mushroom Sauce.

For dessert, the festival highlights the Lemon Myrtle Cheesecake, Macademia Caramel; and the Oz Pavlova 2012 with Wattleseed Cream and Sugar Bark; and a Verbena and White Chocolate

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Parfait, Lemon Tuile, Lemon Curd, Raspberries and Elderflowers which will all be available at the Old Manila Restaurant.

A special "Tasting Australia at Escolta" buffet prepared by Chef Craven would also be held at the Escolta Restaurant where 5 percent of the proceeds raised from the buffet will be donated by the Peninsula Manila to Bahay Tuluyan, a non-government organization that provides a variety of programs and services aimed at preventing and responding to the abuse and exploitation of children in the Philippines.

Another highlight of the festival is the "Australia On My Plate" special cooking class with Chef Mathis' to be held at the Peninsula Academy Cooking Class on Jan. 28 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

The lesson, priced at P3,300 per person, includes the three-hour class, a three-course lunch, a Peninsula Academy apron and a special gift.

Vodusek said the "Tasting Australia" festival will also afford guests who avail of the special festival menus in Old Manila and Escolta the opportunity to join in a raffle and win a round-trip ticket for two to Sydney onboard the new Qantas A380 aircraft whose ergonomically designed seats — designed by acclaimed international designer Marc Newson who won the 2009 Australian International Design Award of the Year.

She said part of the celebration is also the one-night only performance at the Salon de Ning on Jan. 31 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., of one of Australia's singing talents and Australian Idol alumni, Dewayne Everettsmith.