

# New restaurant features the food of Malaysia

**By Michael Hastings Winston-Salem Journal** May 9, 2017  
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David Rolfe/Journal  
Malaysian Egg Rolls with Duck Sauce, Curry Chicken & Rice, Malaysian Milk Tea

18 Malaysia has opened in Harper Hill Commons shopping center off Country Club Road in the spot formerly occupied by Orchid Thai.

Judy Heng, who owns Mandarin Chinese Restaurant in Clemmons, also owns 18 Malaysia.

“I wanted something nicer, more (upscale),” she said, “and I wanted to show people what Malaysian food is.”

Heng and manager Tony Tan are natives of Malaysia who are of Chinese ancestry.

The 18 in the restaurant’s name is a lucky number to Chinese, Heng and Tan said. Similarly, they

chose the last four digits of the restaurant's phone number — 1668 — for good luck.

Malaysia is a bit of a melting pot, in ethnicity and cuisine. The main ethnic groups are Chinese, Indian and native Malay. But its food also has other influences, including Thai, Portuguese and Dutch.

“With the food, you have a mix of all these groups,” Tan said.

But he said that Malaysian food is most similar to that of Indonesia and Singapore.

Malaysia has its own style of curry dishes. Noodles or rice appear at almost every meal. “We often eat noodles for breakfast and rice for dinner,” Heng said.

Common ingredients include coconut milk, ginger, chiles and lemongrass.

“Our curry is very smooth,” Tan said. It doesn't usually have bold flavors as with Indian or Thai curries. Malaysian curries also are often not spicy, though chile paste is used in many dishes.

Winston-Salem diners previously could get a few Malaysian dishes at Mandarin Malay, a restaurant that operated at two locations on Reynolda Road before closing a few years ago. But the selection at 18 Malaysia is much more extensive.

The restaurant's menu includes Malaysian Indian roti, similar to the Indian pita-like wheat bread but served with a curry dipping sauce made with coconut milk.

A Malaysian egg roll is deep-fried like a Chinese egg roll, but contains a mixture of pork and shrimp and no cabbage or other vegetables.

The chicken curry is thick and mild, served with potatoes.

Malaysian Char Kueh Teow is a mixture of stir-fried beef with flat, wide rice noodles and onions, scallions, bean sprouts and egg.

Malaysian grilled pork is marinated with lemongrass and served over a simple salad with a rice-vinegar dressing.

Malaysian curry noodle soup is available with shrimp, mixed seafood, chicken, pork or vegetables.

About half of the menu at 18 Malaysia consists of Malaysian dishes. The rest is a mixture of Asian dishes that represents the country's melting pot. Chinese dishes include General Tso's chicken, braised beef pot, and salt and pepper shrimp. Thai dishes include tom yum soup and pad Thai. There is Vietnamese pho and Japanese Udon noodle soup, edamame and seaweed salad.

Other dishes include crab Rangoon, Singapore rice noodles, satay and fried rice. The menu includes a fair number of vegetarian dishes, and the restaurant has ABC permits for beer and wine.

Lunch entrees run \$8. Dinner entrees run from \$8 to \$15.

Heng has run Mandarin Chinese for 23 years, but said she thought it was time to introduce diners to the Malaysian dishes of her homeland.

Besides, she said, she had a selfish reason for opening 18 Malaysia. "Sometimes you just want to eat the foods you grew up with."