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Friday April 17, 2009

Chow time

Find the best food in Kuala Lumpur with a little help from writer Fay Khoo and company.

EATING may be a favourite pastime for most of us; but this is especially true for writer Fay Khoo, who confesses she lives to eat and is a self-proclaimed gourmand. Her passion for food has had her on track from the age of 17 to not only try all kinds of food but explore them in reviews, books and on TV.

As if to prove this point, in a few weeks she's releasing the second edition of the *Best Eats KL* book. This book updates the 2006 edition, listing close to 500 food outlets around Klang Valley, from cheap hawker food, to mid-range restaurants and high-end eateries. And, she's also the host of TV show *Let's Dine* which showcases restaurants in Kuala Lumpur, and airs every Sunday at 11.30am on TV2.

Each week, *Let's Dine* features two restaurants according to what Khoo describes as their "culinary genre". In one restaurant, Khoo pays a visit

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with one or more celebrities and they try out the food and give their opinions. In the second restaurant, a chef is featured giving simple but useful tips.

According to Khoo, it was pretty easy to pinpoint the restaurants that she wanted to feature on *Let's Dine* as she discovered them when she was compiling *Best Eats KL*.

"It's very easy for me because I know what is out there," said Khoo. There are only 26 places featured on the 13-episode TV show. "(For the book), we go in, try the food and pay for it. And if we're not sure, we go back and try again. We also have people giving us suggestions as to their favourite places. So for *Let's Dine*, I already knew which were the best restaurants in KL."



Let's Dine is hosted by Fay Khoo (left) and features celebrities like Stephanie Chai (centre) and Susan Lankaster .

She added that there were no problems getting celebrities to participate in the show. "It wasn't very difficult to find them because we all love to eat!"

In the upcoming episodes, Khoo visits Uzen with Harith Iskander; the Chutney Mary Restaurant with Amber Chia and Sune, and Ches Moi Restaurant with Jit Murad and Datuk Zahim Al-Bakri.

You'll also get to see the kitchen area of Bijan Restaurant, Saffron Restaurant and Bossa Nova as well as learn a trick or two from the experts there.

Khoo, who likes cooking for family and friends, also shares tips, like how to fold napkins and basic table etiquette that may be useful when dining out or playing host at home. According to Khoo, one of the most common problems Malaysians have when dining out at continental restaurants is that they lack confidence in using the right cutlery.

"There are a lot of things that can be improved on," said Khoo. "It's the West-East thing-*lah*. That's what we want to demystify."

Although Khoo loves all kinds of food, she said her tastes vary from day to day, depending on her mood. But one thing is for sure: "Food is life. Food is everything," she said with a laugh. "I've always educated myself on food ... I keep myself in touch with all food-related topics. I hope to take our food overseas and promote it."

Actually, she had already started doing this. Recently, she guest-starred in one of BBC top chef Rick Stein's television series as well as in a food programme on Discovery Channel.

But coming back to *Let's Dine*, Khoo said: "This series allows the audience to discover new restaurants, get tips and see their favourite celebrities just being themselves enjoying good food. It's not scripted, it's all spontaneous."

*Tune in to **Let's Dine** every Sunday, at 11.30am on TV2.*

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