



Tan Ser Seng turns 80 and opens its first mall outlet at Great World

Description

[Tan Ser Seng Herbal Soup](#), the Geylang shop that has sold turtle soup since 1946, has opened its first mall outlet at Great World this month, in the year the family business turns 80.

The new restaurant sits at #B1-106/107, 1 Kim Seng Promenade. It opens daily from 11am to 10pm, with last order at 9.30pm, and closes only for Chinese New Year. Great World MRT on the Thomson-East Coast Line (TE15) is the easy way in: Exit 6 leads into the mall at Basement 2, and the restaurant is one floor up.



Claypot Turtle Soup, the house signature since 1986. Photo: Tan Ser Seng Herbal Soup

From a shoulder pole to Lorong Bachok

The family traces its roots to Fengtang Xiang in Chaoan. Tan Ah Sai arrived in Singapore in 1927, aged 11, and after the war cooked herbal turtle soup for workers rebuilding the city, selling it bowl by bowl from a shoulder-pole pushcart before saving for a tricycle. He founded the business in 1946.

His son Tan Khar Seng took over the fire in 1973, at 20, while supporting eight siblings, and his wife Tay Ah Lek cooked through the night. In 1986 the shop moved to individual claypots, which the family bills as Singapore's first claypot turtle soup. It settled at 29 Lorong Bachok in 1992, and the third generation, Vivian and Allan, joined in the 2000s.

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The Tan family, photographed in a Singapore studio in the 1960s. Photo: Tan Ser Seng
Herbal Soup

What a bowl costs

The family publishes dine-in prices for the Geylang shop and has not posted a separate Great World menu, so treat these as the reference point rather than a promise for Kim Seng Promenade.

- Claypot Turtle Soup: S\$28 small, S\$50 medium, S\$78 large
- Double Boiled Turtle Soup: S\$16 small, S\$21 medium
- Premier Fish Maw and Abalone Soup: S\$30
- Ginseng Black Chicken Soup and Cordyceps Chicken Soup: S\$15 each
- Sugarcane, Water Chestnut and Imperatae Root Soup: S\$9.90

The double-boiled small bowl is the cheapest way into the turtle soups. Sides run from S\$6 for cucumber in vinaigrette to S\$16.90 for steamed seabass with Teochew olive vegetable, and a bowl of Fragrant Yam Rice is S\$2.50. The menu does not state whether service charge or GST applies. Prices on GrabFood, foodpanda and Oddle run higher than in the shop.



Double Boiled Turtle Soup, from S\$16 at the Geylang shop. Photo: Tan Ser Seng Herbal Soup



Cordyceps Chicken Soup, S\$15 at the Geylang shop. Photo: Tan Ser Seng Herbal Soup

Before you go

There are no table reservations at either branch. Seating is walk-in, first come, first served. The Great World outlet takes WhatsApp messages only, on 8997 0368. Pick-up orders and food reservations go through a separate WhatsApp line, 8737 2929, and food is set aside once paid.

Tan Ser Seng is not halal-certified. It serves pork dishes, and some soups carry a splash of house herbal wine. The family describes its soups in traditional terms and is clear that the descriptions are not medical advice.

The original shop at 29 Lorong Bachok keeps shorter hours, 11am to 8.30pm daily with last order at 8pm, a five-minute walk from Aljunied MRT.

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The Lorong Bachok shop in Geylang, home to the family since 1992. Photo: Tan Ser Seng
Herbal Soup

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