

JAPAN FOODS HOLDING LTD

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Japan Foods forays beyond Japanese cuisine to debut its first “*bak kut teh*” restaurant in Singapore

- Franchise rights for concept secured from Malaysia’s “New ManLee Bak Kut Teh”, which has its origins in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Opened first store at Clementi Mall on 4 December 2015.

SINGAPORE, 4 December 2015 – Japan Foods Holding Ltd. (“Japan Foods” and together with its subsidiaries, the “Group”), a leading Japanese restaurant chain, has launched its first non-Japanese concept restaurant with the opening of the “**New ManLee Bak Kut Teh**” restaurant at Clementi Mall today.

The concept is franchised from “New ManLee Bak Kut Teh”, which was established over 40 years ago in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

According to **Mr Takahashi Kenichi, Japan Foods’ Executive Chairman and CEO**, the choice of “*bak kut teh*” was a natural one as the Group was able to leverage its existing central kitchen, which already prepared pork-bone broth for its restaurants across Singapore.

“*Bak kut teh*” is an aromatic soup with a choice of pork spare ribs, lean meat, pork stomach or pork belly meat slow-cooked and flavoured with garlic and other spices. “New ManLee Bak Kut Teh” serves two versions of this dish – Singapore-style white peppery soup and Malaysia-style black herbal soup. Other items on the menu include a dry “*bak kut teh*” dish and braised pork trotters. Side dishes include the ubiquitous dough fritters and salted vegetables.

Because Japan Foods’ has its roots in Japanese cuisine, “New ManLee Bak Kut Teh” serves its soups with Japanese rice, or dry or soup “*udon*” noodles and “*hoji cha*” instead of the white rice, “*mee sua*” and Chinese tea that usually comes with “*bak kut teh*”. The “*udon*” noodles are self-manufactured at the Group’s central kitchen daily.

Mr Takahashi said: *“I believe the Group can leverage its existing restaurant network, market know-how and operational capability to grow the ‘New ManLee Bak Kut Teh’ brand in Singapore. While there are already many local restaurants serving the peppery version of the dish, there are not many serving our herbal version. Looking strategically into the future, we do not want to limit ourselves only to Japanese cuisine but to look for other cuisines that can also tap into the resources that we already have. The new restaurant at Clementi Mall is our testbed and if successful, it will allow us to move confidently in this direction.”*

The Clementi Mall location was previously occupied by an “Ajisen” ramen restaurant. It was converted to the “New ManLee Bak Kut Teh” restaurant following a short period of refurbishment to suit the new concept. This ability to swap concepts quickly in order to optimise resources and drive higher sales leverages Japan Foods’ strong stable of brands and is part of its ongoing strategy of good restaurant portfolio management.

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About Japan Foods

Established in Singapore in 1997 and listed on the Catalist Board of the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited in February 2009, Japan Foods is one of the leading Japanese restaurant chains in Singapore. As at 30 September 2015, the Group operates 44 restaurants in Singapore under various brands, such as “Ajisen Ramen”, “Osaka Ohsho” and “Menya Musashi”, and 1 outlet located in a food court.

Over the years, Japan Foods has successfully expanded its restaurant network of the “Ajisen Ramen” brand and has also created its own “Fruit Paradise” and “Japanese Gourmet Town” brands. The Group is focused on innovation and aims to continuously refresh the dining experience of its customers.

The Group has expanded beyond Singapore. As at 30 September 2015, there are 6 restaurants in Malaysia and 3 restaurants in Vietnam operated by the Group’s sub-franchisees under the “Ajisen Ramen” brand. The Group also has interests in 10 restaurants in Hong Kong and 5 restaurants in China operated by its associated companies under the “Menya Musashi” brand.

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