

Food-related apps tasted

Whet your appetite with these apps

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by Peter Yeo

When two of my favourite things to do - eating and fiddling with smartphones - match up, it is a marriage made in culinary heaven.

In the good ol' days, word-of-mouth often directed your supper finds, but apps on smartphones can now point you to the best char kway teow. And, by throwing this out to experts and the public, your grapevine just got an extended reach.

Foodie radar

Free food apps such KF Seetoh's Makansutra, and spin-off from foodie website Hungrygowhere are just two food scouting apps I've used.

The main difference I see is options in Hungrygowhere are voted by the public, and those in Makansutra are tried and tested by KF Seetoh's team.

Both apps are equipped to scan for food options in your vicinity using your phone's GPS. Keyword searches are also available, as well as a spinner in Makansutra's case.

Makansutra even throws in an Augmented Reality (AR) feature so you can overlay search over your surroundings.

Hungrygowhere also gives the travelling gourmand a view of choices in cities in Australia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, and Vietnam., while Makansutra is built for tourists - or natives on staycation.

It also provides the option to create your own DIY day tours with local food finds, hidden nooks and crannies, things to do, nightlife recommendations and places to rest your head after a day of fun.

Book your spot

We live in a city of foodies and when you have a craving, you may find the 100 people waiting in line ahead of you share it with you.

So make your reservations with the free Chope and Reserve Table apps. Both apps are spin-offs from reservation sites Chope.com.sg and Reserveit.sg.

At print time, Chope has chalked up 130 restaurants under its belt with the likes of Wild Honey, LeVel33, Rider's Cafe and Shangri-La Hotel. Reserve Table has 146 in its list, with another 19 restaurants waiting to get on.

Both apps search via categories - Reserve Table has a keyword search - that proved to be frustrating when I tried it and couldn't find the restaurant I wanted. The reason, I surmised, was because a) not all restaurants take reservations and/or b) they haven't signed up with the apps.

I found Reserve Table provided a more personal service as the restaurant called to confirm my reservation on top of multiple email validations while Chope only provided an email reservation note - which I did not see until almost dinner.

However, both apps proved to be fast (I got my confirmations within 10 minutes) and there was a comment section for me to request for pet-friendly seating.

(B)Log your food diary

Okay, so you've decided where and what you'd like to eat. Now share it with your friends - and fans.

Of course, you can do that through Foursquare, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Now add

Burpple, the social food journal, to your list.

Think of it as Pinterest meets foodie, Burpple lets you log your gastronomic adventure and share them with everyone.

Like Pinterest, you can follow friends - whom you know in person - or be guided by new ones. It is a great way to expand your social circle (Food hunt, anyone?), connect with fellow foodies, and lock in new eateries.

Organise your tasty treasure trove with customisable boxes like Healthy, Must Try, and in my case, one for Clogged Arteries.

Unlike other social media apps, Burpple doesn't require you to pin your food finds immediately. It is able to recall for you when, as well as its location, the picture was taken so you can journal it later - letting you focus on eating first. Remember to take your picture first though, empty plates do not make tantalising pictures.

Get the best deals

Besides eating and fiddling with smartphones, Singaporeans love a great bargain.

And the Good Life app from Standard Chartered offers just such deals, well, to their credit and debit cardholders anyway.

The app pushes weekly mobile coupons, exclusive to the app, on top of the full range of benefits available daily. Cardholders can then share the coupons with friends and family via Facebook, Twitter, email or SMS.

Its I love Free Monday coupons offer members a free item every Monday until the end of the year - that's 32 freebies to look forward to!

If you'd rather not wait for Monday, deals are available to search via categories, merchant names and keyword as well.

All apps are available on Apple's App Store. Hungrygowhere is also available on Google Play and Reserve Table will be made available for Android devices soon.

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