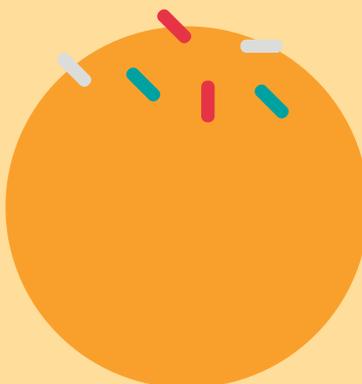




Ice, ice, baby!

Rachel Read checks out some of the coolest ice-cream destinations around town



Mister Softee is so last season... step aside Häagen-Dazs – these days, there are plenty more exciting ice-cream options around town. Boasting Instagram-worthy presentation and a range of unique and innovative flavours, we take a look at the new wave of Hong Kong ice-cream companies that make for the most delicious way to cool down this summer.

For matcha lovers... Via Tokyo

If there are two things Hong Kong foodies love it's soft-serve and green-tea; put the two together and you're onto an easy winner, as the massive queues at local dessert joint Via Tokyo prove. This small café in Causeway Bay is a social media favourite (it won last year's Best New Restaurant Award on Openrice) thanks to their signature matcha soft-serve, which fans declare is the best in town. Made using matcha powder from Tokyo blended

with the smoothest Hokkaido milk, its rich, creamy texture and distinctive green tea taste is pretty unbeatable. With other limited-edition flavours appearing seasonally, including the likes of Royal Milk Tea and Japanese Hojicha, there are plenty of reasons for regular return visits, too.

Shop 1A-1B, G/F, Lei Shun Court, 106-126 Leighton Road, Causeway Bay. 2895 1116
www.facebook.com/viatokyocafe

For unique flavours... Lab Made

The mad scientists of Hong Kong's dessert scene, Lab Made has gone from one perennially sold-out store in Tai Hang to a mini ice-cream empire, growing to eight branches across the city including venues in Tsim Sha Tsui, Repulse Bay and their own café in Causeway Bay. Started by pharmacist Ronnie Cheng and his business partner, Lab Made is Asia's first liquid nitrogen ice-cream

laboratory where all scoops are made fresh to order – and who can resist a bit of dessert theatre thanks to the waves of icy mist that smoke out during the creation process? Now for the science bit: being frozen at -196C with liquid nitrogen results in smaller ice crystals, making for a smoother and creamier ice-cream texture; be quick though, it also melts faster as a result. Chemistry lesson aside, the proof here is in the pudding (literally!) and Lab Made's quirky range of ever-changing flavours comprises original Hong Kong favourites like custard bun, sticky purple rice, crispy toast, and ginger tofu, plus creative crowd-pleasers like pandan cake, sea salted caramel with chocolate crisps, and strawberry Yakult.

Locations in Tai Hang, Causeway Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui, North Point, Repulse Bay, Tseung Kwan O, Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan
www.facebook.com/LabMadeHK

www.southside.edu.hk

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For perfect popsicles... Lola's Ice Pops

In search of the perfect popsicle? Forget artificially flavoured insipid shop-bought lollies and look to Lola's Ice Pops instead! Started by two mums who wanted to create natural, wholesome and delicious frozen treats for their families, Lola's use only the best seasonal ingredients in their artisanal popsicles, all handmade in Hong Kong in small batches to ensure consistent quality – and with absolutely zero chemicals, artificial colourings, additives, preservatives or unnecessary fillers added, either. Whether you're craving something creamy (mango lassi, blueberry cheesecake), fruity (watermelon basil, passion fruit peach sorbet) or chocolate-y (chocolate with homemade brownie bites, white chocolate with strawberries), Lola's has got you covered and then some... right down to clever "boozy popsicle" cocktail collaborations with LKF bar Common Room. Now available to buy at the IFC branch of City'super as well as by direct order, these cute and colourful ice pops are great for events and parties – once you pop, you can't stop!

P.S. Ice-cream lovers will also be pleased to hear that Lola's have brought their au naturel ethos and dessert know-how to their just-launched range of artisan ice-creams, Lily & Ran. Purchase it via their website www.lilyandran.com.

Available at City'super IFC, The Bottle Shop, Just Green and more; see full locations on their website or order direct at info@lolasicepops.com www.lolasicepops.com

For seriously good sundaes...

Oddies Foodies

Ditch those old-fashioned notions of ice-cream sundaes that involve masses of whipped cream and not much else – Wan Chai hole-in-the-wall Oddies Foodies has brought a whole new spin on the sundae. These playful parfaits get creative with exciting flavour combinations and texture contrasts, resulting in all-out ice-cream craziness that somehow still taste absolutely delicious. Case in point: their recent "3.15" parfait includes Italian low-fat soft gelato, jasmine panna cotta, butter crumbs, apple raisin chutney, dehydrated carrot cake, a giant cookie and cacao nibs sprinkles... talk about a mouthful! However, Oddies' true signature comes in the form of their twist on Hong Kong's famous egg waffles (gai dan zai), dishing up varieties that include rice pudding, miso daikon and even kimchi inside; their most famous sundae, The Night Wolf, features their chocolate chip and brownie "eggette" plus dark chocolate gelato, passion fruit panna cotta and caramelised banana ice-cream. Each egg waffle is freshly made-to-order so expect big queues – and since this small dessert joint has no seating inside, you'll have to enjoy that sundae to go... the sweetest kind of Hong Kong street food!

Shop 1F, G/F, 149 Wan Chai Road, Wan Chai, 9551 7972; closed Mondays www.facebook.com/oddiesfoodies

For vegan foodies... Happy Cow

Thought vegans couldn't eat ice-cream? Think again! Happy Cow, Hong Kong's only vegan ice-cream company, was founded by San Francisco husband-and-wife team Isaac and Lacey Goldstein – two vegans who spent years perfecting recipes to create their dream scoop. Gluten-free, soy-free, low glycaemic and yes, absolutely 100 per cent vegan (coconut cream and coconut sugar are the magic ingredients that give Happy Cow's creamy smooth texture and natural sweet taste), the emphasis here is on all-natural plant-based ingredients that are still chock full of flavour – and with zero artificial flavours, colours or preservatives either. With fun flavours including Lime In The Coconut, Mint Chocolate Chip, Cinnamon Caramel Swirl and Pina Colada, the brand is now stocked at several supermarkets and green retailers throughout the city, meaning you're never far from your next Happy Cow fix.

Available at Oliver's, City'super, ThreeSixty, Just Green and many more – see full locations on their website www.happycowhk.com

