



The Tummy Train

FOOD & TRAVEL STORIES BY CLARISSE PANUELOS



9 DECEMBER, 2018 / EVENTS, FOODIE LIFE / POST A COMMENT

*A lovely evening of Filipino-German cuisine through Wanderlust Küche
by Goethe Institut*



Hi there, Clarisse here and welcome aboard *The Tummy Train*! This is mostly a food blog, but I also share travel stories every so often. Expect lots of recipes, foodie features and reviews, mouth-watering food photography, and lots of adventures in different parts of the world!

E-mail: [clarisse \[at\] thetummytrain \[dot\] com](mailto:clarisse@thetummytrain.com) OR
[thetummytrain \[at\] gmail \[dot\] com](mailto:thetummytrain@gmail.com)

In my opinion, there is nothing more universal than food. It's the one thing I feel can truly bring people together. It's one of the first things that can effectively serve as an introduction to a new culture or country. Clearly, Goethe Institut knows this.

For me personally, Germany is one of my dream countries to visit. It sits amongst my top picks for European destinations although I am not particularly well-versed in German food. In fact, I know very little about it. It's why I



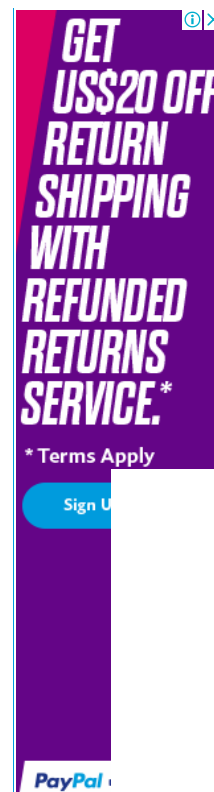
appreciate things like this Wanderlust Küche project by the Goethe Institut. It's a joint project by various offices of Goethe Institut in Asia, beginning as an idea from Maren Niemeyer, head of the Goethe Institut Thailand.



The thought behind this project is simply to shine the light on German cuisine, and perhaps make it more relatable and familiar. Most of what people, at least in Asia, know about Germany involves cars and *Die Nationalmannschaft* (of which I myself was a big fan of when I used to follow football closely). When it comes to their cuisine, there's limited knowledge beyond sausage and beer. And sauerkraut.

This is why the Goethe Instituts of Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Singapore and Wellington decided to make this joint project. It's like German Cuisine going on an Asian Tour!

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In Manila, Wanderlust Küche consisted of a set of mostly open-to-the-public free events that ran from November 6 up to the 29th. There were exhibits on German cookbooks, putting a spotlight on traditional and modern German recipes that visitors got to learn about and even take home. They had lessons about German dining etiquette, and they also screened some German culinary-themed movies in the Goethe Institute Library. Goethe Institut HQ in Makati hosted all of these events.

The series ended in a culminating dinner called the **Blue Hour**, which was by invite only. Held at the fancy **Terraz Restaurant** in Makati, I was lucky enough to be on the guest list for this rather illuminating event.

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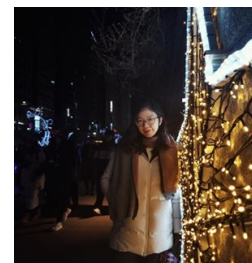
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It's a fitting venue for this culinary tour, since the chefs that have been tapped for this are from famed Hamburg chef collective *Werteköche*, represented by top chef Mirko Trenkner and his master chef colleagues Steffen Burkhardt and Helge Hagemann. Assigned to the Philippines was **Chef Steffen Burkhardt**, and his Pinoy chef counterpart was none other than **Chef Kalel Chan**.

Chef Kalel was away on a personal matter that night, but he was well-represented by **Chef Fred Arellano** who put his ideas onto the plate. (And very well I might add.) The task was to come up with an international menu for 150 guests that would harmoniously showcase the best of both culinary worlds.


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Before that, Chef Steffen was able to have a little food tour with one of my childhood BFFs **Gilbert Que**. As a culture specialist, I'm certain he was able to share tidbits of the Filipino history in relation to food. Based on the video shown during the dinner, it seemed educational and fun!



So the title of the dinner party is *Blue Hour*, which is a reference to the magical moment when the day draws to a close and the light turns blue shortly before sunset. It's that relaxing part of the day where one feels rather compelled to socialize. This was what Goethe Institut had in mind with their guest list when they brought together people coming from different backgrounds.

Though I was with Gilbert during the dinner, my initial feeling being here was that of a fish out of water. Somehow though we all fell into a comfortable banter and I quickly relaxed thanks to my boisterous table-mates.



Amidst all the conversations, the food slowly arrived one by one. It was so difficult to photograph things with the lighting setup of the venue, but I hope that I did a passable job and the food makes your mouth water still.

First was the *brotzeit* combination of **chicken liver pate on a strip of pickled pumpkin**, as well as **fish tartar**, both served atop German bread. At the center is a **celery remoulade** that really wakes up the palate. I really loved the flavor of the liver pate. It had a lovely tang that goes so well with the pickled pumpkin.

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I also enjoyed the other appetizer. On the board for the **Filipino Charcuterie Platter**, we had *etage* (Cordillera-style preserved pork), excelente ham, blue peppato cheese, and pineapple ricotta cheese. For the sweet element, there were some dried mangoes and candied nuts. The crostini was made from malunggay pan de sal.



For the starter, we had a **German-style poached egg dish with braised kangkong** underneath and some smoked potatoes on the side. The real winning factor was the mustard foam that went so well with the poached egg. I used to love eggs with spicy tomato ketchup, but eating it with mustard is now my favorite thing.



And look at this gorgeously poached egg! I believe eggs with runny yolks are one of the greatest simple joys in life so excuse the excitement haha!



Since this was a “dialogue” and the cuisines took turns to be served, it was a Pinoy version that was up next. Seeing those coconut halves on a plate got me all excited because I love Binakol, and this version was a truly good one.



Instead of the normal Chicken Binakol, Chef Khalel and Chef Fred opted for a **Seafood Binakol Soup**. Infused with the sweet coconut water-broth was the barest hint of salty. In the soup we had shrimp, scallops, lapu-lapu, squid, and perfect rounds of crunchy sayote. There were some strips of coconut meat in there too, but I loved how you could use your spoon to scoop out the soft and delicious coconut meat yourself. The pako is of course edible as well.



For the German main course, we got the **Labskaus**. It's basically this melting pot of beef, potatoes, pickled beetroot, topped with a pickled fried fish and onions. The pickled stuff adds character to this dish, but I wasn't too keen on the fish on top. It was a little tough.



Next came what I thought was the star of the show. This **Lambanog-marinated seabass** was truly perfection in terms of texture and taste. It had a tang that was highlighted even more by the calamansi. If you eat the fish with some of the malunggay kalabasa puree, some earthy and spice-filled flavors come into play. The mushroom adlai underneath makes the dish more filling, while the fried tofu skin on the side adds some textural interestingness. (It helps that it also tastes really good on its own.)



I wonder if marinating it in lambanog for several days contributed to its sublime texture. I can't stop raving about this dish to be honest. *Ang sarap talaga niya!*



Throughout the meal, we were served with free-flowing wine. There was a choice of red and white wine and I really thought this sweet white wine complemented all the dishes so well. It's not a fancy dinner without wine!



At last we arrived at the last part of our meal, which was the dessert. I was expecting quite a lot but I thought the desserts were just okay for me. It has an interesting variety though, combining German and Filipino elements in one platter. **Fresh fruits** were present in the platter, notably pineapples and mangoes which we have quite an abundance of. There was **Frozen Honeyparfait** scooped over **Gratinated inutak**.



On one side is the **Jackfruit Sansrival** with coconut caramel, blobs of mango mousse, and some crushed polvoron. The other side you have some **Poppy Seed Pudding**, with a chocolate ganache and some broken pieces of crystallized sugar on top.



I don't think there was anybody that night who did not leave the venue without a full tummy. It's one thing to experience fine dining, but another to do so while being part of something greater than just good food. I really have to commend Goethe Institut for coming up with such a great idea to showcase that German food isn't as intimidating or even "boring" as most people may think.

I can tell that so much thought was put into planning the menu for the *Blue Hour*, so I have to commend the entire Goethe and Terraz teams for creating dishes that made this evening memorable. A giant congratulations is in order!



As someone who is always interested in learning about cuisines from different parts of the world, I thought this experience was a good one in terms of bringing German cuisine to my attention. I have not thought to explore this cuisine before, but now I'm actually finding myself interested to learn and discover more things. Thank you so much to Goethe Institut for inviting me! And of course, Gilbert and I could not resist having a selfie with Chef Steffen after the event! 😊



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