

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL

Eggs provide tremendous opportunity for menu innovation.

By Jeffrey Spear

Historically speaking, eggs have enjoyed longstanding popularity on breakfast and brunch menus. Today, chefs are recognizing just how versatile eggs can be, revitalizing old favorites, using them as colorful toppings on sandwiches and salads and creating exciting new applications that are featured as center of plate proteins on lunch, dinner, and even bar menus.

At The Bar at Willet (Bardstown, KY), Executive **Chef John Sleasman** creates what some call "the best egg salad sandwich ever." Made with smoked Duke's mayonnaise, egg jam, shredded salt-cured egg yolk, plus sprinkles of chives and nutritional yeast, its flavor, texture and stunning presentation have made this one of the restaurant's best-sellers.

In Denison, TX, **Raechel Van Buskirk**, Founder of the Deviled Egg Co., has earned accolades for her flavorful approach to deviled eggs. With varieties including Deep-Fried Crab Rangoon, Walking Taco, Cheeseburger



**RAEHEL
VAN
BUSKIRK**

and even Cinnamon Roll, her restaurant has become a highly specialized, exclusively take-out operation.

GLOBAL FLAVORS RULE

It's no surprise that egg dishes from around the world are capturing attention. While North African shakshuka (poached eggs, tomato, and capsicum sauce), English Scotch eggs (hard boiled egg wrapped in sausage, breaded, deep-fried) and Japanese tamagoyaki (rolled omelet with dashi, sugar, mirin) are somewhat familiar, other dishes including Malaysian nasi goreng (fried rice, shrimp, fried egg), Georgian



EGG TUCK



CHEF MARGARET PAK

ADJARULI KHACHAPURI



Adjaruli khachapuri (cheese bread topped with egg) and Italian Florentine (white sauce, spinach, eggs) and Bismarck (tomato sauce, mozzarella, prosciutto, eggs) pizzas are gaining attention today.

With growing interest in Korean cuisine, Egg Tuck (Chicago, IL) has taken inspiration from "street toast" egg sandwiches served in Seoul. Founder **Alex Sohn** has introduced several variations that feature either soft scrambled or fried eggs. The Royal West, made with a tteok-galbi pork and beef short rib patty, fried egg, cheddar cheese, pickles, and grilled onions on thickly sliced brioche, is one of their many standouts.

While a few regional Indian cuisines are reasonably well known in the U.S., egg dishes from India are still being discovered. A few traditional favorites including egg tadka (green mung beans, chickpeas, hard boiled eggs, spices), egg kothu paratha (shredded paratha, eggs, spicy gravy) and egg puffs (hard boiled eggs, spicy onion masala filling baked inside crispy puff pastry) are slowly appearing on U.S. menus. At Thattu (Chicago, IL), a nationally renowned Indian restaurant specializing in the cuisine of Kerala, **Chef Margaret Pak** is serving up a wide variety of memorable dishes, including several that feature eggs. While egg apam (appam, egg, chili oil crisp, microgreens) is popular at lunchtime and prathal focaccia (housemade turmeric spiced focaccia, collard greens in coconut milk, tomato masala, egg) is offered periodically as a special, her egg curry (hardboiled eggs, spicy coconut milk and tomato sauce) has become a dinnertime favorite.

BUTTER CHICKEN POUTINE



ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

According to **Chef Nelson Serrano-Bahri**, Director of Innovation at the American Egg Board "Eggs are an incredibly versatile protein and a wonderful complement to plant-based menus." When it comes to adding vitality to menus, he suggests "It's truly surprising how many dishes exploiting the functionality of eggs are overlooked. There are countless ways to make them the focal point in truly innovative presentations." Some of these dishes are both smoked and fermented eggs - a perfect standalone snack or ingredient in egg salad; pavlova, a delightful dessert that transforms the whole egg - the whites into merengue and the yolks into curd; and a long list of beverages including Vietnamese egg coffee, gin fizz, and coffee sabayon.

What is glaringly apparent, especially when chefs are hungry for new menu items that will dazzle their guests, is that eggs are being underutilized. Whether included for breakfast, lunch, brunch, dinner or after-hours, the opportunities for visually engaging and flavorful applications that feature eggs is virtually endless.



RECIPE

NASI GORENG

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE SPICE PASTE:

2 small shallots (2 ounces),
roughly chopped
3 medium cloves garlic,
roughly chopped
1 teaspoon sambal oelek
1/2 teaspoon shrimp paste

FOR THE NASI GORENG:

3 tablespoons peanut oil
8 large shrimp (21-25), peeled, deveined
4 cups jasmine rice, fully cooked,
refrigerated overnight
2 tablespoons kecap manis, plus more
for drizzling
2 teaspoons soy sauce
Kosher salt
Ground white pepper
2 fried eggs, cooked sunny side up

DIRECTIONS

For the Spice Paste: Mix all spice paste ingredients in a small food processor and process to make a paste.

For the Nasi Goreng: Heat oil in a large wok over high heat until shimmering. Add the spice paste and cook, stirring constantly until the paste is fragrant and turns a few shades darker.

Add the shrimp and toss until just about fully cooked. Add the rice, tossing to coat all of the grains with the spice paste, followed by the kecap manis and soy sauce. Continue to cook until rice is hot and well coated with all of the seasonings. Add salt and white pepper, to taste.

Divide the rice between two plates, top with a fried egg and drizzle a little kecap manis. Serve while hot.