

SIMPLY THE BEST!

Hong Kong's two top travel icons have joined together for a very special inflight food promotion

The "Best Chinese Food in the Air" is being served again from May, with CX teaming up with The Peninsula Hong Kong to offer a selection of specially prepared dishes inflight.

From 1 May passengers on most flights out of Hong Kong will be able to tuck into unique dishes created by The Peninsula's Spring Moon Chinese Restaurant.

Spring Moon, says Thomas Chung, Manager Chinese Food Development, is renowned for serving the highest quality Cantonese cuisine, "and, as a Hong Kong carrier, we are proud to offer passengers fine Chinese food from top local restaurants. We expect the new promotion to be another success."

This is the fifth time CX has run its "Best Chinese Food in the Air" promotion. For the Peninsula tie-up, a total of 34 dishes have been developed by Spring Moon Executive Chef Ho Pui-yung to be served in all classes.

Thomas says that high-quality Chinese food is now an important part of the inflight product, "not only because of the growing number of Asian passengers, but so that travellers from all over the world can appreciate the unique CX style."

Preparation for the latest promotion began some six months ago when a food trial was conducted at Spring Moon.

"We must have tried out about 70 dishes," says Paul Wun, CPCS Executive Chef. "Based on a number of criteria we selected about 30 which we felt might be suitable to be served on an aircraft."

The CPCS team had to consider the tastes of the travelling public.

"Ingredients such as animal

organs, bird's nests and shark's fin that are prevalent in Chinese cooking had to be excluded, as some passengers might find them offensive," Paul says. Spicy dishes were also struck off the list.

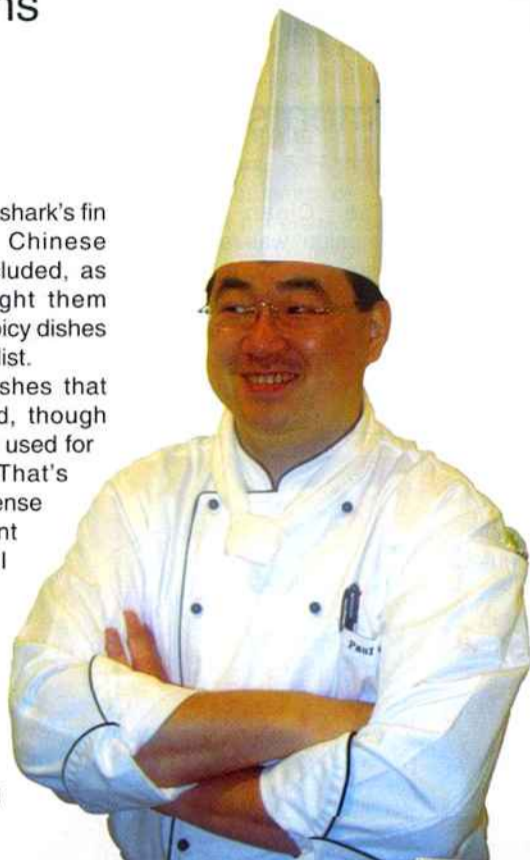
The team prefers dishes that overall are quite bland, though stronger flavours will be used for inflight preparation. "That's because we lose our sense of taste to some extent when we fly," Paul explains.

Under normal circumstances, inflight meals are cooked about 18 hours before departure and then go through a chilling process before being lifted on board.

Deep-fried and

sizzling dishes are not appropriate for reheating. "Instead we were looking for braised and steamed dishes that use rich sauces and are particularly suitable for eating after being reheated," says Paul.

One of Chef Ho's creations that will appear on flights over the coming months is prawns with snow fungus and chrysanthemum in a clear broth.



CPCS's Chef Paul Wun and just two of the "Best Chinese Food in the Air" dishes.



braised beef brisket with broad bean sauce and steamed sliced sea bass with preserved vegetables.

Once the dishes were finalised, trials were conducted at CPCS to fine-tune the preparation process.

Paul says that a number of modifications were made after his team discussed the making of the dishes. The fine-tuning went on until CPCS was happy with each process – from the different stages of preparation to how the food is displayed on the meal tray.

Every famous restaurant in Hong Kong has its own recipes, especially for seasonings and sauces, and Spring Moon was happy to let CPCS in on a few of its secrets.

"I'm delighted that Chef Ho was willing to share some of the secret classic dishes with us," says Paul.

Phase two of the latest "Best Chinese Food in the Air" will see the promotion extended to a number of inbound flights.

Thomas' team will join Chef Ho for special promotions in Bangkok and Beijing in

Chef Ho takes up the challenge

"My initial impression was that it would be challenging and complicated – something very different from what we do here."

Chef Ho Pui-yung certainly knew his culinary skills would be put to the test when he agreed to create dishes for CX's latest "Best Chinese Food in the Air" promotion.

The Executive Chef at Spring Moon Chinese Restaurant is in charge of a kitchen brigade of 33 cooks at what is regarded as one of Hong Kong's finest Cantonese eateries – in short, he knows his onions.

But the chef had to rethink his entire approach when it came to creating dishes to be served inflight.

"Straight away I found there were constraints on what we could and couldn't do," says Chef Ho.

The chef had to consider what would happen to dishes when they were reheated on the aircraft, and also how a different approach needed to be taken for dishes in each class of travel.

"I have to admit I felt some pressure," he smiles.

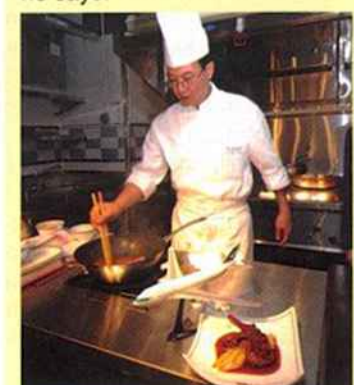
Chef Ho eventually came up with a selection of 70 dishes that he thought might fit the bill, and Thomas Chung and his team whittled these down to 30.

"Thomas arranged for me to visit the CPCS kitchens to give me a better idea of how inflight catering works," says the chef. "I don't need to go back again because I have full confidence in what they are doing."

Chef Ho is one of the stars of Cantonese cooking. From humble beginnings in a Kowloon restaurant specialising in barbecued meats he joined The Peninsula in 1989 and after just a few months he was made Head Chef.

Chef Ho says he's excited by the promotion, "and I think people will be excited by two great Hong Kong travel icons working together," he says.

And his own favourites from the promotion? "I have to say I like the lamb chops with leeks and also the steamed prawns," he says.



Win a fab Spring Moon dinner

To celebrate the new partnership between CX and The Peninsula, the hotel is offering a special prize to tie in with the "Best Chinese Food in the Air" promotion.

The winner will get dinner for four in the Spring Moon Restaurant at The Peninsula, where you can enjoy some of the best Cantonese dining in the world. Spring Moon was remodelled in 1998 to resemble how it might have looked when the hotel opened 70 years before.

The prize gives the winning party the chance to some of the dishes created for the "Best Chinese Food" promotion in a specially prepared five-course banquet all beautifully cooked and presented by Chef Ho and his team.

Spring Moon is offering the dinner at HK\$380 per person throughout the promotion period.

To enter, first answer this question: **In what year did The Peninsula Hong Kong open?**

Send the answer in an email titled "Spring Moon dinner" to CCD#SCT before noon on Friday, 14 May. Please include your name, department/port and daytime contact number. The winners will be announced through Daily News.



Cantonese dining is taken to the next level at Spring Moon where you can eat food prepared by top chefs in art deco surroundings.