

Buffets under \$40: Best spreads for Spanish tapas, Japanese hotpot, Thai fare and Nonya classics



Nyonya Classics Lunch Buffet at M Hotel Singapore offers a spread of over 30 dishes, including Peranakan classics such as Nyonya Laksa and Beef Cheek Rendang. PHOTO: THE BUFFET RESTAURANT AT M HOTEL SINGAPORE



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UPDATED JUN 22, 2025, 06:09 AM ▾

SINGAPORE – Diners who crave the abundance and variety of buffets without paying more than \$40 have plenty of choices.

Instead of the standard international offerings, some restaurants specialise in fare that one does not usually associate with buffets – Spanish tapas, Peranakan classics and traditional Thai dishes.

Several restaurants offer spreads with tighter menus, shorter seatings and sharper weekday deals. But there is no compromise on taste. Think wagyu beef sliders, roast ayam buah keluak and freshly sliced sashimi.



Enjoy sashimi at Kiseki Japanese Buffet Restaurant. PHOTO: KISEKI JAPANESE BUFFET RESTAURANT

Across the island, nine restaurants are showing that affordable, all-you-can-eat dining can be satisfying.

Buffets, at their core, remain a communal way to dine – a format that continues to resonate with Singaporeans.

“We offer diverse, affordable buffets because we believe sharing a wonderful meal together should be accessible for every occasion,” says Ms Bonnie Wong, 36, chief executive of Creative Eateries, which operates Suki-Ya and Sarai Fine Thai.

At Sarai Fine Thai, a weekend lunch buffet goes for \$39++ an adult, while Suki-Ya’s hotpot lunch buffet starts at \$22.90++.

Over at The Winery Tapas Bar in Chijmes, Mondays mean two hours of free-flow tapas at \$39++, including indulgent bites like suckling pig tacos.

Some buffets lean on nostalgia. Carlton City Hotel Singapore’s Plate restaurant hosts a Sunday-only Ah Ma Porridge Buffet Lunch for \$48++, but one-for-one promotions bring the effective price to under \$30. The draw? Comfort classics such as kam heong lala, braised pork belly and Taiwanese-style sweet potato porridge.

At Cafe Lodge in YWCA Fort Canning, the weekday porridge lunch buffet starts at \$19.80++. It includes braised duck and braised pork belly.

Meanwhile, M Hotel Singapore’s The Buffet Restaurant serves a halal-certified Peranakan lunch buffet at \$36.80++ through September.

Catering to white-collar professionals seeking a welcoming venue for lunch gatherings and team luncheons, the buffet offers an accessible and inclusive dining experience, making it ideal for diverse teams, says M Hotel Singapore’s general manager Edeline Tiong, 48.

She observes that guests tend to be well-informed and up to date with the latest deals and promotions.

“This behaviour highlights a clear sense of price sensitivity, particularly when it comes to buffet offerings,” she says. “It also underscores the importance of perceived value. Guests are not just looking for affordability, but also a dining experience that feels worth their time and spend.”

Carlton City Hotel Singapore’s general manager Niall Cowan, 52, says the Ah Ma Porridge Buffet Lunch is built around comfort and quality, not excess.

“While premium buffets focus on luxury ingredients, we focus on thoughtful curation, depth of flavour and warm hospitality. Compared with budget options, we

deliver a higher standard of freshness, cooking technique and a relaxing ambience – all at under \$40 with our one-for-one deal. It’s value without compromise,” he says.

Mr Jason Choong, 46, the food and beverage manager at YWCA Fort Canning, has noticed a growing demand for affordable buffets, driven by economic factors and evolving consumer preferences.

He says: “We see the demand for our affordable porridge buffet not just among seniors, but also families and office workers looking for a delicious and comforting meal.”

Ms Evien Ang, 50, head of marketing at Kiseki Japanese Buffet Restaurant, agrees the demand for affordable buffets is growing as diners become more value-conscious amid the economic downturn.

She says: “Diners appreciate generous selections, consistent replenishment and the freedom to indulge without worrying about the cost. Ultimately, it’s about enjoying a satisfying and well-rounded dining experience that feels worth every dollar spent.”

But she points out that for operators, running an affordable buffet is challenging due to the need for careful cost management and economies of scale. High food wastage and labour costs make it difficult to maintain profitability without compromising on quality.

Value-driven a la carte buffets are also gaining momentum, with the likes of The Winery Tapas Bar’s Tapas Night, Hey Kee All-You-Can-Eat Ala Carte Lunch Buffet and Sarai Fine Thai Ala Carte Buffet, where food is prepared to order.

Mr Mikael Chan, 29, general manager of The Winery Tapas Bar, says the tapas for its a la carte buffet on Monday nights are curated with the same care as the premium a la carte menu.

“While it’s priced affordably, we don’t compromise on quality or ingredients. Many of our tapas feature imported produce like Spanish piquillo peppers,” he adds.

Here is a closer look at the nine restaurants offering buffets under \$40.

Tapas Night

Where: The Winery Tapas Bar, B1-05 Chijmes, 30 Victoria Street

When: Mondays, 4pm to 1am (patrons have a two-hour dining limit)

Tel: 8388-8850

Info: thewinery.com.sg

Kick off the week with a flavour-packed Spanish feast at The Winery Tapas Bar's Tapas Night. For \$39++ a person, indulge in two hours of free-flow tapas, with 16 delectable options that bring bold, smoky and savoury flavours to the table.

Sink your teeth into Patatas Bravas – golden, layered agria potatoes fried to a crisp and smothered in fiery bravas sauce, creamy housemade mayonnaise and a dusting of togarashi.



The Winery Tapas Bar's free-flow Tapas Night on Mondays lets diners tuck into dishes such as Patatas Bravas at \$39++ a person for two hours. PHOTO: THE WINERY TAPAS BAR

Another must-try is the Suckling Pig Taco, filled with luscious Spanish suckling pig, tangy pickled onion and a smoky-sweet housemade sauce.



Suckling Pig Taco at The Winery Tapas Bar. PHOTO: THE WINERY TAPAS BAR

Porridge Buffet

Where: Cafe Lodge, YWCA Fort Canning, 6 Fort Canning Road

When: 6 to 9pm daily

Tel: 6335-8008/6335-8009

A comforting bowl of porridge becomes a hearty dinner spread at Cafe Lodge, where every bite supports a good cause. The dinner porridge buffet is priced at \$28.80++ an adult and net proceeds support YWCA's community service programmes. From Mondays to Thursdays, enjoy a one-for-one deal.



Cafe Lodge at YWCA Fort Canning offers over 30 dishes at its Porridge Buffet. PHOTO: CAFE LODGE AT YWCA FORT CANNING

On weekends, diners get a complimentary steamed fish with every two paying adults. The spread features over 30 dishes with a live station carving up braised

duck, pork belly, steamed squid, century egg and fish cake.



