

# SWEETNESS FROM THE — AS T

CHEF GWEN LIM'S EYES LIGHT UP WITH A BRILLIANT SPARKLE WHEN SHE'S TALKING ABOUT SUGARS. "I FELL IN LOVE WITH THIS SUGAR THE FIRST TIME I TRIED IT IN JAPAN," SHE SPEAKS OF OKINAWA PALM SUGAR, WHICH SHE'D ONCE BOUGHT 200 KILOGRAMMES AT ONE GO. AS AN APPRENTICE IN PIERRE HERME'S KITCHENS, SHE'D HAVE HER FIRST TASTE OF SUGAR AT SEVEN IN THE MORNING, AND CONTINUE SAMPLING PASTRIES THROUGHOUT THE DAY. "IN FACT, I THINK I CAN PROBABLY HAVE A CAKE FOR A MAIN COURSE, RATHER THAN A SAVOURY MEAL," THE OWNER OF PÂTISSERIE G, LOCATED AT MILLENIA WALK, CHUCKLES. LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT SIX NEW IDEAS DREAMED UP BY CHEF LIM, INSPIRED BY RED SUGAR, LIGHT CANE SUGAR, DARK BROWN SUGAR, MALT SUGAR, GULA MELAKA, AND OKINAWA PALM SUGAR! QL

## 源起亚洲的糖潮魅力

糖是糕点制作里不可缺少的一道材料。它不仅仅是甜味剂，在烘焙的过程里，也会发生一些神奇的变化；在充分受热后会产生诱人的色泽，释放出带有苦甜酸的醇厚浓香，在添加水份并加热之后，也能塑造不同质地的糖果。糖起源于亚洲，由印度人于公元前五百年开发出炼糖技术，主要提炼蔗糖。在亚洲一般常见的食糖有赤砂糖、黄糖、黑糖、麦芽糖、椰糖和带有炭烧香的日本冲绳黑糖。这一次我们邀请了原本从事物流业，颇有艺术感的糕点师林慧玲为我们特别设计由以上六种亚洲食糖制作的糖果糕点。有发挥麦芽糖高粘度和抗结晶特质的芒果软糖，在面皮上撒满椰糖的椰香牛角面包，展现赤砂糖风味与颜色的巴黎车轮饼奶油内陷，释放黑糖色泽与坚果香的焦糖果仁挞，带糖蜜风味、层次分明的冲绳黑糖酥粒，利用黄糖色泽与姜汁搭配的港式风味焦糖布丁。从食材到口感气味，从美感到创作艺术，无不显示糕点师林慧玲对科学与美学的究极。强烈的讯息告诉我，任何工作做到极致，就会变成一门艺术。文心





**dark brown sugar**  
Muscovado, which can come from Negros, Philippines, or Mauritius, near Africa, has hints of toffee, caramel, and smoke, making it good for a sticky toffee pudding, caramel oranges, chocolate brioche, and molasses sugar cookies.

Caramel is something the French use a lot, and while most people have the impression that it is very sweet, Chef Gwen Lim is surprised by how nicely dark brown sugar works in place of white sugar. "We had a few customers in the morning, and we got them to try it," she says. "They went, 'Oh, it's not as sweet as I thought.'" On the palate, you first get a sensation of umaminess, from the light touch of Balinese pyramid salt, then an explosion of deep, earthy, smoky aromas from the crunchiness of hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds, and pistachios, countered nicely towards the end by the lively tanginess of raisins. "You almost taste coffee in it," says Chef Lim, of the scent of caramel combined with toasted nuts.

## caramel tartlet with dark brown sugar

By Chef Gwen Lim

220g dark brown sugar  
60g glucose  
300g cream  
160g butter  
70g (each) raisins, apricots and goji (Chinese wolfberries)  
60g (each) walnuts, pistachio, almonds and hazelnuts  
Salt, to taste

### Sweet Shortcrust Pastry

150g flour, sifted  
90g unsalted butter  
60g icing sugar  
20g ground almonds  
30g whole eggs

- For the sweet shortcrust pastry: Mix the sifted flour, unsalted butter, icing sugar and ground almonds in a mixing bowl until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add in the whole eggs one at a time and knead lightly until a soft dough is achieved. Flatten the dough onto a baking tray and keep chilled in the refrigerator for about an hour. Roll out the chilled dough onto a lightly floured surface into a thin dough sheet (5-mm thickness). Cut the dough sheet with a ring cutter (7-cm) into 10 round sheets. Prick the round dough sheets all over with a fork and place into round tart pans and cut off any excess. Blind bake the sweet shortcrust pastry tart shells in a pre-heated oven at 170°C for about 15 minutes. Remove the baked sweet shortcrust pastry tart shells from the tart pans and cool on a wire rack.
- Heat the dark brown sugar and glucose in a saucepan over a medium heat until temperature reaches at 110°C. Add in the cream and stirring constantly. Add in the butter and cook until temperature reaches at 104°C. Add in the mixed fruits and nuts and mix well. Spoon the caramelised nuts and fruits mixture into each baked sweet shortcrust pastry tart shell and sprinkle with salt, to taste. Cool before serving. Makes 10 tartlets



When the oven door swings open to reveal a batch of perfectly golden croissants, the rich, buttery aroma that fills the whole pastry room can get really distracting. "Initially, we just made a plain croissant, and topped it up with shaved coconut," says Chef Lim. "But we thought that the gula Melaka didn't stand out." So, aside from having gula Melaka incorporated into the pastry dough, she decided to top the croissants with some shaved gula Melaka as well. Biting into a croissant, hot from the oven, the coconut fragrance and gentle sweetness of the shaved gula Melaka takes the croissant to a different level altogether from the hot, buttery, crispy and crunchy pastry that we are so familiar with. What a delightful surprise!

### gula Melaka croissant

By Chef Gwen Lim

1kg	bread flour
60g	butter
30g	yeast
25g	salt
360ml	water
150ml	gula Melaka syrup
100ml	coconut milk
500g	butter, cubed
	Egg wash, for brushing
	Gula Melaka shaving, for sprinkling



#### gula Melaka

Known by different names in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma, and Laos, gula Melaka is often used in onde-onde (glutinous rice dumplings), cendol (shaved ice), bubur pulut hitam (black glutinous rice pudding), sago pudding, and bubur pengat (caramelised bananas).

- Mix the bread flour, butter, yeast and salt in an electric mixer bowl. Gradually add in 360ml water, gula Melaka syrup and coconut milk and beat on a medium speed until mixture comes together from the sides of the electric mixer bowl, for about 10 minutes. Place the dough into a bowl and cover with a damp cloth. Proof the dough at room temperature for about an hour and then chill in the refrigerator overnight. Remove the chilled dough from the refrigerator and roll out onto a lightly floured surface into a thin dough sheet. Top the dough sheet with the butter cubes and fold the dough sheet over into one double and one single fold. Cut the folded dough into 26 triangular shapes and proof for about 3 hours. Brush the proofed dough with egg wash, and then sprinkle with gula Melaka shavings. Bake the gula Melaka croissants in a pre-heated oven at 165°C for about 12 minutes. Makes 26 croissants



# 富丽糖皇

Created in 1891 and named after a 1,200-kilometre bicycle race from Paris to Brest, Paris Brest is a French dessert of choux pastry with a praline cream filling. Resembling bicycle wheels, the hazelnut praline filling has a subtle aroma that is best matched with a light cane sugar, so that its delicate fragrance does not get overshadowed. Aside from hazelnut praline, Paris Brest can also be made with chocolate and rum buttercream, with strawberry cream and sliced strawberries, with Nutella cream and almond flakes, or with white chocolate cream and candied orange bits. Crystallised from the pressing of cane, light cane sugar has a light golden colour from the natural molasses, and a light, crunchy texture.

## Paris Brest with light cane sugar

By Chef Gwen Lim

### Choux Pastry

125ml (each) milk and water  
100g butter  
5g salt  
150g flour, sifted  
4 whole eggs  
Egg wash, for brushing  
Sliced almonds and powdered sugar, for garnishing

### Pastry Cream

250ml milk  
65g light cane sugar  
60g egg yolks  
15g (each) custard and flour

### Praline Cream

400g pastry cream  
150g praline paste  
300g butter

- For the choux pastry: Heat the milk, 125ml water, butter and salt in a saucepan over a medium heat to a boil. Remove saucepan from the heat and add in sifted flour and stir well with a wooden spoon. Return saucepan on the stove and cook over a medium heat; stirring vigorously until the mixture forms into a soft dough ball and pulls away from the sides of the pan. Place the dough into a mixing bowl; add in the whole eggs one at a time and beat well. Pipe the 20 choux pastries onto a baking tray in the shape of a doughnut and brush with egg wash. Sprinkle the choux pastries with sliced almonds and bake in a pre-heated oven at 170°C for about 20 minutes.
- For the pastry cream: Heat the milk and light cane sugar in a saucepan over a low heat to a boil. Set aside. Whisk the egg yolks in a mixing bowl, sift in the custard and flour and whip until mixture is smooth. Gradually pour the hot milk into the whisked egg yolk mixture and whisk well. Return the mixture on the stove and heat to a boil, stirring constantly until mixture has slightly thickened. Pour the pastry cream into a shallow baking pan and cover with plastic film, with direct contact to the surface of the pastry cream. Keep chilled in the refrigerator.
- For the praline cream: Beat the pastry cream and the praline paste in an electric mixer bowl on a medium speed until creamy. Add in the butter and continue to beat until praline cream is light.
- Fill a piping bag with the praline cream with a star nozzle attached. Cut the baked choux pastry into half and pipe the praline cream into the base of the choux pastry, cover with the other halves and sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serves 20

### light cane sugar

Demerara, which comes from the sugar cane fields of Demerara, South America, has a delightful crunchiness which comes from the large size of its crystals, making it great as a sprinkled topping for muffins and scones. It is also valued as a sweetener for coffee or tea.



While Chef Lim is not looking, I put a smidgen of Okinawa palm sugar into my lips. Having just tasted a pinch of red sugar and a little of the light cane sugar, the flavours of Okinawa palm sugar seem to come from an entirely different dimension – there is depth, complexity, mellowness, expansiveness, richness, and a finish that never seems to end. Compared to the other sugars, this black sugar, which comes from the Tarama Islands in Okinawa, is more expensive – about S\$6 for a 150-gramme packet (compare this with gula Melaka, which costs about S\$3 for a 300-gramme packet.) "I like streusel cake, but I always thought it needs a little bit more depth to it," says Chef Lim. "So the Okinawa palm sugar came to my mind." Made from flakey puff pastry topped with fromage blanc, apricot, and a streusel butter cookie topping made with Okinawa palm sugar, one gets the sensations of light crunchiness with a tangy, nectarine hit, blanketed by the warm, comforting, gentle sweetness from the Okinawa black sugar.

### streusel with Okinawa palm sugar

By Chef Gwen Lim

200g	flour, sifted
5g	salt
40ml	butter, melted
110ml	water
140g	butter, cubed
100g	fromage blanc
150g	apricots in syrup

#### Streusel Topping

180g	flour, sifted
150g	butter
110g	Okinawa palm sugar

- For the streusel topping: Rub the sifted flour, butter and palm sugar in a mixing bowl until crumbly.



#### Okinawa palm sugar

In Okinawa, the black sugar is used with tapioca pearls, in chinsuko (egg and flour biscuit), in rice crackers, or in kanten jellies. You can also use it in a soy milk pudding, or as a dip for warabi-mochi (bracken starch jelly) with toasted soybean flour.

- Mix the sifted flour, salt and melted butter in a mixing bowl. Gradually add in 110ml water and knead into a dough. Wrap the dough with cling film and keep chilled in the refrigerator, for about 20 minutes. Roll out the chilled dough onto a lightly floured surface and add the butter cubes and fold 5 times three-folds. Roll the flaky dough into a square sheet, and cut with a ring cutter (26- cm in diameter). Fold the sides of the flaky dough and bake in a pre-heated oven at 180°C for about 12 minutes.
- Spread the fromage blanc onto the centre of the flaky pastry and top with apricots in syrup and crumbed streusel toppings. Return the streusel pastry into the hot oven and bake for another 10 minutes. Makes 1 streusel



I remember chancing upon an old man on a street corner in Hong Kong once, stretching malt sugar into fine hair, to make dragon bread candy with crushed peanuts. It was also in Hong Kong where my aunt sandwiched two pieces of crackers with some malt sugar swirled out of a red-and-white tub, hands it to me, and explains, "You can't find this outside anymore." Malt sugar is also used in making peanut brittle and sachima, deep-fried strips of egg and flour batter coated with malt sugar. In the candy that Chef Lim is making, she decides to add dried mango bits. "A bit of dried mango brings out the fragrance of the malt sugar," says Chef Lim. "The malt sugar candy turns out softer than the usual kind of caramels we make," she adds. "It's quite nostalgic."



### mango candy with malt sugar

By Chef Gwen Lim

400g cream  
200g sugar  
100g malt sugar  
25ml trimoline  
50g butter  
1g salt  
100g dried mangoes, diced

- Heat the cream, sugar, malt sugar, and trimoline in a saucepan over a medium heat to 118°C. Remove saucepan from the heat. Add in the butter and salt and whisk until butter has melted. Add in the diced dried mangoes and whisk well. Pour the mango candy mixture into flexi moulds and chill until firm. Once firm, cut the mango candy into rectangular pieces and wrap with cling film. Makes 80 candies

#### malt sugar

Malt sugar comes from the breakdown of starch in barley, wheat, rye, oats, or rice. In 50s and 60s Hong Kong, kids from poorer families made their own little snacks by sandwiching a wad of malt sugar between two rectangles of lightly salted soda crackers.

In Singapore, you can find red sugar used in an Indian dessert named putu mayam, steamed rice flour vermicelli with desiccated coconut, or Nyonya kueh tutu, a steamed cake of rice flour, with a shredded coconut filling which is tinted orange by the use of the red sugar. Chef Lim explains the use of ginger in the crème brûlée. "We thought, red sugar and ginger are always used together in traditional Chinese desserts, so why not try them together?" Some red sugar is dusted over the velvety surface of the custard, which is then caramelised into a brittle sheet with a blow torch. The red sugar adds a pretty pink colour to the dish, and the piquant fragrance of the ginger in the wobbly custard is truly mesmerising.

### ginger crème brûlée with red sugar

By Chef Gwen Lim

220g cream  
150ml milk  
1 old ginger knob (50g) crushed

100ml egg yolks  
60g red sugar  
Red sugar and fresh raspberry, for garnishing



#### red sugar

Red sugar, which is white or light brown cane sugar tinted orange with a food colouring, is often used with dishes that are white in colour, such as putu mayam (Indian rice flour vermicelli), as an auspicious touch. It can also be used to sweeten glutinous rice dumplings.

- Heat the cream, milk and old ginger in a saucepan over a low heat to a boil. Remove saucepan from the heat and leave to infuse for about an hour and then discard the old ginger.
- Beat the egg yolks and the red sugar in a mixing bowl until creamy. Set aside. Return the cream mixture on the stove and heat to a boil. Gradually add the boil cream mixture into the egg yolk mixture and whisk well.
- Divide the custard mixture among 6 ramekins and steam in a prepared hot steamer at 130°C for about 20 minutes. Remove the ramekins from the steamer and set aside the custard to cool. Once cooled, keep chilled in the refrigerator. Sprinkle the ginger crème brûlée with an even layer of red sugar, and caramelize the red sugar with a blow torch. Makes 6 ramekins

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