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HD **THE SERVE**  
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LP  
THIS WEEK MALAYSIAN BRUNCH  
LUXBITE

TD  
RATING: very good  
38 TOORAK ROAD, SOUTH YARRA,  
9867 5888  
UNLICENSED AE MC V EFTPOS  
DAILY 10.30AM-7PM BRUNCH: \$5-\$15; MACARONS: \$2.75;  
EAT-IN CAKES: \$7.50-\$9

LuxBite is a dessert cafe in South Yarra, a suburb where sweet-tooth emporia and teeth-whitening clinics seem to operate in roughly equal numbers. Owners Bernard Chu and Yen Yee worked the pastry stations at restaurants including Rockpool, Quay and Comme before opening their own sleek, petite pleasure dome in 2010. LuxBite is deservedly beloved for its East-meets-West macarons (pandan, say, or kaffir lime) and superbly outlandish cakes, but should also be celebrated for its Malaysian-style savoury snacks and brunches. The brunch menu is small but the dishes are sublime, mixing Malaysian and European elements to inspired and purposeful effect. Satay-marinated chicken leg is turmeric-tinged, crisp-skinned and as juicy as an overripe tomato. It pulls easily from the bone into soft, creamy polenta rimmed by burnt **butter** sauce. Salty crunch comes courtesy of anchovies and peanuts, rumbled together in a jammy version of ikan bilis, a dried anchovy condiment. Chicken also features alongside lap cheong (**Chinese** pork sausage) in a sticky rice dish that's so hearty I was afraid it would overwhelm my dessert stomach. Luckily, it's tempered by a crunchy iceberg lettuce and cucumber salad. Braised beef is textbook comfort food, resting on soft bacon and potato mash, and topped with a fried egg with a wok-style crisp fringe.

The small dining room and elaborate cake display mean this isn't your average brunch hangout; if you want the bathroom, you need to trot to a local park.

I am not the world's biggest macaron fan, but LuxBite's sour strawberry flavour could be the one to turn me. I'm also fully on **board** with the Lolly Bag Cake and gluten-free Meringue Monster. Or you could **buy** a cake-scented candle for sugar-free swooning.

ALSO TRY

KILLINEY KOPITIAM, 114 Lygon Street, Carlton, 9650 9880 (also 108 Bourke Street, Melbourne).  
Tuesday-Sunday brunch, lunch and dinner

The Singapore-style snacks and meals here are popular with students, especially the kaya toast (coconut jam and slabs of **butter** on white **bread**).

ORIENT EAST, 348 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, 9685 2900. Daily breakfast, lunch and dinner

The house restaurant for Seasons Botanic Gardens hotel covers many bases. Dishes include congee, kaya toast and good old eggs-any-way on sourdough.

TOM PHAT, 182-184 Sydney Road, Brunswick, 9381 2374. Wednesday-Monday lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday breakfast

It's not strictly Malaysian, but the pan-Asian weekend breakfast menu includes roti omelettes, and black sticky rice with jaggery yoghurt.

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