

April 1, 2010

Sophie Grigson in the Orient

Eight Half-hours of Cooking and Travelling in Hong Kong and Macau



Intro:

Produced in much the same style as her current series, '***Sophie in the Souk***', these programmes follow Sophie as she learns about all aspects of Hong Kong and its surrounding territories, including Macau, with her new friend, Wing Lau. And with Sophie food is never far from her mind!

The cuisine of Hong Kong can best be described as eclectic with extensive influences from Cantonese cuisine, Japan, and Southeast Asia. And due to Hong Kong's past as a British colony and long history of being an international city of commerce Western cuisine is also a major influence.

From the roadside stalls to the most upscale restaurants, Hong Kong provides an unlimited variety of food in every class. Complex combinations and international gourmet expertise have given Hong Kong the reputable labels of "*Gourmet Paradise*" and "*World's Fair of Food*".

Episode One: Hong Kong Fragrant Harbour Arrival

The first episode discovers Sophie sailing in the Duk Ling, a refurbished junk and iconic symbol of Hong Kong. It's a slow start for what turns out to be a very busy day. She meets her guide and companion Wing Lau and together they off to on a whirlwind tour of Hong Kong Central area, and much more. First they visit Statue Square and look at the buildings of modern Hong Kong and the colonial statues then it's off to an unusual form of transport. They take the Mid-Levels escalator up to a family-run snake restaurant and sample some very different soup! Afterwards it back down and onto the 104 year old 'Ding! Ding!' trams which criss-cross the Central district. They visit Margaret XU the leather-clad owner of one of the smallest and most revered Wanchai

restaurants, Yin Yang. From there it's a bar hop through the world of Suzie Wong with ex-pat, Eric Tomter while the Symphony of Light plays out across the buildings on the harbour. Later Wing and Sophie retire to a Dai Pai Dong, a very Hong Kong kind of stall restaurant for a late 'hot pot' supper before retiring for a rooftop nightcap by the Regal pool.

Episode Two: Hong Kong Fragrant Harbour Adventure

Our duo start off with a hearty dimsum breakfast at Maxims but Maxims is nothing like any breakfast place seen before. Chandeliers abound as the trollies whizz round with mouthwatering freshly steamed and cooked morsels in bamboo baskets.

After breakfast is a trip up in the tram to the top of Victoria Peak where they soak up the views before heading over the mountains to Repulse Bay and Stanley Market. Then its back for lunch with the blue tattooed '*demon chef of Hong Kong*', Alvin Leung at his restaurant, Bo Innovation.

Then it's a water taxi around Aberdeen Harbour famous for its fishing heritage and floating restaurants. It's also Wing's hometown. Then it's onto the grand-daddy floating restaurant of them all, Jumbo Kingdom. There they have a lesson in making Dimsum, rather badly despite their best efforts. Then it's off to Hong Kong's own Soho for evening drinks.

Episode Three: Nine Dragons Kowloon

Another day and time for another wonderful breakfast. This time Sophie learns the secrets of congee and its place in the hearts of Hong Kong residents. After a congee feast, Wing and Sophie board the iconic Star Ferry for a trip over to Kowloon. They visit Sam the Tailor so Sophie can be measured for a jacket and then head to the Peninsula Hotel for a sumptuous tea. There they meet Johnny Chung, the barman who has served celebrities, such as Clark Gable and heads of state in a career that has lasted 54 years so far!

Wing shows Sophie the Bird Market, the Fish Market and the Temple Street night Market in between visits to Sam the Tailor and a walk along the Avenue of Stars where Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee are immortalised. Finally they head over to Jason's place for a BBQ with Wing and her friends.

Episode Four: Country Living Hong Kong Style

It's an early start for Sophie and Wing when they meet Chef Sam Ip at the Fresh Market for a little early produce shopping. They return for a cooking session to make the Smoked Chicken with Tea dish. Finally Sophie and Wing head out into the New Territories, which is really rural Hong Kong. They're off to meet Tang Kwai Yin, a living descendant of the Tang dynasty, as she shows them around her ancient family palaces and holdings. This family provided some of the highest mandarins to the Emperors for generations. Then it's off to visit the beautiful Wetlands Park with a distant view of an extremely crowded China in the distance. The Kadoorie family originally from Baghdad are one of the wealthiest families in Hong Kong and own a beautiful

organic farm complete with tea plantation. Sophie scrambles among the plants and learns about tea cultivation. Finally Sophie and Wing visit the funky seaport of Sai Kung for some incredible seafood.

Episode Five: 'Broken Head' Lantau

Heading away from the city again Sophie and Wing cross the Tsing Ma Bridge, one of the world's longest suspension bridges. This road leads to an amazing variety of places. There's Disneyland with Mickey Mouse surfing on a whale, an old Chinese fortress at Tung Chung complete with cannon aimed at high-rises and finally to the base of the Ngong Ping Cable car. This cable car system lifts visitors up and over the mountain to the Po Lin monastery and big Buddha. There they tour the sights, eat in the vegetarian restaurant with the priests and take part in a tea ceremony. Later winding down the road to the coast Sophie and Wing take in the '*Venice of Hong Kong*' and some of the village's famous dried food. Inspired by all that seafood they return to the hotel to sample Chef Ip's signature, and unusual, prawns in cream dish.

Episode Six: Living the Lamma Life

It's early morning and Sophie and Wing head out to Kowloon for a relaxing and stretching class in Tai Chi with 80 year old expert, William Ng. Feeling fresh they dive into a traditional noodle place for yet another type of breakfast before boarding the ferry to Lamma Island. Lamma is famous for its, laid – back lifestyle, lack of roads and various artists, not to mention a huge power station which provides most of Hong Kong's electrical energy. They tour Herboland with two former designers who opted out of the rat race of the nearby cities, meet a beach rock artist whose sculptures ease his stress and sickness. Making their way back to the ferry along one of the many paths they taste the famous Bean Curd dessert and see how it's made.

Episode Seven: Macau Macanese

It's a bright and sunny day as Sophie says good-bye to Wing and gives her their Feng Shui goldfish. Then Sophie boards the Jet Cat to Macau where she meets Luis Heredia, her new friend and fellow foodie. They clamber into a rickshaw and go for a rather strange tour which brings them to the A Ma Temple, the spiritual heart of Macau. It is from this place that name Macau came about and the temple is a lovely, somewhat loud place as they discover when the demons are chased away!

Luis and Sophie then make their way to the famous Art Deco Red Market of Macau which is called that because it's made of red brick...very red!

Inside is a cacophony of noise, people, animals, fish and other living things. Then Sophie ventures to a special little spot which has made an incredible name for itself around Asia in just a few decades. It's Lord Stow's Bakery on Coloane Island. Here she learns how to make their famous egg custard tarts. Apparently there was no real 'Lord' Stow but a very nice Englishman who

came out to run a disco and restaurant and stumbled across a winning formula to create the best egg tarts around.

Naturally that leads to the Rua Da Cunha on Taipa, where people happily spend an afternoon, eating their way from shop to restaurant to bakery and back again on this street known locally as Food Street.

Then to finish it all off, it's a hop, skip and a jump to Antonio's eponymous restaurant where Sophie is treated to his prize-winning food and a rather interesting way of opening a bottle of bubbly!

Episode Eight: City of Dreams

Sophie is ensconced in the City of Dreams which is pretty much the heart of the Las Vegas of the East. She explores the complex with what's billed at the world's biggest HD screen and expensive shopping taking in some very expensive watches.

Sophie goes to meet Chef Sam who makes her his signature dish, Sinshyu miso cod fish, seaweed risotto and green spring beans with bonito foam.

Then it's the amazing Bubble Show, watches the dragons and sea creatures come to life in the giant dome complete with lasers, liquid nitrogen and steam. There she gets to meet and chat to the Executive and Creative Director, Geoff Benham.

She is invited to one of the new attractions the Macau 360 Tower where Luis and his friends are holding a book launch for Macanese Cuisine. After a spirited conversation with various people Sophie tears herself away for a second dinner at Fernando's beachside restaurant. This is pure laid-back Portuguese style with a hint of Chinese.

The next day finds Sophie back with Luis and touring the old colonial city centre after which he takes her to the Wine Museum for a drink of Port wine, opened and poured in another unusual way. What is it about these Portuguese?

And as her time in the Orient winds down Sophie takes herself off to the Macau Food Festival where anything goes with food and spectacle. Fancy munching on a crocodile burger while watching a troop of young Chinese Britney Spears 'wannabes'? This is the place for you and what a fitting end for Sophie on her eastern adventure.

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