

## easyStreets

**foodie two shoes**

by Judi Low

Picky foodies are even pickier about where and what they eat these days – thanks to the economic slowdown. But this doesn't mean you have to compromise.

Pic: Wu Lifan

# Belacan.rice SO NICE

**TONGUE-TINGLING**, aromatic, and so easy on the eye: The cuisine of Thailand so wows the senses, it's almost a travesty that gastronomic indulgence is so inexpensive there.

Recently returned from Thailand, I found myself scouring local restaurants and eateries for the dishes I enjoyed so much there.

My search turned up Belacan Fried Rice (\$4.50) at Bali Thai Specialities in Orchard Cineleisure – probably the only food court here offering this dish.

Costing less than half the price you would pay at a

restaurant, it offers twice the flavour – earning a deserving place in this column's feisty food for tough times.

Known as khao kluk kapi in Thai, this dish is common at street stalls and food courts in Thailand.

Bali Thai's version is as good as that in the Land of Smiles – not a wonder, considering both the cook and his assistant are Thai.

The rice had a delicious smoky flavour, the result of having been well tossed in a very hot wok. It was lightly seasoned with shrimp paste (belacan or kapi in Thai), garlic, sugar, and fish sauce and garnished with shredded omelette.

On the side were small piles of fried dried shrimps, julienne of green mango, sliced fresh shallots and slices of lean, sweet soy chicken. The last is a substitute for pork normally served with this dish.

My only quibble is the absence of lime to give the final pep. Lettuce, cucumber, spring onions or a more generous portion of green mango would also have been nice.

All food at Bali Thai is halal and includes the ever popular pineapple fried rice, phat Thai (fried rice noodles) and mango and papaya salads.

The stall is decked out just like those at Thai food courts. Trimmed banana leaves line plates and trays. Customers can help themselves to several chilli condiments in traditional Thai bowls.

There are fresh, flaked and pickled varieties, and also sugar, fish and soy sauces.

**WHERE:**  
BALI THAI  
SPECIALITIES  
Stall 4, Food Junction,  
Orchard Cineleisure,  
8 Grange Road  
**OPEN:** 10am-9pm  
**MRT:** Somerset  
**BUS:** 7, 14, 16, 36, 65, 77, 85, 106, 111,  
123, 124, 143, 167, 171, 174, 190, 502