Not nuts about doughnuts

Undergrad Chen Yixiao won't be ebbing her way into any queues for this pastry as she has a phobia of it after a trip to the US.

Huang Lije

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HE is happy to share her food experiences, both good and bad, online. Food blogger Chen Yixiao will not spill any juicy doughnuts.

Chen, 21, who is studying business at the Singapore Management University, has a phobia of the ring-shaped pastry. This fear was born during a family food trip in the United States when she was eight.

"Every pit stop we made had a Dunkin' Donuts stand and the smell of doughnuts wafting out of the store, which I can only describe as foul, always making me sick. I think this fear is also due to my current phobia of queues. I have no intention of eating any doughnuts."

She started her university blog because she missed her food blog after she left Singapore for a six-month exchange programme at the Copenhagen Business School in January to June last year.

My idea of cuisine involves the words "fast food" and "unhealthy" for three reasons: I cannot tolerate spending more time preparing food than eating it.

What did you live on during your programme in Copenhagen then?

I was living on a budget so I ate really frugally. During my first month there, I had horderves from 7-Eleven almost every day because they were being sold at a promotional price of 10 kroners ($1.85) each. But I did not feel like I was missing out on the Danish culinary scene. Yes, their sodas are yummy but their food culture lacks the vibrancy of New York, London and even Singapore.

Did you try any Singaporean food while in Copenhagen?

No. I have always loved bread and pastries so I was really happy with the smorgasbord of Danish pastries. But I did miss my family's monthly special sausages and I would have tried some of the dishes at my Mum's special minced meat dumplings.

What's your one food weakness?

As much as I like pastries and chocolate, I'm still quitekeen to find a filling and nutritious breakfast.

Did you crave any foods while studying abroad?

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You blog mostly about gourmet meals. Can you stomach humble fare?

Of course. It's just that having grown up on humble food – our family used to have it every weekend – it's slowly worn off. There are only that many places of chicken rice and bowls of laksa around that can excite my taste buds.

If you had to eat only one hawker dish for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Toh Guan hor hor mee. The variety of toppings it comes with lends the dish an array of textures and seasonings – sweet, sour and spicy – and I am less likely to grow sick of it.

Do you have any odd dining habits?

I do not mind having cakes or pastries for a meal. I also go through spells where I take a fancy to a new food or dish and eat it every day for some two weeks before moving on to something else.

You've been through a hawker phase and a Cedele's carrot cake phase. Currently, I'm in a peanut butter and jelly sandwich craze.

Do you cook?

I have only cooked about six times so far, all during a six month exchange programme at the Copenhagen Business School from January to June last year.

My idea of cooking involves the words "just add water" and "microwave for three minutes." I cannot tolerate spending more time preparing food than eating it.

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