



Serious food for thought: Eight top Michelin-starred chefs cook with Feeding Hong Kong to highlight food insecurity affecting 1 million people this Chinese New Year

February 1, 2021

Eight star chefs joined Feeding Hong Kong today to discover the brutal food reality faced by more than a million people in the city.

Holding seven Michelin stars between them, they learnt why food insecurity has condemned a huge swathe of the city's population to have little or nothing special to eat at Chinese New Year, a time that usually celebrates prosperity and abundance.

Every day, 3,600 tonnes of food waste are sent to landfills in Hong Kong, while more than one million people live in poverty struggling to afford nutritious meals. At Feeding Hong Kong's Yau Tong HQ, the eight chefs taking part were Vicky Lau from [TATE Dining Room](#), Vicky Cheng from [VEA](#), Nate Green from [Henry](#), Agustin Balbi from [ANDO](#), Grégoire Michaud from [Bakehouse](#), Jowett Yu from [Ho Lee Fook](#), Uwe Opocensky from [Petrus](#) and Olivier Elzer from [L'Envol](#).



L-R Chefs Jowett Yu, Vicky Lau, Nate Green, Olivier Elzer, Uwe Opocensky, Gregoire Michaud, Vicky Cheng And Agustin Balbi

First they learnt how Feeding Hong Kong support the supply of 250,000 meals per month, before they then helped to pack 500 special CNY food parcels. Next they took on the challenge of preparing meals using only the most basic ingredients, 60 tonnes of which Feeding Hong Kong rescue each month and include in deliveries to frontline charities providing emergency food support.

Instead of state-of-the-art kitchens, their equipment consisted of single hotplates and rice cookers, as used by Hong Kong's low-income population who have no choice



but to live in cramped subdivided flats and cage homes. Rice, oil, instant noodles, dried mushrooms, canned meat, fish and vegetables, fresh greens and basic condiments were the ingredients that the chefs had to work with.

The eight chefs were joined by two of Hong Kong's best known and most respected food Instagrammers, @little_meg_siu_meg and @thatfoodcray who documented the morning to their thousands of followers.



Chefs Vicky Cheng, Nate Green, Jowett Yu, Agustin Balbi, Olivier Elzer, Uwe Opocensky, Vicky Lau And Gregoire Michaud, @little_meg_siu_meg and @thatfoodcray

Chef Vicky Lau, recently awarded a highly-coveted second Michelin star at her restaurant Tate Dining Room, said: "Today was a really powerful experience that showed the critical work of Feeding Hong Kong. Hundreds of thousands of people in our city live in food insecurity, so cooking with very basic ingredients on minimal equipment reminded exactly the huge challenges that so many have to deal with.

Gabrielle Kirstein, Feeding Hong Kong's founder, said: "We're immensely grateful that these acclaimed chefs took the time to learn about our work and create dishes from the food we supply. So many people lack the absolute basics at CNY, let alone anything

to celebrate, while 1 in 3 seniors and 1 in 5 children fall under the poverty line of HK\$4,500 per month. Covid has significantly disrupted our normal channels of food, volunteers and distribution - but the need for food assistance has never been greater. We'd ask everyone to visit www.feedinghk.org to look at ways in which they may be able to help our work."

Despite COVID, the F&B industry has continued to support Feeding Hong Kong. As pallets of produce that were destined for restaurants and hotels became backlogged, Feeding Hong Kong were able to work with wholesalers and distributors to make sure that instead of going to waste, they helped people in need.



Argentinian Chef Agustin Balbi from ANDO was last week awarded his first Michelin star. He reflected on how those in the restaurant industry have themselves been hammered by COVID: *"Many people working in the food and beverage community have recently found themselves in food insecurity and now rely on organisations like Feeding Hong Kong to support their families. It has been a brutal time for the restaurant business, in common with many industries, so we'd urge everyone to look at ways that they may be able to support the brilliant work of Feeding Hong Kong."*

How you can help Feeding Hong Kong:

Food: If you work in a food company and would like to find out how Feeding HK can help collect and redistribute your surplus stocks then we'd love to chat to you. Not in a food company? Drop off any packaged, long life product at the FHK Foodbank or at one of our community collection points. We'll make sure they get to the frontline charities providing emergency food support across the city.

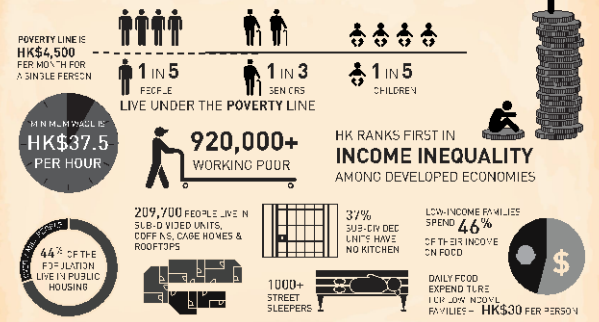
Friends: Foodbanking is very labour intensive. Whether it's 20,000 bottles of oil that need cleaning and repacking, 10 pallets of food that need sorting and checking, or 500 family food boxes to pack, it's only possible thanks to 100s of volunteers a week who help us. COVID has drastically impacted our volunteers, so check out our [volunteer calendar](#) and sign up for a shift today!

Funds: Every month we rescue 60 tonnes of surplus food, but in order to keep that food flowing to where it's needed most safely, we need to invest in storage, transportation and manpower. But it is an investment that goes a long way. For every HK\$100 donated to Feeding HK we can collect, sort and deliver enough food for 20 meals.

For interview requests, contact: Lawrence Wong +852 3643 0060 lwong@feedinghk.org

Photos: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/92no923doymplaz/AABrP-F9dbG8JhFkOL7ZKgpFa?dl=0>

POVERTY FACTS AND FIGURES



Sources: **Qin's Hong Kong Poverty Report: Employment and Poverty in Hong Kong** (2014-15)
Hong Kong Legislative Council Subcommittee on Poverty (2014)

Qin's Hong Kong Poverty Report 2019
Thomas O. Sargent - Household Income & Welfare Issues in Hong Kong 2017
Labour Department, May 2019, Minimum Wage



FOOD WASTE FACTS AND FIGURES



Sources: **Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022**
Hong Kong Government Environmental Protection Department: **Food Waste Challenge 2014**
Hong Kong Government Environmental Bureau: **Food Waste & Yard Waste Plan for Hong Kong 2014-2022**
Friends of the Earth: **Food Waste Report 2012**
Monitoring of Solid Waste in Hong Kong, 2017



FEEDING HONG KONG FACTS AND FIGURES



Visit us at: Unit 715-717, Block A2, Yau Tong Industrial City, 15-35 Ko Fu Road, Yau Tong, Kowloon
www.feedinghk.org
T: +852 2002 4148 E: info@feedinghk.org

