

Michelin star for Singapore noodle stall where lunch is half the price of a Big Mac.

Queues at Hong Kong Soya Sauce Chicken Rice and Noodle are growing after award from prestigious food guide.

Queues are not a strange sight at the Chinatown Complex. It is Singapore's largest hawker centre – an open-air food court – where everything from craft beer to claypot rice to satay is available and affordable. There is something for everyone.

But one of the queues, stretching across the heart of the complex every day, has become an attraction in itself. As it grows in the lead-up to the lunch rush, onlookers pull out mobile phones and cameras, snapping photos and sharing them on Instagram and Facebook.

“What’s going on?” a tourist asked the surrounding crowd when the Guardian visited on Thursday. “We were told to come up here and look for the queue. What’s this about?”

The answer is Hong Kong Soya Sauce Chicken Rice and Noodle, now known as [the street food stall with a Michelin star](#).

The stall itself is fairly unremarkable by Singaporean standards; with its lit-up sign and row of cooked chicken hanging from hooks, it looks like any other chicken stall seen in hawker centres across the country.

But the price makes it the most affordable Michelin-starred meal you can get: a plate of soya sauce chicken and rice costs just S\$2 (£1.10) – less than half the price of a Big Mac at McDonald's.

The attention from the world's most prestigious food guide has propelled the stall and its chef, Chan Hon Meng, to a new level.

He was one of two street hawkers to have the award bestowed on them when Michelin launched its [Singapore](#) dining guide – the other is chef Tang Chay Seng's Hill Street Tai Hwa Pork Noodle, which turns out daily bowls of minced-meat and noodles.

And to get a taste of either success, you now have to wait several hours.

“I don’t know how good it is, but I think we just trust the queue,” student Joel Neo said. He had already been queuing for an hour at Hong Kong Soya Sauce Chicken Rice and Noodle, but was nowhere near the front. He anticipated another hour of standing in line; it did not appear to faze him in the slightest.

It is certainly a test of endurance, for both patrons and workers. There’s no air-conditioning, and the steam from all the surrounding stalls adds to the muggy, tropical climate. Diners jostle in the narrow aisles between tables, balancing plates and bowls of hot food on plastic trays. Elderly cleaners navigate their trolleys around the bustle, shouting for people to make way.

The chef has no time to bask in the glory. He hadn’t expected this honour – when he first received an invitation to the Michelin Guide Singapore Gala Dinner, he asked if they were joking – but seems to be taking it in his stride.

Dressed in his chef’s whites, his small frame is hunched over a chopping board, cleaver in one hand and braised chicken in the other.

He works 17-hour days in his tiny kitchen selling 180 chickens – 30 more than before his award was made public.

“Sure, you can take photos,” he said, but it’s clear that he has little time to chat to either journalists or customers. He has two assistants who take orders, serve rice and mind the roasting meats. They work steadily and efficiently, with no outward show of awe, panic or haste.

Round the corner, the IT service manager Jeffrey Gudani Encomienda is spending his day off in the queue. It’s his third visit to the stall, but he hasn’t been rewarded with a meal yet. “The first time, they ran out of food, and yesterday they were closed,” he said. “So I hope this time I’ll manage to get some.”