

Sin Mui Heng

A Knack for Tasty Snacks



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Tasty Singapore-endorsed brands: **SMH, Sin Mui Heng, Xing Food**

To refer to Sin Mui Heng as simply a manufacturer of dim sum is akin to describing Mount Everest as a rather tall peak. This is because what the company produces at its six factories in Singapore, Malaysia and China is a staggering variety of over 300 assorted dim sum - a far wider range than you would find in even the most ambitious Cantonese restaurant anywhere. Today, its dim sum is sold in bulk, to supermarkets and other retailers, or as bento sets customised for private functions.

Every year, Sin Mui Heng introduces between 20 and 30 new variations on these quintessentially Chinese teahouse snacks, marketed under its three brands, 'Sin Mui Heng', 'SMH' and 'Xing Food'. Occasionally, it may create customised varieties using special ingredients like abalone, for example, at a client's request. Its prolific inventiveness simply offers proof of a company that lives and breathes innovation.

Established in 1961, Sin Mui Heng began investing heavily in its own machinery in the late 1970s and then went on to become the first food company in Southeast Asia to automate its production facilities. In due course, it achieved the methodology to mass produce frozen and chilled dim sum that retained its nutritional value, freshness and taste. It is hardly surprising then, that this family business became the first dim sum maker in Singapore to be awarded ISO 9001 certification in 2001.

The company chalked up another "first" with its foray into halal manufacturing. The true innovation in this milestone was that the technique acquired to ensure that a change in ingredients did not compromise the authenticity of the snacks. "We do not only replace pork with chicken. It took us 10 years of research to replicate the taste and texture of the original dim sum in our halal versions," says Mr Johnson Tay, Sin Mui Heng's Director of Operations. The move has opened up a potentially vast Muslim market to its brand of dim sum, made with only the finest and freshest ingredients to the most stringent production standards. Today, 90% of Sin Mui Heng's output comes from its halal-certified factories.

Sin Mui Heng's customer base includes more than 80% of the hotels and caterers in Singapore. Its fare is also served to First Class airline passengers as well as at many high-level functions. Supermarkets island-wide stock many of its dim sum products including its two key bestsellers - *siew mai* and *pau*.

Because Sin Mui Heng is adamant about sacrificing the quality of its ingredients for cost effectiveness, the company is usually unwilling to engage its competitors in a price war. This means that it tends to take its dim sum products only to markets where consumers have more discerning and discriminating taste profiles. Currently, about 5% of its total production is exported to the Maldives, Canada, Australia and Brunei. The company's next stop is the Middle East, where it already gained acceptance and approval as an official food supplier for the 2006 Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.