How to be a foodie—without cooking or leaving the house
by Sasha Milam

As a Traveller, going out and looking for food—be it the perfect paella or Ma Po tofu to knock your socks off—is often part of the adventure of experiencing a new city. You roam the streets, hear the language and do some people-watching while you eat. Sometimes you find the dish you were craving—and other times you end up lost, hungry and cranky.

Which is why sometimes all you want is that perfect paella delivered to your door.

Andrew Sorokovsky, BCom ‘11, is partnerships manager for Australia/New Zealand at UberEATS, a subset of the ride-sharing company that uses the model of freelance drivers to deliver food orders from any restaurant within the network to your door. Having relocated to Melbourne, Australia from Vancouver in 2016, Sorokovsky has recent experience with eating as a new comer in a foreign city.

“The first four months after I moved here, I cooked twice. My feeling is, why would you need to cook when there are world-class restaurants that are brought to your door?”

So obviously I’ve dialled that back a bit since, but I would say I’m a power user.

First-hand enjoyment of the service aside, Sorokovsky has a number of reasons for feeling energized by his current position.

“We are at the forefront of changing the way people discover and consume food. You can call consumers lazy, but at the end of the day, today’s consumer has different expectations about the quality and convenience of food. And it’s fascinating to be at the crux of that shift.”

As this landscape continues to evolve, there are certain types of restaurants that quickly rise to the top on the back of delivery marketplaces like UberEATS. There are the usual suspects, the ones that immediately come to mind when you think takeaway—pizza, burgers, egg rolls. However, the real rising stars are the operations that understand the importance of price point and speed, and are willing to lean into delivery as a central component of the business.

“We’ve had many lesser-known restaurants that have embraced delivery as a part of their operation, and they’ve rocketed to the top. The players with the most potential are the ones that are building delivery-only centres: simply put, kitchen spaces with chefs and easy access for delivery partners. No need for costly fit-outs or front-of-house staff for this business model.”

Of course, the restaurant scene is complex and supports many different dining experiences. Not everyone wants to stare at their own dining room walls while they eat—restaurants are sometimes as much about the atmosphere and the interactions as the food. But as so many consumer industries, we are witnessing a fundamental shift in how we consume food, and technology such as UberEATS is central to this change.

“Hootsuite was an industry leader when I left to take my current job, and it’s not to say I couldn’t have learned more in my role there; but I was 28, I’d been there five years, and I wanted to challenge myself with something completely different. I wanted to layer in that international aspect, which was how Australia came up. But the fact that UberEATS was a new and fast-growing business and I had no idea about food, the restaurant industry, and consumer tech helped into it was really attractive to me.”

For eaters embarking on their own international adventures and planning to be in Australia anytime soon, Sorokovsky leaves us with an insider tip: “Poke is just consuming the country. You could make the argument that, oh, it’s just a bowl of vegetables and fish—it’s basically deconstructed sushi—but it’s all about presentation, and it’s hot here.”

Paella, Ma Po tofu, or poke: no matter how obscure your craving, it seems this brave new world no longer requires you to wander unfamiliar streets to satisfy—or even change out of your footie pajamas.