

# An inside look at SATS' canteen catering

This is a special feature from *PAX International's* [June 2021 Asia-Pacific digital edition](#).



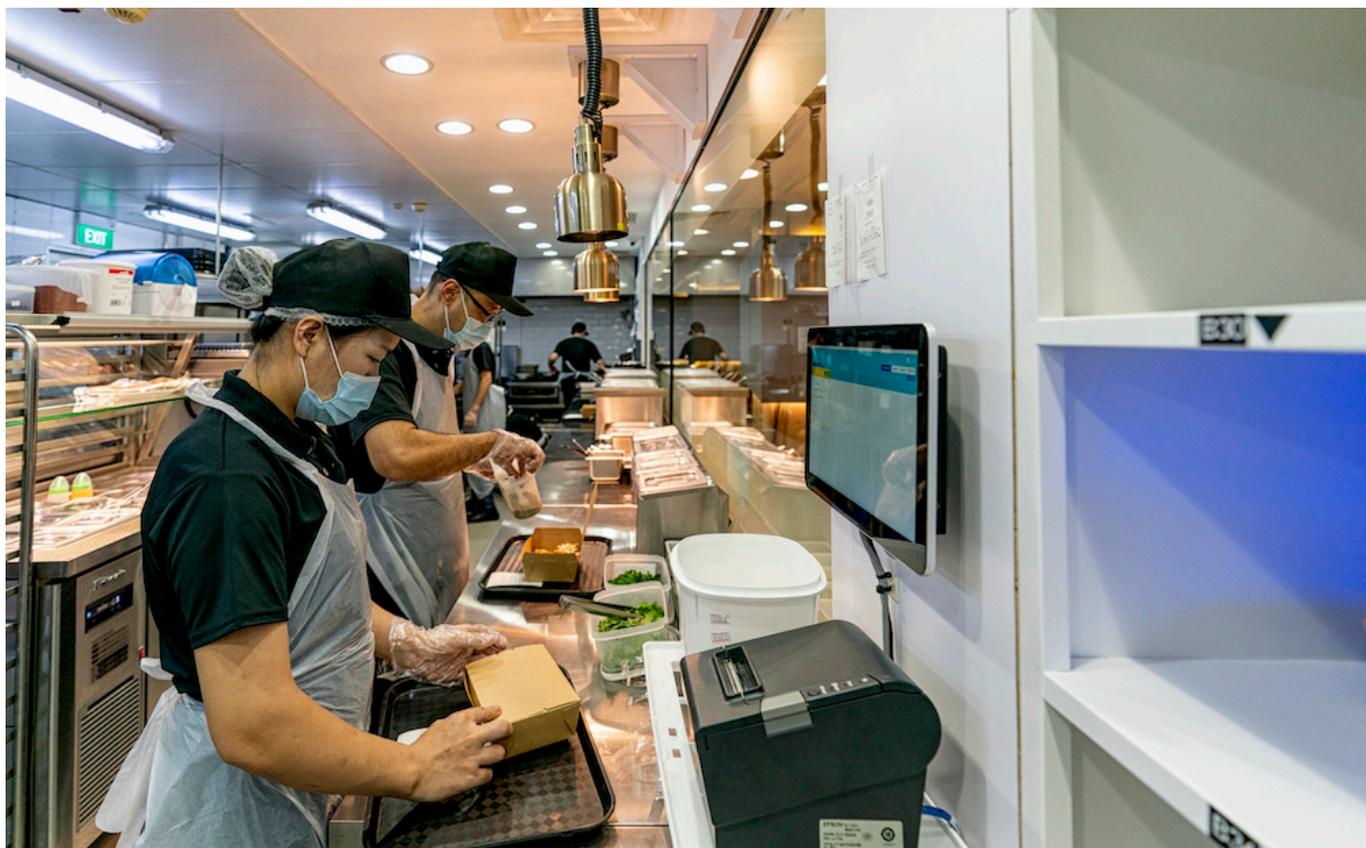
To adhere to touchless requirements, meals are served from individual lockers. Photo courtesy SATS

With a foundation that was laid in 1821, [Singapore General Hospital](#) has no doubt an impressive history. Known for affordable health care and doctor training, the professionals who gather here for work have a keen eye for proper meal hygiene and safe food distribution, especially as the pandemic moves through its second year.

Like instilling confidence in airline passengers on the safety of its food service, Singapore-based SATS has set up a new contactless F&B concept called SGH Housemen's Canteen, which was introduced at the hospital in February of this year.

Now, food professionals work in a windowed preparation area and deliver some of [SATS'](#) dishes such as its signature laksa, under the watchful eyes of diners at Housemen's. Behind the scenes, the contactless operation has stations in the kitchen for hot food preparation, refrigeration, assembly and packing all done with a staff of only five people.

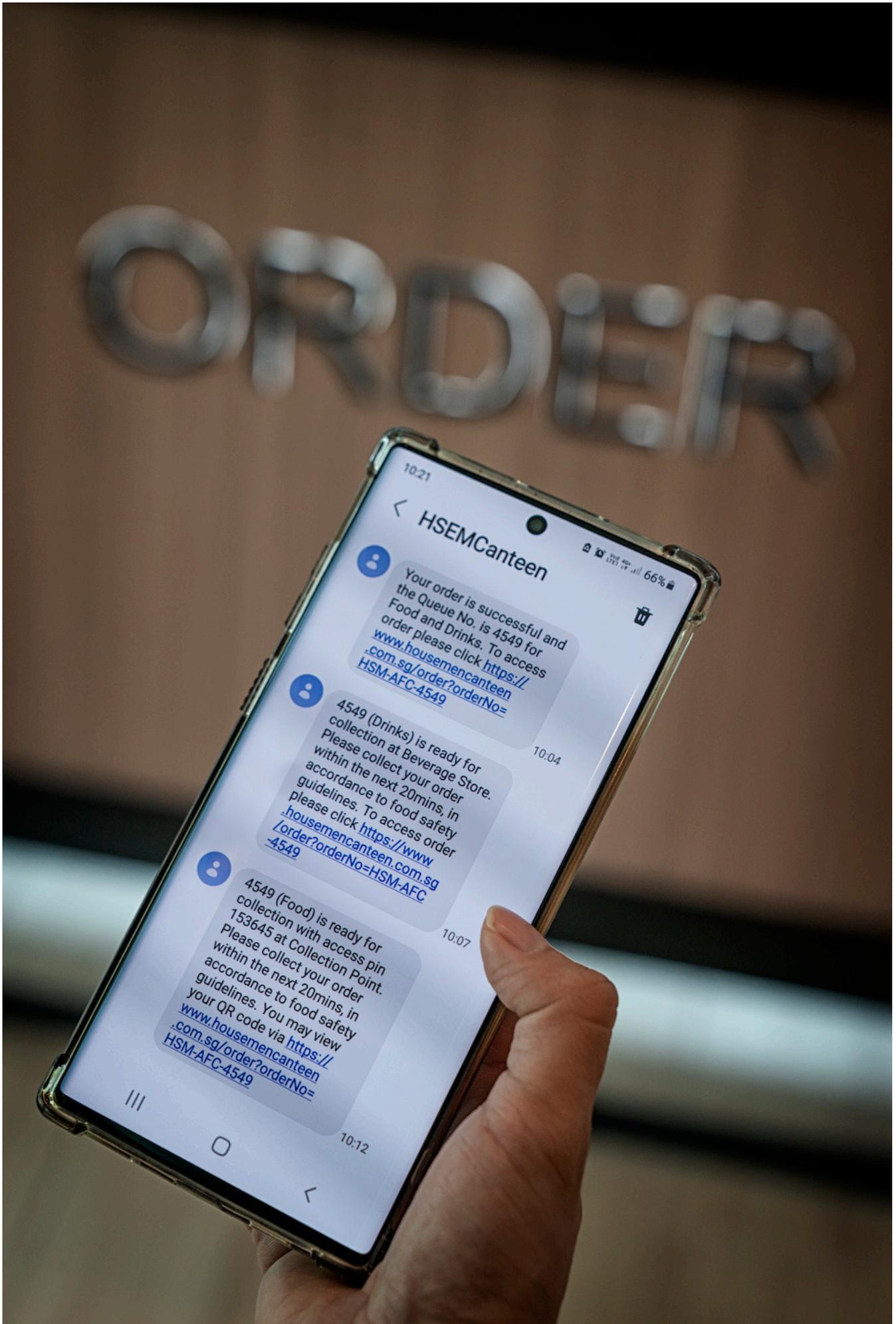
The Housemen's Canteen contract is an extension of SATS' involvement in institutional and health care food service that goes back more than 15 years, says Alan Tay, Vice President of Commercial Strategy for Food Solutions at SATS. The operation is handled through the SATS Food Solutions Division.



Food preparation at SGH Housemen's Canteen. Photo courtesy SATS

“We have a team of trained dietitians, chefs, and catering professionals who work with healthcare institutions to develop tailor-made in-patient menus, therapeutic and textured meals and pantry supplies with stringent hospital guidelines and food safety regulations,” Tay says. “Our range of integrated solutions also include food concierge services and staff lounge management.”

The rest of Canteen menu is largely different from other SATS food service offerings but uses much of the same culinary techniques and food technology. To make the process as safe as possible, diners order dishes through a website on mobile phones, or place the orders on digital kiosks at the Canteen. Through a window beside the collection point they can watch the food being prepared. The food is placed in separate lockers that are accessed once the diners receive a message notification.



Customers can place their orders over a website and are alerted by text message that the meal is ready. Photo courtesy SATS

“SGH believes in leveraging on technology to transform patient care and experience as evident by the initiatives we have rolled out over the years. We continue to do so even more during the pandemic as the need for rapid innovation has never been greater,” said Lee Jiunn Kee, Deputy Director who helms the Division of Patient Support at Singapore General Hospital in the announcement of the partnership.

“Our partnership with SATS to offer a digitalized and contactless dining concept will not only enhance visitor experience but that of our staff at the SGH Campus, too,” he adds.

Making the process economically feasible has always been a part of the equation, be it airline or institutional catering and beyond, says Tay.

“SATS has been investing in large-scale kitchens and food technologies to increase productivity and reduce waste over the last three years,” says Tay. “By harnessing our central kitchen capabilities, we are able to scale production while consistently maintaining food quality with a high degree of customization.”

That customization will lead to a greater list of choices and a varied menu. Kerry Mok, CEO of SATS Food Solutions said the company will employ its data analytics to develop a “live menu” that can be quickly tailored to suit diner preferences. In a city that has a culinary reputation that is known around the world, the SATS team has pledged to constantly monitor food and consumer trends to keep the menu fresh and compelling.



SATS employs analytics that will create “live menu” for SGH Housemen’s. Photo courtesy SATS

“The SGH Housemen’s Canteen is a long-term investment with more plans in the pipeline,” says Tay. 4

“We are constantly exploring a variety of opportunities within the SGH campus, so stay tuned for more.”

### **Mini Q&A with SATS**

**PAX International:** As the pandemic slows in many places around the world, how is the traditional airline catering business shaping up and what do you see in the next six months?

**Alan Tay, Vice President of Commercial Strategy for Food Solutions:** “Airline catering continues to evolve with a growing need for low-touch, high-hygiene packaging for the safety and well-being of travelers. SATS has been working closely with its airline customers to roll out various initiatives such as developing new menu offerings, as well as packaging solutions that reduce single-use plastics and improve waste management.

“Together with our partners, we have also made the switch from printed to digital menus for some airlines, enabling us to better predict customer demand to refresh buy-on-board offerings more often to feature the latest food and beverage trends.”