



# Long Prawn: Deep food thinking.



## Let's chew the fat?

Carve up and share some ideas for uncharted food related content.

Mediums that honour deep food thinking and the individuals and rituals behind the foods and experiences.

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# Half-Time Oranges League of Lunches: Eating in Esports

Photography: Phebe Schmidt feat. PractiseStudioPractise  
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While it may be the expectation that the ones lurking in the dark are the gamers, it's really those who are unaware of the magnitude of esports who are culturally unenlightened. In 2018, esports is expected to garner a lofty revenue of US\$906m. By 2020, it's predicted that the industry will rack together in excess of US\$1.6 billion. It's an economic leap that's compelling many to shift away from "real" sport. From players to sports commentators and (ball) sport investors, people are now taking esports very, very seriously.

Ask any of the 215m esports viewers details on the leading professionals and they will say the same thing: "To be that good at esports is extremely rare, and staying at the top is even harder." The reason for this is that the level and length at which esports pros train are undeniably exhausting. It's a space where champions burn super-brightly at a very young age. Faced with weighty sponsorship pressures, millions of otherworldly fans and just as many faux stars wanting to pull the plug on them, the very best go to strenuous lengths to stay there.

Ten-hour training sessions are commonplace for both professional and amateur competitors. As well as the esports scene being an intensely high-pressure environment, these e-athletes also face a serious risk of fatigue and burnout, not to mention the potential of deep vein thrombosis, carpal tunnel syndrome and muscle strains.

Although these competitions are more mentally, than physically, exhausting, Long Prawn peppered the inbox of e-athletes to find out if they pay as much attention to their body's hardware as they do their software.

Undeniably, those at the pinnacle of esports have as strict routines as any other athlete. From focusing on posture and the auxiliary back muscles, through to traditional exercises of mind strengthening and coaching to remain focused, it's all there. Their menu is regimented and well thought out, albeit a little bland. It's good fuel for sustenance. The co-dependence of a healthy lifestyle guiding a strong game appears to be an ethos affirmed by managers of many of the leading teams. During playing seasons, many of the top teams live together, train together and often eat together. A balanced assortment of chicken and rice, and steamed vegetables, with nuts and fruit for snacks, is the fodder for champions of League of Legends, Dota and Counter-Strike. Stringently managed to achieve at the highest level, the e-athletes are presented with plates of food that mirror those of a lean runner or football great.

Despite this new dawn of superstar players, many of them have never been known for their

physical prowess. Expectations of a healthy diet, regular sleep and hydration are taught, not tacit. Now sponsored and adored, top players have little choice but to perform at their best and, like many top-level sportspeople, much of their old lives is left behind.

Sadly, the colour of steamed vegetables doesn't shine as brightly as the pulsating, LED-lit keyboards used by the sporting masses. Those a little further down the rankings embrace a more liberal diet, featuring fast food for screen-facing consumption. Energy drinks are as voluminous as the virtual damage the players cast on opponents. Bowls of noodles are revived with boiling water to create spicy and awakening broths. And ordering food to be delivered has never been so easy, with gaming venues seldom restricting the procession of brown bags through the door. In their rise up the ranks, these players unrelentingly focus on their in-game prowess, so much so that the less-crucial elements of daily life can fall by the wayside. A diet high in sugars, MSG and preservatives fuels players for long periods, until fatigue cannot be fought back.

Maybe more than any other sport, there currently lives a huge disparity between the lifestyle of the very best athletes and those aspiring to be them, a gap we suspect will disappear as esports hurtles into the mainstream. We believe its future will be one of highly trained competitors, engaged not only in the physicality of virtual reality but also the technologies of future food consumption. It's a culture that's more likely to embrace leaps in nutritional science, possibly harnessing the powers of algae, bugs or jellyfish. A culture that will refuse to be slowed down by the laborious nature of food preparation or even perishable produce. It's a culture in which the main players redefine health by hacking their bodies to outperform the laymen.

Presently, most will concede that the guts of the game aren't in the fittest shape. Yet, there are high hopes for this emerging realm of athletes. These early adopters and forward thinkers may be the first to download their food as the competition for esports glory increases. ●

