

Travel blogger earns ire for belittling Pinoy food

Written by Rich Mazon
Friday, 04 April 2014 17:27



My "I'm starving but I don't want to eat this food" face

Contributor to the Filipino Reporter

Agness Walewinder (photo above) may have intended it or not, but she surely is getting of plenty of attention nowadays.

The Polish travel-blogger penned a very strong blog regarding her recent trip to the Philippines and her experiences with Filipino food- which drew plenty of negative reaction in the internet and social media from Filipinos worldwide.

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See link to her blog here:

(<http://etramping.com/rather-go-hungry-eat-filipino-food-again/>)

Walewinder's original entry, "I Would Rather Go Hungry Than Eat Filipino Food Again!" on her site matched with a photograph that was captioned..." My "I'm starving but I don't want to eat this food" face." was heavily criticized by Pinoy netizens after it went viral on social media.

In her blog, the Polish traveler complained of "stomachache, dizziness and feeling overtired and bloated" after eating Filipino food when she and friend Cez Krol visited the country.

She lamented on the "poor quality of food" that she saw on her trips to various provinces in the country, grumbled that the fruits sold in local markets "looked and tasted old and gross" characterized local dishes as "packed with salt, sugar and oil" that left them "bloated and tired" and even described that "the vast majority of Filipino kids and young people are overweight" and blamed it in the poor quality of the food in the country.

Walewinder wrote that what was served her failed her expectations of what she read online, mentioning dishes as adobo, lecho, kare-kare, longganisa and torta as defining Filipino cuisines.

She posted a photo of a hot dog in a bun when she asked for "longganisa."

Pinoys went up in arms after reading her blog and countered her observations with comments on her page and in postings that relate to it.

"I guess you went to the wrong places while you were here in the Philippines," posted Michael on her page and added that "Give our country another chance and visit us again. Next time though, go to places like Manila and Cebu."

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“Makes me think you came here not to look for good things but you intentionally look for places that could satisfy your mind set that Filipino’s are not capable of serving clean foods. We accept criticisms but your blog comes with an insult and I know you know that you intend to do,” commented Trixie.

“True, you have the right to write about your bad experiences. Hell, you could even post the name or picture of the stalls that were unhygienic so we could actually avoid them or even file a complaint to the necessary governing body, but YOU DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO OVERGENERALIZE and say they’re all bad by saying “rather go hungry than eat Filipino food again’ when you hardly experienced authentic Filipino food at all,” wrote Trixie on her site.

Walewinder changed her original title to “I Would Rather Go Hungry Than Eat Filipino Street Food Again!” saying that she added “street” to better reflect her experience.

That still did not silence the criticisms, especially when people reacted that she bought the hot dog posted in her blog from 7-11, a 24 hour American convenience store that had many branches in the Philippines.

“LOL at trying to buy longganisa at 7-11,” tweeted Ysa Lavadia on Twitter.

“Street food? At a 7-11? Really now? she then asked Walewinder and Krol.

“You don’t go to 7-11 to order longganisa nor talk about traditional sweets and post pics of donuts,” chimed in Chatty Pinay on Twitter.

Walewinder also received criticism from a fellow travel-blogger, Nathan Allen, who calls her article as “intentionally trying to antagonize Filipino people in order to bring attention to your blog.”

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Link to Allen's response to Walewinder:

(<http://www.idreamedofthis.com/2014/03/20/another-foreigner-s-response-to-i-d-rather-go-hungry-girl/>)

Allen who has resided in the Philippines for a year documenting about the country, calls Walewinder blog “inflammatory and unethical” and that it was posted to garner traffic to her website.

Allen referred to an earlier blog of Walewinder that described all Filipino food as “deep fried and oily” and that looked “disgusting and gross.”

(<http://etramping.com/first-impression-of-the-philippines/>)

“A full month ago you wrote another blog about your “impressions of the Philippines,” and you included a few negative sections about the food. Then, perhaps you sat back and watched all the comments slowly start coming in. When you realized how sensitive and proud Filipinos can be about their food specifically, you decided to take advantage of the situation and write another inflammatory post all about the food,” Allen writes.

“Knowing how many comments came the first time, you chose to make your opinions and wording even more abrasive (offensive?) the second time...and guess what? The comments did indeed come pouring in! Yes, they're almost all negative (though you have done a good job hiding the people who are really speaking their mind), but look at all that blog traffic!” Allen added.

Allen and most of Walewinder's critics agree that the Polish backpacking duo went to the wrong places and did very little research — if any, to sample local Filipino food and cuisine, hence their experiences.

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Some even asked if they went to the Philippines to find fault in the country, its people and its food.

Plenty offered to change their view and recent experience and invited them back to the country to bring them to places that serve authentic Filipino dishes and street food.

Based on the plethora of reaction from her blog, Walewinder and Krol will have to think twice accepting such invitations to visit the Philippines again.

Unless they arrive discretely, which Allen advised them to do.