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# TOP TABLES 2011

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**B**K Magazine's reviews are quite simply the most respected in town. A lot of the attention they gather comes from how often we give out harsh one or two star reviews—even to our own advertisers. But that's what makes the places we love even more exciting. They've gone through a tough vetting process (no freebies, no sitting with the chef, no glowing review in return for ads) and have managed to put smiles on our grumpy faces. And they're all here in Top Tables, your complete guide to Bangkok's most exciting restaurants, the top picks from ten years of dual weekly reviews. Now maybe this second edition of Top Tables is still missing a couple of fancy hotel Italian restaurants (yawn), our favorite street eats (that's another guide), or your preferred dim sum joint (an endless source of debate), but we can vouch for what did get included, places that may not always be the fanciest, but which are unmistakably a cut above and which often dazzle us with their soul and their lip-smacking good food. You can close your eyes and pick at random: these top tables will all deliver on the simple, but oh-so-elusive, promise of a truly great meal.



Disagree with our selection? Did we miss your favorite place? Email us at [food@asia-city.co.th](mailto:food@asia-city.co.th).




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#### Price guide

<b>B</b>	Under B400
<b>BB</b>	B400-700
<b>BBB</b>	B700-1,000
<b>BBBB</b>	B1,000 and up

Price per person, including one drink, appetizer, main course, dessert, charges and tax.

#### Symbols

	Reservations recommended
	Parking available
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**PICK** Restaurants given four or five stars in *BK Magazine*

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**KRUNGSRI**

## DOWNTOWN

Silom/Sathorn/Surawong



D'Sens



Aubergine

### AE SEAFOOD

**Seafood, Thai.** Chulalongkorn Soi 14, 081-619-1924. Open daily 6-11pm.

Don't expect stunning riverside views and air-con comfort. But if you are looking for good, fresh seafood at bargain-basement prices, this place does the trick. Short and simple, the menu features only 15 home-style seafood dishes. Our favorite are the prawns, which are grilled to perfection with the head intact, allowing the fatty juices to enhance the prawn's natural moisture and sweetness. **B-BB** 🍴 🍷

### AUBERGINE

**French, Italian, Mediterranean.** 71/1 Sala Daeng Soi 1/1, Silom Rd., 02-234-2226. MRT Silom. Open daily 11:30am-11pm.

Set in a grand old villa, Aubergine is all about atmosphere. The building itself, with its hardwood floors, doors and bar, high ceilings and "backyard" patio (perfect for smokers), is impressive. Service is brisk and professional. The food is diverse, with nods to Italy and the Mediterranean. Even though the pasta is all Bangkok seems to want,

there are plenty of other great, comforting dishes. **BBBB** 🍴

### BAAN GARAGADE

**Thai.** 37 Mahaset Rd., 02-631-8808. Open Mon-Fri 11am-2pm, 5-10:30pm; Sat-Sun 11am-10:30pm.

Before the former Baan Chamnong got a bright, trendy, Thonglor-esque makeover, it was grungier and cheaper. But the white walls, black chandeliers and floral prints haven't scared off the families and large groups of regulars who are addicted to this kitchen's magic touch with seafood. Don't miss the signature *pla meuk dad diew* or hearty classics like the *kaeng som*. The menu may be pretty boring but the food is just right. **BBB** 🍴

### PICK D'SENS

**French.** 22/F, Dusit Thani Hotel, 946 Rama 4 Rd., 02-200-9000 ext. 2499. MRT Lumpini. Open Mon-Sat 11:30am-2:30pm, 6:30-10pm.

The French-imported eatery by the Michelin starred Pourcel brothers has all the oomph one might expect. What we enjoy the most (other than the heartbreakingly delicious set dinner

menu) is the male restroom. The urinal is dug into the floor, against a floor-to-ceiling window, bestowing a panoramic view of the city—yes, it's like pissing on Bangkok (as if you're a politician). In the dimly lit dining room, too, the design is ultra chic. A meal here is not complete without the delightful chocolate *coulat* with lemon flavored caramel, hazelnut biscuit and yogurt. Who can ask for anything more? **BBBB** 🍴 🍷

### EAT ME

**International.** 1/6 Phiphat Soi 2, Convent Rd., 02-238-0931. BTS Sala Daeng. Open daily 3pm-1am.

Nearly a decade on, Eat Me still has a genuine charisma. The décor is a cool, yet cozy, mélange of industrial, natural and artistic in the form of rotating exhibits by top artists. The kitchen pulls off bold combinations like "cranberry couscous" with roasted duck, Pernod on a plate of spaghetti and lamb rump with cannelloni beans and chorizo. The service is diligent and sweet, and the cocktails are perfection. **BBBB** 🍴

WINE  
PUB



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## DOWNTOWN

Silom/Sathorn/surawong



La Table de Tee

### INDIGO

**French. 6 Convent Rd., 02-235-3268. BTS Sala Daeng. Open daily 11:30-1am.**

The restaurant is housed inside a beautifully restored L-shaped colonial-style home, and the setting alone makes it worth a visit. The music is modern and mellow, and there is a good selection of wines by the glass (a dozen or so) at very reasonable prices. The menu has a sizable fish section, with traditional French offerings like sole and mullet. But Indigo has always been better with meats, and beef in particular. Just one look at their butcher shop, Gargantua (02-630-4577), and you can see where their interest and expertise lie. **BBBBB** 🍷

### LA SCALA

**Italian. The Sukhothai Bangkok, 13/3 Sathorn Rd., 02-344-8888. Open daily noon-3pm, 6:30-10:30pm.**

Embellished with dark wood furniture, Buddha images and stylish lamps, Ed Tuttle's design is resolutely contemporary and Asian. The subtle, yet finely-tuned, ambiance is the ideal backdrop for Chef Maurizio's Italian cuisine. Highlights include

baby Iberico pig and black ink risotto. **BBBBB** 🍷 🍷

### PICK LA TABLE DE TEE

**International. 69/5 Soi Sala Daeng, Silom Rd., 02-636-3220. MRT Silom. Open Tue-Sun 6:30-10:30pm.**

The Thai chef, Tee, might only be 26 years old but he's already completed six formative years working at Michelin-starred French restaurant Roussillon, in London. Now he's come home to serve up Thai ingredients cooked French-style, making this hard-to-find-shophouse well worth hunting out. The reasonably-priced set menu (no a la carte) includes a small soup, an appetizer, a main, two desserts and little treats to enjoy with your coffee. While the menu rotates weekly, you can always count on intriguing and bold fusion dishes. **BBB** 🍷

### LE BOUCHON

**French. 37/17 Patpong Soi 2, 02-234-9109. BTS Sala Daeng. Open Mon-Sat noon-3pm, 6:30-11pm.**

Now a Bangkok institution, this eatery has been serving bistro Lyonais food to hungry gourmands for



Opus

more than a decade. And it has been doing this amid a confusing tangle of go-go bars and bikini-clad dancers. Despite the occasional culinary misfire, Le Bouchon is an experience. It's not just the food, which is fairly authentic and occasionally very comforting, but the whole vibe, which stands in marked contrast with the city's fine-dining Gallic standards.

**BBB-BBBB** 🍷

### LE CAFÉ SIAM

**French, Thai. 4 Soi Chuaphloeng, Sri Aksorn Rd., 02-671-0030. MRT Khlong Toei. Open daily 6-11pm.**

The elegant yet homey 1920s building, set in an adorable tropical garden, got a makeover and a new chef. Apart from a few Asian touches, Chef Paul Anthony Quar-chioni offers up unpretentious French favorites at reasonable prices (thanks to an emphasis on local ingredients) along with a few creations for the more adventurous. There are good set dinner options or, if you can't make up your own mind, try the surprise menu where Chef Paul whips up six courses. **BBBBB** 🍷



**NADIMO'S**

*Lebanese. Baan Silom, Silom Soi 19, 02-266-9081. BTS Surasak. Open daily 11am-11:30.*

In almost every respect, barring the tourism posters, this is a fairly elegant place with competent service and a kitchen (and Lebanese chef) to match. Each table is brightened by a bowl overflowing with pickled and fresh vegetables which are served with some pleasant dips—yogurt, garlic puree and hot pepper. The mains cover all the usual suspects like shawarmas, shish kebabs and the national dish of Lebanon, kibbeh. Oh, and now there's a second branch, on Sukhumvit Soi 24. **BB** ☞ ☞

**PICK- NAHM**

*Thai. G/F, Metropolitan, Sathorn Rd., 02-625-3333. Open daily 7-11pm.*

David Thompson's Nahm serves a fiery, multi-course (we use the word course loosely, as this is true Thai-style dining: communal with the dishes arriving all at once) set menu, which also offers plenty of choices. Try the fresh, tart and unusual Hiro-masa kingfish *yam* and the balanced, insanely spicy and delightfully sweet

*nam prik* of prawns, santol and shrimp paste served with mackerel, sweet pork and crispy cha-om. **BBBB** ☞ ☞ ☞

**PICK- NIU'S**

*Italian. 1-2/F, Baan Silom, 661 Silom Rd., 02-266-5333. BTS Surasak. Open daily 5pm-1am.*

Muted tones, crisp white tablecloths and large windows flanking two sides of the room let the food take center stage. Prepared by chef Marco Cammarata, who works the tables and makes suggestions to diners, it's both inventive and delicious, with dishes like the roasted porcini with goat cheese, veal ravioli with truffle and cream essence and roasted kingfish on eggplant caponata. Add in an extensive wine list and top name jazz acts downstairs, and you have an experience that is definitely worth the hefty price tag. **BBBB** ☞ ☞

**OPUS**

*Italian. 64 Pan Rd., 02-637-9899. BTS Surasak. Open daily 6pm-midnight.*

Owned and managed by Alex Morabito, who used to run *Vino Zanotti*, Opus has a similar emphasis

on wine—there are over 400 Italian labels to choose from in the impressive walk-in cellar. But that's not to dismiss the food created by Tuscan chef, Francesco Lenzi, who has a passion for simple classic dishes and a real love for seafood. Don't miss the wonderfully light and flavorsome seafood platter as you soak up the understated but opulent atmosphere. **BBBB** ☞

**RUEN URAI**

*Thai. Rose Hotel, 188 Surawong Rd., 02-266-8268/-72. BTS Sala Daeng. Open daily noon-11pm.*

After walking the gauntlet of Surawong's beer bars and massage parlors, it's a shock to discover this century-old, two-story house which has been skillfully decorated and outfitted with rare taste and attention to detail. The architecture draws its share of tourists and the food tastes slightly international, but the ingredients are of high quality and the curry pastes and sauces taste like they are made from scratch. **BBB** ☞ ☞



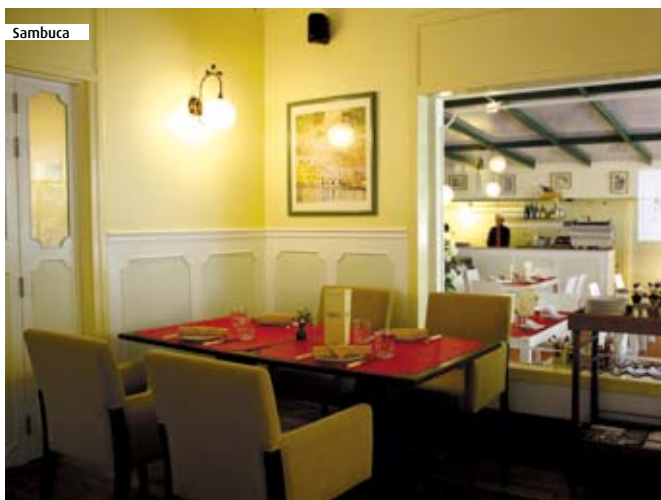
Nahm



Ruen Urai

## DOWNTOWN

Silom/Sathorn/Surawong



Sambuca



Tsukiji

### PICK SAMBUCA

*Italian. 139/3 Sathorn Soi 7, 02-286-8805. BTS Chong Nonsi. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 5:30-10:30pm.*

This is the little sister to Nicolas Bonazza's equally noteworthy Enoteca. Sambuca offers a stylish but informal location to enjoy a range of classic dishes. Set in a white house flanked

by a bright and airy glass-covered veranda, there are no surprises on the menu. The beauty is that they get the simple things right, from the delicious imported meats to the crisp pizzas baked in an authentic pizza oven. Make sure you leave room for the desserts. **BBB-BBBB** 🍷 🍴

### SERINA

*Japanese. 9/26 Soi Jim Thompson, Surawong Rd., 02-235-8382. BTS Sala Daeng. Open Mon-Fri 11am-2pm; daily 5:30-10:30pm.*

Waitresses in kimonos, the glass tower stocked with Bordeaux Grand Cru and the windowless dining room flanked by two massive tepanyaki grills create a hushed atmosphere. We come often for lunch (great sets) but in the evening, both the sets (Kobe beef, seafood or US beef) and the a la carte menu are on another plane entirely. But it's also the superb food's supporting cast—the beautiful crockery, the stern waitresses that never miss a beat—that makes Serina not just a great meal, but a great experience. **BBBB**

### TSUKIJI

*62/19-20 Soi Thaniya, Silom Rd., 02-233-9698. BTS Sala Daeng. Open daily 11:30-2am.*

Named after the famed Tokyo fish market, the specialty here is sashimi and sushi. Dinners can break the bank, but those in the know enjoy the much more affordable sushi sets at lunch. **BBB** 🍷 🍴

### UNKAI

*Japanese. 22/F, Crowne Plaza, 952 Rama 4 Rd., 02-632-9000. BTS Sala Daeng. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-10:30pm.*

Formerly called Keyaki, this Japanese outlet really feels like Japan. Not only is the decor reminiscent of some 1980s Tokyo hotel, the *kaiseki-ryori* also has a real Japanese taste. Unkai doesn't try to be stylish or hip—no models' nights—which is just the way we like it. It's a great business lunch venue, too, with its solid sets and bento boxes, downtown views and diligent waitresses in kimonos. **BBB-BBBB**

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## DOWNTOWN

Silom/Sathorn/Surawong



Vertigo Grill and Moon Bar

### VERTIGO GRILL AND MOON BAR

*International. 61/F, The Banyan Tree, 21 Sathorn Rd., 02-6791200. BTS Sala Daeng. Open daily 5pm-1am.*

One of the city's first sky-high dining options remains a popular choice for special occasion dining. (It was voted best restaurant for Western food by our readers in 2010.) The focus is on grilled dishes, the mouth-watering smell of which greets you at the top of the (many) stairs. With the twinkling lights of the city stretching out in front of you, the stage is set for romance—as long as you check the weather forecast first. **BBB-BBBB** 🍷 🍴



Water Library

### WATER LIBRARY

*International. 2/F, Chamchuri Square, Phaya Thai Rd., 02-160-5188/9. MRT Sam Yan. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-9:30pm.*

This place is really gorgeous, much more like something you'd find in an elegant boutique hotel than a mall. The use of steel, glass and grey wood is striking without being cold, thanks to cozy corners that conjure a library atmosphere. There's also a long water menu, hence the name. Some dishes, like the pan-seared snowfish with

## TOP WINE PLACES



Wine Pub

### ALDO'S

*7/F, The Ascott, 187 Sathorn Rd., 02-676-6982. Open daily 11:30am-midnight.*

In addition to The Reflexions, Aldo's is the only other restaurant in Bangkok to be repeatedly recognized in *Wine Spectator Magazine* for its long and broad wine list. If that's more bewildering than impressive to you, Aldo's also has a fancy wine saver that can store several bottles of wine in top condition as well as dispense it by the half-glass and full-glass, so you don't have to commit to bottles and you can even get a half-glass to match each course you order. 🍷

braised cabbage a la Parisienne, are simply outstanding. **BBB-BBBB** 🍴

**YAMAGOYA (SURAWONG)**

*Japanese. 98-102 Surawong Rd., 02-637-0588. MRT Sam Yan. Open daily 10:30am-midnight.*

This Japanese chain serves Kyushu-style ramen. The secret is a deliciously thick broth that rivals even the fattiest *kha muu* (with ten times more salt). Added to that succulent soup, in the signature Yamagoya Ramen, are toothsome noodles, slices of fatty pork, hard-boiled eggs, chopped green onion, tender bamboo, seaweed and pickled ginger. **B-BB** 🍴

Yamagoya



**PICK ZANOTTI**

*Italian. 1/F, Saladaeng Colonnade Condominium, 21/1 Soi Sala Daeng, Silom Rd., 02-636-0002. MRT Silom. Open daily 11:30am-2pm, 6pm-midnight.*

A contender for Bangkok's favorite Italian restaurant, Zanotti's dining room certainly has the best buzz. Authentic Piedmontese cuisine is whipped up from top-quality ingredients. A favorite haunt among power brokers and visitors from Hong Kong and Singapore.

**BBBB** 🍴 🍷 🍴



**THE LAKE HOUSE**

*18 Soi Prommitr, Sukhumvit Soi 39, 02-662-6349. Open Tue-Fri 5pm-midnight, Sat-Sun 11:30-midnight.*

While they only do a couple of wines by the glass, they have a pretty big wine list, with special emphasis on Australian wines (so the price per bottle won't be too through-the-roof for the most part). The other big attraction here, particularly for those who believe that the enjoyment of wine depends on where you are, is the beautiful 100-year-old Thai house with a lake on premises.

**WINE PUB**

*2/F, Pullman Bangkok King Power, Soi Rangnam, 02-680-9999. Open daily 6pm-2am.*

Perhaps one of our favorite, affordable hotel eateries, Wine Pub has three things we love: cold cuts, wine and net prices. They even do affordable promotions that change on a daily basis, though our favorite would have to be the one on Fridays where you can purchase a booklet of coupons and exchange each one for a different glass of wine. Pair that with a vast array of salamis, saucisson and pickles and you have a winning combo and pretty cool date night. 🍴

**WINE CONNECTION DELI AND BISTRO**

*G/F, K. Village, 93-95 Sukhumvit Soi 26, 02-661-3940. Open daily 10-1am*

Opened early 2010, Wine Connection was a sort of Prometheus of wine, stealing the hoity-toity drink from great heights and bringing it to the tableside of the masses. The neat model of picking a wine from their very inexpensive adjacent wine store and having it served at your table, along with pizzas and pastas has endured the initial hype. With most wines (from all parts of the world) going for well under B1,000, this is a good place to develop your palate before moving on to the expensive stuff. 🍴



Café Chili



Sra Bua



Déjà Vu

## CAFÉ CHILI

*Isaan. G/F, Siam Paragon, Rama 1 Rd., 02-610-9877/8. Siam. Open daily 11am-10pm.*

Elegantly decorated in contemporary Northeastern style with a lovely outdoor seating area, the café serves up luxurious Isaan dishes with *larb* salmon and grilled lamb with *jaew* sauce as hot favorites. By street standards, the servings are small for what you're paying, but the kitchen does a solid job, the service is smart and the ambiance is oh-so-cool. **BB** 🚗

## LIM KWONG MENG

*Chinese, Seafood. 294 Chulalongkorn Soi 15, Rama 4 Rd., 02-215-4171, 02-215-4260. Open daily 11am-2pm, 5-10pm.*

This unassuming two-story shophouse offers the sort of Chinese food typically created by the well-entrenched Chinese community in Thailand: heavy on the spices and easy on the glutinous muck commonly featured at more expensive (or Mainland-authentic) venues. Instead, shoppers exhausted after a wrangle with the durian vendor can vie with hungry Chula students for some of the best seafood in town. **BBB** 🚗

## PICK-NEW SRA BUA

*Thai. Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok, 991/9 Rama 1 Rd., 02-162-9000. BTS Siam. Open Mon-Fri noon-2pm, 6-10pm; Sat-Sun 6-10pm.*

Sra Bua is a sister of Copenhagen's Michelin-starred Thai restaurant Kiin Kiin (one of just two Thai restaurants in the world to have received this distinction). Chef Yde-Andersen whips up Thai food with a very contemporary twist: frozen red curry with baby lobster, the harvest with green curry (freshly harvested vegetables, covered with edible "soil") or spicy salad with orchids and sankhaya ice cream. All this in an atmospheric setting that's part soaring, glittering palace and part rice field. **BBBB** 🚗

Salt



## DÉJÀ VU

**French.** 2/F, Pullman Bangkok King Power Hotel, 8/1-7 Rangnam Rd., 02-680-9999. *BTS Phaya Thai.* Open Tue-Sun 6-11pm; Sat-Sun 11:30am-2:30pm, 7-11pm.

The Pullman's lofty fine dining restaurant serves contemporary cuisine with a strong Gallic influence. Déjà

Vu makes good use of its generous space and ceiling height by creating subtle divisions—curtains of thin metal chains, a central platform and cozier tables in the back under a lower ceiling. An affordable set menu (a choice of starter, main and dessert) features plenty of modern twists and international touches, making this traditional gastronomy with an edge.

**BBBB** ☞ ☞

## PLA DIB

**Fusion.** 1/1 Ari Samphan Soi 7, Rama 6 Rd., 02-279-8185. Open Tue-Sun 5pm-midnight.

Unlike clichéd East-West cuisine that earned "fusion" the scorn it has garnered over the years, Pla Dib's innovative presentation and emphasis on "rawness" (as in uncooked food as well as sparse concrete walls

and no frills seating) has earned it a reputation among the indie denizens that populate the area. Besides tasty dishes, this fresh joint also has an art gallery out front and DJs spinning loungey Brazilian music, house and soul. **BBB** ☞ ☞

## NEW SALT

**International.** Ari Soi 4, 02-619-6886. Open Wed-Sun 6pm-midnight; Mon 6pm-midnight.

A big wooden house in the back, a glass box with exposed concrete pillars and a small lawn in the front, cool, elegant people sitting at the tables, and a long, long menu: raw fish seasoned to local taste, wood-fired oven pizzas, classic French fare and solid cocktails. Expect to wait for a table. **BBB** ☞

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# CENTRAL

Ratchadamri/Lang Suan/Phoenchit/Wireless



Gaggan



Boqueria

## BISCOTTI

**Italian.** G/F, Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok, 155 Ratchadamri Rd., 02-251-6127. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-10:30pm.

With a chic but comfortable ambiance, varied menu, well-rounded wine list and “we aim to please” staff, the place works to make sure every diner feels like the restaurant is created especially with them in mind. The menu changes its mains, pizzas and pastas frequently enough

that you never tire of the offerings. Biscotti may no longer be the flavor of the day, but, where it matters, it still epitomizes good taste. **BBBB** 🍷 🍴 🍴 🍴

## BOQUERIA

**European.** G/F, CRC Tower, All Season Place, 87/2 Witthayu (Wireless) Rd., 02-685-3930/1. BTS Phloen Chit. Open daily 11am-2:30pm, 5:30-10:30pm.

It can come as a surprise to learn that a secluded corner of an office block would be the ideal location to

recreate the delights of Barcelona. The authentic, quality ingredients and the size of the portions make up for the lack of atmosphere though, with a highlight having to be the wonderfully moist and flakey black cod on a bed of summer vegetables. Our tip: take advantage of the midweek lunch deals with a main course and buffet, and savor some impressive cuisine. **BBBB** 🍷 🍴 🍴 🍴

## TOP DINGY EATS Great Food Sometimes Comes in Ugly Packages



Jok Kitchen

## BAAN PA JAZZ

**Thai.** 103 Rachawithee Soi 7, 02-245-1006. Open daily 10am-11pm

At these lowly prices, the sight of Pa Jazz herself standing impeccably coiffed, with makeup fit for a beauty queen competition, as she handles two pans simultaneously is worth a visit alone. But when these affordable dishes also display perfect timing and sauces bursting with flavor, then a visit becomes a must. Don't miss the addictive sauce on the *plaa goong* or the herbal, peppery delight that is the *gaeng om neua*. This place can get super busy, but trust us, it really is worth the wait.



**ERAWAN TEA ROOM**

*Thai. 2/F, Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok, 494 Ratchadamri Rd., 02-254-1234. Open daily 10am-10pm.*

Good food (all the recognizable favorites), Asian ambiance (a little Thai silk and a lot of air-con) and friendly service are some of the virtues of this cute eatery in the very swanky Grand Hyatt Erawan. More than just a tea room, they also have delicious main courses worth trying. The comfy seats, tranquil atmosphere and free board games are just a few of the details that make this tea room stand apart from others. **BBB** 🍵

**NEW GAGGAN**

*68/1 Soi Lang Suan, 02-652-1700. BTS Chit Lom. 6pm-midnight.*

We can guarantee that you've never had Indian food like this before. After a solid foundation in Indian and Italian cooking from his hotel restaurant days, Chef Gaggan Anand upped the ante, did a brief stint at the research facility of El Bulli, the modern gastro capital of the world, and developed this exciting menu interpreting regional Indian dishes with solid, traditional flavors and wow-worthy construction. Expect

foaming, sous-vide, dehydrating and more alongside your traditional curries. Our tip: splurge on the slightly pricy degustation and put yourself in the chef's able hands. **BBBB** 🍴 🍷

**PICK GIANNI RISTORANTE**

*Italian. 34/1 Soi Tonson, Ploenchit Rd., 02-252-1619, 02-652-2922. BTS Chit Lom. Open daily noon-2:30pm, 6-10pm.*

"Gianni's," as it's referred to by most, has earned this affection with consistently outstanding food, an elegant opera-house atmosphere and polished service. The fritto misto, with baby squid, tiny shrimp and fish fillets on a bed of polenta is head-and-shoulders above the mundane deep-fried starters served elsewhere, and the slow-cooked Wagyu beef cheeks served with an Amaronne wine are also wonderful. The ever-changing specials frequently knock it out of the ballpark.

**BBBB** 🍴 🍷

**GROSSI TRATTORIA**

*Italian. G/F, Intercontinental Hotel, 973 Ploenchit Rd., 02-656-0444. BTS Chit Lom. Open daily 11:30am-3pm, 6:30-10:45pm.*

Start up chef Jesse Barnes might have departed, but this place is still backed

by famed Australian Guy Grossi and his commitment to earthy Italian cuisine. This is no hotel restaurant—thanks to its street entrance and soaring three-story tall ceilings and lively but elegant trattoria touches. High quality ingredients, distinct flavors and intriguing dishes make this place a real stand-out. **BBBB** 🍴 🍷

**HYDE AND SEEK**

*International. Athenee Residence, 65/1 Soi Ruam Rudee, 02-168-5152-3. BTS Phloen Chit. Open daily 11-1am.*

Former interior designer turned cocktail connoisseur and the man behind Flow, Chanond Purananda, and Chef Ian Kittichai, of New York City's Kittichai fame, came together to share their love of food, drink and detail at Hyde and Seek, a chic gastro bar with a playful edge. The beveled windows, dark woodwork and leather couches make this a spot worthy of a *Mad Men* cocktail meeting. The menu features lovingly-made traditional pub food with a high-end twist, like baby back ribs in a chili and chocolate glaze. But we go mostly for the cocktails, which are quite simply the best in town.

**BBB-BBBB** 🍷

**JOK KITCHEN**

*Chinese, Thai. 23 Soi Isara Nuphap, Phlab Phla Chai Rd., 02-221-4075, 081-919-9468. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 5:30-10pm.*

Don't be discouraged by the rats and cockroaches in the alleyway where this small, menu-less establishment lurks. The real challenge is that it may take months after you make your reservation before you actually get to dine here. But Jok will astonish you with his Chinese-Thai cooking prepared with fresh seafood, in particular his stunning crabs. 🍴

**ROYAL INDIA**

*Indian. 392/1 Chakkaphet Rd., 02-221-6565. Open daily 10am-10pm.*

Tucked away in a back alley in Pahurat, Royal India's cramped tables and harsh lighting are hardly inviting to the uninitiated. Yet for years the restaurant has been serving some of the most consistently delicious Northern Indian food in Bangkok. Looking for a light meal? Turn on your heels, because here they cook in true grandmother style—plenty of cream and ghee. For roughly a third less of what it'll cost you in the city, you get true homemade lip-smacking good Punjabi recipes. Their chicken *makhani* with garlic naan is a killer combination.

**YIM YIM**

*Chinese. 2/F, 89 Yaowaphanit Rd., 02-224-2203/5. Open daily 11am-2pm, 5-10pm.*

Around for some 80 years, this is now a venerable institution in Yaowarat's rich dining scene, which is to say it's some of the best Chinese food you'll get in Bangkok. The decrepit décor, despite kitsch touches, is messy and almost gloomy, with its low ceiling and small, dark windows. But the best ingredients and impeccably traditional execution make Yim Yim a superbly reliable kitchen. Let's hope the next generation keeps it that way.

# CENTRAL

Ratchadamri/Lang Suan/Ploenchit/Wireless



Madison



Shintaro



La Monita

## PICK LA MONITA TAQUERIA

**Mexican.** Mahatun Plaza, 888/26 Phloen Chit Rd., 02-650-9581. **BTS Phloen Chit.** Open Mon-Sat 11:30am-10pm.

Hands-down the best place to get a super flavorful quesadilla or fish taco and cozy up with a date or a large party of friends. Burritos and the steak torta are also excellent thanks to well-flavored meat, onions, cilantro and a squeeze of lime. You might also want to try the Cuban rice topped with fried egg and the amazing choriqueso, a spicy dish made with Mexican chorizo and cheese. The decor isn't much, but you won't care after your third michilada—a concoction of beer, lime juice, salt and chili. **BB** 🍷 🍴 🍷

## PICK MADISON

**Steak.** G/F, Four Seasons Bangkok, 155 Ratchadamri Rd., 02-250-1000, 02-251-6127. **BTS Ratchadamri.** Open Mon-Sat noon-2:30pm; daily 6-10:30pm; Sun 11:30am-3pm.

Bright and open, Madison has been tastefully designed by the famous Tony Chi. This contemporary, high-end steakhouse foregoes the traditional steakhouse feel, unless you book one of the booths. A meat-eater's paradise, the extensive menu features imported beef from Australia and Japan and comes with exceptional service. **BBBB** 🍷 🍴 🍷

## REFLEXIONS

**French.** 3/F, Plaza Athénée, 61 Witthayu (Wireless) Rd., 02-650-8800. **BTS Phloen Chit.** Open Tue-Sat 6-11pm

Elegant but edgy, with its raw black and white photography of Bangkok, Reflexions is authentic French food without the stuffiness. One look at the young Thibault Chiumenti will tell you this is not stodgy French fare. Still, Chiumenti cooks with an eye for tradition and bold flavors, without making sacrifices to any fads or shortcuts. **BBBB** 🍷 🍴 🍷

## SA-NGUAN SRI

**Thai.** 59/1 Witthayu (Wireless) Rd., 02-252-7637, 02-251-9378. **BTS Phloen Chit.** Open Mon-Sat 10am-3pm.

Sometimes you just want some old-fashioned comfort food like your gran used to make: simple, traditional dishes that are full of flavor. Sa-Nguan Sri does just that; and to really make you feel nostalgic, it does so in an old-school setting. Still, you could be excused for missing the place altogether. Sa-Nguan Sri is never going to win any style awards but as the hordes of office workers that descend each lunchtime can testify, if you want good, affordable home-style Thai food then it's hard to beat this classic oasis, hidden amid the modernity of Wireless Road. **B** 🍷

## SHINTARO

**Japanese.** G/F, Four Seasons Bangkok, 155 Ratchadamri Rd., 02-251-6127. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 5-10:30pm.

Its location in one corner of the Four Seasons Hotel makes this cozy and somewhat dim Japanese restaurant a draw for the glam crowd who come to pose on weekend nights. The food is trendy-Japanese, with dishes like sushi-pizza and California rolls that you wouldn't find in a more traditional restaurant. Attentive but unobtrusive service makes it an ideal place for media-types to sit around and gossip. **BBBB** 🍷 🍴 🍷

## PICK XINN TIEN DI

**Chinese.** 3/F, Gaysorn, 999 Ploenchit Rd., 02-656-2114-5. **BTS Chit Lom.** Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-10pm.

Xinn Tien Di's food is blessed with fresh ingredients, subtle sauces and discreet twists. In fact, we think this is one of the best Peking ducks in town—and the seafood is just as stunning. It's all the more extraordinary a find as it is situated on the uppermost floor of a mall, Gaysorn, and the prices are very reasonable. Were Xinn Tien Di at a nicer location, we might be more inclined to visit in the evening, but then again, we would probably have to pay a whole lot more for the privilege. **BBB** 🍷

Bei Supperclub



Arirang



Bei Otto



## ARIRANG

**Korean.** •1/F, Sukhumvit Plaza, Sukhumvit Soi 12, 02-653-0177, 02-653-0179. **BTS Asok. Open Mon-Fri 11am-2pm, 5-10pm; Sat-Sun 11am-10pm.**

• 199/1 Sathorn Soi 12, 02-635-4772.

We've been to a lot of Korean barbecue restaurants, and most are smoky, greasy, cacophonous affairs, often badly-lit and badly-served, with all the charm of an auction in a barn.

Arirang is the exact opposite: pleasant, clean, bright and stylish. It also offers delicious and beautifully presented cuisine made with top quality ingredients and five-star service from well trained servers. **BBBB** 🍷

## BED SUPPERCLUB

**International.** 26 Sukhumvit Soi 11, 02-651-3537. **BTS Nana. Open Tue-Sun 7:30pm-2am.**

This all-white, loft-like, futuristic hangar maintains its status as the grande dame of clubbing and trendy dining despite the years. The menu always surfs the latest trends, from sourcing local products to comfort food. With those decadent white beds you're dining on, and a crowd of moneyed visitors and jet-set Bangkokians sprawled all over them, the joy of dining here is also to see and be seen. Enjoy the innovative shows and then head to the bar section next door to party later on.

**BBBB** 🍷 🍷

## BEI OTTO

**German.** 1 Sukhumvit Soi 20, 02-260-0869. **BTS Asok. Open daily 11am-midnight.**

What could be a medieval German tavern stands at the end of a small courtyard on Soi 20, where they offer a remarkable selection of sausages, sauerkraut and other homemade delicacies with little grace but with an efficiency and authenticity that is unmatched in Thailand. It's a great place for friends and family to gather over sumptuous grilled platters washed down with plenty of German beer. **BBBB** 🍷

# LOWER SUKHUMVIT

Sukhumvit Soi 1 – Soi 19



Greenhouse



Minibar Royale



Le Beaulieu

## CREPES & CO.

**French, Greek.** • 18 Sukhumvit Soi 12., 02-653-3990/1. Open Mon-Sat 9am-midnight; Sun 8am-midnight

• G/F, 8 Thonglor, 88 Thong Lor Soi 8, 02-726-9398/9. Open daily 9am-11pm.

Despite the new, more contemporary branch on Thong Lor, this original location retains its colonial charm and appeal, with loads of wicker and a tropical, overgrown garden outside. Great service adds to the positive vibe. When it comes to the food, in addition to the array of sweet and savory crepes, the frequent Greek and Moroccan promotions do not disappoint. **BBB** ☺ ☹

## GREENHOUSE

**International. The Landmark Hotel, 138 Sukhumvit Rd., 02-254-0404. BTS Nana. Open daily 24hrs.**

Located on the Landmark's ground floor, Greenhouse specializes in everything from sandwiches to Chinese breakfast (thier pork congee is arguably the best in town). Fans of "fresh" air can choose to sit along their terrace section opened everyday till midnight, when they move you inside. A favorite of hungry nightowls and late-night revellers. **BB-BBB** ☹

## KUPPA

**International. 39 Sukhumvit Soi 16, 02-663-0495, 02-663-8806. Open daily 10am-10:30pm.**

Kuppa is better-known as a lunch venue—consistency is key when you're meeting with clients or fellow expat wives. The menu has changed very little over the years: home-style sandwiches served on cutting boards, salads in tall wooden bowls, soups of the day, pizzas, pastas, tarted-up Thai favorites, solid desserts and underappreciated coffee made from beans roasted on premises. Throw in comfy couches, cool, polished cement and floor-to-ceiling windows bathing everything in natural light, and you've got one chill spot to lounge on the weekends. **BBB-BBBB**

## PICK LE BEAULIEU

**French. Asoke Residence Grand Mercure Building, 50 Sukhumvit Soi 19, 02-204-2004. MRT Sukhumvit. Open daily 6:30-10:30pm, 11:30am-2:30pm, 6:30-10:30pm.**

The venue itself, with its cathedral-like foyer/wine room/bar and intimate sky blue-ceilinged dining room, is small but grand and surely cost a small fortune. The menu is similarly ambitious, featuring four pages of French dishes with a Mediterranean slant made with the finest imported

ingredients money can buy. At the helm is Chef (and co-owner) Herve Frerard, a talented perfectionist who puts a lot of work into creating food which is complex and always tastes wonderful. **BBBB** ☹

## PICK LIMONCELLO

**Italian. 17 Sukhumvit Soi 11, 02-651-0707. BTS Nana. Open daily noon-2pm, 6-11pm.**

Located in bustling Soi 11, this is a hot spot for pizza. As the sister of well-regarded Zanotti, Limoncello offers tasty pizza as well as other authentic Italian dishes. The decor is home-style simple and the open ovens make the whole place smell delicious. **BBB-BBBB** ☺ ☹

## MINIBAR ROYALE

**International, Western. Citadines Bangkok, 37/7 Sukhumvit Soi 23, 02-261-5533. MRT Sukhumvit. Open daily 6:30am-midnight.**

Welcome to hipsterville, where media execs and fashion designers nosh on solid, standard bistro food. Pretentious and overpriced or buzzing and fresh? One thing is sure, Minibar has struck a nerve. The décor is cool, with hints of New York, Paris and Greyhound and the dishes go for safety and comfort, not groundbreaking thrills. Go for

New York Steak-House



brunch (the eggs Benedict with salmon are a good call) or on Friday night, when you can down cocktails from their impressive (if expensive) drinks list. **BBB** 🍷

**PICK** **NEW YORK STEAKHOUSE**

**Steak.** 2/F, JW Marriott Bangkok, 4 Sukhumvit Soi 2, 02-656-7700. BTS Phloen Chit. Open daily 6-11pm.

The competition is fierce among Bangkok's steakhouses, and to be honest we don't find them all that different: Sinatra, martinis, gorgeous waitresses, meat from at least four countries, and sides you pay extra for that are inevitably disappointing. But for an over-the-top experience, there's nothing quite like NY, with its huge handlebar platters and knives, oversized chairs at tables that are so close you can't help pause when the couple next to you starts talking, and a stuffiness that's more Monaco than Manhattan. The steaks are pretty darn good, too. **BBBB** 🍷 🍷

**PICK** **RANG MAHAL**

**Indian.** 26/F, Rembrandt Hotel, 19 Sukhumvit Soi 18, 02-261-7532. BTS Asok. Open Mon-Sat 11:30am-2:30pm; daily 6:30-11pm; Sun 11am-2:30pm.

Known as one of the best Indian places in town, Rang Mahal serves royal Indian cuisine amid maharaja decor (gigantic artifacts and gold, gold and more gold). If the lengthy offerings require too much effort to peruse, opt for a set menu. A traditional Indian band keeps you entertained throughout the meal. Don't miss the mouth-watering butter-chicken. **BBBB** 🍷 🍷



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# LOWER SUKHUMVIT

Sukhumvit Soi 1 – Soi 19

Zeist



Tsu & Nami



Tapas Cafe



## RIB ROOM & BAR

**Steak.** 31/F, The Landmark Bangkok, 138 Sukhumvit Rd., 02-254-0404. MRT Sukhumvit. Open daily 6-11pm.

The bird's-eye-view of Bangkok's skyline is sure to impress, as is the discreet, dimly-lit dining room on the 31st floor of the hotel. Bigger parties can book the glass-encased private room, which nestles between the open cooking station and the meat room. For an interesting meal, order the Australian beef tasting plate, where you can sample the same cut of beef at different stages of aging.

**BBBB** 🍷 🍴 🍻

## TAPAS CAFE

**Spanish, Tapas.** • 1/25 Sukhumvit Soi 11, 02-651-2947. BTS Nana. Open daily 11:30am-midnight.

• Spanish on Four, Silom Soi 4, 02-632-9955. Open Sun-Thu 11-1am, Fri-Sat 11-2am.

Tapas Café fills a void in the local dining scene, offering authentic Spanish food in a comfortable and lively setting. The food is designed

to be consumed with alcohol, so order a pitcher of sangria or a bottle of sherry and plunge into the bold flavors of the super garlicky shrimps and the eggplant "caviar" with goat cheese. The restaurant attracts a regular and mixed clientele of mostly farang expats plus a fair number of Thais and Japanese, with Thursday and Friday nights getting pretty busy. **BBB-BBBB** 🍷 🍴

## TEN-SUI

**Japanese.** 33 Sukhumvit Soi 16, 02-663-2281. Open daily 11:30am-2pm, 5:30-10pm.

Ten-Sui is one of the city's most attractive Japanese eateries. Its magnificent grounds and handsome patios and interiors alone make it worth a visit. Then there's the wide array of food—fried, grilled, hot stone, sukiyaki, shabu shabu, sashimi, sushi, noodles and rice dishes—which is consistently excellent, made from top quality imported ingredients, expertly prepared and served up by waitresses

in striking traditional dress. The bad news is that the prices at Ten-Sui put it beyond the means of most of us, making it more of a special occasion's kind of place than your regular sushi-ya or izakaya. **BBBB** 🍷 🍴

## TSU & NAMI

**Japanese.** JW Marriott Hotel, 4 Sukhumvit Soi 2, 02-656-7709. BTS Phloen Chit. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-10:30pm.

The design boasts clever lighting and custom artwork—a wave of bamboo flowing between Tsu and Nami. Closest to Sukhumvit is Tsu, the sushi-ya, in the middle is a bar serving stiff saketinis and at the far is Nami, where melt-in-your-mouth kobe beef is grilled at your own private tepanyaki counter. Despite it attracting few Japanese, the sushi bar is one of Bangkok's most elegant, with its unusual interior design and softly lit private rooms. Make sure you're on an expense count—or that your boss is paying. **BBB-BBBB** 🍷 🍴 🍻

## ZEIST

**European.** Methawattana Bldg., 27 Sukhumvit Soi 19, 02-651-0372. MRT Sukhumvit. Open Mon-Sat 11:30am-2:30pm, 5:30-11pm.

Chef Art Supapipat turns out food with an almost macho regard for size and flavor—no delicate Alain Ducassian frills here. That means dishes that can withstand the hammering shine brightest. Soups are good enough to bring tears to the eyes (but if we had to choose just one, maybe it would be the roasted garlic cream). Meats are among the best in Bangkok. The star is on the specials menu, a fatty slice of beef belly called, somewhat unappetizingly, a "short plate" and braised in a rich, unctuous sauce. **BBB** 🍷

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# UPPER SUKHUMVIT

Asoke to Sukhumvit Soi 53



Bacco

## PICK BACCO-OSTERIA DA SERGIO

*Italian. 35/1 Sukhumvit Soi 53, 02-662-4538. BTS Thong Lo. Open Mon-Fri 11:30am-3pm, 5:30pm-midnight; Sat-Sun 11:30am-midnight.*

This relaxed, slightly rustic and always noisy eatery, created by owner Sergio Forte, already seems like an institution. It packs in the diners nightly, thanks to its extensive menu of specialties from all over Italy. We highly recommend the *piadas* (flat Italian sandwiches with different stuffings) and the delicious homemade pastas, like the ravioli with truffle cream and papardelle with duck ragu sauce. **BBB-BBBB** 🍴

## BHARANI

*International, Thai. 96/14 Sukhumvit Soi 23, 02-664-4454. MRT Sukhumvit. Open daily 10am-10pm.*

The homey décor of the original has been replaced with a contemporary family vibe. One thing that does remain is the menu, and those tasty dishes of old are still as good. Tacos pizza (ask for half chicken and half pork) has always been a must for an appetizer, together with Vienna sausage (a.k.a. *Saigrog* Bharani). The main

courses include Spanish fried rice, roti with red chicken curry and fried long beans with crispy pork. **BBB** 🍴

## PICK BO.IAN

*Thai. 42 Sukhumvit Soi 26, 02-260-2962. Open Tue-Sun 6:30pm- midnight*

Chefs and couple Bo and Dylan have brought what they learnt working at David Thompson's Michelin-starred Thai restaurant, Nahm, in the UK, back to Thailand. This is a traditional approach to Thai food, presented in a contemporary style. The chefs strongly recommend opting for the Bo.Ian balance, a degustation menu that regularly changes to reflect seasonal products that are bought fresh from the market daily. It's all served in a stylish house-turned-restaurant that prominently features dark wood and has a ceiling covered with *kradong* (flat baskets). **BBBB** 🍴 🍴

## BOURBON STREET

*American. 29/4-6 Sukhumvit Soi 22, 02-259-0328/9. Open daily 7-1am.*

American food is the order of the evening in this nearly two-decade-old restaurant deep in Washington Square. Cajun food and other delicacies from



Chesa

the southern U.S. are the specialties, such as blackened steaks, jambalaya and boiled crawfish. Tuesday night is Tex Mex buffet night. **BBB** 🍴 🍴

## CHESA

*Swiss. 5 Sukhumvit Soi 20, 02-261-6650. Open daily 11am-11pm.*

This humble restaurant has consistently good food, a menu filled with traditional European dishes that delight with their attention to detail, a team of well-trained and amiable servers and a cozy, comfortable atmosphere. The menu features pungent melted raclette eaten with pickles and new potatoes, fondues of cheese or oil, but also (somewhat) lighter fare including trout, pastas, salads and salmon tartare. **BBBB** 🍴

## DEMI

*Chinese. 21/15 Sukhumvit Soi 49, 02-662-6485/-6. Open daily 11am-10pm.*

The restaurant's describes itself as a Taiwanese and, specifically, vegetarian restaurant. Despite tasty meatless dishes, such as bitter mustard greens paired with toothsome milky bean curd skin, vegetarian cuisine is by no means the focus, as



a quick glance around at other tables will reveal mouthwatering plates of tender beef or mutton, crispy duck, succulent shellfish, and fatty *moo sam chan* (pork belly). For such a small place, Demi's menu really is huge. Still, we've yet to find a dish we didn't like or felt wasn't worth the money. **B-BB** 🍴

## ENOTECA ITALIANA

*Italian. 39 Sukhumvit Soi 27, 02-258-4386. MRT Sukhumvit. Open daily 5:30pm-midnight.*

This enoteca (tavern) is cut from a traditional cloth, with its wall of wines and a bar groaning under the weight of various dried meats, cheese wheels and platters of antipasti. It's a charming little place, especially at night as there are tables set inside overlooking a brightly-lit front yard, through a wall of arched windows. Bold dishes like the risotto with licorice and saffron or oxtail in tomato and red wine sauce with celery and raisin are testament to Enoteca's ambitions to be more than just another Italian joint in Bangkok.

**BBBB** 🍴

## EXHIBIT CAFÉ

*International, Thai. 235/28-31 Sukhumvit Soi 31, 02-662-3636. Open daily 11am-10pm.*

Despite the venue's name, art only plays a secondary role to the actual dining, but it is clearly the inspiration for the gallery-like décor: bare concrete floors, plain white walls and lots of spotlights pointed at the artwork. The menu is equally nonsensical, if extensive, focusing on those twin favorites: pasta and Thai dishes with good quality ingredients. Like the art featured on its walls, Exhibit Cafe might not use the most thrilling palettes, but apart from the occasional missed stroke, the decent food and warm service mean visits

are well rewarded. **BB** 🍴

## EXTRA VIRGIN

*International, Thai. 63 Sukhumvit Soi 53, 02-259-7898/9. BTS Thong Lo. Open Tue-Sun 5pm-1am.*

The white brick walls, cream sofas and mish-mash of retro furniture give this spot a relaxed but sophisticated atmosphere that is distinct for Bangkok. While service can be a touch erratic, the small but diverse menu is well-executed and has a good mix of starters, pastas and mains that includes international and Thai inspired options. If you like sweet drinks, make sure you take advantage of the extensive cocktail list to go with your meal. **BB-BBB** 🍴

## GIUSTO

*Italian. 16 Sukhumvit Soi 23, 02-258-4321. MRT Sukhumvit. Open daily 11:30am-2pm, 6-10:30pm.*

Giusto is one of the most renowned Italian kitchens in town. Set in a lovely house with light chocolate walls, the place has the warmth and coziness of a modern home. The food is lip-smacking, whipped up with top-quality ingredients. Its comprehensive wine list comprises shipments from Italy, France and Spain that are on offer by the glass so that you can match a different wine with each course. **BBBB** 🍴

## IL TARTUFO

*Italian. 64 Sukhumvit Soi 51, 02-259-3569. Open daily 11am-11pm.*

Nestled at the end of Soi 51 in its charming house with an equally delightful garden area, there's actually quite a lot that's both surprising and contemporary about Il Tartufo. For a start, it has a light and breezy atmosphere thanks to the bright and airy interior with its stonework floors and vibrant yellow walls. But it's the menu that is

perhaps the most welcome surprise. Sure, there is a very traditional, very classic Italian spine, but there are also plenty of less obvious dishes to spark the interest, particularly dishes using the signature truffle base, like the delicious tortellini tartufo. But it's not just the truffles that impress. It's the generally high standards of all the imported ingredients and how they are used. It all helps to make Il Tartufo a very pleasant, very homely neighborhood trattoria with a menu that will ensure you keep coming back for more. **BBB-BBBB** 🍴

## INDUS

*Indian. 71 Sukhumvit Soi 26, 02-258-4900, 02-661-5279. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 5:30-10:30pm (last order)*

Those who see Indian as a freaky culinary adventure could find a reassuring guide in Indus. Not only is it an ambient spot where beautiful people flock to be seen, the kitchen does a good job serving up much lighter versions of the usual favorites like biriyani, kebabs and tikkas and seafood. They also have a beautiful backyard where you can enjoy your appetizers with cocktails. **BBBB** 🍴



# UPPER SUKHUMVIT

Asoke to Sukhumvit Soi 53



Koi



Le Bottega Di Luca

## KHUA KLING PAK SOD

**Thai.** 98/1 Thong Lor Soi 5 (Sukhumvit Soi 55), 02-185-3977. Open daily 11am-2pm, 5:30-9pm (last order).

This eatery is unapologetically Southern, hitting every spicy note, which genuine home cooking from those parts is all about. Under the rule of a matriarch chef hailing from Chumpon, the single-room restaurant is family-run. She'll point you to the signature dish, a Southern classic of course, *khua kling*, which they recommend with diced pork. It can be hazardous if you don't watch out for the chilis, but that's just the way it's meant to be. **BB** ☞

## KOI

**Fusion, Japanese.** 26 Sukhumvit Soi 20, 02-663-4990. Open Mon-Sat 6pm-midnight.

A favorite of Thai and international celebrities alike, this place has a minimalist yet lively vibe. The food is fusion, more LA Japantown than Japan: delicate yellowtail carpaccio-style dressed with grape seed oil; ponzu sauce and wasabi-marinated roe; hamachi-scented with truffle oil, among others. The prices may be high, but you will be too intoxicated by the sexy candlelit surroundings to really care. **BBBB** ☞ ☞

## LA BOTTEGA DI LUCA

**Italian.** Terrace 49, Sukhumvit Soi 49, 02-204-1731. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 5:30pm-midnight.

The latest project of well-traveled chef Luca Appino, this deli cum restaurant sticks to traditional recipes but stands out thanks to its distinct emphasis on fresh and, when possible, homemade ingredients. A range of authentic dishes takes you on a tour of different cities in Italy as indicated on the menu. **BBBB** ☞

## LE DALAT

**Vietnamese.** 57 Sukhumvit Soi 23, 02-664-0670. MRT Sukhumvit. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 5:30-10:30pm.

We must admit to being slightly disappointed when we discovered that Le Dalat had swapped its beautiful wooden home and moved up the road to a purpose-built venue. Still, the new entrance does manage to evoke shades of Hanoi temples and they did at least keep the beautiful antiques and frankly bizarre collection of sexual imagery in the toilets. Even more importantly they also retained their commitment to quality ingredients and royal Vietnamese cuisine to produce dishes that you won't find anywhere else. If you are a novice, don't worry: just let the team of impeccable waiters guide you through the comprehensive menu, which includes plenty of classics like *pho*, *bánh cuốn* and *chao tom*. **BBB** ☞

## LE VENDOME

**French.** 267/2 Sukhumvit Soi 31, 02-662-0530-1. Open Mon-Sat 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-10:30pm.

This two-story house has a purpose-built kitchen, shaded garden, its own pool, and posh private rooms for big-spending VIPs. From langoustines and Canadian lobster to foie gras and baby lamb chops, this classic French

menu is packed with intricately designed recipes that let the true flavors of the premium ingredients shine through. **BBBB** 🍷

## MA DU ZI RESTAURANT BY YUYA

*French, Japanese. Maduzi Hotel, 9/1 Sukhumvit Soi 16, 02-615-6400. BTS Asok. Open daily 11am-2pm, 6-10pm.*

Japanese Chef Yuya Okuda's food is very recognizably French, only very light, very subtle and with seamless exotic touches. For example, you'd never really notice the thin strips of puffer fish brightening your wagyu tartar, or that the scallops with caviar are on a bed of pureed roots, not a boring (or comforting as people like to call it) mash. Yuya has some serious cred, too, with two years in a Relais & Chateaux hotel restaurant in



Le Vendome



Ma Du Zi Restaurant by Yuya

France and a stint at a Joel Robuchon restaurant in Japan. Best of all, Ma Du Zi, despite its no walk-ins policy, is finally priced within reach of mortals. **BBBB** 🍷



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5:30pm - 10:00pm

Sat - Sun : 11:00am - 10:00pm

# UPPER SUKHUMVIT

Asoke to Sukhumvit Soi 53



Spring Summer

## PHILIPPE

*French.* 20/15-17 Sukhumvit Soi 39, 02-259-4577/8. BTS Phrom Phong. Open Mon-Sat 11:30am-2pm; daily 6-10pm.

Enjoy classic French fare and good wine while rubbing shoulders with the local bigwigs. The food is just as classic as the stately decor: foie gras, escargots and plenty of truffles. Its affordable three-course set lunch with its menu changing weekly is another reason to pay a visit to the knowledgeable, friendly staff. **BBBB** ☞ ☞

## SONIE'S

*Fusion, Italian, Japanese.* 9/2 Sukhumvit Soi 31, 02-260-8386-7. MRT Sukhumvit. Open Tue-Sun 11:30am-2pm, 5:30-10:30pm.

Don't be put off by the sound of the odd mix of cuisines—Japanese and Italian. Sonie's does both with flair and panache. The irresistible, forever-famous Sonie's Sushi Pizza comes as thick blocks of seaweed laden with sticky rice, crunchy shrimp, avocado, crabstick and roe—finger-licking good. If the weird sounding but nonethe-

less delicious Nashville or Oh My God Rolls sound too bizarre, try one their 12 varieties of pasta—more traditional but equally memorable. **BBB** ☞

## SPRING SUMMER

*International.* 199 Sukhumvit Soi 39, 02-392-2747/8. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-11pm.

Set in a pleasantly peaceful, grassy compound this actor-owned restaurant dishes out Thai fusion recipes like spicy peanut calamari or spring pad Thai with sea prawn. The spacious all-white house charms with its modern minimalist décor. On a cool day, snag a seat out on its large green lawn. Don't forget to drop by Summer next door (open noon-midnight) for their particularly tempting desserts like the decadent chocolate treat named Better than Sex. **BBB**

## THE CUP RESTAURANT AND TEA ROOM

*British.* 3/F, Lake Rajada Office Complex, Ratchadaphisek Rd., 02-264-0247. Open Mon-Sat 11:30am-6pm.

This magnet for hi-so ladies and young executives whips up British classics like roast lamb drenched in

## TOP CHAINS SOMETIMES MULTIPLICITY RHYMES WITH QUALITY



Crystal Jade

## CRYSTAL JADE

*Chinese, Cantonese.* G/F, Siam Paragon, Rama 1 Rd., 02-610-9363, 02-129-4343. Siam. Open Mon-Sat 11am-3pm, 5:30-10pm; Sun 11am-10pm.

This classy Chinese bistro from Singapore is a bit more upscale than its sister branch at Erawan but features a selection of familiar Cantonese specialties, like *la mian* and *xiao long bao*. More venues at [www.crystaljade.com](http://www.crystaljade.com). ☞ ☞

The Seafood Bar



rich gravy and some mean desserts like their apple pie a la mode. **BBB**

### THE SEAFOOD BAR

*American, Seafood. Somerseset Lake Place, 41 Sukhumvit Soi 16, 02-663-8863. Open Tue-Sat 6-11pm; Sun noon-3pm, 6-10pm.*

The Seafood Bar is the bigger, more centrally-located sister of the Oyster Bar, also owned by oyster importer Bill Marinelli. While it retains the emphasis on seafood, duh, more space means more choice and a

proper kitchen to cook up the modern American cuisine. Work up an appetite looking at the painted fish on the walls before selecting from 20 different types of oysters and a range of perfectly grilled fish dishes that changes daily. **BBBB** 🍷

### VIENTIANE KITCHEN

*Laotian. 8 Sukhumvit Soi 36, 02-258-6171. BTS Thong Lo. Open daily noon-midnight.*

A good place to take your visiting friends, this restaurant boasts fun

and authentic Laotian dining in a classic setting. The traditional musicians play dreamy wavering notes round the base of the magnificent tree that stands at the center of the restaurant. Clad in traditional Vientiane wear, the friendly wait staff is more than willing to arrange less spicy somtam for your foreign friends before engaging in mock swordfights for added entertainment. **BB** 🍷 🍷

### JE NGOR

*Chinese, Seafood. 68/2 Sukhumvit Soi 20, 02-258-8008/9. Open daily 11:30am-2pm, 5:30-10pm.*

There are now 13 branches of this well-regarded seafood establishment, though the two-building original on Siphraya Road is still the best. The decor is a bit aged, but you don't go to Je Ngor for the atmosphere. Go instead for fresh, well-prepared seafood. More venues at [www.jengor-seafoods.com](http://www.jengor-seafoods.com). 🍷 🍷

### GREYHOUND CAFE

*International. G/F, J Avenue, Thong Lor Soi 15, 02-712-6547. Open Sun-Thu 11am-10pm; Fri-Sat 11am-1pm*

Like its sisters, this branch of Greyhound Cafe combines urban cool and comforting dishes. Most of all, Greyhound is reliable: same menu, same attentive staff, same reasonable prices and same touches of creativity that don't you take you out of your comfort zone. This being Greyhound, and this being Thong Lor, this is also a particularly fun spot for people well rewarded. More venues at [www.greyhoundcafe.co.th](http://www.greyhoundcafe.co.th). 🍷 🍷

### HONMONO SUSHI

*Japanese. 19 Thong Lor Soi 23, 02-185-1447. Open Mon-Fri 5pm-midnight; Sat-Sun 11:30am-2pm.*

Sushi is all about the raw materials. Honmono Sushi is an authentic Japanese restaurant that prides itself on the freshness of its ingredients. With its creative sushi menus like the dragon avocado, the roasted matzusaka, and the yummy salmon skin roll, the place is busting with sushi lovers. You don't have to fly all the way to Japan to experience a typical Japanese restaurant anymore. More venues at [www.facebook.com/Honmono](http://www.facebook.com/Honmono). 🍷



Chote Chitr



Shambara

## CHOTE CHITR

*Thai. 146 Praeng Phuton Rd., 02-221-4082. Open Mon-Sat 11am-9pm.*

The auntie/server/cook at Chote Chitr has some of the best (and most authentic) Thai food in town—and at amazingly low prices. The mee krob and yum thua phuu (wing bean salad) are nothing short of miraculous. Just don't forget to bring a map, and watch out for the resident dogs! **BB**

## KRUA APSORN

*Thai. Samsen Rd., 02-668-8788. Open Mon-Sat 10:30am-7:30pm.*

Despite the slightly grubby ambience and the out-of-the-way location, the dishes here are special, in part because they're made the "old-fashioned" way and have been fine-tuned over decades. The awesome mussels fried pad cha style, with basil, yellow chili, krachai (wild ginger) and green peppercorns are so plump and sweet that chefs from other restaurants have inquired about their source. With food this

good, maybe we should think about moving closer to them. **B-BB**

## MAY KAIDEE 2

*Vegetarian or Organic. 33 Samsen Soi 1, 02-281-7699. Open daily 8am-10pm.*

Located just a short walk from Khao San Road, this shophouse restaurant is a tourist destination in its own right. Listed in travel guides, like Lonely Planet and Frommer's, it has been providing backpackers reliable, meat-free meals for almost two decades. Just make sure you skip farang favorites and order what May does best—unpretentious homely Thai dishes. The cooking might not be that consistent but the eatery makes up for it with fast and friendly service, generous portions and pocket-friendly prices. **B**

## MISTERPAS

*International. 140 Phra Athit Rd., 02-629-3207. Open Tue-Sun 1-10:30pm.*

With its fresh ingredients, warm welcome and honest cooking, Misterpas is well worth a visit. The décor, like the menu, is simple but inventive:

stone floors, concrete walls and the odd piece of funky art to catch the eye. Aside from five small tables, the remaining space is occupied by an open kitchen. The menu is impressive with a huge all-day breakfast menu, pastas and daily specials. The spaghetti with crispy bacon, chili and basil and the pistachio crusted snapper fillet on nero spaghetti are stand-outs. **BB** **☞**

## SHAMBARA

*International, Thai. 138 Khao San Rd., 02-282-7968. Open Tue-Sun 5-11:30pm.*

This small eatery is hidden in a soi off Khao San. It's only 500 meters from the busy road but is it like being suddenly transported to a peaceful northern province. In a beautiful and serene house, the restaurant serves both Thai and farang food. Despite misfires, the kitchen delivers some surprisingly authentic Thai dishes, some passable fusion and decent Western comfort food. **B**

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Harvey



4 Garçons

## 6TH FRATELLO

**Italian.** 40/25 Ekamai Soi 12, 02-391-9946. Open Tue-Sun 11am-2:30pm, 5:30-10pm

The food shows imagination and a dedication to fresh ingredients. The kitchen's pride in their work transfers to the knowledgeable staff who are quick to offer intelligent recommendations. Appetizers include mouthwatering soups like the blue crab bisque. The risotto prawns with mushrooms are light and zesty, and the duck breast is spot on with crispy skin and tender meat. Despite the less-than-full dining room, 6th Fratello is definitely a restaurant that deserves our support. **BBB** 🍷

## NEW 4 GARÇONS

**French.** 1/F, Oakwood Residence, 113 Thong Lor 13, 02-713-9547. Open daily 11:30am-10:30pm. (Note they will be closed for one month in April 2011.)

Four men with respectable day jobs in the high flying fields of law, medicine and finance decided to partner up and open a restaurant on Thong Lor.

Although cooked by a Thai doctor, this is classic French fare, such as Burgundy escargots with garlic and parsley and their in-house *pate de campagne*. Mains are hearty affairs, involving dishes like duck confit with mustard sauce mashed potatoes and the big-seller tender ox tail stew. A great alternative to many of the stuffy, expensive French restaurants in town. **BBBB** 🍷 🍷

## AL MAJLIS

**83/8 Ekkamai Soi 12 (Soi Charoen Chai), 02-392-2345. Open Mon-Fri 4pm-12:30am, Sat-Sun 2:30pm-12:30am.**

Located adjacent to Praduu Spa at the back of this small soi, Al Majlis is a gem of a restaurant where elegance meets comfort. The spacious tea room transports guests to Morocco with its white draperies hanging from the ceiling and the staff clad in kaftan shirts. Snug sofas and plump pillows complete this ideal spot for a lingering tea-sipping session. The menu is concise, featuring a variety of teas, a few light dishes, some Middle Eastern inspired offerings and some homemade cakes. They also have an impressive selection of wines. **BBB** 🍷 🍷

## BONJOUR

**French.** 1217/2 Sukhumvit Soi 59, 02-714-2112. BTS Thong Lo. Open daily 6pm-1am.

We actually think the departure of Bonjour's French chef was a good thing. The young Thai guy now at the kitchen's helm is ready to experiment and has a very sure hand—and he's been in France long enough to have all the basics covered. He's also much better at using local products which, along with the introduction of set menus, have brought the prices down to more realistic levels. **BBBB** 🍷 🍷

## FUZIO

**Italian.** 6/F, Mini Showroom, 99/99 Ekkamai Soi 7, 02-711-6999. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-10:30pm.

Here, classic Italian recipes are mixed with just enough modern touches to suit the locale and clientele. Its location atop the Mini Cooper gallery and the modern lofted ceilings all make for a special experience. The recent renovation has made this place a lot lighter, with a very long white table in the center of the room for cooking demonstrations and some tableside cooking. **BBB** 🍷

## HARVEY

**American, International.** 129 Thong Lor Soi 9, 02-712-9911. Open daily 11:30am-2pm, 6-11pm.

The upstairs private rooms at Harvey are often fully booked by the rich and famous, and the downstairs dining room and bar are usually buzzing with beautiful people and bossa nova. The trained staff glide between tables in the slightly minimalist glass and concrete dining room. As for the food, billed Californian, it encompasses interpretations of American, French and Italian, including clam chowder, beef cheeks and double chicken consomme. **BBBB** 🍷 🍷 🍷

## HAZARA

**Indian.** 29 Sukhumvit Soi 38, 02-713-6049. BTS Thong Lo. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-11pm.

Hazara is the more popular part of The Face's elegant compound that also houses Lan Na Thai and Face Bar, plus a spa and bakery. The north Indian food here is definitely excellent (though pricy), the space is always packed and the decor is stunning—hardwood carpentry and exotic crafts. Great for special occasions or entertaining foreign visitors. **BBBB** 🍷



Al Majlis



Crepes & Co.



Bonjour



Fuzio



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Iron Fairies



Kubpo Hanako



Khun Churn

## NEW IRON FAIRIES

**394 Sukhumvit Soi 55 (Soi Thong Lor), 084-520-2301. Open daily 6pm-2am.**

Fashioned after a Dickensian factory, with blackened walls, antique (and functional) machines and a narrow, metal staircase that curls up through the middle of the room, Iron Fairies is a popular nighttime hangout among celebrities and laymen alike. The menu highlights an exciting list of absinthe-based cocktails and giant Australian beef burgers. Don't forget to order the Old Man Jap Wedges to go with yours. **BB-BBB** ☞

## KHUN CHURN

**Thai, Vegetarian or Organic. G/F, Bangkok Mediplex Bldg, Sukhumvit Soi 42, 02-713-6599. BTS Ekkamai. Open daily 10am-8:30pm.**

Originally from Chiang Mai, this family-run eatery is tucked away in the relatively quiet Bangkok Mediplex. The atmosphere is classy yet casual,

with wooden paneling, cushioned banquettes and intricate bamboo lanterns adorning the ceiling. The menu is down-to-earth and straightforward—delicious meat-free meals prepared using tofu, mushrooms and rare, indigenous veggies as the core ingredients. **B-BB** ☞

## PICK KUBPO HANAKO

**Japanese. 113/1 Thong Lor Soi 13, 02-712-6371/-2. Open daily 5pm-midnight.**

The main reason we like this restaurant with adjoining karaoke bar so much, next to the cool ambience and flirtatious service, is that we can pop in for a snack, or a luxurious meal, at 10pm. In addition to table seating, Hanako also has a teppanyaki bar and some nifty private tatami rooms. The food is good, too: steamed clams, broiled eggplants, sashimi, and fried stuff like tempura and breaded Hiroshima oysters. **BB** ☞

## PICK NEW PHUKET TOWN

**Southern Thai. 160/8 Soi Thong Lor (corner of soi 6), 02-714-9402. Open daily 10:30am-10:30pm**

The cute, bright shophouse welcomes people in with its huge windows and cute wooden front door that transports you to the old quarter of the famous Southern town. But the food is the real star of the places, with classic Phuket dishes like *kai thod kamin* (fried chicken with turmeric), *kanom jeen nam ya poo* (rice vermicelli with crab curry) and stir fried *sataw* with shrimp. **B-BB** ☞

## RED

**Indian. 124 Thong Lor Soi 9, 02-259-7590. Open daily 11am-2:30pm, 5:30-11pm.**

A chic, contemporary spot with cool gray walls and some red accents. The kitchen claims a fusion of India-meets-the-West creations, though the menu is largely Indian

Red



Soul Food Mahanakorn



classics like tandoori chicken, tikka and red mutton curry with garlic naan. There's also a rich, legitimate vegetarian selection. The desserts do have some fun, fusion flair, with the layman's deep-fried sweet *jalebi* coming with an apple flavor, and the *rasmalai*, cottage cheese dumplings in sweet cream sauce, spiked at Red with caramel. **BBB-BBBB**

**PICK RUEA THONG**

*Thai. 351/2 Thong Lor Soi 17, 02-185-2610. Open Mon-Sat 11:30am-2pm; daily 5-11pm. Closed every 2nd and 4th Sun of the month.*

Despite its tatty appearance, the two-story shophouse makes you feel comfortably at home, as does the family-style service from veteran staff. The décor is nothing to write home about, but the food certainly is. At first glance, the menu might not look that exciting as it lists a few dozen standards you can find at most

neighborhood restaurants. But look closely and there are also homey, old-fashioned recipes which might remind you of your grandmother's cooking, such as *kaeng khua hoy khom* (cockles curry) and "boneless" sundried tapian fish, which is fried to such a crisp you can even eat the bones. **B**

**PICK NEW SERENADE**

*Western. Grass Complex, 264/1 Soi Thong Lor (Sukhumvit Soi 55), 02-713-8409. Open Mon-Fri 11am-2pm, Sun-Thu 5:30-11:30pm, Fri-Sat 5:30pm-1am*

It is tragic that Serenade hasn't yet been adopted by hip and devoted restaurant goers the way Soul Food Mahanakorn and Iron Fairies have been. The shared small plates and cocktails concept, as well as the regularly changing menu of exciting dishes make this a pretty unique option in our fair city. The emphasis

here is on small plates to be enjoyed with lots of drinks. The menu does dishes like grilled longan, feta and cucumber salad and layered red and black beans and fromage blanc topped with gruyere. Among the non-veg options, don't miss the pork belly with pickled radicchio. **BB-BBB**

**PICK NEW SOUL FOOD MAHANAKORN**

*Thai. 56/10 Sukhumvit Soi 55 (Soi Thong Lor), 085-904-2691, 02-714-7708. BTS Thong Lo. Open daily 6pm-midnight.*

One of the most significant new restaurants to open in 2010, Soul Food is strong on both fronts: it dishes out very strong (double pours, actually) original signature cocktails like the Bun Bang Fai (a mix of tequila, lime, chilli, almond syrup and egg white) as well as a brief menu of perfectly executed Thai regional dishes like *khao mok kai*, tamarind ribs and *pad*



Triplets



The Garret



To Die For

*krpao* made with Australian lamb. The combo has a heady, infectious effect on the hip and beautiful as the place is packed almost every night of the week. **BBB** ☞

### NEW THE GARRET

**Rooftop, Mini Showroom, 99/99 Ekkamai Soi 7, 02-711-6999. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6pm-midnight.**

Instead of monopolizing that entire, gorgeous rooftop space with just one restaurant, the folks at Fuzio now have a second eatery, one of the first to serve what it calls New American cuisine, a big trend in foodie cities in

## TOP EXOTIC EATS



La Cuchara

### HIMALAYA

**Nepalese. 235/5 Sukhumvit Soi 31, 02-258-4489. Open daily 11am-10:30pm.**

When we come across a tiny restaurant that does Himalayan cuisine (focusing on dishes from Nepal, Bhutan and Kashmir) with loads of vegetarian options, we can't help but commend the place just for existing. But Himalaya has a few more things going for it. The room is filled with floor seating, mountain photos and prayer flags, the food is humble and uncool, and we like them for it. It's not Indian fine dining, and it's not a South Indian vegetarian lunch. It's a whole other, albeit related, cuisine, one sorely lacking in town.



Xuan Mai

America. In a high ceilinged, *Boardwalk Empire*-esque vintage setting, they do meat-heavy dishes done simple, like lamb skewers, enormous burgers and some hearty salads. **BBB-BBBB** 🍴

## TO DIE FOR

**International.** 988 Sukhumvit Soi 55 (Soi Thong Lor), 02-381-4714. Open Sun-Thu 4pm-midnight; Fri-Sat 5pm-1am.

Located in hipster enclave H1's courtyard, To Die For ticks all the right boxes to excite trendy Thonglorites: modern furnishings, rough brick wall, intricate light fixtures and artsy details. The menu is comforting European dishes with a Mediterranean

slant and occasional nods to local tastes: baked clams with garlic butter, Thai-style spicy pasta, beef stew. It's also a sexy lounge with plump sofas and a sizeable bar. **BBB** 🍴 🍷

## NEW TRIPLETS

**French.** 6/F, Parnjit Tower, Sukhumvit Soi 55 (Thong Lor), 02-712-8066. Open Wed-Sun 6-10pm.

It may be on the sixth floor of an office building, but not only does Triplets boast lovely views in the evening, it's maybe the restaurant most seriously dedicated to locally-sourced products. The food is interesting, French-style cooking with

affordable results—all made to order by Chicago-returned Royal Projects enthusiast Chef Nate, at the homey open kitchen that dominates one side of the space. **BBB** 🍴

## PICK XUAN MAI

**Vietnamese.** 351/3 Thong Lor Soi 17, 02-185-2619. Open Tue-Sun 11am-2:30pm, 6-11pm.

This is the second location for what may well be the best Vietnamese food in Bangkok. Chef Me Yung is an expert at sourcing the best ingredients, either from local markets or directly from Vietnam, and cooking them perfectly. Her mastery of textures, colors and flavors make a heady mix that redefines addictive. Many dishes here are unlikely to find their way onto the menus of other Vietnamese restaurants in Bangkok including the *banh mi thit*, or Vietnamese sandwich, and the *hu tieu my tho*, its southern-style counterpart. Don't miss the *cha ca Hanoi*, or grilled catfish, which arrives in its own wok, with handfuls of fresh dill and homemade fermented shrimp paste, representing another unique foray into Hanoi cuisine. **BBB**

## HABESHA

**Ethiopian.** G/F, Royal Garden Home Hotel, 63/1 Sukhumvit Soi 3 (Soi Nana), 02-253-5458, 086-012-5490. Open daily 10am-10pm.

Possibly the only Ethiopian place in Bangkok, we Habesha credit for its novelty value, even if the food can be hit-or-miss. It arrives as it should, on a giant platter lined with traditional sourdough *enjera* (teff flour) bread. The presence of Ethiopian uncles lends authenticity, as does the little set up on the floor, where they roast their own coffee beans. So even if you might not always like the food, you should go anyway, because it's cheap and cozy and worth experiencing at least once.

## LA CUCHARA

**Colombian.** 2/38 Rama 4 Soi 1 (Sathorn), 02-679-9910 Open daily noon-10:30pm.

Where else can you go on an authentic culinary adventure surveying the best in Columbian, Cuban and Latin American cuisine? The décor matches the cuisine with a riot of colors from vibrant reds to shocking greens while a host of crucifixes watch over the small dining space (it's so small the kitchen is next door). The food (like the La Cuchara Chicken) is homely, if also carb and protein heavy. If nothing else, the cocktails, ambition and atmosphere of La Cuchara are enough reason for a return visit.

## PARDIS

**Iranian.** 894-8 Rama 4 Rd., 02-637-1008. Open daily 12-11pm.

You might be surprised to learn that this 200-seat, two-story restaurant is actually serving up such a specialist cuisine, but they do it in some style. Bathed in white light and decked out with chic fittings it's a pleasantly minimalist setting to enjoy traditional dishes like the *bagali polo* and *manicheh* (a platter of rice and lima beans with a leg of lamb) as well as a range of kebabs.



China House



Le Normandie



Mei Jiang

## CHINA HOUSE

*Chinese. Mandarin Oriental, 48 Oriental Ave. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6:30-10:30pm.*

China House is one sexy place: the tiny aquamarine bar, the deep red and black lacquers, the films playing in the toilets. While there are cheaper places with greater reputations, we still think China House is a winning blend of style and substance. Classics like the sweet and sour pork can be truly masterful, while the shrimps in a creamy wasabi sauce never fail to elicit oohs from us. Our tip: go for the Sunday brunch and try to snag one of the cozy, two-person window booths. **BBBB** 🍷 🍴 🍴

## PICK LE NORMANDIE

*French. The Oriental Bangkok, 48 Oriental Ave., 02-659-9000. Open Mon-Sat noon-2:30pm; daily 7-10:30pm.*

The Mandarin Oriental's showcase restaurant needs little introduction. For years it has set the standard for service and cuisine—and the breathtaking river views aren't bad. Dinner can easily break the bank, but if you've ever wondered what bourgeois French families have for their dejeuner, order yourself their three-course set menu. A sample set: homemade meat pie, duck and pork belly casserole with garlic confit and creme brulee. Le Normandie is ideal for any occasion. Then you can gleefully throw your empty wallet into the Chao Phraya. **BBBB** 🍷 🍴 🍴

## MEI JIANG

*Chinese. The Peninsula Bangkok, 333 Charoen Nakhon Rd., 02-861-2888. BTS Saphan Taksin. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-10:30pm.*

This elegant establishment overlooking the Chao Phraya River offers one of the best dim sum experiences in town. The food is authentic Cantonese fare, while the service is knowledgeable and courteous. There's even a cool display of tea on the counter and specially-trained staff so you can have your very own mini tea ceremony. **BBBB** 🍷 🍴 🍴

The Oyster Bar

**PICK KUAN AH**

*Chinese.* 884/9 Rama 3 Rd., 02-682-7747/-8. Open daily 10am-10pm.

After over a half-century serving *khao man gai* and a handful of other Hainanese staples, Kuan Ah expanded their menu and moved to this purpose-built “complex” on a quiet stretch of the Chao Phraya River. But, frankly, the venue itself is about as stylish as a cafeteria. The focus here is obviously on the food, which is terrific, the kind of confident, presentation-be-damned cuisine you can only get in places that have been in business this long. Must-orders are the famous chicken and “sukiyaki,” which is ideally enjoyed at one of the 40 or so outdoor tables. **BB** 🍷

**PICK PEN**

*Chinese, seafood.* 2068/4 Chan Rd., 02-286-2344/3058. Open daily 11am-2pm, 5-11pm.

Wall-hangings made with bits of glass in different colors and gold leaf, mirrored walls, heavy teak chairs and tables, plastic flowers—it’s as though this restaurant was frozen in the 1970s (although it’s been around much longer). Most importantly, Pen is still committed to sourcing the best ingredients—seafood, in particular—and cooking in a manner that brings out the true flavors of those ingredients. Everything is wonderful here but you’re really in luck if the aging owner is around to pick what really stands out that day. **BB** 🍷

**PICK THE OYSTER BAR**

*Seafood.* 395 Narathiwat-Ratchanakarin Soi 24, 02-212-4809. Open Tue-Sat 6-11pm; Sun noon-3pm, 6-10pm.

Set up by oyster importer Bill Marinelli as a space where he could wine and dine potential customers this place quickly developed a life of its own, pulling in people from all over town keen to sample the range of fresh oysters flown in twice a week from Canada and the USA and, rare for Bangkok, a modern American seafood menu. Don’t miss the good value Sunday brunch.

**BBBB** 🍷 🍷

## Review Policy

# BK

- pays for its meal.
- does not call ahead or sit with the chef.
- does its reviews anonymously.
- waits 4-6 months before reviewing new restaurants.
- does not hesitate to give 1-2 star reviews—even to advertisers.

In this guide, we've selected only our strongest three-star restaurants and, of course, four-to-five star restaurants. The latter are labeled **PICK**.



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### **PICK** ANOTAI

*Vegetarian or Organic. 976/17 Soi Rama 9, Rim Klong Sam Sen Rd., 02-641-5366-7. Open Thu-Sun 10am-9:30pm; Mon 10am-9:30pm; Tue 10am-9:30pm.*

This small, friendly health-conscious eatery and adjoining yoga studio offers a menu that lists several Thai dishes (healthy food in its own right) along with green salads, pastas and Japanese tofu and *tempeh* creations. Rice dishes are served with clear broth, and there is a mouth-watering selection of homemade desserts to warm the heart if not trim the waistline.

**BBB** ☎ 🍷

### **PICK** JANHOM

*Thai. 273/4 Ramkhamhaeng Soi 21, 02-319-1128/9. Open Tue-Sun 11am-9:30pm.*

Janhom is one of the top restaurants for authentic Southern cuisine in the capital. Here, there is no sugar to accommodate Bangkokians and only solid tongues can take the heat. Janhom's matriarch hails from Surat Thani and her reputation reaches all the way to Chiang Mai, where she has another branch. Despite uncompromisingly hot dishes, an increasing number of patrons are coming to this distant, non-descript soi in Ramkhamhaeng that's always busy, especially at dinner. **B-BB** 🍷



Wine 33



**NEW WINE 33**

*Crystal Design Center, Zone E, 1420/1 Praditmanoontham Rd., 02-102-2233. Open daily 5pm-1am.*

Nothern Bangkok's answer to Wine Connection (minus the actual wine store), this atmospheric glass house is a partnership between Singha (owners also of PB Valley in Khao Yai) and Pla Dib, those extraordinary servers of raw fish. The wine list is divided into Good, Better and Best, to help you choose, and the food menu is pretty seafood heavy with some modern gastro touches like sous-vide and foaming. Try the raw tuna with lime foam for something fatty and zesty. 🍷

Suan Thip



**SUAN THIP**

*Thai. Chaeng Watthana Rd., 02-583-3748. Open daily 11am-10pm.*

With unlimited alfresco dining options from a leafy garden under the stars and graceful pavilions to the open-air terrace overlooking the river, outdoor-loving diners have it good at this spacious restaurant. Its lip-smacking Thai food is a big bonus. Don't forget the mosquito repellent. **BBB** 🍴 🍷



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# DINING ESSENTIALS



## ALDO'S

7/F, The Ascott, Sathorn Rd., 02-676-6982.  
Open daily 11:30am-10pm

Upstairs from the very cool Cascade Club and Gym, Aldo's offers not only poolside city views in a rustic, copper-tinged space, but also one of only two wine lists recognized in Bangkok by *Wine Spectator Magazine*. As for the food, there's a brief menu of French and Italian-tinged Mediterranean dishes like grilled hake, pastas, salads and steaks. They also do a very affordable set lunch for the business types in the area.



## AMBASSADOR HOTEL

171 Sukhumvit Soi 11, 02-254-0444. Open daily 11am-2pm, 6pm-10:30pm

A great option for those wanting to enjoy dishes from around the world in sophisticated surroundings without breaking the bank, the Am Cafe's international brunches and dinners are hard to beat. Alternatively just stick to China, with the variety of Cantonese and regional specialties, including traditional dim sum, served up at Hong Teh on the second floor.



## BED SUPPERCLUB

26 Sukhumvit Soi 11, 02-651-3537.  
Open Tue-Sun 7:30pm-1am

Eating at Bed Supperclub is an experience unlike any other in the city. As you lounge on your gleaming white bed, order a stiff cocktail and get ready for a world class show that blends cutting edge choreography, a certain oddball humor and some irresistible sex appeal. The food comes with an exciting modern presentation worthy of the club's futuristic allure, but the flavors are also comforting and solid.



## FUZIO

Rooftop, Mini Showroom, Ekkamai Soi 7 (Sukhumvit Soi 63), 02-711-6999. Open daily 11:30am-2:30pm, 6-10pm

Fine dining is hard to come by in Ekkamai, so we're excited that, after a several-month renovation, the new and improved Fuzio is back and a lot more cheerful, almost Mediterranean, thanks to its blue and white tones. The menu remains heavy on the Italian, and while they may have lost the rooftop to The Garrett, the two restaurants are under the same ownership, so you can still head there for a drink.



## ISAO

5 Sukhumvit Soi 31, 02-258-0645.  
Mon-Fri 11am-2:30pm, 5:30-10pm;  
Sat-Sun 11am-10pm

The owner and head chef learned her trade in Chicago and there are certainly plenty of American influences in the wonderfully inventive sushi and sashimi dishes on offer at this unpretentious, but always popular, little restaurant. Must-tries include the volcano, a meaty scallop covered in a spicy sauce and served in its shell and the addictive and unusual sushi sandwiches.



## MA DU ZI

9/1 Ratchadapisek Rd., 02-615-6400.  
Open daily 11am-2pm, 6-10pm

Chef Yuya Okuda worked at prestigious Relais & Chateaux hotels in France and at the multi-Michelin-star chef Joel Robuchon's restaurant in Japan. By blending discrete touches of Japanese techniques and ingredients into his French food, Chef Yuya concocts dishes that are both more personal and much lighter—and are guaranteed to renew your excitement for French food.



**PATARA**

375 Thong Lor Soi 19 (Sukhumvit Soi 55), 02-185-2960. Open daily 11:30am-2pm, 6-11pm

With servers in traditional Thai attire, an elegant oriental décor, and contemporary Thai cuisine, Patara has long attracted hi-sos from old families and up-and-coming power players. The class surrounds you as soon as you enter and are seated among the vibrant silk pillows, in the lounge for pre-dinner cocktails. As for the food, expect great attention to detail with Thai classic dishes, and a few Westernized platters, like tacos, thrown in.



**RUEN URAI**

118 Surawong Rd., 02-662-8268/-72. Open daily noon-11pm

This gorgeous wood pavilion is packed to the rafters with antiques, creating an enchanting mood of aristocracy and the charm of a bygone era. But not only is this century-old home one of the most exquisite places to have dinner in Bangkok, the Thai food served here is of the highest standards: delicately presented and prepared with the utmost authenticity.



**SHA RAKU**

14 Sukhumvit Soi 23. 02-664-0348. Open daily 5pm-midnight

This well established chain in Kyoto makes it first foray into Bangkok with this restaurant, located in a lavishly renovated former home, a few steps from Sukhumvit Road. Not surprisingly, the emphasis is firmly on classic Japanese dishes but there are a staggering 200 plus to choose from and an equally impressive 300-odd drinks from sake to cocktails to wash them all down with.



**SHANGHAI MANSION**

479-481 Yaowaraj Rd., 02-221-2121. Open daily 6.30am-10.30pm

The cozy boutique hotel is a throwback to 1920s Hong Kong or Shanghai, with lots of wood and silk upholstery in bright solid colors. The dining outlet here, Cotton, doubles as a jazz venue at night and offers a mix of Chinese and Thai dishes with a few American wild cards, like sweet barbeque ribs thrown in for good measure.



**TORAJIRO**

2/1 Soi Athakavi 1, Sukhumvit Soi 26. 02-259-6075-6. Open daily 5pm-midnight

This beloved Japanese chain has now expanded to include three branches. Their success is down to keeping things simple and focusing on classic Japanese dishes, covering everything from sashimi to tonkatsu at very affordable prices. Favorites include the okonomi yaki (Japanese pizza) and the extensive range of noodle dishes from ramen to soba treats.



**WINE PUB**

2/F, Pullman Bangkok King Power. 8-2 Rangnam Rd., 02-680-9999. Open daily 6pm-2am

The pub that finally took wine off of its pedestal in Bangkok has now become an institution of sorts: rarely do Western restaurants so ably bridge nightlife (Wine Pub regularly welcomes top international DJs and live acts) and dining. It may be better known for its casual fare, from tapas to burgers, but Wine Pub also has a full-on a la carte menu with plenty of great meat and fish options to go with their incredibly inexpensive wine.



**VATEL**

2/4 Borommarachonnani Rd., Talingchan, 02-880-9684/-6. Open Mon-Sat 11am-2pm, 6-10pm.

Vatel takes an unlikely location for a French restaurant—the Talingchan strip on the outskirts of Bangkok—and made it a homey alternative for unfussy diners looking for an affordable French meal. Run by Silpakom University International College and Vatel Institut to prepare hotel management students, service is always attentive. Plus, there are some great set menu options, making Vatel a great spot to sample French fare without a bank breaking.

## Japanese Sake Bar & Restaurant

  
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