



Thailand A Celebration of Gastronomy





A Celebration of Gastronomy

Thailand is a melting pot of gastronomy, offering everything from street food and MICHELIN-starred cuisine to healthy food, halal food, international fare from everywhere, and sweet Thai desserts and fruits.

Flavours and aromas galore

Thailand is one of the world's greatest gastronomy destinations. From Bangkok to Chiang Mai, Phuket and elsewhere, this is a country of amazing food and fantastic culinary experiences, where tasty local treats can be enjoyed alongside trendy new-age sensations. Where spicy noodle soup, the freshest of fruits and sweetest of Thai desserts, and fine French restaurant fare can all be found on the same street.

Explore Amazing Thailand and you can discover the mesmerising flavours and aromas of Thai cuisine in all its delicious variations, as well as many other international cuisines from Japanese and Italian, to Korean and French, from Chinese and Indian, to Mexican and more.

Testimony to the world-class gastronomic destination Thailand has become, is The MICHELIN Guide Thailand which is now in its sixth edition. The MICHELIN Guide Thailand 2023 lists 400 dining venues across Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Phuket & Phang-nga, and the four Isan (Northeast) provinces of Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, Ubon Ratchathani, and Udon Thani. The list includes six restaurants with 2 MICHELIN Star, 29 restaurants with 1 MICHELIN Star, 189 Bib Gourmand venues, and 217 other recommended eateries.



Fantastic Local Food

One of the great things about Thai food is its amazing diversity, with each of Thailand's different regions having distinctive cuisine and dishes associated with them. Travel through these regions - the Northeast, the North, the South, and the Central Plains - and you'll discover for yourself the delightfully tasty variations. Variations that come from each region's differing cultures, histories, and ingredients used for cooking.

The Central Plains

The Central region and its fertile plains are 2 key rice farming and agricultural area. The landscape features rivers, picturesque vistas, and ancient historical temples. The culinary flavours of the region are varied and balanced, coconut milk is a popular ingredient in many dishes, and food here is often beautifully decorated before being served.

The culinary and dining out scenes in the two Central provinces of Bangkok and Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya are featured in the MICHELIN Guide Thailand.

Phetchaburi is a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in the field of Gastronomy, and its well-known dishes include **Kaeng Kua Hua Tan** (toddy palm curry) and **Khanom Tan** (toddy Palm Soufl ).

Ratchaburi boasts a rich culinary culture, with signature dishes such as **Photharam black tofu**, while **Samut Songkhram** is known for its **Pla Thu** (mackerel fish) – often eaten fried with steamed rice and Nam Prik Kapi (shrimp paste chilli dip).





The East

The East of Thailand is known for its many beautiful beaches and islands, as well as its fruit orchards. Chanthaburi is referred to as the 'Orchard of Thailand' for its plentiful production of fruits like rambutan, mangosteen and durian. Rayong is home to the popular island of Ko Samet and boasts excellent seafood. The star attraction in Trat is the Ko Chang archipelago with over 40 islands, while the seafood here is also fantastic.



Regional dishes to enjoy in **Chanthaburi**, **Rayong** and **Trat** are **Khao Kruk Prik Klua** (rice with salty chili sauce and seafood), consisting of freshly steamed jasmine rice tossed with salty chili sauce, then topped with seafood and served with spicy sauce and **Kaeng Moo Chamuang** (pork curry with sour Chamuang leaves) with its combination of tartness, sweetness and saltiness. **Gai Tom Krawan** (spicy chicken soup with Cardamom leaves) is another dish to try in Chanthaburi, as are dishes featuring coral grouper from Trat.





The North

The North of Thailand is known for its mountainous terrain, rolling hills and sweeping valleys, nature-based activities, and its rich culture and historical connections to the ancient Lanna Kingdom. Chiang Mai, Thailand's second largest city, is one of Thailand's most popular tourist destinations and features in the MICHELIN Guide Thailand.

A signature dish of northern Thailand is **Khao Soi** - curry noodle soup topped with deep-fried egg noodles, which has been included in **CNN Travel's list of 50 of the best street foods in Asia**. Other iconic must-try dishes are **Kaeng Hung Lay** - stewed pork belly and ribs combined with aromatic spices, perfect with steamed rice. And often eaten with sticky rice and fresh vegetables are Sai Oua - spicy grilled pork sausage and Larb Nua - spicy pork salad with Makhwaen (Sichuan peppercorn), a distinctive northern Thai spice.



The Northeast

The Northeast of Thailand, also known as Isan, is known for its fun annual festivals, prehistoric art and Bronze Age archaeological sites, and ancient temple remains. Hom Mali rice or Thai Jasmine rice is grown here and exported all over the world. The 2023 edition of The MICHELIN Guide Thailand features coverage of the Northeast for the first time, with the four provincial cities of Nakhon Ratchasima, Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani and Khon Kaen chosen to represent the region's distinctive cuisine.



Sai Krok Isan (Northeastern-style pork sausage) is a popular dish from the Northeast that's also been included by CNN Travel in its list of 50 best street foods in Asia. Sour and garlicky, this is usually made of pork, sticky rice, and garlic and hung up to ferment and dry, and served grilled with condiments like chillies, pickled ginger, and cabbage for a perfect bite. Another, particularly iconic dish from the region, is Larb - a spicy meat salad often eaten with sticky rice and fresh vegetables.





The South

Southern Thailand's beautiful coastlines, gorgeous beaches and exotic resort islands are renowned the world over, with the most famous destinations including Phuket, Krabi, Phang-nga, Khao Lak, Ko Samui, Ko Pha-ngan, and Ko Tao. The region's cuisine is based around seafood, and The MICHELIN Guide includes Phuket and Phang-nga among its featured destinations.

Like Northern cuisine, Southern Thai cuisine shares flavours from its neighbouring countries in particular Malaysia and Indonesia. Popular dishes include **Kaeng Tai Pla** (fermented fish curry), **Kaeng Som Pla** (hot and sour fish soup), **Kua Kling** (dry fried meat curry), and **Massaman** stewed curry.

Chinese-Muslim food culture is also present in Phuket, Phang-nga, and Hat Yai, and Muslim food can be widely enjoyed in the five southern-most provinces of Thailand – Satun, Songkhla Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, where there is a significant Muslim population. a distinctive northern Thai spice.





Superb Street Food

Thailand's street food is widely considered to be the best in the world. From early morning until late evening, street food vendors prepare and sell everything from grilled pork, noodles, and rice dishes, to meatballs, sweet Thai desserts, and fresh fruits.

Bangkok was named by CNN as one of the world's best destinations for street food, while crab omelette, Khao Soi (curry noodle soup), and Sai Krok Isan (Northeastern-style pork sausage) were included in CNN Travel's list of 50 of the best street foods in Asia. The Thai capital also has its own celebrity street food chef, Supinya 'Jay Fai' Junsuta, whose eatery Jay Fai became the first street food restaurant to receive a MICHELIN Star, and which has been named one of Asia's 50 best restaurants.

In **Bangkok**, Chinatown is fantastic for delicious street food where you'll find barbecued seafood, dim sum, and Thai-Chinese desserts among the offerings. The Old Town area or Rattanakosin Island is legendary for its street food restaurants dotted along narrow streets, while the Bang Rak area is great for dishes like roast duck, crispy pork, rice porridge, and green curry with roti. Around Khao San Road and Soi Rambuttri, popular dishes include fried rice and Tom Yam soup.

In **Phuket**, the best place for street food is Phuket Town where the dishes to try include crispy savoury pancakes and stir-fried Hokkien noodles. In **Chiang Mai**, you'll want to head for the city's markets, for delicious items like Sai Oua (Northern-style grilled pork sausage), and great Phat Thai. Similarly, in Khon Kaen the night markets are usually a good choice for finding street food dishes like pork satay, and fried chicken with sticky rice.



Halal Food

With Thailand being ranked as a leading global exporter of Halal products and having a sizeable Muslim population particularly in the South, there are many Halal products and Halal restaurants to be found. According to The Halal Science Center at Chulalongkorn University, there are over 3,500 Halal-certified restaurants in the country.

Many Halal restaurants are often found near and around mosques and Muslim communities. Halal food can also be found in markets, although it might take a bit of exploration to find this.

When seeking out Halal food, you can look for restaurants that are certified by the Central Islamic Council of Thailand. These establishments follow strict guidelines to ensure their food is prepared in accordance with Islamic law, including using halal ingredients and excluding alcohol and pork. Many of these serve traditional Thai dishes, which can be enjoyed knowing they are halal, including Khao Kai Jiew (rice topped with Thai omelette), Phat Krapow Gai (chicken stir-fried with chilli and basil leaves), Massaman curry, Gai Tawd Kratiem Prik Thai (fried chicken with garlic and black pepper), and Phat See Ew Gai (stir-fried rice noodles with chicken and sweet soy sauce).

Delicious Healthy Food and Fine Vegetarian Fare

Thai food is generally healthy and nutritious, thanks to its use of wholesome ingredients like vegetables, herbs and fruits, lean proteins, and spices to enhance flavour without adding calories. Yet it is also the elements of variety and balance that are emphasised in the preparation and cooking of Thai dishes which help. Many of the popular ingredients such as turmeric, galangal, and lemongrass also have beneficial properties for the digestive system.

There are plenty of healthy Thai dishes to enjoy. These include Som Tam (papaya salad) which is low in calories and high in fibre, Larb Gai (minced chicken salad) that's high in protein, Pla Neung Manao (steamed whole fish with lime dressing) which is low in calories and high in protein, Kuay Teow Lui San (fresh spring rolls with chilli sauce) that are rich in fibre and low in calories, Khao Niao Ma Muang (mango with sticky rice) with the mango providing Vitamin A and Vitamin C.

If you're heading to **Chiang Mai**, pay a visit to **Ginger Farm** restaurant which serves traditional home-cooked dishes and whenever possible uses organic and free-range ingredients, while in **Udon Thani**, **Samuay & Sons** restaurant creates traditional Thai cuisine using ingredients that are picked for their health benefits as well as flavour.

PRU restaurant at Trisara resort in Phuket is a 1 MICHELIN Star restaurant and a Michelin Green Star Award winner for how it embraces sustainability in its day-to-day operations, and offers dishes made with ingredients sourced entirely from within Thailand, many of these from its own organic farm. In

Bangkok, the 1 MICHELIN Star **Bo.Lan** has earned a reputation for its ancient Thai recipes that use local ingredients, as well as its pursuit of a zero-carbon footprint and support of local communities.

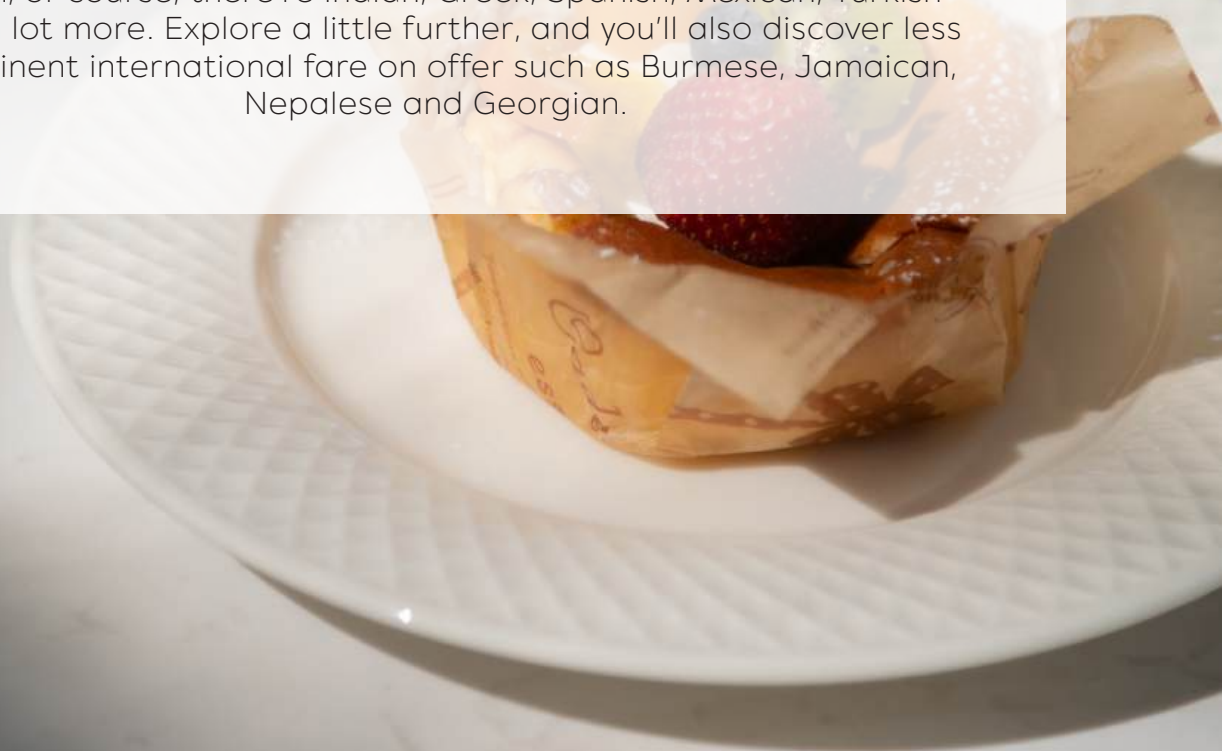
Vegetarian food is available year-round, but it is during the annual vegetarian festivals in Thailand that many restaurants and eateries will switch to vegetarian menus. Soybean and protein substitute products are used to replace pork, chicken and fish, in an amazing variety of tasty vegetarian dishes. The most famous of these festivals take place in Phuket, Hat Yai, Chon Buri, and Bangkok, during the ninth lunar month of the Chinese calendar - usually in September or October.





Tantalising International Food

In Thailand, an amazing array of international cuisines can be enjoyed, so much so that you can pretty much take your palette on a world tour without leaving the country. At a myriad of restaurants and eateries everywhere, the ever-popular cuisines of Europe like French, Italian and German are well represented as are the Asian favourites like Chinese, Japanese and Korean. Then, of course, there're Indian, Greek, Spanish, Mexican, Turkish and a lot more. Explore a little further, and you'll also discover less prominent international fare on offer such as Burmese, Jamaican, Nepalese and Georgian.





The MICHELIN Guide Thailand 2023 features an impressive selection of restaurants and eateries serving various international cuisines. For Chinese food in Bangkok its recommendations include the 1 MICHELIN Star **Yu Ting Yuan** where the Peking duck is a highlight, the MICHELIN-listed Nan Bei for the not-to-be-missed braised abalone and braised pork belly, and the MICHELIN-listed Yih Sahp Luhk for beef-noodle shop fare as well as non-beef items like scallops and pork.

Should you feel like French food, then there's the 2 MICHELIN Star **Le Normandie** at the Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok where a recommended order is the pan-fried Canadian lobster medallion. At Artur restaurant the menu includes classics like lobster bisque and Burgundy escargot, while the American Angus beef and Australian Kobe are not to be overlooked.

The menu at **Enoteca** offers fare from all over Italy and dishes are made with ingredients flown in from Europe, with specialties including beef shank in red wine, and vitello tonnato. The 1 MICHELIN Star **Ginza Sushi** Ichi imports the daily catch from Tokyo's markets and serves authentic omakase plates.



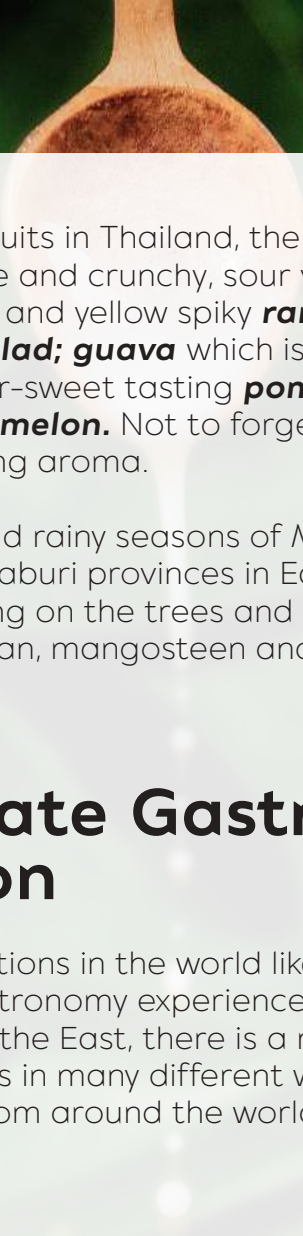
Tasty Thai Desserts and Fruits

When it comes to choice, the range of Thai desserts and fruits is impressive.

The Thai people's love for desserts makes them a part of Thai culture, and they are typically bold in both taste and colour and made using intricate preparation methods. Like Thai food in general, desserts can be distinctive to the different regions of the country. They can also have symbolic meaning and can also be used for specific occasions like Songkran (the traditional Thai New Year) and for merit-making.

The most popular Thai desserts include **Thong Yip** - one of the traditional egg yolk-based desserts that have thong (meaning gold) in their name and which are commonly prepared for weddings and other celebrations to bring good luck, prosperity and wealth; **Khanom Tom** - boiled rice flour dumplings coated and stuffed with shredded coconut; **Kluai Thot** - deep-fried bananas; and Khanom Chan - steamed coconut-pandan layer cake.

Two other Thai desserts have made it into CNN International's top 50 list - these being **Khao Niew Ma Muang** (mango with sticky rice) and **Thapthim Krop**, a refreshing concoction of crushed ice and a sweetened coconut liquid infused with pandan leaves.



Among the bevy of fruits in Thailand, the most popular and abundant are **mango** of which there are ripe and crunchy, sour varieties; the rather bizarre-looking **mangosteen**; the red and yellow spiky **rambutan**; the **papaya** which is used raw to make **Som Tam salad**; **guava** which is favoured for its fragrant, exotic taste; the succulent and sour-sweet tasting **pomelo**; the **jackfruit**; and of course the **pineapple** and **watermelon**. Not to forget the famous - or infamous - **durian** with its rich taste and strong aroma.

During the summer and rainy seasons of May to July, the fruit season sees orchards in Rayong and Chanthaburi provinces in Eastern Thailand holding open fruit buffets. The fruit hangs ripening on the trees and visitors can feast to their heart's delight on the likes of rambutan, mangosteen and durian.

The Ultimate Gastronomy Destination

There are few destinations in the world like Thailand when it comes to the quality and variety of the gastronomy experiences on offer. From the North to the South, and from the West to the East, there is a myriad of opportunities to celebrate many different cuisines in many different ways. Delicious street food, sublime fine dining fare, cuisines from around the world, Thai food at its very best...it's all here.





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