



EXOTIC EXCELLENCE

Thai Spice Restaurant

By Margaret Word Burnside and Aaron R. Fodiman



Thai Spice Restaurant

THAI CUISINE is easy to love, as it is healthy, flavorful, and can be prepared anywhere within the range of mild to Thai Hot to suit individual tastes. Whether you are a

newcomer or an experienced "Thaiaholic," you will fall under the spell of Thai cuisine at this small, but stylishly decorated, restaurant. We are in the latter category and, on occasion, have eaten at Thai Spice for both lunch and dinner on the same day. It is easy to do so, as they offer a wide variety of dishes and flavors. To begin, we often have the Sateh with chicken, which is marinated in curry and cream of coconut and served with peanut dipping sauce. Other times, we have Crab Rangoon, Steam Dumplings, Spring Rolls, Curry Puffs, Golden Tofu, Bangkok Fried Shrimp, Basil Mussels, Pan Fried Squid or a sampler platter.

They have six soups that range from Tom Yum Seafood with a spicy lemon-grass flavor to traditional Wonton. We suggest the Tom Kha Kai, a tasty combination of chicken, coconut milk broth with lime juice, lemon-grass and galanga. Their salads are addictive. Nam Sod with ground pork, ginger, peanuts and spicy lemon dressing is not to be missed. They also offer Yum Beef, Yum Duck, a Garden

Salad, a marinated papaya and Larb Kai, which is lettuce topped with ground chicken that has been tossed with lime juice, lemon-grass and mint to give it a cool, refreshing punch.

Their Thai Curries can be ordered red, green, yellow, panang or jungle style. They, as well as the noodle and fried rice dishes, can be prepared with chicken, pork, beef, vegetables, tofu, shrimp or squid. In this group, Pad Thai rice noodles with ground peanuts is another must-have dish.

Choosing a favorite dish here is difficult, so we usually select several items to be shared. Either of their duck specialties and one of the amazing stir fries with peanut sauce are always on our list. But, whatever you choose, it is impossible to go wrong.

The service is the epitome of Thai sophistication - unobtrusive, but caring. You never have to ask for a thing, as they somehow anticipate your every wish. Sue, the owner, recommended that we try the grouper in ginger sauce and the

Chili Jam Snapper. Both were light and tasty renditions of these two local fishes. The Volcano Shrimp, with chili sauce and Shu-Shi Shrimp with curry are two other items we can highly

recommend. Let your server know how much heat you want the kitchen to add to the dishes. We often order ours mild, particularly when we are sharing, so that each of us can add some Thai sauces that are served on the side, if we want to increase the intensity of the dish.

In addition to the many dishes that are offered here, they also have macrobiotic food for anyone who prefers that style of eating. To finish your meal, you can choose from Thai Donuts, Fried Banana with Ice Cream, Fried Ice Cream or Sticky Rice with Mango. Thai Spice is open every day for dinner and for lunch Monday through Friday. ■■■

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thai Spice Restaurant is located on the southwest corner of Enterprise Road and McMullen Booth Road in Clearwater, (727) 791-7050.