

THAI

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"Thai appetizers are what I call city food," Lawan said. She marked Satay Gai as the most famous Thai appetizer and Koong Hom Pa, shrimp stuffed with ground chicken in a crispy phyllo roll, her personal favorite along with Thai Lamb Salad.

Tom Yum Gai is chicken soup with lemongrass and galangal. It's also frequently called lemongrass soup. Thai hot and sour soup should not be confused with a Chinese soup named similarly. The Thai version is chicken, chicken broth, bamboo shoots, water chestnuts, Thai peppers, vinegar, mushroom soy sauce and egg drop in a wonderfully substantial, piping-hot mixture.

The best-known noodle dish is Pad Thai, which is stir-fried rice noodles with shrimp, Chinese chives, sometimes fried tofu, egg and bean sprouts, sprinkled with ground peanuts. "It should be served with a lime wedge," Lawan said. "Lime squeezed on the dish brings out the flavors and is a must for full enjoyment."

Pad Se-Ewew is rice noodles colored by sweet black soy sauce and tossed with egg, broccoli, meat or seafood. Pad Prik has stir-fried meat with chili/garlic paste and basil and is what Lawan calls "street food." Pork stir-fried with red curry is known as Pad Ped, which Lawan dubbed "gourmet."

If the choice begins with Ba Mee, then it's made with egg noodles. Kao or Kanom Jeen at the beginning of the name signals rice noodles. Kao Soi is a dish from southern Thailand that's rice noodles with chicken curry. Kanom Jeen Nam Ya is rice noodles with fish curry, while Kanom Jeen Sao Nam is rice noodles with pineapple sauce and dried shrimp in a slightly sweeter dish.

Gaeng means curry, so Gaeng Musaman is a delicious Muslim-style beef curry with potatoes and peanuts. Gaeng Kari is an Indian-style mild curry, and is a good example of other influences on Thai food, as is Indian-inspired Gaeng Panaeng. However, Panaeng Neua, a Malaysian-style sweet beef curry, is an exception to the name rule that starts with gaeng.

If you enjoy seafood and a Thai eatery makes Haw Mok Taidy in a clay pot, order it for a seafood stew of shrimp, squid, mussels, scallops, fish and crab legs stir-fried with a creamy curry sauce and served over a bed of napa.

Phu-Khet Fish takes red snapper to new heights with chopped garlic, onions and green peppers topped with fried basil.

Although Thai eateries don't focus much on dessert, coconut or mango ice cream is popular, as is a coconut flan. Banana "anything" is generally a treat to end a Thai meal.

Eleanor Heald is a nationally-published writer and Troy resident who writes about restaurants, food, wine and spirits for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave her a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 18644.



PHIL HERSHMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ladavalya Sriprinyo, owner of Thai Bistro in Canton, with shrimp and Thai eggplant, (left), and Panang curry with beef.

THAI-ING ONE ON

The following restaurants specialize in Thai food.

■ **BANGKOK BISTRO** - 1941 W. Maple in Cambridge Crossings, Troy (248) 655-0222. Lunch and dinner from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, noon to 10 p.m. Saturday, 1-8 p.m. Sunday.

■ **BANGKOK BISTRO CAFE** - 5377 Crooks Road, Troy (248) 267-9989. Same owners and hours as Bangkok Bistro.

■ **BANGKOK CUISINE** - 727 N. Main Street, Rochester (248) 652-8841, lunch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday; dinner 3-9:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 3-10:30 p.m. Friday, noon to 10:30 p.m. Saturday, and noon to 8:30 p.m. Sunday.

■ **BANGKOK EXPRESS** - 29702 Southfield Road, Southfield (248) 557-0993. Same owners and hours as Bangkok Bistro.

■ **MAGIC THAI** - 297 E. Maple, Birmingham (248) 594-5758. Lunch 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday; dinner 4-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 4-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday, and 4-10 p.m. Sunday.

■ **ORCHID CAFE** - 3303 Rochester Road, Troy (248) 524-1944. Lunch 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday; dinner 3-9:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 4-9:30 p.m. Saturday.

■ **PENNY'S THAI CAFE** - 3658 Rochester Road, Troy (248) 680-0841. Lunch from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; dinner 5-9 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, and 4-8 p.m. Sunday. Closed Saturday. Small eatery.

■ **SIAM SPICY** - 29838 Woodward Ave., Royal Oak (248) 545-4305. Lunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday-Friday; dinner 5-9:45 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, and 5-10:45 p.m. Friday-Saturday.

■ **SY THAI** - 315 Hamilton Row, Birmingham (248) 258-9830. Lunch from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday; dinner 4-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, and 4-11 p.m. Friday-Sunday.

■ **TASTE OF THAILAND** - 2755 University Drive, Auburn Hills (248) 373-4422. 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday; until 10 p.m. Friday-Saturday.

■ **THAI BISTRO** - 45620 Ford Road, Canton (734) 416-2122. Lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; dinner 4:30-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, and 4:30-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday.

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