



Restaurants we like in Chiang Mai

Description

Kanjana

We reached Kanjana almost by mistake on our first day in **Chiang Mai** and we became regular customers from our first meal there. Apparently it is considered to be one of the best restaurants in the city. Here is an example of a good TripAdvisor advice. The restaurant is run by sweet mother and daughter and the atmosphere is homey and yet very professional. Everything we ate there was excellent, best of its kind, generous in quantity and served relatively quickly.

We sampled well known dishes like Chicken with cashew nuts and Massaman curry. Both were the best we had so far in Thailand (and we tried a few!). We also tried for the first time Khao Soi, a Northern Thai dish, that although humbly hiding inside the soups section in the menu, its thickness and contents make it a filling and very delicious dish. So don't let the "soup" classification deceive you. The Khao Soi is a curry in coconut cream soup with meat of your choice (we tried it with chicken and shrimps, both versions were excellent) served with two types of rice noodles " one inside the broth and another on its top, crispy and slightly sweet, a handful of coriander ("extra coriander please" in my case).

Another great dishes are Pad Khing " a stir fried meat of choice with ginger, black mushrooms and two colored onions on a white or red rice, Pumpkin Curry " excellently mildly spicy seasoned with local basil herb (with slight anise flavor) and kaffir lime leaves, wonderful Lap Salad " minced chicken (or pork) with herbs, lime and chili. Even the popular egg rolls are served in an generous size and a lovely presentation together we the tasty sauces that lying on the table just in case you'll want to use them.

By the way, Chiang Mai is the first place we saw the option to order red rice as well as white rice. That's nice.

One meal for five people costs us 400 baht (11\$) with drinks. Note that we only drink water and in Thailand it's absolutely safe to order drinking water with ice. You may notice that in Thailand the ice comes in round or cubic pieces with a hole in the middle. That hole guarantees that its source is purified water. In places like Kanjana it is more cost effective to order "drinking water" instead of a bottle of water. The price is 2 baht per glass.



Khao Soi – a typical Northern Thai dish. Kanjana restaurant, Chiang Mai



The sour and spicy soup “ Tom Yum.



Stir fried mixed mushrooms with oyster sauce

The Free Bird Caf 

A veggie-vegan-restaurant-caf  combining second hand shop with clothing, books and miscellaneous accessories and a pleasant sitting area with tables and stools/benches.

It has a creative menu of Thai-Burmese cuisine, entirely veggie and partly vegan. All the dishes except for the soup that The One ordered were a knock out. From the desserts we only sampled one because the others unfortunately were just finished. They all looked great and we ordered the only one they had. It’s called Key Lime Pie. I suspect they are trying to hide the fact that it primarily contains avocado. But you would never have guessed they use avocado to gain this lovely creamy texture. Anyway, it’s a great dessert, delightful without too much sugar. Simply fine.

When I said “sampled” I didn’t mean to imply that the portions are small. On the contrary, they are pretty generous.

I took a green tomatoes salad with lime, ginger, chickpea crumbs and peanuts, shallot and red rice

aside, excellently blending with the various textures of the salad, softening its spiciness and adding up as a protein ingredient (together with the chickpea crumbs, remember?). Little One order noodles salad with garlic, lime, yellow bean and herbs that was dad-I-don't-like-it-let's-exchange delicious. It was a spicy-ish, creative and crunchy. The One gladly exchanged their courses and passed her the consomme (clear tomato soup) with sticky rice noodles, which wasn't a great success in our opinion. And it indeed it was not too long before Little One asked to replace it too. This time with The Central, who gave her his order in return, a home version of the local popular Khao Soi, crispy noodles with curry, roasted potatoes and Thai pickles. The Eldest also order the Khao Soi and enjoyed it very much.



Vegan Khao Soi



Shan yellow noodles salad



Shan sticky rice noodles consume soup



Green tomatoes salad

The best Pad Thai in Chiang Mai (and maybe the world)

Now, that's a statement. Well, there are many legends and promises by people about the best Pad Thai in Chiang Mai (and maybe the world).

One day we decided to look for it, the best Pad Thai in Chiang (and maybe the world) with only vague instructions in our hands sent by a friend from home. She was living in Chiang Mai for two years but still couldn't remember the name of the place or the address. But well, whatever, we're going. We set an appointment with two friends, charming Britons we met, we openly uncovered the delusive starting point we had in our hands and off we went.

Undoubtedly, we were on the right street, where another alley should have spilt from and in it the desired treasure was supposed to be. The instructions were to start searching from the third alley to the right. We passed the first alley ignoring any distraction and carried on. We've reached the second alley, there a big sign stood right in front of us point rightwards with the convincing words "Pad Thai!". We ignored it and carried forward determinately. We've reached a third alley. There was nothing there. And then happened something funny. Something that probably happens to people who search for the best Pad Thai in the world. Right on the street not far from us stood a small restaurant facing the street with a sign specifically saying "Best Pad Thai in Thailand (maybe the world)". At that moment we forgot all the instructions and the vagueness and the alleys and we sat down. It was good.

But not as good as the Pad Thai in one of the restaurants not far from our hotel, or perhaps the one next to it! To sum up, searching is fun, Pad Thai is tasty, go have fun.



Pad Thai. The popular dish of Thailand.

The Swan

A Thai-Burmese restaurant, a few minutes walk from the place we stayed in, on the main unmissable Moon Muang Street in beautiful Chiang Mai, just across the Soi 5 street.

It is our second Burmese oriented restaurant, after the vegan-veggie Bird Caf . Only this time it  a restaurant with meats. It didn  stop The Natives from complaining before ordering the meal and enjoying it afterwards. So predicted, God!

We suspect that Burmese are: 1) Small. Don  eat much. 2) Poor. Don  eat meat, probably for economic reasons. That  because the portions in The Swan are quite small on one hand (which explain the aforementioned #1) while on the other hand rich with crunchy legumes like crushed chickpeas. We conclude that they are poor and not having enough money for meat since they add mixtures of cereals and legumes to obtain a nutritious diet with complete protein. Why should I care ? I  here for the crunchiness, for this lovely edge it adds to their dishes and because they are generous with garlic. It  well known there  no point of living without garlic.

The One and I shared two excellent dishes, one hot and one cold. The cold dish was actually a bit warm because of the chicken, but at the end of the day it was basically a salad that whoever made it knew what he/she was doing, very well. Rice, chicken, crushed chickpeas, thin strips of green mango, coriander, roasted garlic, lime, potato, ginger, red onion and peanuts. A perfect dish. Tasty, balanced with flavors, cool texture, a celebration with every bite.

The other course was chicken with potatoes and eggplants, with a lot of garlic we were delighted to see again. It was a very good dish. Not too spicy.

On our second time there we ordered again that wonderful salad and with it we took another chicken dish with onions and peppers and chili and cumin and it was even better than its predecessor. Groans and sighs of happiness.

Our Eldest, the most experimental Native, ordered and lovely dish of meatballs with tons of herbs, potatoes, onion and garlic, fried but yet crispy, served with white rice and a spicy sauce that pinches your heart and soul.

The Central suffered from a temporary loss of reason and insisted on order a burger which is on one hand duhhh and on the other hand surprisingly taste. What else should I say ?

Little One ordered and really enjoyed a veggie noodle soup, full of vegetables, great broth, one of the best we had up to now. And don  forget we re dealing with a girl who tried a lot of noodle soups during the last year, if you get what I mean. Hint: she doesn  like spicy. You have that kid in every family. Right?

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