

# CHA BA THAI

## The COMFORT of CURRY

**Comfort Food:** "Food prepared in a traditional style having a usually nostalgic or sentimental appeal" (Merriam-Webster Online).



Thai curry is my new comfort food. Although, by the dictionary definition of that term, my relationship with yellow curry simply doesn't stand up. There's nothing nostalgic or sentimental about my attachment. My childhood was spent in small-town

Oregon – nary a Thai restaurant in sight. And college took place, well, in a decade when exotic meant Chinese take-out. Again, no taste excursions into Thai territory.

So, if I've begun to consider the yellow curry from Cha Ba Thai on NE Sandy Boulevard as Comfort Food, I'll need a new definition. Here it is: It's the food I want to eat while watching re-runs of West Wing (which I've dubbed Comfort Videos) after a particularly crappy day. A Burgerville chocolate shake will do too – but with Cha Ba's yellow curry, there's no eater's remorse involved (Aargh! I just consumed 800 calories without actually chewing anything?!).

But that's the Curling Up with Curry experience. There's another way to enjoy it – with your buddies. When my gal friends or family crave Thai food – great tasting, generous amounts of it – we head to Cha Ba Thai.

The menu, of course, is half the fun at Thai restaurants: page upon page of mouth-watering choices. I've tried a handful of Cha Ba offerings (aside from my trademark curry) and sampled my co-diners' plates, too. Beyond the curries (all excellent), the Cashew Chicken Stir Fry and the noodle dishes – Pad Thai, Pad See Ew and Pad Kee Mao stand out – are divine. (Next time, I'm splurging on the Crispy Duck & Ginger.)

The Sandy Boulevard icon now also boasts a second location in the Alberta Arts District. It's about equi-distant from our house to either location, five minutes tops. Lucky me. ■

*Cha Ba Thai, 5810 NE Sandy Blvd.; 503-282-3970  
3024 NE Alberta; 503-719-6917*

**More Thai to Die For**  
If the line's too long at Cha Ba Thai, never fear: Portland has about a gazillion other Thai restaurants. Here are a few Thai restaurant raves from our writers:

### Peemkaew

Our family adores Peemkaew in NW: thoughtfully spiced, reliable Thai flavors; but the surprise of some unique and scrumptious dishes like a Pad Thai with Crab.

– Kendra

323 NW Park;  
pkthaiinthepearl.com

### Thai Apsara

Our favorite on the west side is (and I think we've been to nearly every one): Thai Apsara. I'm embarrassed to say the owner can recognize my voice over the phone and says, "Oh hi, Michelle, do you want the usual tonight?"

– Michelle

11793 SW Beaverton Hillside Hwy., Beaverton;  
beavertontownsquare.com/thai.htm

### Pok Pok

Of course, we (along with everyone else in town!) love Pok Pok. It's often much quieter and calmer at lunch, which is a great time to try some of their specials. I love the wild boar salad, served with icy cold greens as a palate cleanser. And take-out is still a relative bargain – try the fresh green papaya salad with long beans, peanuts and cherry tomatoes, served with a pile of sticky, delicious pork and some coconut rice. Hm, getting hungry now.

– Julia

3226 SE Division;  
pokpokpdx.com

### Typhoon!

We have a few neighborhood favorites, but when we want to splurge on fabulous Thai food in a more upscale atmosphere, we always go to Typhoon! (! is part of the name I think.) They have restaurants downtown, on NW 23rd and in Beaverton, Gresham, Bend and Redmond, Wash. Also, they're owned by a local family - the mom (she's Executive Chef) is from Thailand.

– Emily

Typhoonrestaurants.com.

### Mee Sen

Mee Sen on Mississippi is fresh and exotic and serves what's actually eaten in Thailand. The three flavors fish is adventurous and yummy, and the drunken noodles are the best in town. They also have great drinks and a terrific cheap small plates happy hour. Don't miss the soups, either!

– Melissa

3924 N Mississippi;  
meesenpdx.com