



## Restaurant Review

*Tasting Thai Treats*

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**H**ISTORICALLY, I do not read reviews of restaurants I plan on reviewing, as I do not want my opinion colored in any way. When I determined to travel from Thai restaurant to Thai restaurant to find the best, I knew I only had Google and the *Yellow Pages* for help.

I put my list together by ascertaining the strictly family type of Thai restaurants (we have one of the best right here in Boca Raton) and eliminating them from my schedule. I was looking for an upscale, not necessarily up-price, eatery that offered the creative cuisine recipes of a mysterious and beautiful country.

I am not one to sample a bit of anything when I am wearing my reviewer's hat. I jump in, mouth first; and, from my gourmand throne, I get the whole story. That said, here it is: the premier Thai restaurant in our entire eight-city distribution area is Thai Spice, located at 1514 East Commercial Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale (954-771-4535).

Do your own survey, travel to eight or ten (though I did sixteen) so-called upscale Thai restaurants and form your own opinions. The review you're reading cannot express a more encouraging, positive and enthusiastic endorsement of the food, service and prices at Thai Spice.

Frequently, with Asian restaurants, the menu is quite large, as the centuries have given these countries enough time to experiment and discover.

We started our review dinner with Thai spring rolls, which are crispy spring roll skins stuffed with ground chicken breast and fresh vegetables served with sweet and sour sauce. I followed with satay, which comes with a choice of chicken, beef or pork on a stick (I had one of

each), marinated and grilled Thai style, served with fresh peanut and cucumber sauce.

The restaurant brags that their Thai stuffed chicken wings are painstakingly deboned chicken wings stuffed with chicken, pork loin, fresh mushrooms, clear noodles, Thai herbs and spices, deep fried and served with sweet chili sauce for dipping. I didn't believe them. I was wrong. These wings aren't from KFC and are really moist and tender.

I can highly recommend the next two appetizers:



crispy soft shell crab, jumbo crispy Maryland soft shell crab served with a light sake ginger sauce and steamed asparagus; and coco shrimp, which are rarely found in this country and ought to be commonplace. They are delicious, large shrimp dipped in a Thai tempura batter and rolled in crispy rice noodles, then served with a Thai honey mustard sauce.

Room doesn't allow me to list the salads and soups we sampled, but each was marvelous.

For our main courses, we tried the ever-popular pepper steak, prepared with sliced, tender black Angus beef sautéed with onions, peppers and scallions in brown sauce. With this as a barometer, we next shared Panang beef, which is certified black Angus beef simmered in Panang curry paste, coconut milk, green beans, ground peanuts, fresh basil and peppers. Wow!

The fish course consisted of fresh Key West yellowtail filet, which is prepared lightly pan fried, finished off, then baked in the oven and topped with a Thai garlic lemon butter sauce with scallions, cilantro and cracked red pepper, and crispy whole fish (pia lad prik) which, this evening, was crispy fresh Key West whole yellowtail snapper topped with tasty spicy chili garlic sauce. I usually don't rush into eating cooked fish (sushi is a different matter altogether), but this fish was perfect.

What good would it be to review a Thai restaurant and not taste the noodles that Thailand is famous for? I ordered pad Thai — rice noodles sautéed with chicken, shrimp, ground peanuts, bean sprouts and fresh scallions — and I didn't want to share any with my guests, but they forced me to. I also had pad siew, which is rice noodles sautéed with broccoli, egg and choice of chicken, beef or pork. I had a little of each. I never had this dish before and cannot compare it to any other restaurant's version. I can say, however, I loved it.

I opened this article by raving about Thai Spice Restaurant. You will agree. I'm sure. ☀

