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Top Thai restaurants

Celebrate Thai New Year with **Square Meal's** guide to the best Thai cuisine nationwide

£ CHAOPHRAYA

Chapel Walks, Cross Street, Manchester (0161-832 8342), open Mon-Sun noon-11pm (Fri-Sat -midnight)
Chaophraya ticks all the boxes — sweet-natured service, impressive surrounds, a relaxed atmosphere and it wins hands down in the food stakes. The ubiquitous pad thai and green curry serve as benchmarks for clean, distinct, traditional flavours.

££ CHIANG MAI KITCHEN

130a High Street, Oxford (01865 202233), open Mon-Sun noon-2.30pm, 6-10.30pm (Fri-Sat -11pm; Sun -10pm)
The city's best Thai restaurant is noted for knockout dishes such as spiced chicken and ground peanuts wrapped in Thai spinach leaves, sweet chilli prawns cooked with spring onions and cashew nuts and pork in coconut milk with long beans, Thai herbs and chilli.

££ THE CRAZY BEAR

Bear Lane, Stadhampton, Nr Oxford (01865 890714), open Mon-Sun noon-3pm, 6-10pm
In this weird and wacky conversion a brigade of Thai chefs rustle up amazing soups, salads, noodles, authentic curries, stir-fries of Aberdeen Angus beef, slow roasts of ox cheek or pork

THEBIGEAT

Sukhothai

£ 8 Regent Street, Chapel Allerton, Leeds (0113-237 0141), open Tues-Sun noon-3pm; Mon-Sat 5-11pm; Sun 6-11pm
The menu at this pleasing Thai restaurant runs to more than 100 dishes, all cooked swiftly to add immediacy and punch. Steamed crab with bean-thread noodles, spring onion, coriander, Chinese

leaf, condensed milk, egg, carrot and pepper, and duck marinated in spices and fried with garlic and pepper, are typical of the delicately presented concoctions on offer. Add smiling and courteous service, an atmosphere of peaceful well-being, and a short, useful wine list, and Sukhothai is hard to beat.

belly, and fish dishes such as steamed sea bream fillets with ginger, shiitake mushrooms and soy sauce.

££ NAHM-JIM

11 Crails Lane, St Andrews, Fife (01334 474000), open Tues-Sat noon-3pm; Tues-Sun 6-11pm (Fri-Sat -midnight)
St Andrew's Nahm-Jim elicits a resounding thumbs up from those who have discovered its bijou charms. The pleasant service adds flavour to an appealing litany of Thai favourites, such as spicy fishcakes, punchy chicken satay and a first-rate pad thai.

££ NUMJAI THAI

19 Milburngate Centre, Durham (0191-386 2020), open Mon-Sun 11.30am-2pm, 6-10.30pm
A great option for lovers of Thai food, Numjai offers dishes with unbeatable freshness, piquancy and spontaneity of flavours. Try the steamed scallops with garlic and coriander sauce or green mussels with Thai sauce.

£ SURIN

30 Harbour Street, Ramsgate (01843 592001), open Tues-Sat noon-2.30pm; Mon-Sat 6-11pm (Fri-Sat -midnight)
This convivial restaurant is hugely popular, offering the

novelty of serving cheap and cheerful though well-made Thai cuisine. Vegetarians are well catered for, as are students — who benefit from a staggeringly low-priced menu.

£ THAI EDGE

7 Oozells Square, Brindley Place, Birmingham (0121-643 3993), open Mon-Fri noon-2.30pm, 5.30-11.30pm (Fri -midnight); Sun noon-3pm, 6-11pm
This chic restaurant happily manages to produce food that's just as good as its stunning decor. The lengthy menu is full of authentic treats — all well executed and packed with flavour.

£ THE THAI HOUSE

3-4 Guildford Crescent, Cardiff (029-2038 7404), open Mon-Sat noon-2.30pm, 6.30-11pm
The emphasis here is on traditional Thai food, made with quality ingredients from Thailand and Wales. Mains are a harmonious assortment of meat and fish dishes, from slices of trout fillet in a red curry sauce to tender Welsh beef in a rich oyster sauce.

££ TARN THAI

9 George Street, Nottingham (0115-959 9454), open Mon-Sun noon-2.30pm, 6-10.30pm (Fri-Sat -11pm)
Several Thai restaurants have opened in Nottingham in recent years, but nothing quite like Tarn Thai. The food sets this place apart, with the kitchen showing a practised hand in dishes such as sun-dried marinated beef or grilled sea bream.

PRICE GUIDE

- £££ Above £45
- ££ £30-£45
- £ Under £30

Price ranges are indicative of one two-course à la carte meal, plus half a bottle of house wine, coffee, cover charge, service and VAT. Restaurant reviews compiled specially for *The Times* by Square Meal, for 18 years the London and UK eating-out experts. Opinions are based on the experiences of the Square Meal team of inspectors and of thousands of readers, who are surveyed throughout the year. You can find more reviews and news on their website.

squaremeal.co.uk

TOP FIVE FOR KIDS

Louise Cohen



1 HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

Few can resist the singing, dancing and high school fun of the cult Disney film — catch the stage version on its UK tour. *Royal Concert Hall, Theatre Square, Nottingham* (www.royalcentre-nottingham.co.uk 0115-989 5555), from Mon, until Apr 19

2 BLUE PLANET DAY

Explore the oceans with the BBC's *The Blue Planet* team, using projections, music and the museum's collections. For those who enjoy it, *Blue Planet Live* — a two-hour edit of the series shown on the big screen — will also be visiting the museum on April 20. *The Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester* (www.museum.man.ac.uk 0161-275 2648), Sat

3 ART ZONE

Families can design and paint their own T-shirts in these creative sessions. *The Lowry, Salford Quays, Salford* (www.thelowry.com 0870 7875780), Tues & Thur

4 FROGGY FORTNIGHT

Learn about the world of frogs, newts, toads and insects, as well as enjoying some fun outdoor activities. *Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, District 15, Washington* (www.wwt.org.uk 0191-416 5454), until Apr 20

5 DOES A MONSTER LIVE NEXT DOOR?

Mystery play about a girl who has nightmares that a monster is in her house. *Darlington Arts Centre, Vane Terrace, Darlington* (www.darlingtonarts.co.uk 01325 486555), Fri

For more kids' stuff in your area, timesonline.co.uk/families