



THE RESTAURANT

# BANGKOK

THESE TWO ASIAN HUBS HAVE LONG BEEN STREET-FOOD STARS AND THE INSPECTORS LAUNCH THE FIRST EVER

## THE MUST-TRY DISH

Leaving Bangkok without eating at least one **pad thai** would be a crime, so make a pit stop at Thip Samai, widely considered one of the city's best vendors hawking the classic. Its smoky, slightly sweet noodles topped with prawns, bean sprouts, crushed peanuts and chilli flakes are what got the place a Bib Gourmand. Expect long queues well before it opens at 5pm. 313-315 Maha Chai Road

## THE CHEF SHAKING THINGS UP

At hit fusion restaurant 80/20, tattooed chef **Napol 'Joe' Jantraget** experiments with cooking techniques, food pairings and local produce even most Thais have never heard of, such as *hom choo*, a thin root vegetable, and *ka-yang*, a cumin-tasting leaf. Paving the way for the rediscovery of even more obscure ingredients, his food laboratory in the south of Thailand is currently in the works. 1052-1054 Charoen Krung Road ([fb.com/8020bkk](https://fb.com/8020bkk))

## THE UPCOMING NEIGHBOURHOOD

In the Old Town the burgeoning arts district of **Talat Noi** is finally turning into a dining destination, with a slew of new-wave chefs setting up shop in its narrow bylanes. Trailblazer 80/20 led the pack back in 2015, but recent months have seen an explosion of exciting openings such as upscale Japanese-style JUA and 100 Mahaseth for Isaan recipes.

## THE BIG SPLURGE

Charging **£20 for a crab omelette** may seem astronomical in Bangkok, but take one bite of this masterfully crafted *khaj jeaw poo* at Raan Jay Fai and you'll see it is worth it. Each dish comes loaded with chunks of fresh, juicy crab meat and is made by Auntie Fai (the queen of Thai street food), who works the woks in goggles to protect herself from splashes of hot oil. As Raan Jay Fai is the first and only Thai street-food restaurant to receive a star, expect prices to go up even higher. 327 Maha Chai Road

## THE HARDEST-TO-SCORE TABLE

Even before **Gaggan** was crowned with two stars in December – not to mention topping Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list for three years running – getting a table at this progressive Indian spot (pork-vindaloo bites; sea-urchin ice cream) already involved at least a month-long waiting list and a lot of phone calls. With the news that it will close in 2020, this isn't likely to improve anytime soon. 68/1 Soi Langsuan ([eatatgaggan.com](https://eatatgaggan.com))

From top left: the Talat Noi area; buffalo tartare at 80/20, its façade and inside the restaurant; Gaggan; beetroot salad at 80/20 and the bar. Top right, Outside JUA







## REVOLUTIONARIES



## WORD OF MOUTH

# TAIPEI

KINGPINS. BUT AS THEIR KERBSIDE COOKING GAINS MICHELIN GUIDES IN BOTH, HOW DO THEY SQUARE UP IN A FACE-OFF?

### THE MUST-TRY DISH

Taiwan's ultimate comfort food has to be **lu rou fan**, a steaming bowl of rice topped with a layer of salty-sweet braised pork. It's Jin Feng's claim to fame, as proven by the constant crowd of hungry patrons waiting eagerly for a bowl of the fatty, deep-brown goodness. Taiwanese foodies are speculating that this place will be next to get a Michelin star, so go now before it gets even busier. 10, Section 1, Roosevelt Road

### THE CHEF SHAKING THINGS UP

After stints at Singapore's famed Guy Savoy and one-star Jaan, Taichung-born **Kai Ho** recently returned to the Taiwanese capital to open **Tairroir**, a France-meets-Taiwan fine-dining joint that quickly became the hottest restaurant in town. Combining Gallic techniques with indigenous ingredients (sous-vide egg with crumbled taro), he has championed the trend for using locally sourced produce. 6F, 299 Lequn 3rd Road ([tairroir.com](http://tairroir.com))

### THE UPCOMING NEIGHBOURHOOD

If it's high-end contenders you're after, the Dahzi area is the place to go (Ryugin, RAW). But just across the river, **Dadaocheng** is where the fun stuff really happens. Here, third-wave coffee shops, gastropubs and mini organic-food markets breathe life into the historic shophouses, and new spots such as artisanal cheese maker Man Mano and Nordic craft-beer brewery Mikkeller pop up almost every month.

### THE BIG SPLURGE

After tasting the rich broth and succulent chunks of beef, diners proclaimed they would be willing to pay **£245 for beef noodle soup** at Niu Ba Ba – so that became the price of its most premium dish. The rigorously researched recipe includes a special combination of five stocks and four different cuts of prime, A-grade beef imported from Australia and the USA. 149, Section 6, Minquan East Road

### THE HARDEST-TO-SCORE TABLE

Three years after opening, André Chiang's **RAW** is still one of Taipei's hottest restaurants. And to experience his refined blend of international flavours and Taiwanese ingredients, you should have booked your table already, especially since he's announced he's shutting André in Singapore to return home. Alternatively, tip your hotel concierge generously and hope for the best. 301, Lequn 3rd Road ([raw.com.tw](http://raw.com.tw)) CHRIS SCHALKX



From top left: André Chiang; Tairroir; RAW; Man Mano; Mikkeller; beef noodle soup and dumplings; Raw's minimal interior; outside Man Mano

