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NEIGHBORHOODS

Thai Town

There's more to this six-block stretch of inexpensive eateries and charming shops than Thai Elvis.

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By Katherine Tulich
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With its influx of Thai immigrants and businesses, the six-block stretch of Hollywood Boulevard between Western and Normandie was officially designated as Thai Town in 1999. Two tall "Aponsi" Thai angel statues welcome visitors to the restaurants and shops housed in its strip malls, which are an Asian foodie haven ranging from cheap and quick to authentic culinary excursions.

Dining

Palms Thai (5900 Hollywood Blvd., Suite B, [323] 462-5073, www.palmsthai.com), with its infamous Thai Elvis impersonator, has always been one of the main draws to Thai Town. The restaurant has relocated a few blocks west into a larger space, but the owners made sure Thai Elvis has not left the building. Ruen Pair (5257 Hollywood Blvd., [323] 466-0153) is a foodie favorite, with its renowned papaya salad and hearty rice soup with meat. For quick cafeteria-style food, there's Ganda restaurant (5269 Hollywood Blvd., [323] 466-4281). The buzz-generating Jitlada (5233 Sunset Blvd., [323] 667-9809) serves authentic southern-style Thai. The mango salad with coconut, cashews and shrimp is a must, and the fiery dry curries reward the brave.

Oodles of noodles

Noodle junkies swear by the spicy and flavorful Thai boat noodles at the tucked away Sapp Coffee Shop (5183 Hollywood Blvd., [323] 665-1035). Ord Noodle (5401 Hollywood Blvd., [323] 468-9302), with its pleasant street-front space, serves great home-style dishes, including its trademark Hoy Kha noodle with ground pork, BBQ pork and dried shrimp.

Sweet treats

The impressive Bhan Kanom Thai (5271 Hollywood Blvd., [323] 871-8030, www.bhankanomthai.com) is a glorious sweet retreat with shelves of prettily packaged candies and crackers. The ice cream bar serves the hard-to-find durian ice cream and the addictive hot pan chi, with taro and coconut. Kanomthai Ram (5185 Hollywood Blvd., [323] 667-2055) is a family-owned dessert shop with freshly prepared fried bananas and Thai sweet tacos.

Shopping

It's hard to miss the towering salmon-and-yellow pagoda of Thailand Plaza (5321 Hollywood Blvd.), the mini-mall that houses Silom Supermarket ([323] 993 9000), with its crowded aisles of fresh produce, sauces and mega bags of noodles and rice, and Dokya Bookstore ([323] 464-7178), which has a good selection of Thai cookbooks.

De-stress

Traditional Thai massage at reasonable prices and well-maintained facilities can be found at Thai Sabai (5261 Hollywood Blvd., [323] 485-2800, www.thaisabai.com).

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