

Rosa's Thai Café – Born in the East. Raised in the East

The new Rosa's Thai in Edinburgh is really worth checking out.

The restaurant has been open since mid-November and have replaced what locals will have known as the short-lived cocktail bar 63rd & 1st, and before that Café Rouge.

Although a chain, this restaurant offers a variety of dishes that are bursting with flavour and spice, from classic curries and stir-fries to salads and soups. You can also enjoy some of their signature dishes, such as the crispy pork belly with holy basil, the drunken noodles, or the pad thai with prawns.

I was invited along with a friend to experience what Rosa's Thai has to offer and to meet the owner Saiphin Moore. She opened the first restaurant in Spitalfields in 2008 after stumbling across a disused old English caff called Rosa's Cafe. It seemed the perfect location to sell her food: a fusion of cool, authentic London and modern Bangkok, and with very little money to spend on branding they adopted the name and changed it to Rosa's Thai and the name has stuck. Fast forward 15 years, from humble beginnings and I suspect, a lot of hard graft, there are now 40 of them across the UK, but only two in Scotland (in Glasgow and Edinburgh).

The atmosphere is cosy and inviting, the portions are generous, the service is friendly and warm, and it was lovely to see some familiar Thai staff who have jumped ship from a neighbouring Thai restaurant, welcoming us with a warm smile and wonderful Thai hospitality.

The Boozy Iced Tea on arrival, made from Havana Dark Rum, and

Thai Lemon Iced Tea packed a punch, accompanied by a firm favourite, prawn crackers.

Starters were Pandan Chicken Parcels with a Sriracha Sauce and very healthy, homemade vegetable spring rolls with spicy chilli sauce and peanuts, which were light and healthy. Thank God, someone advised us to unwrap the chicken parcels as the leaves aren't edible.

From the main courses on offer, we chose a Veg & Pulled Mushroom Pad Thai, and I had the Chilli & Basil Kra Prow with minced chicken. While this is obviously a vegetarian dish, for any carnivores, the mushrooms had a meaty texture and were full of flavour and I'd consider ordering this again, as a change from chicken.

Meanwhile, the three chilli indicators on the menu should have given me a clue as to just how spicy my Chilli & Basil 'Pad Kra Prow' with minced chicken might be. This wok-fried dish, with Thai basil, onions and green beans, was lovely but while it won't be to everyone's taste being on the spicy side, I loved it.

We chose the Thai Churros and Chocolate Brownie for desserts. The Churros were served with a dipping sauce of condensed milk, which was a real favourite treat as a child. My sister and I were even known to buy tins of the stuff with our pocket money, pour it into a jar and hide it in a cupboard in our playroom. The dead giveaway was the trail of ants to the cupboard!

The Chocolate Brownies were served with what I thought was a caramel sauce but turned out to be a home-made tamarind sauce, which cut through the sweetness of the brownie and a coconut ice cream.

Forget the less than favourable Trip Advisor reviews, if you like Thai food, you'll get nothing but a warm welcome and some delicious Thai food. I'm told they have a great express

lunchtime offer too – from £13.95.

Whether you are looking for a quick lunch, a romantic dinner, or if in a group a party menu that's fit for a Thai-style feast all year round for just £25 per person, Rosa's Thai will satisfy your cravings and make you feel like you are in Thailand.

And if you like cooking, Rosa also has a couple of books. The original book celebrates traditional Thai cooking techniques and features over 100 recipes, including dishes from the menu at Rosa's as well as family favourites from founder Saiphin Moore's regular tips back home. Recipes range from the aromatic Beef Massaman Curry to homemade Sriracha Sauce and Mangoes with Sticky Rice.

You can also order online for delivery or takeout or book a table in advance to avoid disappointment. Rosa's Thai is open seven days a week, from 12:00 to 22:30 on weekdays and 12:00 to 23:00 on weekends.

<https://rosasthai.com/>













