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EATING

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It is hard to have a conversation in Hong Kong without mentioning food, especially when many still greet each other by asking, 'Láy sĭk-jó faan may?' (Have you eaten yet?). Dim sum brunch on Sunday is still the way of life for many families and the thickness of the dumpling skin, the consistency of the glutinous rice and the colour of the green vegetable are all part of the discussion. Socialites, or *tai tai*, meet for high tea in the afternoon and, between catching up on the latest gossip, comment on the presentations of their finger sandwiches and scones. Office workers fervently discuss whether to have sushi or pasta for lunch, while the fashionable set inevitably exchanges news on which celebrity chef is due to make an appearance in town. In the last half century, Hong Kong has emerged from a backwater British outpost in the Far East to an epicentre of international trade. The general lifestyle of its population has become cosmopolitan, and so have the things people eat.

Despite its 150 years as a British colony, which ended in 1997, Hong Kong has never lost its Chinese roots. Cantonese food is by far the most popular cuisine in Hong Kong. It originated in Guangdong province, from where most Hong Kong Chinese people can trace their roots. The flavours are more subtle than in other Chinese cooking styles and the sauces are rarely strong.

Spoilt by their locale's generally mild climate, with clearly divided seasons, the Cantonese are almost religious about the importance of fresh ingredients. 'What's in season now?' is often the first question customers pop to the waiter when dining Cantonese. It is common to see tanks in seafood restaurants full of finned and shelled creatures enjoying their final moments on *terra infirma*. Housewives still prefer a live chicken or pigeon plucked from (and plucked in, come to think of it) a market for the evening meal, though the cost of fresh poultry means the supermarket variety still has its market.

Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong, once known as Canton (from which the adjective 'Cantonese' was derived), was the first Chinese port to open to foreign trades, so Cantonese cuisine has always had the cosmopolitan edge. It has the largest collection of specialised dishes in all of China and is characterised by elaborate preparation and the use of an infinite variety of ingredients. Subtle flavours are combined with a light touch of soy sauce and ginger, enhancing the freshness of the ingredients. Delicate and well-balanced flavours are obtained through cooking methods such as quick stir-frying and steaming.

Wok tossing is a distinctly Cantonese cooking technique that is crucial to the quality of a quick stir-fry. The radiating heat and aroma of the finished dish, known as *wok-hay*, determines the success of a dish. Seasoned Cantonese diners can often guess the size and the age of the wok by tasting the food cooked from it.

Accelerated international airfreights and the increase in foreign travel by local people means there's a lot more experimentation with food these days. Macadamia nuts find their way into scallop dishes, and you're just as likely to find on a menu sautéed cod slices with pinenuts and fresh fruit as you are traditional steamed grouper.

Expensive local dishes – some of which are truly tasty, others that carry with them more of a 'face' value – include abalone, shark's fin and bird's nest. Pigeon is a tasty Cantonese speciality that is served in various ways, but most commonly roasted, chopped finely and eaten with lettuce and hoisin sauce (a sweet, slightly piquant brown paste).

Hong Kong's colonial history has developed few unique food items. *Bo lo bao* (meaning 'pine-apple bun' because of its surface pattern) is a cheap-and-cheery, sweet breakfast or afternoon pastry believed to have been inspired by scones. Little-trolley noodles (*chē jái mihn*) owed their origin to mainland immigrant hawkers but are most certainly a Hong Kong invention. But other than these few examples, there aren't many dishes or sauces unique to Hong Kong per se.

Hong Kong chefs, however, pride themselves on innovation: experimenting, improvising and creating. They will instantly seize upon a new ingredient and find ways to use it. For example, asparagus is a vegetable little known in the rest of China, but Hong Kong chefs serve it every day, combining it with baby abalone and olive oil or with caviar and preserved eggs.

In Western dining, hotels play an important role. Short of an established culinary institute Hong Kong has always relied on resource-rich hotel groups to bring in trained non-Chinese chefs. Although such dependency has decreased in the past 30 years or so with the developments of many stand-alone restaurants, the legacy continues. Michelin staples Nobu (p191) and Pierre (p177) both have their footholds in five-star hotels.

For a territory where almost everything has to be imported, embracing outside influences is a way of life. Starbucks is considered hip, Pret A Manger is lunch culture and McDonald's is everyone's childhood memory. Seafarers, colonists, refugees, migrant workers and expatriates have all come here from different parts of the world and enriched – or at least influenced – the culture and the food. To Hong Kong globalisation is nothing new, and neither is mixing flavours on the plate.

HISTORY & CULTURE

The modern history of Hong Kong begins with the First Opium War (p21), but the roots of Hong Kong cuisine were laid long before. Prior to its colonial history, Hong Kong was already home to three major clans: the Punti (Cantonese Chinese) and Hakka (non-Cantonese Chinese) peoples lived in what is the New Territories today, while a humble fisherfolk called the Dan lived on the coast, especially in the south of Hong Kong Island.

Not wanting to have much to do with the local fare, the British brought their own provisions, and in this far corner of the world continued to eat their gammon and sausage, pies and kippers, and wash it all down with milky tea and warm beer.

The local inhabitants, living in walled villages, ate what they could herd and grow or catch from the sea. Produce was abundant. Certain ancient food traditions from these peoples have remained, and the most notable among them is the 'basin dish' (*poon choy*). The story has it that the last emperor of the Southern Song dynasty (AD 1127–1279), Zhao Bing, fleeing from the Mongolians, headed south and ended up in Hong Kong with his entourage. The villagers were gobsmacked by the sudden arrival of their supreme ruler. And although he was only eight, they treated him to the best food they could scrape together, according to the imperial tradition of wastefulness. Not a people overly endowed with beautiful crockery, the villagers resorted to serving the mountain of fine foods to the emperor in a basin. *Poon choy* has become a dish for festival occasions ever since.

The Crown Colony maintained its stability and prosperity for most of its 150 years, even as the mainland skipped from one upheaval to another. Many of the best mainland cooks, especially those from Guangzhou, eventually found refuge in Hong Kong. Given the colony's resources to play around with, they

strived for the best and the most exotic, making Hong Kong the 'real' Guangzhou.

With the declaration of the People's Republic of China in 1949, floods of immigrants from Shanghai, Sichuan, Hunan and Peking (Beijing) came looking for safety, jobs and a new life. Their arrival turned Hong Kong into a melting pot of Chinese regional cuisines, and the rest, literally, is history.

HOW HONG KONG PEOPLE EAT

Local brand Doll Instant Noodle once suggested Hong Kong people eat its product five times a day. While not what a dietician would call a sound piece of advice, it was an accurate reflection on how Hong Kong people eat: always in a hurry and up to five meals a day – breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and a late-night snack.

In Hong Kong, workers often drop by a small restaurant specialising in breakfast foods such as *jūk*, a rice porridge also known as congee, which is either eaten plain or with a multitude of savoury garnishes and condiments. Office workers often grab a bowl of soup noodles to bring back to work, happily slurping away at their desks. On weekends and holidays everyone goes out for dim sum (aka yum cha) for breakfast, brunch or even lunch.

Lunch in the built-up areas during the week will often be a set lunch consisting of one or two dishes at a fixed price. Or it could be a bowl of soup noodles with shrimp wontons or a plate of rice with roast pork, duck or goose. Or something more elaborate.

Afternoon tea in Hong Kong is especially popular on weekends. It may be an elaborate affair – such as traditional English high tea or dim sum – at a good hotel. Or it may be at the office and comprise little more than tea and biscuits or a steamed bun. Labourers will stop for just a few minutes to pour a cup of tea and eat a custard tart before going back to work.

Dinner is a big event every day, especially dinner in a restaurant. The majority of Hong Kong people live in very small flats with handkerchief-sized kitchens; dining out with friends and family solves the problem of space. This is one reason Hong Kong's restaurants are always so noisy; this is where people come to catch up on all the gossip, make plans, tell jokes and just enjoy life. But still, few diners are longer than two hours, as Hong Kong people always have somewhere else to go.

Dishes at a Chinese meal are always served together. Tables, which are always round in Chinese restaurants, are often equipped with a lazy Susan. It's not unusual for dishes to be served with tiny saucers filled with various sauces, with *sī-yàu* (soy sauce), *gaai-laat* (hot mustard) and *laat-jiù jeung* (chilli sauce) the most common ones. Feel free to stand up, lean over the table and dip if the sauce is on the other side.

Often you'll see several small bottles on the table, usually containing soy sauce and vinegar. The vinegar is usually a dark colour and is easily confused with soy sauce, so taste some first before pouring. Sauces aren't dumped on food – instead the food is dipped into a separate dish. Staff will usually let you know which sauce goes with which dish.

ETIQUETTE

The Chinese are, by and large, casual about etiquette at the table, and they don't expect foreigners to understand all of their dining customs. But there are a few unique ways of doing things here that are useful to know.

The Chinese think nothing of sticking their chopsticks into a communal dish, which can raise sanitation issues. Better restaurants provide separate serving chopsticks or even spoons with each dish; if so, use them.

Leaving chopsticks sticking vertically into the bowl – as unlikely as that sounds – is a bad omen as they resemble incense sticks in a bowl of ashes, a sign of death.

If you absolutely can't manage chopsticks, don't be afraid to ask for a fork; nearly all Chinese restaurants have them. It's less embarrassing than having your food dropping all over the table, or worse yet flying across the room, as it often happens with unskilled chopstick users.

At a Chinese meal, everyone gets an individual bowl of rice or a small soup bowl. It's quite acceptable to hold the bowl close to your

SMOKING

Effective 1 January, 2007, all indoor spaces of restaurants were theoretically smoke free. But in its usually irresolute style, the government has allowed certain places exemption until 1 July, 2009. Nicotine addicts are seeking out these havens, as well as restaurants with unsheltered outdoor spaces where the smoking ban does not reach. In districts such as Soho (p180) and Sai Wan Ho (p189), where restaurants tend to have open fronts, customers often step outside to get their fix.

lips and shovel the contents into your mouth with chopsticks. An alternative is to hold a spoon in one hand and use the chopsticks to push the food onto the spoon. Then use the spoon as you normally would.

If the food contains bones, just put them directly on the tablecloth beside your plate or bowl. And you needn't use a napkin to hide what you're doing; except at very upmarket restaurants most Hong Kong people just spit them on the table.

Chinese make great use of toothpicks – foreign residents of Hong Kong sometimes call them 'Chinese dessert'. The polite way to use them is to cover your mouth with one hand while using the toothpick with the other.

Beer, soft drinks, wine or brandy may or may not be served with the meal, but tea most definitely will. When your waiter or host pours your tea, thank them by tapping your middle and index fingers lightly on the table. When the teapot is empty and you want a refill of hot water, signal the waiter by taking the lid off the pot and resting it on the handle.

DIM SUM

Dim sum (*dīm sàm*) is a uniquely Cantonese 'meal', eaten as breakfast, brunch or lunch. The term literally means 'to touch the heart', but 'snack' is more accurate. The act of eating dim sum is usually referred to as yum cha (*yám chāa*), meaning 'to drink tea' as the beverage is always consumed in copious amounts with dim sum.

Each dish, often containing two to four morsels steamed in a bamboo basket, is small and meant to be shared, so the bigger the group the greater the variety you get to try. At some restaurants there can be close to a hundred varieties to choose from.

In old-style dim sum places you don't need a menu; just stop the waiter and choose

something from the cart. Modern venues give you an order slip, but it's almost always in Chinese only. However, as dim sum dishes are often readymade, the waiters should be able to show you samplings to choose from. When a dish arrives, the server will mark it down on a bill they leave on the table. Dim sum restaurants are normally brightly lit and very large and noisy.

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Chinese vegetarian food has undergone a renaissance in recent years and it is consumed by devout Buddhists and the health-conscious alike. Out of Buddhist piety many Hong Kong people will become vegetarians on the first and 15th day of the lunar month.

Chinese chefs are masters at adding variety to vegetarian cooking and creating 'mock meat' dishes. Dishes formed to resemble (and taste like) spare ribs or chicken are made from layered pieces of dried beancurd and gluten or fashioned from mashed taro root.

Large monasteries, notably Po Lin (p201) on Lantau, often have vegetarian restaurants, though you will also find many restaurants in Kowloon and on Hong Kong Island. For the most part they are Cantonese or Shanghaiese and strictly vegetarian, as they are owned and operated by Buddhists.

Western vegetarian food is reasonably hard to come by here if you want anything more complex than a salad or penne in tomato sauce, though there are options in Central and the island of Lamma. Some Indian restaurants are exclusively vegetarian, but most in Hong Kong offer a combined menu.

Otherwise, this city is not particularly vegetarian-friendly. Seemingly meatless dishes often have hidden meat elements in them (see boxed text, p194).

COOKING COURSES

Hong Kong is a good place to hone your skills in the art of Chinese cookery.

Chinese Cuisine Training Institute (Map pp54–5;

☎ 2538 2200; www.ccti.vtc.edu.hk; 7th fl, Pokfulam Training Centre Complex, 145 Pok Fu Lam Rd, Pok Fu Lam; \$620) Four-hour afternoon course that surveys the full spectrum of Chinese cooking.

Home Management Centre (Map pp54–5; ☎ 2510 2828; www.hec.com.hk; 10th fl, Electric Centre, 28 City Garden Rd, North Point) Wednesday English-language class teaches three simple Chinese recipes in two hours for \$85.

On the website go to the Electric Living/Home Management Centre section.

The Peninsula Academy (Map p92; ☎ 2920 2888; The Peninsula, Salisbury Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui) Every two months one of the chefs from the historical five-star hotel teaches a different cuisine, ranging from Japanese to French to Cantonese. The \$1000 per head fee (including high lunch) makes it popular among *tai tai*.

Towngas Cooking Centre (Map p74; ☎ 2576 1535; www.towngascoking.com; Basement, Leighton Centre, 77 Leighton Rd, Causeway Bay; \$300 to \$350) Classes in a vast range of Chinese cooking styles and other culinary subjects. There's also a **Tsim Sha Tsui branch** (Map p94; ☎ 2367 2707; Shop L030, New World Centre, 18–24 Salisbury Rd).

PUBLICATIONS

The best sources for travellers looking for more restaurant recommendations than we are able to make here are the biannual *Good Eating* guide by the **South China Morning Post** (special@scmp.com), published in March and October, and the annual *HK Magazine Restaurant Guide* by in the **HK Magazine** (asiacity@asia-city.com.hk), published in February or March. Both offer reviews and listings of hundreds of eateries throughout the territory. *The Guide: Hong Kong's Restaurant Guide* from **bc magazine** (www.bcmagazine.net) has reviews of 300-plus Hong Kong restaurants in all price categories. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB; p301) distributes an annual booklet called *Best of the Best Culinary Guide*, featuring award-winning local dishes and where to find them. Lonely Planet's *World Food Hong Kong*, while not a restaurant guide per se, will take you on an in-depth culinary tour of the territory.

SNACKING ON STREET-SAVVY SAVOURIES

Dim sum is not the exclusive province of the tea restaurants; some street stalls serve dim sum until the wee hours, to help partygoers soak up the booze. What they serve are usually the more common items, such as steamed shrimp dumplings (*hàa gáau*), steamed pork and shrimp dumplings (*siù máai*) and steamed rice-flour rolls with shrimp, beef or pork (*chéung fán*). The dim sum is served alongside other street-food items, such as curried fish balls, grilled squids, poached pig's colon and – it's no euphemism – stinky tofu (*chau dou fu*), tofu fermented with shrimp shell and deepfried.

PRACTICALITIES

Opening Hours

With the exceptions of local tea restaurants (*chà chàan t'èng*), most Hong Kong restaurants open from around 11.30am to 3pm for lunch and 6pm to 11.30pm for dinner. The restaurants reviewed below follow these standard opening hours unless otherwise stated.

How Much?

You can make a meal out of wonton noodles and some greens and it would cost you no more than \$30, and fast-food chains such as **Café de Carol** (www.cafedecoralfastfood.com), **Fairwood** (www.fairwood.com.hk) and **MX** (www.maxims.com.hk/html/fastfood) would serve you a Western set (soup, main and coffee) for less than \$40. Otherwise, a proper sit-down lunch costs at least \$80 and for dinner about \$120 per head. Upscale restaurants will set you back at least \$700 per person for dinner.

Booking Tables

Most restaurants midrange or above will take reservations. Booking is a must for private kitchens (see p184) and very popular places that serve two or even three seatings a night.

Tipping

Tipping is not a must in Hong Kong restaurants as waiters supposedly get full salaries and every bill includes a 10% service charge. But the service charge almost always goes into the owner's coffers so if you like the service, tip as you see fit. Most people leave behind the small change.

Self-Catering

The two major supermarket chains, Park'N'Shop and Wellcome, have megastores around that offer grocery as well as takeaway cooked food. Their gourmet counterparts

include: **Great Food Hall** (Map p63; ☎ 2918 9986; Basement, Two Pacific Place, Admiralty; ☎ 10am-10pm); City-super, with a handful of branches, including **Causeway Bay** (Map p74; ☎ 2506 2888; Basement One, Times Square, Causeway Bay; ☎ 10.30am-10pm); Oliver Delicatessen in **Central** (Map p56; ☎ 8.30am-8pm), as well as Sheung Wan and Admiralty; and **Taste** (Map pp88-9; Festival Walk, Kowloon Tong; ☎ 7am-midnight). The relatively new **Three Sixty** (Map p56; ☎ 2111 4480; 3rd & 4th fl, Landmark Bldg, 1 Pedder St; ☎ 7am-9pm; MTR Central, exit C) offers organic produce, mostly imported and generally expensive.

HONG KONG ISLAND

Catering facilities on Hong Kong Island run the gamut from Michelin-level restaurants in five-star hotels to Asian fusion enjoyed at pavement cafés, to an embarrassment of ethnic cuisines – from Indian and Mexican to Chiu Chow and Vietnamese – served in tiny little holes in the wall upstairs, downstairs or in some obscure chamber.

CENTRAL

From one end to the other, Central can offer a diverse range of dining experiences covering everything from *daai-p'ài-d'awng* (open-air street-stall food) and affordable ethnic food to funky Western restaurants with celebrity chefs. Lan Kwai Fong and Soho are still going strong, and the part of Wyndham St linking the two areas is growing in full force.

AMBER Map p56 Modern European \$\$\$\$

☎ 2132 0066; 7/F, The Landmark Mandarin Oriental; 15 Queen's Rd Central; weekend brunch \$348; ☎ also open for breakfast 6.30-10.30am; MTR Central (exit G)

Amber is the name as well as the colour tone of the restaurant's interior. In the light of day it serves as a power restaurant for three-Martini lunches; at night the brightest light sources are the tubular ceiling light installation and the flat-screen computer wine menu customers use to pick their bottles according to regions, varieties and, less importantly, price ranges. The menu is rather cryptic and every name is at least 12 words long, but once that oven-roasted Sisteron baby-spring-lamb shoulder or soy-and-maple-glazed bluefin tuna melts in your mouth, every syllable is fine.

PIERRE Map p56 Modern French \$\$\$\$

☎ 2825 4001; Mandarin Oriental, 5 Connaught Rd; ☎ dinner only Sat, closed Sun; MTR Central (exit F)

The godfather of fusion, Pierre Gagnaire, has finally brought his revolutionary cuisine to the city that embodies the concept. Consider this: Le Rouge – red-pepper jelly, duck foie gras and 'red' red tuna, red belotta 'Croque-Monsieur', Niora pasta, chorizo, light butternut squash chutney, red beetroot and raspberry ice cream. Every bite hits your taste buds like a pianist working the keys. Dessert might be a caramelised rocket salad – and it works. The décor, with portholes and chandelier, reminds one of a fine restaurant on a cruise liner, especially when adding the harbour view.

CAFÉ DES ARTISTES Map p68 French \$\$\$

☎ 2526 3880; 1st fl, California Tower, 30-32 D'Aguilar St; ☎ dinner only Sun; MTR Central (exit D2)

This bright and airy eatery has evolved from a rather stuffy provincial French restaurant to a casual modern French haunt. Perched on the 1st floor and surrounded by breezy, bright windows overlooking Lan Kwai Fong, the restaurant boasts a large bar and secluded terrace area perfect for enjoying the immaculate foie gras dishes and diving into fresh seafood from the ice-bar.

FINDS Map p68 Scandinavian \$\$\$

☎ 2522 9318; 2nd fl, Lan Kwai Fong Tower, 33 Wyndham St; set lunch from \$98; ☎ dinner only Sun; MTR Central (exit D2), ☎ 26

This wonderful place, whose name stands for – would you believe? – 'Finland', 'Iceland', 'Norway', 'Denmark' and 'Sweden', serves seasonal Scandinavian food. We love the *scapas* (Scandinavian tapas, for lack of a better term; \$50 to \$90), especially the tartare of Baltic herring and terrine of pork confit with leek. The surrounds – faux igloo walls, icicles-cum-chandelier, lots of blue tones – will have you thinking that global warming has worked in reverse in old Hong Kong.

LUNG KING HEEN Map p56 Chinese \$\$\$

☎ 3196 8888; Four Seasons Hotel, 8 Finance St, Central; set lunch \$400, dinner \$880; MTR Central (exit A)

It's not just the view that you should come for, it's the plump and fresh crustaceans and the divine roast duck (\$560 each, good for

six people), whose aroma lingers on long after you've devoured every bit of the bird.

M AT THE FRINGE Map p68 International \$\$\$

☎ 2877 4000; 1st fl, South Block, Fringe Club, Dairy Farm Bldg, 2 Lower Albert Rd; ☎ dinner only Sat & Sun; MTR Central (exit D2)

No one seems to have a bad thing to say about Michelle's. The menu changes constantly and everything is excellent, be it lobster soufflé (\$168) or slow-baked salted lamb (\$248). It's worth saving room for dessert, if you have that kind of self-restraint. Reservations are a must. At lunch starters/mains/desserts are a uniform \$68/112/58.

MOZART STUB'N Map p68 Austrian \$\$\$

☎ 2522 1763; 8 Glenealy; ☎ closed Sun; MTR Central (exit D2)

This classy, almost fastidious Austrian (do not say German) establishment has excellent food and wines and a delightful atmosphere. The dishes may sound Teutonic, but they are served in sensible portions.

OLÉ SPANISH RESTAURANT & WINE BAR Map p68 Spanish \$\$\$

☎ 2523 8624; 1/F, Shun Ho Tower, 24-30 Ice House Street; tapas \$50-130; MTR Central (exit D2)

Any Spaniard living in the city would point to this restaurant as the best Spanish restaurant in town. Every tile and vase oozes Iberian air, and if you sit by the window looking at the colonial-style Bishop's House across the street, you might forget that you're in Asia. The paella (\$360) is great for two to share.

TOKIO JOE Map p68 Japanese \$\$\$

☎ 2525 1889; Ground fl, 16 Lan Kwai Fong; ☎ dinner only Sun; MTR Central (exit D2)

This place serves sushi and sashimi that's among the freshest in Hong Kong, though there is a full range of hot dishes (including *yakitori*) available as well. There are set lunches for \$125 to \$190. Joe's flashier kid brother, **Kyoto Joe** (Map p68; ☎ 2804 6800; Ground fl, 21 D'Aguilar St), just down the hill, is somewhat more expensive and modern, and a venue for drinking as much as dining. There's a *robotayaki* (barbecue) bar out back.

VA BENE Map p68 Italian \$\$\$

☎ 2845 5577; 17-22 Lan Kwai Fong; set lunch \$198; ☎ dinner only Sat & Sun; MTR Central (exit D2)

This smart restaurant bears a striking resemblance to a neighbourhood trattoria in

PRICE GUIDE

The price indicators below are based on Hong Kong dollars per person at a meal.

\$\$\$\$	Over \$700
\$\$\$	\$400-699
\$\$	\$200-399
\$	Under \$200

Venice. It's a good choice for a special date or an extravagant celebration. Book ahead; dress smart.

YUN FU Map p68 Northern Chinese \$\$\$

☎ 2116 8855; Basement, Yu Yuet Lai Bldg, 43-45 Wyndham St; ☎ 26

No other place does Chinese food in such a fun way. Entering the restaurant through the stone staircase feels like travelling in a time tunnel, to the period of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. After an exotic cocktail garnished with dry seahorses or lizards (\$88), your appetite should be whetted for goose liver soaked in dark soy sauce (\$98) and sliced duck fillet wrapped in tofu paper (\$88). If you're a veggie, why not a whole roasted bamboo shoot served in the bark?

ZUMA Map p56 Japanese \$\$\$

☎ 3657 6388; Level 5 & 6, The Landmark, 15 Queen's Rd Central; ☎ closed Sun; MTR Central (exit G)

This uberchic dining import from London markets itself as authentic but not traditional Japanese cuisine, and has miles of space in which to serve it. There is a robata counter, sushi bar and a terrace. Up the game with *sashimi omakase* of rock lobster, Dungeness crab, sea urchin, monkfish liver, abalone, oscietra caviar and tuna belly, each of which'll set you back \$880.

ASSAF Map p68 Lebanese \$\$\$

☎ 2851 6550; Shop B, Ground fl, Lyndhurst Bldg, 37 Lyndhurst Tce; ☎ noon-midnight; ☎ 40M

This welcoming and cosy place specialises in meze and other tasty tidbits; the set dinners are a mixture of six to eight different items. There are good-value set lunches (\$78) and dinners (vegetarian/meat \$155/178) as well. The Assaf brothers also own the *Beyrouth Cafe Central* (Map p68; ☎ 2854 1872; 39 Lyndhurst Tce), a simple place that does takeaway sandwiches, kebabs and so on for \$45.

CHINA TEE CLUB Map p56 International \$\$

☎ 2521 0233; Room 101, 1st fl, Pedder Bldg, 12 Pedder St; ☎ 11.30am-8pm Mon-Sat; MTR Central (exit D1)

This civilised tea house-cum-restaurant serving both Asian and Western favourites is perfect for a meal or a cuppa after finishing your shopping at Shanghai Tang (p160) or Blanc de Chine (p159) below. The food is

only passable but you can't beat sipping tea or diving into laksa or Hainan chicken rice in an ambience that makes you feel like you had travelled back to 19th-century Hong Kong. Pasta and vegetarian dishes are \$90 to \$105.

HABIBI Map p56 Egyptian \$\$

☎ 2544 6198; Shop B & D, Ground fl, 112-114 Wellington St; ☎ dinner only Sat, closed Sun; ☎ 40M Whether or not Habibi serves strictly authentic Egyptian food is a moot point – the halal food is very good and the setting is the Cairo of the 1930s – all mirrors, tassels, velvet cushions, ceiling fans and hookahs. Habibi's casual and takeaway section, *Habibi Café* (Map p56; ☎ 2544 3886; ☎ 11am-midnight), in Shop A next door is a lot cheaper, with meze from \$25 to \$58, meze platters \$85 to \$110, mains \$45 to \$160 and a weekday set lunch \$60.

HUNAN GARDEN Map p56 Hunanese \$\$

☎ 2868 2880; 3rd fl, The Forum, Exchange Sq, Connaught Rd, Central; MTR Central (exit A)

This elegant place specialises in spicy Hunanese cuisine, which is often hotter than the Sichuan variety. The Hunanese fried chicken with chilli is excellent, as are the seafood dishes. Views, overlooking the harbour or into the heart of Central, are a bonus. Set meals start from \$398 for two.

IVAN THE KOZAK

Map p68 Ukrainian, Russian \$\$
☎ 2851 1193; Lower ground fl, 46-48 Cochrane St; ☎ 40M

Blinis and borscht are probably not what spring to mind when you're considering an ethnic dining experience in Hong Kong, but the food here – down-home dishes such as Ukrainian-style borscht, beef Stroganoff, stuffed cabbage rolls and *vareniki* (Ukrainian dumpling) – is surprisingly authentic and the décor cosy. There's live folk music nightly. Caviar goes for \$65 to \$850 for 30g.

JIMMY'S KITCHEN Map p68 International \$\$

☎ 2526 5293; Basement, South China Bldg, 1-3 Wyndham St; MTR Central (exit D1)

High on nostalgia and one of the oldest names in the game, Jimmy's, a Hong Kong feature for seven decades, rests on its laurels. The baked onion soup (\$58), char-grilled king prawns (\$235), seven-pepper

steak (\$290) and a whole medley of desserts (including its famous baked Alaska, \$58 per person) all compete for the diners' attention. There's a branch in *Tsim Sha Tsui* (Map p92; ☎ 2376 0327; 1/F, Kowloon Centre, 29-39 Ashley Rd).

KOH-I-NOOR Map p68 Indian \$\$

☎ 2877 9706; 1st fl, California Entertainment Bldg, 34-36 D'Aguilar St; ☎ dinner only Sun; MTR Central (exit D2) Fine Indian cuisine in sophisticated presentation and service is what you get here, as well as sophisticated prices. The most expensive dish is the leg of lamb (\$300), which is great for sharing. But the weekend vegetarian/meat lunch-time buffet is a steal at \$55, while biryani dishes are \$62. There are branches around town, including *Tsim Sha Tsui* (Map p94; 1/F, 3-4 Peninsula Mansion, 16C Mody Rd) and *Tai Koo Shing* (Map pp54-5; Shop 001, G/F, Cityplaza, 1111 King's Rd), and prices may be a little lower at those locations.

LA KASBAH Map p68 Middle Eastern \$\$

☎ 2525 9493; 4-8 Arbutnot Rd; ☎ 6.30-11.30pm Mon-Sat; ☎ 40M

La Kasbah is a Frenchified Maghreb *caravanseraï* serving dishes from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, which effectively means meze and tajine or couscous. It's good stuff, but expensive for what it is. The bar, Medina, opens till 2am.

LUK YU TEA HOUSE Map p68 Dim Sum \$\$

☎ 2523 5464; 24-26 Stanley St; ☎ 7am-11pm; MTR Central

This old-style teahouse is a museum piece in more ways than one. Most of the staff have been here since the early Ming dynasty and are as grumpy and ill-tempered as an emperor deposed. The booths are uncomfortable, it's not cheap, prices aren't marked on the English menu, but the dim sum, served from 7am to 6pm, is really quite delicious.

POST 97 Map p68 International \$\$

☎ 2186 1817; 1st fl, Cosmos Bldg, 9-11 Lan Kwai Fong; ☎ 9.30am-1am Mon-Thu, 9.30am-2.30am Fri & Sat, 9.30am-1am Sun; MTR Central (exit D2) Since its renovation, this all-day brasserie and café above the Fong has lost a little of that bohemian charm and become a bit nondescript, but it still offers a view of the bustling Lan Kwai Fong. The all-day

breakfast items such as egg benedict (\$85) are still there, and new items such as detox salad (\$98) are welcome additions. Weekend brunch (\$150) with bottomless coffee and pick-me-ups such as Bloody Mary is a draw.

QING Map p70 Vietnamese, Western \$\$

☎ 2815 6739; 3 Mee Lun St; ☎ noon-midnight Mon-Fri, noon-2am Sat, closed Sun; ☎ 26 Time seems to just stand still at this place, which resembles a street-side bistro in Hanoi. Blocked out from traffic, the outdoor tables here offer an ambience that is increasingly hard to find in hyperactive Hong Kong. Go light with the Vietnamese-style rice-paper rolls or indulge in a steak smothered with Roquefort – it's all up to you, and the wine is always fab.

RUGHETTA Map p68 Italian \$\$

☎ 2537 7922; Basement, Carfield Commercial Bldg, 75-77 Wyndham St; pasta \$110-168; ☎ dinner only on Sun; ☎ 26

This basement restaurant with a branch in New York City serves faultless 'Roman' (read earthy Italian) cuisine – though it may suffer after being discovered by the cheap lunch crowd.

SHALOM GRILL Map p56 Kosher \$\$

☎ 2851 6300; 2nd fl, Fortune House, 61 Connaught Rd Central; ☎ no dinner Fri; ☎ 5B

If it's Ashkenazic and Sephardic glatt kosher food you're after, the Shalom Grill can oblige. Don't expect cordon bleu, but if you're in the mood for felafel or gefilte fish (or you answer to a Higher Authority on matters culinary), this is the place to visit. Shabbat dinner and Saturday lunch can be prearranged and paid for in advance. For something lighter, sandwiches are \$45 to \$55.

SONG Map p68 Vietnamese \$\$

☎ 2559 0997; Lower ground fl, 75 Hollywood Rd; ☎ dinner only Sat, closed Sun; ☎ 26

This very stylish though somewhat cramped Vietnamese eatery, down an unnamed alleyway between Peel and Aberdeen Sts, serves refined (some might say overly so) Vietnamese food to the denizens of Soho.

THAI LEMONGRASS Map p68 Thai \$\$

☎ 2905 1688; 3rd fl, California Tower, 30-32 D'Aguilar St; weekday set lunch \$118-138; ☎ dinner only Sun; MTR Central (exit D2)

This quiet, discreet and very smart place serves up such treats as pomelo salad, spicy green papaya salad and mussels in red curry. It is Thai food with a lot of style and a price to match, but it is worth the bucks.

YUNG KEE RESTAURANT

Map p68 Cantonese \$\$

☎ 2522 1624; 32-40 Wellington St; roast goose from \$100; ☎ 11am-11.30pm; MTR Central (exit D2)

This long-standing institution is probably the most famous Cantonese restaurant in Central. Its signature roast goose has been the talk of the town since 1942 (the restaurant farms its own geese for quality control), and its dim sum (2pm to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday, 11am to 5.30pm Sunday) is excellent. Set meals cost \$300 to \$550 per person.

BON APPETIT Map p68 Vietnamese, Thai \$

☎ 2525 3553; 14B Wing Wah Lane; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Sat; MTR Central (exit D2)

Cheap but tasty dishes for those on a rock-bottom budget – and a scrum of office workers trying to squeeze a decent meal into a short break at lunch time – are available at this Vietnamese and Thai nook in Wing Wah Lane, the northern extension of Lan Kwai Fong. Dishes such as filled baguettes and rice and noodles are generally less than \$50, but you may also spend a little more on seafood such as crab curry (\$150).

GRAHAM ST MARKET

Map p56 Produce Market \$

Graham St; ☎ 6am-8pm; ☎ 5B

The stalls and shops lining Graham St south of (and up the hill from) Queen's Rd Central to Hollywood Rd are positively groaning with high-quality vegetables and fruit, as well as meat, seafood and other comestibles. But being in Central, the prices are generally higher than wet markets further west in Sheung Wan and Kennedy Town.

CITY HALL MAXIM'S PALACE

Map p56 Dim Sum \$

☎ 2521 1303; 3rd fl, Low Block, Hong Kong City Hall, 1 Edinburgh Pl; dim sum \$23-42, compulsory tea fee per person \$11; ☎ 13

For many years *HK Magazine* readers voted this place as the best dim sum restaurant in town, and while probably not everyone

would agree, this establishment does offer food of solid quality. The ambience is civilised but not snobbish, and at busy lunch time there is always a nice buzz to the place. Dim sum ladies walk around with trays of food ready to be served, saving you from having to read the menu. At night the restaurant serves more formal Cantonese cuisine and is a popular venue for Chinese banquets.

MAK'S NOODLE Map p68 Noodle Bar \$

☎ 2854 3810; 77 Wellington St; ☎ 11am-8pm; ☎ 40M

This noodle shop sells excellent wonton soup, and the beef brisket noodles, more of a Western taste than a Chinese one, are highly recommended. Go for lunch or eat early; it's shut tight by 8pm. Branches: Causeway Bay (Map p74; ☎ 2895 5310; 44 Jardines Bazaar; ☎ 11am-midnight; MTR Causeway Bay, exit F), Tai Kok Tsui (Map pp88-9; ☎ 2740 4129; Shop K09, G/F, Olympian City Phase 2; ☎ 10am-10pm; MTR Olympic, exit D3), Tsim Sha Tsui (Map p92; ☎ 2730 0710; Shop C03, 2/F, Gourmet Express, China Hong Kong City, 33 Canton Rd; ☎ 7am-10pm; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui, exit A1).

SOHO

Soho is awash in restaurants; in fact, there is nothing but eateries lining Elgin St. Most of them are in the middle and top-end range. The area is accessible by the Central Escalators, or bus 26 can be caught from Caroline Centre (Map p74) in Causeway Bay or Pacific Place (Map p63), Admiralty.

CECCONI'S CANTINA Map p68 Italian \$\$\$

☎ 2147 5500; 43 Elgin St

If the décor of this restaurant is a little too cold and showroom-like, the food more than makes up for it. Few would be able to resist such sophisticated dishes as roasted figs with goats curd, flat pancetta and honey mustard dressing, and peppered duck and confit leg with sweet potato and lime jus.

STONEGRILL Map p68 International \$\$\$

☎ 2504 3333; Ground fl, 28 Elgin St; set lunch \$100, set dinner \$400-500

Don't complain when your food arrives half-cooked – it's supposed to be that way. Steak or fish comes sunny-side up and sizzling on a slab of stone; you turn it over to suit your taste. Whether you consider this a half-baked idea or fall for it, you'll love the

excellent New York-style bar. There is also a pasta selection.

VEDA Map p68 Indian \$\$\$

☎ 2868 5885; 8 Arbutnot Rd; ☎ dinner only Sun; ☎ 40M from Wan Chai for Pacific Place, Admiralty We've heard talk that this uberstylish and pricey eatery is not measuring up to the same standards as when it first opened its doors and introduced Hong Kong to 'innovative Indian' (eg chicken in coriander and cashew-nut paste, fish steamed with mint). Sunday brunch (\$198) still seems to pack in the punters, though. The weekday lunch buffet is \$98.

CARAMBA! Map p68 Mexican \$\$

☎ 2530 9963; 26-30 Elgin St; ☎ noon-midnight Mexican is a cuisine as diametrically opposed to Chinese as you can imagine, but with a blinding selection of tequilas, this *cantina* provides a cosy and intimate venue for a fix of chilli (\$95), fajitas, enchiladas and *quesadillas* (\$55 to \$68). There's brunch from noon to 6pm on the weekend.

CHILLI FAGARA Map p68 Sichuanese \$\$

☎ 2893 3330; Shop E, Ground fl, 45-53 Graham St; ☎ dinner only Sat & Sun

This new hole-in-the-wall in Soho serves reasonably authentic Sichuan fare and is a welcome addition to the short list of quality local eateries open in this part of Central. Make sure you try all three Sichuan tastes: *màa* (spicy), *laat* (hot) and *tám* (mild).

CRU WINE & GRILL Map p68 Australian \$\$

☎ 2803 2083; 44 Staunton St; ☎ 8am-11pm

Since the first day this two-storey, open-front restaurant opened, there hasn't been a day when it is not packed out. It's all in the food (and not the service, for sure). You can't beat a big hot plate of tasty fettuccini marinara or spaghetti with clams, tomato and chorizo for under \$100. Even a ribeye steak is only \$250, which is a bargain for this town, and especially this neighbourhood. Vegetarian options aplenty.

NEPAL Map p68 Nepalese \$\$

☎ 2869 6212; Ground fl, 14 Staunton St

This was one of the first ethnic restaurants to find its way to Soho, and Nepalese flavours and treats remain in abundance

here. There are some 14 vegetarian choices on the menu.

OLIVE Map p68 Greek, Middle Eastern \$\$

☎ 2521 1608; Ground fl, 32 Elgin St

We've received very mixed reports about the food at this Greek(ish) Soho restaurant, but with ace Australian chef Greg Malouf behind the wheel (if from afar), we know it's been a success. Give it a go and stick to the mixed meze (\$108).

PEAK CAFE BAR Map p68 International \$\$

☎ 2140 6877; 9-13 Shelley St; ☎ 11am-2am Mon-Fri, 9am-2am Sat, 9am-midnight Sun

The fixtures and fittings of the much-missed Peak Cafe, established in 1947, have moved down the hill to this comfy restaurant and bar with excellent nosh and super cocktails. The only thing that's missing now is the view. There are also sandwiches (\$68 to \$98) and pizza (\$88 to \$98).

SHUI HU JU Map p68 Sichuanese \$\$

☎ 2869 6927; Ground fl, 68 Peel St; ☎ 6pm-midnight

This restaurant, which could almost be in Off Soho, serves earthy dishes from Sichuan that have only been gently toned down. The décor is a delight – traditional Chinese with tables separated by latticed screens. It's like dining in one of the neighbouring antiques shops.

ARCHIE B'S NEW YORK DELI

Map p68 American Deli \$

☎ 2522 1239; Lower ground fl, 7 & 9 Staunton St; ☎ 11am-11pm

This little place just off the Central Escalator serves as authentic East Coast American delicatessen food as you'll find west of the US of A. It's pretty much an eat-and-run kind of place, but the few tables in the small alleyway just off Staunton St may have you lingering over your kosher dill pickle or Dr Brown's Cream Soda.

LIFE Map p68 Vegetarian \$

☎ 2810 9777; 10 Shelley St; ☎ delicatessen & shop 8am-10.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10.30pm Sat & Sun, café & rooftop noon-midnight Mon-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat & Sun

This place is a vegetarian's dream, serving vegan food and dishes free of gluten,

ALL-DAY DINING

For a city that is so bustling and vibrant, the amount of late-night dining options in Hong Kong is surprisingly short. Most of the eateries that open late are local tea restaurants (*chàa chàan t'èng*), one of the most famous being fast-food chain **Tsui Wah**, which has branches in **Central** (Map p68; ☎ 2525 6338; 15-19 Wellington St; ☎ 6.30am-4am; MTR Central, exit D2), **Causeway Bay** (Map p74; ☎ 2834 2438; 491-493 Jaffe Rd; ☎ 24hr; MTR Causeway Bay, exit B) and **Yau Ma Tei** (Map p97; ☎ 2384 8388; 77-83 Parkes St; ☎ 24hr; MTR Jordan, exit A), as well as elsewhere. The menu is more limited at night, but the signature fish-ball vermicelli in shark-bone broth (\$25) is always available.

In recent years, other styles of off-hour eateries have sprung up. **Flying Pan** in **Central** (Map p68; ☎ 2140 6333; 9 Old Bailey St), **Wan Chai** (Map p65; ☎ 2528 9997; 81-85 Lockhart Rd) and **Lantau** (Map p139; ☎ 2987 7749; Discovery Bay Plaza, Discovery Bay; 🚢 from Central Pier) serves 24-hour Western breakfasts. Meanwhile **Hotdog** (Map p68; ☎ 2543 3555; Shop D, L/G Hollywood Hse, 27-29 Hollywood Rd, Central) offers a broad range of franks served on soft buns (\$25 to \$35, condiments \$2 to \$6) 'round the clock.

A few hotel coffee shops have experimented with 24-hour dining but given up on the idea in the end, apparently having failed to capture the business they had hoped for. One that still persists is **Cafe One** (Map p74; ☎ 2839 3311; The Park Lane Hong Kong, 310 Gloucester Rd; MTR Causeway Bay, exit E), which features an à la carte menu comprising everything from wonton noodles (\$68 per bowl) to *linguine al vongole* (\$88). There are also the omnipresent **7-Eleven** and **Circle K** convenience stores, which, depending on the locations, serve sushi, sandwiches and microwaveable foods. Some branches of **McDonald's** and **Wellcome** supermarkets are open 24 hours.

wheat, onion and garlic. There's a delicatessen and shop on the ground floor, a café on the 1st and additional seating in the rooftop garden. Delicious takeaway salads from the deli counter costs \$50 to \$75 and the large size one can feed a small family.

SHEUNG WAN & THE MID-LEVELS

West of Central, Sheung Wan stands out for two quite disparate cuisines: Chinese (in particular, Chiu Chow) and Korean. For some reason the district has always been a 'Little Korea' and is the best place on Hong Kong Island to look for *bulgogi* (Korean barbecue) and *kimchi* (spicy fermented cabbage). Restaurants in the Mid-Levels cater mostly to local residents who don't feel like making the trek down to Soho or Central.

GAIA RISTORANTE Map p70 Italian \$\$\$

☎ 2167 8200; Ground fl, Grand Millennium Plaza, 181 Queen's Rd Central, Sheung Wan; ☎ till 1am Fri & Sat; MTR Sheung Wan (exit E2)

At least one *bon vivant* friend considers this the best restaurant in Hong Kong. We love the wood and tile floors, the thin-crust pizzas and the outside tables in the lush plaza.

ORANGE TREE Map p77 Dutch \$\$\$

☎ 2838 9352; 17 Shelley St; ☎ 6-10.30pm; 🚢 40M from Wan Chai For Pacific Place, Admiralty

Modern Dutch food served in a breezy russet setting in the higher reaches of the Central Escalator. Don't get stuck on the sausages – there are lighter dishes like smoked eel. For dessert there are always delicious *poftertjes* (Dutch pancakes) on the menu.

GRAND STAGE Map p70 Cantonese \$\$

☎ 2815 2311; 2nd fl, Western Market, 323 Des Voeux Rd Central, Sheung Wan; dishes \$68-128, dim sum \$14.8-29.8; ☎ 11.30am-6.15pm & 7pm-midnight; MTR Sheung Wan (exit C)

This wonderful place, with balcony and booth seating overlooking a huge dance floor in Western Market, features ballroom music and dancing at high tea (2.30pm to 6.15pm) and dinner. The food is fine, but come here primarily to kick your heels up.

KOREA HOUSE RESTAURANT Map p70 Korean \$\$

☎ 2544 0007; Ground fl, Honwell Commercial Centre, 119-121 Connaught Rd Central, Sheung Wan; ☎ noon-11pm; MTR Sheung Wan (exit C)

Korea House, *in situ* since 1965, is acknowledged as having some of the most authentic Korean barbecue, *kimchi* and appetisers (side dishes to a barbecue sizzled at your table) in Hong Kong, and is always filled with Korean expats – the ultimate stamp of approval. Enter from Man Wa Lane.

LEUNG HING CHIU CHOW SEAFOOD RESTAURANT Map p56 Chiu Chow, Seafood \$\$

☎ 2850 6666; 32 Bonham Strand West, Sheung Wan; ☎ 11am-midnight; MTR Sheung Wan (exit A2)

The staple ingredients of Chiu Chow cuisine – goose and duck but especially fish and shellfish – are extensively employed and delectably prepared at this very local place.

LIN HEUNG TEA HOUSE Map p56 Cantonese \$

☎ 2544 4556; Ground fl, 160-164 Wellington St, Sheung Wan; ☎ 6am-10pm; MTR Sheung Wan (exit E2)

This old-style Cantonese restaurant on the corner of Aberdeen St, packed with older men reading newspapers, extended families and office groups, has decent dim sum (from \$12 to \$16) served from trolleys. It's a very local place, but staff can rummage out an English menu. The signature braised stuffed duck (\$150) is a must try if you come for dinner, but advance booking is needed.

THE PEAK

You'd hardly venture all the way up Victoria Peak for a meal; food here takes its place in the queue behind the views and all the attractions of the Peak Tower. But there are a few options from which to choose.

PEARL ON THE PEAK Map pp54-5 Australian \$\$\$

☎ 2849 5123; Shop 2, Level 1, The Peak Tower, 128 Peak Rd; 🚢 Peak Tram

This place has all the trappings of a tourist restaurant, so you're bound to end up here one way or the other. It is somewhat of a branch of Pearl Restaurant in Melbourne, and the signature air-freight pearl meat flash fried with shiitake, chive buds, ginger and soy served on a mother of pearl shell (\$198) would be quite enjoyable eaten with the view. Otherwise there is everything from pasta to curry, with twists of Oz.

CAFE DECO Map pp54-5 International \$\$

☎ 2849 5111; Levels 1 & 2, Peak Galleria, 118 Peak Rd; set lunch \$88; ☎ 11.30am-midnight Mon-Thu, 11.30am-1am Fri & Sat, 9.30am-midnight Sun; 🚢 Peak Tram

With its spectacular harbour views, Art Deco furnishings and live jazz from 7pm

to 11pm Monday to Saturday nights, this place need not have made too much effort with the menu. But the food, while an East-meets-West eclectic thing, is above average, with the bistro dishes, sushi and sashimi plates (\$152 to \$298) and oyster bar scoring extra points. Breakfast and brunch are served from 9.30am to 2.30pm Saturday and Sunday.

L16 Map pp54-5 Thai \$\$

☎ 2520 1616; Shop 1, G/F, The Peak Galleria, 118 Peak Rd; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Sat, 9am-11pm Sun; 🚢 Peak Tram

The Thai food here is not the most authentic – a jaded palate might even find the tom yum and pomelo salad lacking in heat – but it's the location and the sophistication that will get you through the door. Besides, there is another restaurant inside this restaurant. A branch of Zen, an upscale Cantonese restaurant whose Admiralty *flagship* (Map p56; ☎ 2845 4555; Shop 001, LG/F, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway; MTR Admiralty, exit F) draws quite a crowd, takes up the inner space. The soya marinated chicken is highly recommended.

PEAK LOOKOUT Map pp54-5 International, Asian \$\$

☎ 2849 1000; 121 Peak Rd; ☎ 10.30am-midnight Mon-Thu, 10.30am-1am Fri, 8.30am-1am Sat, 8.30am-midnight Sun; 🚢 Peak Tram

East meets West at this swish colonial-style restaurant, with seating indoors in a glassed-in veranda and on the outside terrace – there's everything from Indian and French to Thai and Japanese on offer. We'll stick to the oysters (\$140 to \$225 a half-dozen), the barbecue and the views – which are to the south of the island, not the harbour. Breakfast is available on the weekend from 8.30am.

ADMIRALTY & WAN CHAI

Wan Chai, and to a lesser extent Admiralty, is a happy hunting ground for ethnic restaurants. Name your cuisine and MTR, bus or tram it down to the Wanch. You're certain to find it here.

NICHOLINI'S Map p63 Italian \$\$\$\$

☎ 2521 3838; 8th fl, Conrad Hong Kong, 88 Queensway, Admiralty; set lunch/dinner \$288/688; MTR Admiralty (exit F)

This refined restaurant's approach to northern Italian cuisine has won it praise from Italian expats – a certain stamp of approval. Simple yet superb antipasti and shellfish dishes are firm favourites here. It also has an excellent bar.

PETRUS Map p63 French \$\$\$\$

☎ 2820 8590; 56th fl, Island Shangri-La Hotel, Pacific Place, Supreme Court Rd, Admiralty; set lunch from \$310, set dinner from \$800; MTR Admiralty (exit F)

With its head (and prices) in the clouds, Petrus is one of the finest Western restaurants in Hong Kong. Expect traditional (not nouvelle) French cuisine, some over-the-top décor and stunning harbour views. Coat and tie required for men.

CINE CITTÀ Map p63 Italian \$\$\$

☎ 2529 0199; Ground fl, Starcrest Bldg, 9 Star St, Wan Chai; ☎ dinner only Sat & Sun; MTR Admiralty (exit F)

This very flash restaurant with an Italian-film theme is in an area of southwest Wan Chai that is slowly becoming something of a restaurant and nightlife district. The crowd here is more unhip hotel bar than Lan Kwai Fong, though.

PRIVATE KITCHENS

Private kitchens, or speakeasy restaurants, have become a characteristic of Hong Kong dining, though the hype has died down in recent years. Originally, private kitchens were unlicensed, clandestine eateries hidden in high-rise flats and serving meals for relatively low prices, but the raves gained regulators' notice and now many private kitchens are licensed eateries. But they still tend to be at hidden locations.

Sichuan Cuisine Da Ping Huo (Map p68; ☎ 2559 1317; L/G Hilltop Plaza, 49 Hollywood Rd, Central; ☎ 2 seatings 6.30-9pm, 9-11pm) This pioneer of the private kitchen scene, owned by Sichuanese couple Wang Hai and Wong Siu-king, now operates out of a commercial space and even has a specialised wine fridge. Happily, all the great dishes such as *mà pàw dau fù* (stewed beancurd with minced pork and chilli), *góng baau gài ding* (sauteed diced chicken and peanuts in sweet chilli), *daam daam min* (noodles in savoury sauce) continue to be served for \$250 per head (set menu), and Wong, a trained Chinese opera singer, still sings for customers after she finishes in the kitchen.

Xi Yan (Map p65; ☎ 2575 6966; 3/F, 83 Wanchai Rd, Wan Chai; lunch per head \$48, dinner from \$360; ☎ by booking only; MTR Wan Chai, exit A3) This former advertising executive converted his office into a private kitchen and achieved so much success he is currently also running casual walk-in restaurants **Xi Yan Sweets** (Map p63; ☎ 2833 6299; Shop 1, G/F, 8 Wing Fung St, Wan Chai; MTR Admiralty, exit F) and **Xi Yan – Tastes** (Map p74; ☎ 2881 6693; G0D, 2/F Leighton Centre, 77 Leighton Rd; MTR Causeway Bay, exit A). Both open noon to 11pm and dishes are \$18 to \$148.

Club Qing (Map p68; ☎ 2536 9773; 10/F Cosmos Bldg, 8-11 Lan Kwai Fong; MTR Central, exit D2) A restaurant that could easily be mistaken for a museum of dynastic Chinese artefacts, Club Qing serves menus that are degustation style, with eight to 10 courses, starting from \$400 per person. It can go all the way up to \$1500 if you're into whole braised Yoshihama abalone and shark's fin soup. Less politically incorrect treats include baked prawns with lemon grass and baked rib 'fingers' in Club Qing style.

FISH BAR Map p63 Seafood \$\$\$

☎ 2841 3858; 7/F, JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong, 88 Queensway, Admiralty; MTR Admiralty (exit F) Seafood by the pool is what you get here, and the harbour view is a bonus. The signature jumbo shrimp cocktail with avocado and cocktail sauce (\$148) gets you ready for the seasonal selection of imported fish, cooked in your preferred recipes. The oysters are so fresh they shrivel when poked by a fork. Carnivores may still find solace in the freshly grilled rib-eye steak.

H ONE Map p63 Mediterranean, International \$\$\$

☎ 2805 0638; Shop 4008-4010, Podium Level 4, IFC Mall, 8 Finance St; ☎ closed Sun; MTR Central (exit A)

The nameplate outside proclaims the restaurant 'the ultimate dining experience', and besides wood-fired pizzas, handcrafted pasta, handcrafted breads and specialities, such as Wagyu beef cheek and roasted northern Thai-style chicken massaged with tamarind and spices, there are also 'kick-ass curries' and 'dum dum biryani' and tandoori. Over-confidence aside, this glass-encased restaurant does offer the ultimate view.

THE GRILL Map p65 Grills \$\$\$

☎ 2584 7623; 11/F, Grand Hyatt, 1 Wan Chai Rd, Wan Chai; ☎ 11.30am-10pm; MTR Wan Chai (exit A5)

You come here in the day to chill out with a salad and a cocktail and you come in the evening to heat things up with the all-you-can-eat barbecue (\$460 to \$490). Stationed chefs are doing the cooking for you so that you have time to dive into the seafood mountain.

YÈ SHANGHAI Map p63 Shanghainese \$\$\$

☎ 2918 9833; Shop 332, Level 3, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Admiralty; MTR Admiralty (exit F)

This groovy place takes street-level Shanghainese cuisine and gives it a tweak here and there. The cold drunken pigeon (\$100) is a wine-soaked winner and the steamed dumplings are perfectly plump, but sometimes this restaurant goes for clattery style over substance. There's live music from 9.30pm to 11.30pm Thursday to Saturday.

CAFÉ TOO Map p63 International \$\$

☎ 2829 8571; 7th fl, Island Shangri-La Hotel, Pacific Place, Supreme Court Rd, Admiralty; ☎ 6.30am-10.30pm; MTR Admiralty (exit F)

This immensely popular food hall has a half-dozen kitchens preparing dishes from around the world, seating for 250 grazers and one of the best lunch/dinner buffets (\$250/350 Monday to Saturday, \$290/380 Sunday) in town. There's lighter fare as well, including sandwiches (\$120 to \$180) and rice and pasta dishes (\$120 to \$170).

CHE'S CANTONESE RESTAURANT

Map p65 Cantonese \$\$

☎ 2528 1123; 4th fl, The Broadway, 54-62 Lockhart Rd, Wan Chai; MTR Wan Chai (exit C)

This *crème de la crème* of Cantonese restaurants, opened by a local showbiz celebrity, serves home-style delicacies and offers a special seasonal menu with a dozen additional dishes. A must-try is the freshly baked Chinese roast-pork puffs. Prices are high but loyalists say it's worth the extra bucks.

HYANG CHON KOREAN RESTAURANT

Map p65 Korean \$\$

☎ 2574 5142; 2nd fl, Workingfield Commercial Bldg, 408-412 Jaffe Rd, Wan Chai; ☎ 6pm-4am; MTR Causeway Bay (exit C)

This somewhat expensive Korean restaurant attracts Korean expats and their friends with its authentic ginseng chicken and *bibimbab*, rice served in a sizzling pot topped with thinly sliced beef and cooked and preserved vegetables, which is then bound by a raw egg and flavoured with chilli-laced soy bean paste. Service is friendly and helpful.

LIU YUAN RESTAURANT

Map p65 Shanghainese \$\$

☎ 2510 0483; 1st fl, CRE Bldg, 303 Hennessy Rd, Wan Chai; MTR Wan Chai (exit A2)

This stylish restaurant serves superb Shanghainese dishes, including things like crab claws cooked with duck egg; the tiny prawns steamed with tea leaves are superb. Highly recommended.

R66 Map p65 Buffet \$\$

☎ 2862 6166; 62nd fl, Hopewell Centre, 183 Queen's Rd E, Wan Chai; MTR Wan Chai (exit B2) R66 – it's on the 62nd, not the 66th floor, as you'd expect – obeys the unwritten code of revolving restaurants by playing cheesy music and serving average buffets. It's best to roll up for an afternoon tea (3pm to 5pm; \$66) and go for a twirl in the daylight. To access the lipstick tube-like Hopewell Centre's outfacing bubble lifts, swap at the 17th (lifts are in the alcove opposite lift 6) and 56th floors.

THAI BASIL Map p63 Thai \$\$

☎ 2537 4682; Shop 005, Lower ground fl, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Admiralty; ☎ 11.30am-11pm; MTR Admiralty (exit F)

This basement-mall restaurant turns out some surprisingly authentic (and quite lovely) Thai dishes. This may not be a destination but it's not a bad stop along the way. The sticky banana pudding (\$60) is the ultimate blast for the sweet tooth.

VICEROY RESTAURANT & BAR

Map p65 Indian, Middle Eastern \$\$

☎ 2827 7777; Room 2B, 2nd fl, Sun Hung Kai Centre, 30 Harbour Rd, Wan Chai; MTR Wan Chai (exit A5)

The Viceroy has been an institution in Hong Kong for some two decades: an upmarket Indian restaurant with sitar music and a fun place to watch comedy (p216) at least once a month.

369 SHANGHAI RESTAURANT

Map p65 Shanghainese \$

☎ 2527 2343; Ground fl, 30-32 O'Brien Rd, Wan Chai; ☎ 11am-4am; MTR Wan Chai (exit A1) Low-key Shanghainese eatery that's nothing like five star but does the dumpling job well. It's family run and there are some comfy booths in the front window. It's open late, too, so you can come here after a draining dance. Try the signature hot-and-sour soup (\$40 to \$60) – almost a meal in itself – or the eggplant fried with garlic (\$55).

AMERICAN RESTAURANT

Map p65 Northern Chinese \$

☎ 2527 7277; Ground fl, Golden Star Bldg, 20 Lockhart Rd, Wan Chai; ☎ 11am-11.30pm; MTR Wan Chai (exit C)

The friendly American (which chose its name to attract Yank sailors cruising the Wanch for sustenance while on R&R during the Vietnam War) has been serving decent Northern Chinese cuisine for well over half a century. Famous for Peking duck (\$275) and beggar's chicken (\$310; order in advance).

CARRIANA CHIU CHOW RESTAURANT

Map p65 Chiu Chow \$

☎ 2511 1282; 1st fl, AXA Centre, 151 Gloucester Rd, Wan Chai; ☎ 11am-11.30pm; MTR Wan Chai (exit A1)

For Chiu Chow food, the Carriana still rates right up there after all these years. Try the cold dishes (sliced goose with vinegar, crab claws), pork with tofu or Chiu Chow chicken. Enter from Tonnochy Rd.

CINTA-J

Map p65 Filipino, Indonesian \$

☎ 2529 6622; Shop G4, Ground fl, Malaysia Bldg, 69 Jaffe Rd, Wan Chai; ☎ 11am-3.30am Mon-Fri, 11am-5am Sat & Sun; MTR Wan Chai

This friendly restaurant and lounge has a Southeast Asian menu longer than the Book of Job, which covers all bases from *murtabak* to *gado-gado*, but with a strong emphasis on Pinoy dishes. It turns into a cocktail lounge in the late evening and stays open until 3.30am (5am on the weekend).

CHUEN CHEUNG KUI

Map p74 Hakka \$

☎ 2577 3833; 7-8/F, Causeway Bay Plaza 1, 489 Hennessy Rd, Causeway Bay; ☎ 11am-midnight; MTR Causeway Bay (exit B)

Enlist a Cantonese dining companion or dive in bravely: there's not much English spoken here and the food is challenging. The pulled chicken, a Hakka classic, is the dish to insist upon. ('Gizzard soup' and 'stomach titbit' may be less appealing.)

LUNG MOON RESTAURANT

Map p65 Cantonese \$

☎ 2572 9888; 130-136 Johnston Rd, Wan Chai; ☎ 6am-midnight; MTR Wan Chai

The dining experience at this very basic (and friendly) Cantonese restaurant has not changed a great deal since the 1950s, and the prices, while not quite at 1950s levels, are still reasonable. Dim sum is available daily from opening till 5pm.

SABAH

Map p65 Malaysian \$

☎ 2143 6626; Shop 4 & 5, Ground fl, 98-108 Jaffe Rd, Wan Chai; ☎ 7.30am-midnight; MTR Wan Chai (exit A1)

Sabah in the heart of Wan Chai serves Malaysian food tempered for the Hong Kong palate. It's a favourite of office workers; try to avoid 1pm to 2pm. A choice of five set lunches (\$48) is available from 11am to 3pm.

THAI SHING

Map p74 Thai \$

☎ 2577 3833; ☎ 2834 2500; 36 Tang Lung St, Causeway Bay; ☎ 10am-midnight; MTR Causeway Bay (exit B)

If you want the best Thai food on Hong Kong Island and you couldn't care less about eating off a Formica table top and being assaulted by cheesy Thai pop, this place is where you should be. The folks here won't give you top-notch service either, but once that delicious *tom kha gai*, *padthai* and *kaeng* hit the table nothing else matters.

TIM'S KITCHEN

Map p65 Hong Kong Fast Food \$

☎ 2527 2982; Shop C, Ground fl, 118 Jaffe Rd, Wan Chai; ☎ 7.30am-10.30pm Mon-Fri, 7.30am-7pm Sat, closed Sun; MTR Wan Chai (exit A1)

When as many Hong Kong Chinese queue up outside a restaurant at lunch time as they do at Tim's every day, you can be sure that the food is both inexpensive and of good quality. It's a mix of Cantonese staples (fried rice, noodles) with some Hong Kong-style additions (such as fried pasta).

CAUSEWAY BAY

Causeway Bay is a strange amalgam of restaurants and cuisines but, apart from a selection of rather slick and overpriced European places on Fashion Walk (otherwise known as Houston St) northeast of the Causeway MTR station, this is the place for Chinese and other Asian – particularly Southeast Asian – food. Causeway Bay also has a lot of Japanese restaurants because of all the Japanese department stores headquartered here.

FORUM

Map p74 Cantonese \$\$\$\$

☎ 2891 2555; 485 Lockhart Rd; MTR Causeway Bay (exit C)

The Forum's abalone dishes have fans spread across the world and have won countless awards. What restaurant owner Yeung Koon-Yat does with these marvellous molluscs has earned him membership to Le Club des Chefs des Chefs and the moniker 'King of Abalone'. The pan-fried redfish and crunchy-skin chicken are also recommended.

HEICHINROU

Map p74 Cantonese \$\$\$

☎ 2506 2333; Shop 1003, 10th fl, Food Forum, Times Square, 1 Matheson St; ☎ 11.30am-midnight Mon-Fri, 11am-midnight Sat, 10am-midnight Sun; MTR Causeway Bay (exit A)

This stylish Cantonese restaurant is arguably the most elegant eatery in what makes up the four-level Food Forum (floors 10 to 13) in the Times Square shopping mall. The dim sum (\$16 to \$45) is excellent.

SUSHI HIRO

Map p74 Japanese \$\$\$

☎ 2882 8752; 10/F, Henry House, 42 Yun Ping Rd, Causeway Bay; MTR Causeway Bay (exit F)

A good example of Causeway Bay's Japanese-ness, this restaurant is one of the many authentic sushi bars hidden in the upper floors of commercial buildings, much like the way it is in Tokyo. Like other sushi bars of this grade, Sushi Hiro offers a seasonal choice of fish that changes on a weekly basis, and the chef will happily pick the best for you. Set lunch starts from \$120 per head (nine pieces) and set dinner from \$320 (12 pieces). For \$450 you get sashimi as well.

INDONESIAN RESTAURANT 1968

Map p74 Indonesian \$\$\$

☎ 2577 9981; 28 Leighton Rd; ☎ noon-11pm; MTR Causeway Bay (exit A)

This erstwhile dive has recently got a much needed face-lift and has added the year of its founding to its name – just so you won't forget. The food? It still serves pretty authentic *rendang*, *gado-gado* and the like, with improved presentations but in considerably smaller portions. There's a **Tsim Sha Tsui branch** (Map p94; ☎ 2619 1926; 2-4A Observatory Rd) and a **Sha Tin branch** (☎ 2699 8777; Shop 701, Shatin New Town Plaza Phase 1).

PAK LOH CHIU CHOW RESTAURANT

Map p74 Chiu Chow \$\$

☎ 2576 8886; 23-25 Hysan Ave; ☎ 11am-11pm; MTR Causeway Bay (exit F)

This is one of the best Chiu Chow restaurants on Hong Kong Island, turning out the most perfect shrimp and crab balls and delectable *sek-lau-gai* (steamed egg-white pouches filled with minced chicken).

QUEEN'S CAFE

Map p74 Russian \$\$

☎ 2576 2658; Shop D, Ground fl, Eton Tower, 8 Hysan Ave; ☎ noon-11.30pm; MTR Causeway Bay (exit F)

This eatery has been around since 1952 (though obviously not at the bottom of the same modern high-rise), which accounts for its subdued yet assured atmosphere. The borscht and meat set meals – White Russian dishes that filtered through China after WWI – are pretty good. Try the *zakuska* (\$70 to \$90), a mixture of Russian appetisers.

SORABOL KOREAN RESTAURANT

Map p74 Korean \$\$

☎ 2881 6823; 17th fl, Lee Theatre Plaza, 99 Percival St; ☎ 11.30am-midnight; MTR Causeway Bay (exit A)

This is the Korean's Korean restaurant, with helpful and informative staff. The barbecues are great and the *kimchi* dishes – notably the summer variety of the piquant and fermented cabbage – are particularly well prepared.

TAI PING KOON

Map p74 International, Chinese \$\$

☎ 2576 9161; 6 Pak Sha Rd; ☎ 11am-midnight; MTR Causeway Bay (exit F)

This place has been around since 1860 and offers an incredible mix of Western and Chinese flavours – what Hong Kong people called 'soy sauce restaurants' in pre-fusion

days. Try the borscht (\$40) and the smoked pomfret (\$158) or roast pigeon (\$98).

TOMOKAZU Map p74 Japanese \$\$

☎ 2833 6339; Shop B, Lockhart House, 441 Lockhart Rd; sushi platter from \$150; 🕒 11.30am-3pm & 6pm-4.30am; MTR Causeway Bay (exit C)

One of the longest-running Japanese haunts in town, this restaurant, for its location and well-prepared Japanese food, is a bargain. It's also the place to go for a fix of noodles or sushi in the wee hours.

TOWNGAS AVENUE Map p74 International \$\$

☎ 2367 2710; Ground fl, 59-65 Paterson St; MTR Causeway Bay (exit E)

This is an odd concept in a Hong Kong restaurant, where the cook is usually to be heard and *not* seen. This restaurant, operated by a Hong Kong gas utility, allows you to watch chefs at work through a glass screen. You get to keep the recipe of the dish(es) you order and you may even spot the cooker or fridge of your heart's desire: it's also a kitchenware showroom.

W'S ENTRECÔTE Map p74 French, Steakhouse \$\$

☎ 2506 0133; 6th fl, Express by Holiday Inn, 33 Sharp St East; MTR Causeway Bay (exit A)

This place serves steaks of every shape and size, but with a Gallic twist. Included in the price is a salad and as many *frites* (chips) as you can squeeze onto your plate. Starters are in the 'foie gras and snails' category. A three-course set lunch is \$108 to \$138, while a three-course set dinner is \$278 to \$318.

XINJISHI Map p74 Shanghaiese \$\$

☎ 2890 1122; Shop 201-203, 2nd fl, Lee Gardens Two, 28 Yun Ping Rd; MTR Causeway Bay (exit F)

This restaurant exemplifies how the world has turned upside down in Hong Kong in recent years. It's a branch of a successful mainland-based chain, with five restaurants in Shanghai, one in Taipei and another in Osaka. It offers traditional Shanghaiese (the cooks are imported) in a modern, very stylish setting. Try one of the clay-pot dishes, such as braised pork meatballs with vegetables (\$70).

KUNG TAK LAM Map p74 Vegetarian \$

☎ 2881 9966; Ground fl, Lok Sing Centre, 31 Yee Wo St; 🕒 11am-11pm; MTR Causeway Bay (exit E)

This long-established place, which serves Shanghai-style meatless dishes, has more of a modern feeling than most vegetarian eateries and is usually packed out. All the vegetables are 100% organic and dishes are free of MSG.

MAN FAI Map p74 Noodles \$

☎ 2890 1278; G/F, 22-24 Jardine's Bazaar, Causeway Bay, 🕒 8am-2am; MTR Causeway Bay (exit F)

Any time of day you can see people squeezed together here at the few communal tables, slurping up noodles. It's not a heaven for hygienists, but it is for noodles lovers. The signature squid balls, desired for their al dente texture, can be had alone or with a variety of noodles (\$20), and with other ingredients such as beef balls, fish balls, crispy fish skin and seaweed (assorted \$23). There is a *Sheung Wan branch* (Map p70); ☎ 2543 8468; 274 Des Voeux Rd Central; 🕒 10am-10pm.

MI-NEI SUSHI map p74 Sushi \$

☎ 3188 2440; 12 Pak Sha Rd, Causeway Bay; sushi \$9-60; 🕒 11.30am-midnight; MTR Causeway Bay (exit F)

Conveyor-belt sushi (*kaiten-zushi*) has been in Hong Kong for decades, but mostly it's been done badly. Since it opened a few years ago, this place has changed everything. People want the sushi rice to be the right consistency and the morsels lovingly presented, even if they are picked from a rotating belt. A plate of salmon sushi is presented like an art installation, decorated with a 'crown' made from sliced *daikon*.

YIN PING VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT

Map p74 Vietnamese \$

☎ 2832 9038; Ground fl, 24 Cannon St; 🕒 11am-midnight; MTR Causeway Bay (exit D1)

This little place is the 'anchor' Vietnamese restaurant on a street with more than a few of those eateries. Set lunches with soup are a snip at \$37.

HAPPY VALLEY

In general, the restaurants and cafés in Happy Valley cater to local residents, though two places – a little beyond the racecourse – are worth making the trip out for.

AMIGO Map p74 French, International \$\$\$\$

☎ 2577 2202; Amigo Mansion, 79A Wong Nai Chung Rd; 🚊 tram

Call us old-fashioned but this old relic with a Spanish name and Gallic twists is a place full of memories. The waiters still wear black tie and white gloves, there's a strolling guitarist and women are handed roses as they leave. Swoon city...

KISSHO Map p74 Japanese \$\$\$\$

☎ 2836 6992; 1A Wong Nai Chung Rd; 🚊 tram Residents of this prestigious neighbourhood swear by the seasonal selection of fish here. Be ready for anything: the chefs might drag out from the kitchen a giant octopus the size of an aerobic Swiss ball and just start slicing it up in front of you. The mini crabs in the tank are not pets, they are deep-fried for snacks.

ISLAND EAST

North Point is traditionally home to a sizeable Fujian population and there are a few good places for dishes from its native province. Quarry Bay has the largest collection of restaurants in the entire district, especially in and around Tong Chong St, a short distance southeast of the Quarry Bay MTR station. But these places offer nothing very special and their customers are mostly workers from nearby offices. The waterfront of Sai Wan Ho has a line-up of decent restaurants, and for the ambience alone they are worth visiting.

BEIRA RIO WINE BAR & GRILL

Map pp54-5 Surf & Turf \$\$

☎ 2568 3993; Shop GB08-10, G/F, 45 Tai Hong St, Lei King Wan, Sai Wan Ho; set lunch from \$42;

🕒 11am-midnight; MTR Sai Wan Ho (exit A) Along the foodie waterfront of this Island East neighbourhood, this restaurant looks the classiest and the food is reliable. Kick back with a glass of chilled white wine and a seafood mountain (\$268, good for two) and there should be no complaints.

KIN'S KITCHEN Map p74 Chinese \$\$

☎ 2571 0913; 9 Tsing Fung St, Tin Hau; MTR Tin Hau (exit A2)

Opened by artist and gourmand Lau Kin-wai, who was behind the opening of private kitchen Sichuan Cuisine Da Ping Huo (see boxed text, p184), this unassuming restaurant is so painstaking in choosing its ingredients that the waiter can tell you why the chef needs to source a chicken from a particular region. The signature smoked

chicken (half/whole \$180/360) needs to be booked a day in advance, and you will know why when it melts in your mouth.

FOOD REPUBLIC Map pp54-5 Food Court \$

☎ 2907 0521; Shop 308, Cityplaza, 18 Tai Koo Shing Rd, Tai Koo Shing; 🕒 10.30am-10.15pm; MTR Tai Koo (exit D2)

Food courts in malls have a bad rep but this one proves an exception. The choice of food covers everything from pasta and noodles to Thai and Vietnamese. There are also mini hotpots and teppanyaki. The longest queue is at the stall by Yummy Vietnamese Restaurant, which is famous for its beef *pho* (\$25).

MIN NAN RESTAURANT

Map pp54-5 Chinese \$

☎ 2807 2168; 25 Kam Ping St; 🕒 7.30am-9.30pm; MTR North Point (exit B1)

This authentic Fujian restaurant is famous for its specialised noodles, porridge and snacks, which, starting from \$10 per serving, are an absolute bargain.

ISLAND SOUTH

The restaurants in this district are as varied and eclectic as the villages and settlements themselves. While the choice is obviously limited in smaller places such as Shek O and Repulse Bay, you'll still manage to eat decent Thai at the former, and enjoy one of the most delightful venues on any coast in the latter. Main St in Stanley offers diners and snackers an embarrassment of choices, and in Aberdeen Harbour you'll find what is – for better or worse – Hong Kong's best-known restaurant.

Shek O

SHEK O CHINESE & THAI SEAFOOD

Map pp54-5 Thai, Cantonese \$

☎ 2809 4426; 303 Shek O Village; 🕒 11.30am-10pm; 🚊 9 from MTR Shau Kei Wan (exit A3)

This hybrid of a place is hardly authentic in either category, but the portions are generous, the staff are convivial and the cold Tsingtao beers just keep on flowing.

Stanley

Far-flung Stanley is reachable by bus 6, 6A, 6X or 260 from Exchange Square, Central.

BAYSIDE BRASSERIE Map p85 Fusion \$\$

☎ 2899 0818; Ground fl, 25 Stanley Market Rd;
🕒 11.30am-11pm

This waterfront eatery offers a splendid view and an enormous menu, including everything from oysters (from \$88 for three pieces) and pasta and pizzas (\$68 to \$158) to international and Indian main courses.

BOATHOUSE Map p85 International \$\$

☎ 2813 4467; 86-88 Stanley Main St; set dinner \$446 for 2; 🕒 11am-midnight Sun-Thu, 11am-1am Fri & Sat

All aboard for nautical overload. Salads, bruschetta and Med-inspired mains make up the bulk of the Boathouse's fleet. Steer for sea views; a table on the roof garden is something to covet.

LUCY'S Map p85 International \$\$

☎ 2813 9055; 64 Stanley Main St

This cool oasis within the hustle and bustle of Stanley Market doesn't overwhelm with choice but with quality food. The menu changes frequently as fresh produce and inspiration arrive, but the offerings tend to honest fusion rather than fancy flimflamery. There's a good selection of wines by the glass. A set dinner of two/three courses for \$240/280 is available from Sunday to Thursday only.

SHU ZHAI Map p85 Chinese \$\$

☎ 2813 0123; 80 Stanley Main St, Stanley; dim sum \$25-35; 🕒 noon-10pm

Modelled to resemble a school in ancient China, this breezy new restaurant off Stanley's waterfront serves an assortment of Chinese dishes that are as nice to look at as to eat. Braised Mandarin fish with vermicelli in salty sauce (\$148) is a must-try. There is a door connecting the restaurant to a branch of Dymocks book shops (see p159).

CHILLI N SPICE Map p85 Asian \$\$

☎ 2899 0147; Shop 101, 1st fl, Murray House, Stanley Plaza; 🕒 noon-11.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-11.30pm Sat & Sun

A branch of the ever-growing chain – nine branches at last count – has found its way into Hong Kong's oldest (reconstructed) colonial building. Expect no surprises, but the venue and views are worth a ringside table.

TOBY INN Map p85 Cantonese \$

☎ 2813 2880; U1-U2, 126 Stanley Main St;
🕒 5.30am-10.30pm

This modest eatery is the neighbourhood restaurant of Stanley, with elderly people dropping in for early morning dim sum at the crack of dawn and family diners coming in for cheap and cheery food throughout the day.

Deep Water Bay & Repulse Bay

These little beach resorts are reachable by bus 6, 6A, 6X or 260 from Exchange Square, Central.

VERANDAH RESTAURANT

Map pp54-5 International \$\$\$

☎ 2812 2722; 1st fl, The Repulse Bay, 109 Repulse Bay Rd; 🕒 noon-2.30pm, 3-5.30pm (tea) & 6.30-10.30pm Tue-Sat, 11am-3pm, 3.30-5.30pm (tea) & 6.30-10.30pm Sun

In the new-colonial bit of the wavy Repulse Bay condos, the Verandah is hushed and formal, with heavy white tablecloths and demurely clinking cutlery. The Sunday brunch is famous (book ahead); the afternoon tea is the south side's best. Set dinner starts at \$580.

COCOCABANA Map pp54-5 Mediterranean \$\$

☎ 2812 2226; 2/F, Beach Bldg, Island Rd, Deep Water Bay; 🕒 noon-midnight

Clichéd as it may sound, it's all location, location, location. The service is rather lax, but with the sounds of the waves and the sea breezes, the dishes such as bouillabaisse and Spanish duck confit with olives go down well.

Aberdeen

The lively harbour of Aberdeen is reachable by bus 70 from Exchange Square, Central.

TOP DECK Map p82 International \$\$\$

☎ 2552 3331; Top fl Jumbo Kingdom, Shum Wan Pier Dr, Wong Chuk Hang; 🕒 6-11.30pm Tue-Thu, 6pm-1am Sat, 9am-11.30pm Sun & public holidays
Alfresco dining in a Chinese courtyard setting and with a view of the sea – you just can't beat that. Top Deck's seafood brunch, with free-flowing champagne on Sunday (\$328; 11.30am to 4.30pm), is a dream.

JUMBO KINGDOM FLOATING RESTAURANT Map p82 Cantonese \$\$

☎ 2553 9111; Shum Wan Pier Dr, Wong Chuk Hang; 🕒 11am-11.30pm Mon-Sat, 7.30am-11.30pm Sun

The larger of two floating restaurants moored in Aberdeen Harbour and specialising in seafood, the Jumbo is touristy in the extreme and the food is so-so. The interior looks like Beijing's Imperial Palace crossbred with a Las Vegas casino; think of it as a spectacle – a show – and you'll have fun. There's free transport for diners from the pier on Aberdeen Promenade (p82). Dim sum is served from 7.30am to 4.30pm on Sunday. The other floating restaurant, the Tai Pak, is usually reserved for groups and spillovers.

SHAN LOON TSE KEE FISH BALL

Map p82 Noodles \$

☎ 2552 3809; 80-82 Old Main St; 🕒 10am-6pm
This place started from a nearby cave (*shan loon*) decades ago and it has since grown into a busy restaurant with two jointed shops. The signature fish balls are al dente and they are great eaten with *ho fan* (flat rice noodles). The *ju zaat* (dumplings made with fish meat, minced pork, carrot and celery) is usually sold out by noon.

WANG JIA SHA Map p82 Shanghaiese \$

☎ 2873 3030; Shop E, 1/F, Site 5 Aberdeen Centre, 6-12 Nam Ning St; 🕒 11am-11pm

Another mainland import to cash in on the affluent Hong Kong market, this household name from Shanghai offers delectable *siu lung bau* (steamed pork dumplings; \$32 for four), *daam daam min* (noodles in savoury sauce; \$28) and more.

KOWLOON

Kowloon doesn't have quite the same range of restaurants as Hong Kong Island does, but you will still find an amazing assortment of ethnic eateries in Tsim Sha Tsui. For Chinese soul food, head for Yau Ma Tei or Mong Kok. Kowloon City is renowned for its Thai eateries.

TSIM SHA TSUI

Tsim Sha Tsui can claim the lion's share of ethnic restaurants in Kowloon. If you're looking

for something fast, cheap and Chinese, Hau Fook St (Map p94) has food stalls (dishes from about \$25). It's a few blocks east of Nathan Rd in Tsim Sha Tsui and isn't included on many tourist maps. Walking north from the intersection of Carnarvon and Cameron Rds, it's the first lane on your right. Most of the places don't have English menus, but you can always point to what your fellow diners are tucking into.

FELIX Map p92 Fusion \$\$\$

☎ 2315 3188; 28th fl, Peninsula Hong Kong, Salisbury Rd; 🕒 6pm-midnight; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit E)

Felix has a fantastic setting, both inside and out. You're sure to pay as much attention to the views and the Philippe Starck-designed interior as to the fusion food (think lobster nachos, hoisin grilled ribs). Towering ceilings and copper-clad columns surround the Art Deco tables. Even the view from the men's is dizzying. A special lift will whisk you up directly. There's a set dinner for \$728 (six courses) and early dinner set for \$428 (three courses with a glass of wine; served 6pm to 8pm).

HUTONG Map p92 Chinese \$\$\$

☎ 3428 8342; 28/F, 1 Peking Rd; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit C1)

With the panoramic view of Hong Kong you'd feel like you're midair while eating here, and dishes such as wok-fried prawns with salty egg yolk and crab roe (\$188), and crispy de-boned lamb ribs in *hutong* style (\$248) would make you feel that way anyway. If you're adventurous, try the drunken raw crab (\$188).

SPRING MOON Map p92 Cantonese \$\$\$

☎ 2315 3160; 1st fl, Peninsula Hong Kong, Salisbury Rd; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit E)

The Peninsula's flagship Chinese restaurant, Spring Moon is Japanese minimalist with bits of Art Deco thrown in. The Cantonese food is excellently prepared, and the surrounds and ambience are stunning.

ARIRANG Map p92 Korean \$\$

☎ 2956 3288; Shop 2306-7, 2nd fl, Gateway Arcade, Harbour City, 25-27 Canton Rd; set dinner for 2 \$328; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit A1)

This is a large, brightly lit restaurant that may not be the place for a romantic tête

à tête but is great for a group. It's mostly given over to barbecue. If in doubt, order a set lunch (\$98).

EASTERN PALACE CHIU CHOW RESTAURANT Map p92 Chiu Chow \$\$

☎ 2730 6011; Shop 308, 3rd fl, Marco Polo Hong Kong Hotel, 3 Canton Rd; ☎ 11am-11pm; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit C1)

Chiu Chow dim sum is served at this large hotel restaurant from 11am to 4pm daily. Particularly good are the crab and shrimp balls, as well as the sliced goose in vinegar.

GOLDEN BULL Map p92 Vietnamese \$\$

☎ 2730 4866; Shop 101, 1st fl, Ocean Centre, Harbour City, 3-9 Canton Rd; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit C1) The crowds who descend on this place at lunch and dinner are not coming for the atmosphere (noisy) or service (abrupt), but the excellent-quality, low-cost Vietnamese food.

WU KONG SHANGHAI RESTAURANT Map p92 Shanghainese \$\$

☎ 2366 7244; Basement, Alpha House, 27-33 Nathan Rd; ☎ 11.30am-midnight; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit E)

The specialities at this Shanghainese restaurant – cold pigeon in wine sauce and crispy fried eels – are worth a trip across town. Dim sum (\$20 to \$48) is served all day.

CHUNGKING MANSIONS Map p92 Indian \$

36-44 Nathan Rd; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit D1) The greatest concentration of cheap Indian and Pakistani restaurants in Kowloon is in this rabbit warren of hostels and guest-houses. Despite the grotty appearance of the building, many of these 'messes' are quite plush, though somewhat claustrophobic. The food varies in quality, but if you follow the recommendations below you should be in for a cheap and very filling meal. A good lunch will cost from about \$50; for \$80 to \$100 you'll get a blowout. Only a couple of these places are licensed, but you are usually allowed to BYO.

Delhi Club (☎ 2368 1682; Flat C3, 3rd fl, C Block) does good-value Indian and Nepalese food, especially the curry and chicken tandoori (\$20). Pretty flash by Chungking Mansions standards. **Everest Club** (☎ 2316 2718; Flat D6, 3rd fl, D Block) boasts a cornucopia of 'Everest' cuisines but, frankly, the food is less colour-

ful compared to the other offerings in the building. The Spartan **Islamabad Club** (☎ 2721 5362; Flat C3, 4th fl, C Block) serves Indian and Pakistani halal food.

Swagat Restaurant (☎ 2722 5350; Flat C3-4, 1st fl, C Block) is one of the most popular messes in Chungking Mansions, probably less to do with the quality of food than its liquor licence, one of the few held by a mess in this building. **Taj Mahal Club** (☎ 2722 5454; Flat B4, 3rd fl, B Block) is popular with those who like truly hot curries, such as the chicken Madras (\$40). This place can do you *raan mussalam* (\$275), a leg of lamb cooked in the tandoor and feeding six to eight people, if given advance warning.

KYOZASA RESTAURANT Map p92 Japanese \$

☎ 2376 1888; 20 Ashley Rd; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit E)

For an *izakaya* experience, this colourful and cosy Japanese restaurant is as close as you'd get in Hong Kong. It has a menu that extends from sushi to steaks via hotpots. There are reasonably priced set lunches. And unlike **Gomitori** (Map p94; ☎ 2367 8519; Shop LG5, Lower ground fl, Energy Plaza, 92 Granville Rd; dishes \$50-250; ☎ 7pm-1am Mon-Sat) it does not discriminate – they treat you the same whether you're Japanese or not.

WEINSTUBE Map p92 Austrian, German \$

☎ 2376 1800; 1st fl, Honeytex Bldg, 22 Ashley Rd; ☎ noon-1am Mon-Sat; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit E) *Pfannengebratener fleischkäse* (pan-fried meatloaf), *Schweinshaxe* (Bavarian-style pork knuckle) and other hearty mains await you at this Austro-German wine bar, which has been going strong for over two decades. Happy hour is from 3pm to 8pm Monday to Friday and from noon to 8pm on Saturday.

YUMMY VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT Map p92 Vietnamese \$

☎ 3520 4343; 9/F, Canton Plaza, 82-84 Canton Rd; ☎ 11am-11.30pm; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit A1)

This place looks like a fast-food canteen but it's actually a truly authentic Vietnamese restaurant that serves even the most exotic of dishes, such as duck foetus egg (\$18). But no need to go that far if all you want is a bowl of truly satisfying *pho* (from \$25) or roasted pigeon in lemongrass (\$60).

TSIM SHA TSUI EAST

After a bit of a slump in the '90s, Tsim Sha Tsui East has regained much of its life with the extension of KCR East Rail line, which is connected with the MTR and has an exit right outside of Kowloon Shangri-La.

NOBU Map p94 Japanese \$\$\$

2/F InterContinental Hong Kong, 18 Salisbury Rd; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit F)

This is the restaurant where the Hollywood set drops by whenever they are in town, like they would in London, New York and Los Angeles. The *tiradito* (scallop, white fish, live octopus or razor clam; from \$195) with spicy lime dressing that highlights the seafood is world famous, and other Nobu dishes like black cod *saikyo yaki* (black cod in sweet miso; \$268) are also served here.

FOOK LAM MOON Map p94 Cantonese \$\$\$

☎ 2366 0286; Shop 8, 1st fl, 53-59 Kimberley Rd; ☎ 11am-11pm; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit B1)

One of Hong Kong's top Cantonese restaurants, the Fook Lam Moon takes care of you from the minute you walk out of the lifts, with cheongsam-clad hostesses waiting to escort you to your table. The enormous menu contains a lot of unusual and expensive dishes (shark's fin, frog, abalone), which would shoot your bill up to at least \$1000 per head. You might sample the pan-fried lobster balls (from \$440), which are a house speciality.

NADAMAN Map p94 Japanese \$\$\$

☎ 2733 8751; Basement 2, Kowloon Shangri-La, 64 Mody Rd; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit G)

The authentic Japanese food at this restaurant has won it a well-deserved reputation, but the décor falls somewhat short. Though it is expensive, it's worth it, and the set meals at lunch time (\$120 to \$480) are very good value.

SABATINI Map p94 Italian \$\$\$

☎ 2733 2000; 3rd fl, Royal Garden Hotel, 69 Mody Rd East; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit G)

Classy Sabatini is a direct copy of its namesake in Rome, with murals on the walls and ceilings and polished terracotta tiles on the floor. Even classic Italian pasta dishes (\$218 to \$300) such as fettuccine

carbonara come across as light in the best sense, leaving room to sample the exquisite desserts. Set lunches of two/four courses are \$148/250. The wine list is excellent but pricey.

SPRING DEER Map p94 Northern Chinese \$\$

☎ 2366 4012; 1st fl, Lyton Bldg, 42 Mody Rd; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit D2)

This is probably Hong Kong's most famous (though not best) Peking restaurant, and it serves some of the crispiest Peking duck (\$280 for the whole bird) in town. This place is extremely popular, so book several days in advance.

A TOUCH OF SPICE Map p94 Southeast Asian \$\$

☎ 2312 1118; 1st fl, Knutsford 10 Bldg, 10 Knutsford Tce; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit B1)

This is one of several trendy restaurant-bars stacked up Japanese style at 10 Knutsford Terrace. This one does Thai curries, Indonesian and Vietnamese noodles and stir-fried dishes. Most meals are good value, unless you go for the seafood.

RED STONE BAR & GRILL Map p94 Surf & Turf \$\$

☎ 2722 7050; Shop G7-G8, Tsim Sha Tsui Centre, 66 Mody Rd; ☎ 11.45am-midnight; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit G)

One of the newer restaurants that has contributed to the renaissance of Tsim Sha Tsui East, this waterfront venue serves up some truly great steaks and fresh oysters (\$160 for half-dozen). For lunch, try the pizzas (small from \$98, large \$120).

CHANG WON KOREAN RESTAURANT Map p94 Korean \$

☎ 2368 4606; 1G Kimberley St; ☎ noon-5am; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit B1)

If you're looking for truly authentic Korean food, head for this place, just one of several restaurants along a stretch that makes up Tsim Sha Tsui's 'Little Korea'. Try the excellent *bibimbab* (\$100).

GOOD SATAY Map p94 Malaysian \$

☎ 2739 9808; Shop 144-148, 1st fl, Houston Centre, 63 Mody Rd; ☎ noon-10pm; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit G)

This place on the 1st floor of a shopping and office complex doesn't look promising

VEGGIES BEWARE

There are probably more than 101 ways to accidentally eat meat in Hong Kong. Sensitivity towards vegetarians is generally low. If you are a strict vegetarian, you may as well forget about dim sum. A plate of green would be cooked in meat stock and served with oyster sauce. Vegetable dumplings might have been seasoned with lard, and minced pork creeps in when you least expect it. You can tell the staff 'I'm a vegetarian' (*ngāw hai sik jàai ge*) but it almost never helps. In fact, Cantonese food in general is a minefield to vegetarians. Superior broth, made with chicken and Chinese ham, is a prevalent ingredient, even in dishes where no actual meat is visible. In budget Chinese restaurants, chicken powder is used liberally, often in the place of salt. The safe bet for veggies wanting to go Chinese is either a specialised vegetarian eatery or upscale Chinese establishments, especially those in hotels. The chefs would substitute the flavour of meat stock with logan fruits and mushroom broth.

but it serves some of the best (and most authentic) laksa and sate in town, as well as Hainan chicken rice (\$39) that has people travelling in from other parts of town. It's packed at lunch.

WOODLANDS Map p94 Indian, Vegetarian \$

☎ 2369 3718; Shops 5 & 6, Ground fl, Mirror Tower, 61 Mody Rd; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui (exit G) If you can't handle the less-than-salubrious surrounds of Chungking Mansions (p192), this place offers an inexpensive Indian alternative.

YAU MA TEI & MONG KOK

Temple St, the area around the night market, is a traditional place for cheap eats and snacks. Market cuisine, served from a pushcart, includes fish balls or squid on skewers, and there's a large choice on offer from the nearby stalls. Anything upmarket in this part of Kowloon will usually be inside a hotel of some sort.

MING COURT Map p98 Cantonese \$\$

☎ 3552 3388; 6th fl, Langham Place Hotel, 555 Shanghai St, Mong Kok; MTR Mong Kok (exit C3/E1) This hotel restaurant serves excellent modern Cantonese fare in a lovely dining room surrounded by replicas of ancient pottery unearthed in the area. Dim sum is served at lunch time daily.

BALI RESTAURANT Map p97 Indonesian \$

☎ 2780 2902; 10 Nanking St; set lunch from \$69; ☎ noon-11pm; MTR Jordan (exit B1) The food is pretty good and the service friendly, but the best thing about the Bali is its superb tackiness: a permanent 'happy birthday' sign, vinyl booths separated by fake brick walls, and a 'resort'-style bar playing tunes from *South Pacific*. Try the

nasi goreng, the vegetable curry or the pork satay.

TAI PAK Map p97 Taiwanese \$

☎ 2332 4673; Shop 2N, 2 Tung Choi St, Mong Kok; ☎ 11.30am-11.30pm; MTR Mong Kok (exit E2) Diners who come here are being squashed waiting for a table on the narrow pedestrian walkway, and they are being squashed when having to share the small tables with strangers. But they are not gluttons for punishment; they are simply food lovers who enjoy a good *daam daam min* (\$24) and drunken chicken (\$48).

MIU GUTE CHEONG VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT Map p97 Vegetarian \$

☎ 2771 6218; 31 Ning Po St, Yau Ma Tei; ☎ 11am-11pm; MTR Jordan (exit A) Cheap, cheerful and family-oriented vegetarian restaurant. The tofu is fresh and firm, the vegetables are the pick of the market and the tea flows freely. Takeaway dim sum is \$10 to \$15 (three to five pieces).

NEW KOWLOON

There isn't really much that inner Kowloon has to offer that you wouldn't find south of Mong Kok. But the confluence of Thai restaurants in Kowloon City and a few famous local joints may be worth a visit.

MEGA BOX Map pp88-9 Shopping Mall \$-\$\$

38 Wang Chiu Rd, Kowloon Bay; MTR Kowloon Bay (exit A) One of the newest shopping arcades promising all forms of entertainment under one roof, the dining options here span a large spectrum of Asian cuisines, including Japanese, Vietnamese and regional Chinese. Western restaurants are few at the moment but the choice is bound to grow.

KOWLOON CITY THAI RESTAURANTS

Map pp88-9 Thai \$

☎ 5C from Tsim Sha Tsui Star or 101 from Statue Square, Central Kai Tak airport may have shut down in 1998, but the neighbourhood of Kowloon City to the northeast of Tsim Sha Tsui is still worth a journey. This is Hong Kong's Thai quarter, and the area's restaurants are the place for a *tom yum* and green-curry fix. Among the simplest and most authentic (attracting Thai domestics by the bucketful) eateries are those below. Kowloon City, packed with herbalists, jewellers, tea merchants and bird shops, is worth a postprandial look round.

One of the most authentic Thai restaurants in the area, **Friendship Thai Food** (☎ 2382 8671; 38 Kai Tak Rd; dishes \$32-138; ☎ 10.30am-3pm & 6-12.30pm) is always full of Thai domestics. **Golden Orchid Thai** (☎ 2716 1269, 2383 3076; 12 Lung Kong Rd; dishes \$35-65; ☎ noon-1am) is slightly more expensive than the Friendship but the food is excellent.

Hot Basil Thai Cuisine (☎ 2718 1088; Ground fl, 31-33 Kai Tak Rd; mains \$45-110) serves decent Thai in very upmarket (for this neighbourhood) surrounds, while the **Thai Farm Restaurant** (☎ 2382 0992; Ground fl, 21-23 Nam Kok Rd), with its panelled walls and banquettes, looks like a neighbourhood café in Bangkok. **Wong Chun Chun Thai Restaurant** (☎ 2716 6269; 23 Tak Ku Ling Rd; ☎ 11am-2am), arguably the most commercially successful, is an enormous place spread over three floors and keeps later hours than most restaurants in the area.

CHONG FAT CHIU CHOW RESTAURANT Map pp88-9 Chiu Chow \$

☎ 2383 3114, 2383 1296; 60-62 South Wall Rd, Kowloon City; ☎ 11am-midnight; ☎ 5C from Tsim Sha Tsui Star or 101 from Statue Square, Central While this place isn't easy to get to and communications are limited, it has some of the best and freshest Chiu Chow seafood in the territory. Don't miss the crab dishes, *sek-lāu-gài* (chicken wrapped in little egg-white sacs) and the various goose offerings.

ISLAM FOOD Map pp88-9 Halal Chinese \$

☎ 2382 2822; Ground fl, 1 Lung Kong Rd, Kowloon City; ☎ 11am-11pm; ☎ 5C from Tsim Sha Tsui Star or 101 from Statue Square, Central If you fancy trying the cuisine of the Wui (Chinese Muslims), come here. Order the

mutton with scallions on a hotplate, or minced beef with pickled cabbage stuffed into sesame rolls.

WING LAI YUEN Off Map pp88-9 Sichuanese \$

☎ 2726 3818; 15-17 Fung Tak Rd, Wong Tai Sin; ☎ 11am-11.30pm; MTR Wong Tai Sin (exit E) A household name in Hong Kong for *daam daam min*, this unpretentious local eatery actually offers more than that. Try the fiery beef cooked in chilli broth (\$48), or for something tamer, go for the wonton chicken in clay pot (from \$78). English won't work here: bring a phrase book.

NEW TERRITORIES

With very few exceptions, the New Territories is not an area offering a surfeit of culinary surprises. The following recommendations are basically to help you find sustenance along the way.

TSUEN WAN

As in most of the New Towns of the New Territories, the happiest hunting grounds for a snack or lunch in Tsuen Wan are in the shopping mall that – inevitably – tops the MTR station. But there are also often surprises further afield.

PANDA CAFÉ Map p105 International \$\$

☎ 2409 3218; 3rd fl, Panda Hotel, 3 Tsuen Wah St; ☎ 6.30am-midnight; MTR Tsuen Wan (exit B) You might be in the neighbourhood exploring its indigenous culture and charm, but if the foreignness gets a little much the Panda Cafe is a decent choice for some reasonable international cuisine that includes pasta and steaks. Or dive into the buffet (lunch from \$128, dinner from \$248) for everything from sushi to curries.

TUEN MUN

You'll find plenty of Chinese restaurants and noodle shops in Tuen Mun town centre, but it's best to travel out a way for something unusual and delicious.

CAFE LAGOON Map pp50-1 Café \$\$

☎ 2452 8448; LG/F, Hong Kong Gold Coast Hotel, 1 Castle Peak Rd, Castle Peak Bay, Tuen Mun; ☎ 6.30am-midnight; ☎ 53 from Tsuen Wan Ferry Pier

Even if you are not staying at the resort, you may still want to come here and chill by the pool with the international menu that includes sushi, pasta and steak. Or have it all with the buffet, especially at the more lavish evening edition, from \$298.

ASIAN KITCHEN Map pp50-1 Singaporean \$

☎ 3446 1122; 49 Tin Liu New Village, Ma Wan; 🚶 from Ferry Pier No 2 or Tsuen Wan Ferry Pier
A number of foodies on the quest for the best Hainan chicken rice in town have found themselves ending up here in this far-flung place. The *bak kut teh* (herbal pork-rib soup) has also won quite a few fans.

MIU FAT MONASTERY

Map pp50-1 Vegetarian \$

☎ 2461 8567; 18 Castle Peak Rd; lunch \$75; 🕒 noon-3pm; Light Rail line 751
This restaurant, on the 1st floor of Miu Fat Monastery in Lam Tei, due north of Tuen Mun town centre, serves vegetarian meals at lunch time only. The range of dishes varies daily and depends on group size, starting with three dishes for two (which is the minimum number).

NANG KEE GOOSE RESTAURANT

Map pp50-1 Cantonese \$

☎ 2491 0392; 13 Sham Hong Rd, Sun Tsuen, Sham Tseng; roast goose from \$250; 🕒 10.30am-10.30pm; 🚶 234A or 234B from Tsuen Wan town centre
Sham Tseng has long been famous for roast goose, and this place is the most-visited restaurant in the area. Savour the crispy skin and succulent meat of the bird with some cold beer and there can be no complaint. The San Miguel brewery is just across the street.

YUEN LONG

Besides the mall offerings at Yuen Long Plaza, this historical town has a couple of interesting dining places that are actually worth trekking up north for. See the Tai Wing Wah boxed text (p198).

PAK HEUNG KWUN YUM TEMPLE

Map pp50-1 Chinese \$

☎ 2477 5168/9077 5393; 8 Sheung Tsuen, Pak Heung; 🕒 11.30am-2pm (prior booking a must);

\$768 for 10-12 people; 🚶 51 from Nina Tower, Tsuen Wan

The folks here claim that their *poon choy* is the most authentic and the recipe dates back to the end of the Southern Song dynasty (AD 1127-1279), when the defeated emperor fled from the Mongolians to what is the New Territories today. Apparently, the proof is in the duck, stewed the same way it was 800 years ago. Vegetarian food is available upon request. Booking is by the table, each seating 10 to 12.

TAI PO & SURROUNDS

Tai Po town centre features pretty decent street food, such as Shanghaiese meat buns (*sheng jian bao*), and the many Chinese eateries serve up old-style dishes that more Westernised parts of Hong Kong no longer serve, such as *kam ung dan yin choi* (amaranth cooked with salted and cured eggs). Tai Mei Tuk, the springboard for the Plover Cove area some 6km to the northeast, boasts a number of interesting eateries along Ting Kok Rd, many of them Thai.

LITTLE EGRET RESTAURANT

Map pp50-1 International \$

☎ 2657 6628; Tai Po Kau Interactive Nature Centre, 2 Hung Lam Dr, Tai Po Kau; 🕒 10.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 11am-10.30pm Sun; 🚶 70 from Wui Cheung Rd bus terminus, Jordan
In the same complex as the nature centre and the Museum of Ethnology (p122) is this attractive little restaurant serving a mix of dishes, from seafood to pasta (\$78 to \$98).

CHUNG SHING THAI RESTAURANT

Map pp50-1 Thai \$

☎ 2664 5218; 69 Lung Mei Village, Ting Kok Rd, Tai Mei Tuk; 🚶 75K from Tai Po Market KCR
This is the flagship restaurant of the restaurant strip in Tai Mei Tuk, the one that launched the entire fleet. It remains very popular for its authentic Thai curries, soups and fish dishes but caters for less adventurous locals with a few Chinese offerings.

SHA TIN

The multilevel, three-phase shopping mall New Town Plaza (Map p124), connected to the Sha Tin KCR station, has more restaurants and snack bars than you can shake a chopstick at, including a branch of the *Saint's Alp Teahouse*

(☎ 2693 0638; Shop A189, 1st fl, New Town Plaza Phase III; 🕒 11am-11pm), steakhouse **A-1 Restaurant** (☎ 2699 0428; Shop 140-151, 1st fl, New Town Plaza Phase I; mains \$70-190; 🕒 11am-11pm) and its affiliated **A-1 Bakery Shop** (☎ 2697 6377), and **Kaga Japanese Restaurant** (☎ 2603 0545; Shop A191-A193A, 1st fl, New Town Plaza Phase III; rice & noodle dishes \$52-85).

STAR SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Map p124 Cantonese \$

☎ 2635 3788; 55 Tai Chung Kiu Rd; dim sum \$11-18, dinner per person from \$200; 🕒 6am-12.30am; 🚶 680 from MTR Admiralty (east bus terminus) or 85k from Sha Tin KCR

A cement building that's shaped like a giant boat, this is your quintessential tourist restaurant. The food might not be the best you've had, but the experience would certainly be one of a kind.

SUN KEUNG KEE ROASTED GOOSE & SEAFOOD RESTAURANT Map p124 Chinese \$

☎ 2606 1197; 47-50 Holford Garden, Tai Wai; whole roast goose \$220, regular serving \$55; Tai Wai KCR

In most cases you come here for the roast goose and congee when you happen by, maybe en route to another New Territories destination. But this restaurant does have a loyal following of people making a trip here just for the bird.

SAI KUNG

Sai Kung town is chock-a-block with eateries. Here you'll find curry, pizzas, and bangers and mash just as easily as Chinese seafood, but you'd make a special trip here only for that last category. It's reachable by bus 92 from Diamond Hill MTR bus terminus (exit C2).

DIA Map p127

Indian \$
☎ 2791 4466; Shop 2, Block A, Ground fl, 42-56 Fuk Man Rd; 🕒 11am-11pm

This stylish place, all blue satin and rattan, serves North Indian cuisine. Kick off with the mixed starters platter (\$120) before diving into the curries with some sensational *naan* (\$15).

JASPA'S Map p127

International, Fusion \$
☎ 2792 6388; 13 Sha Tsui Path; 🕒 8am-10.30pm

Mon-Sat, 9am-midnight Sun
Jaspa's is an upbeat and casual place serving international and fusion food. Weekday

set lunch is \$88, as is all-day breakfast on the weekend.

PEPPERONI'S PIZZA Map p127 Italian \$

☎ 2791 0394; Lot 1592, Po Tung Rd; pizzas from \$75; 🕒 11am-11pm

This place serves up some decent pizza, although you are advised to stick with the classics and stay away from the hybrid recipes such as the Cajun. The atmosphere is relaxing and fun.

SAUCE Map p127

International \$

☎ 2791 2348; 9 Sha Tsui Path; 🕒 11am-11pm

Mon-Fri, 10am-11pm Sat & Sun
This very stylish restaurant on a narrow pedestrian path in the centre of Sai Kung town has outside seating. There is a range of pasta dishes and the sticky toffee pudding is divine.

CHUEN KEE SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Map p127 Chinese, Seafood \$

☎ 2791 1195; 53 Hoi Pong St; 🕒 11am-11pm

Chuen Kee, the granddaddy of the Sai Kung seafood restaurants, has three several nearby branches to house customers when capacity is maxing out. A standard stir-fried clams costs \$48.

HONEYMOON DESSERT

Map p127 Chinese Desserts \$

☎ 2792 4991; 9, 10A, B&C Po Tung Rd; per person \$30; 🕒 1pm-2.45am

This place, serving Chinese desserts such as sweet thick walnut soup and durian pudding, has become so famous that some people drive in from town for it. Some former loyalists say standards have slipped in recent times, but others remain faithful. The business has since grown to include new locations, such as *Sheung Wan* (Map p70; ☎ 2851 2606; Shop 4-8, G/F, Western Market, 323 Des Voeux Rd Central); 🕒 noon-midnight; MTR Sheung Wan, exit C).

TAP MUN CHAU

You won't starve to death on remote Tap Mun, but you also won't have much of a choice in the way of venues. There's only one restaurant on this far-flung island, which technically belongs to the Tai Po District but is connected to Sai Kung by ferry. The food, including some local seafood, is good and the people helpful and friendly.

NEW HON KEE Map pp50-1 Chinese, Seafood \$

☎ 2328 2428; 4 Tap Mun Hoi Pong St; 🚗 11am-2pm Mon-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 Tap Mun ferry from Ma Liu Shui (University KCR)

This seafood restaurant, popular with islanders and visitors alike, is a short walk northeast of the ferry pier on the way to the Tin Hau temple. The grilled prawns and squid are very good.

OUTLYING ISLANDS

Restaurants and other eateries vary widely from island to island. Some, like those on Lantau (and to a large extent Cheung Chau), are just convenient refuelling stations as you head for (or return from) your destination. Others, such as the seafood restaurants in Lamma's Sok Kwu Wan (opposite) or on Po Toi (p201), are destinations in their own right.

LAMMA

Lamma offers the greatest choice of restaurants and cuisines of any of the Outlying Islands. Most people head directly to Sok Kwu Wan for a fix of Cantonese-style seafood, but Yung Shue Wan has a vast and eclectic range, and there are a couple of other venues elsewhere on the island, including a famous pigeon restaurant, that are worth the trip in itself.

TAI WING WAH

In the old days every district in Hong Kong would have at least one of those gaudy and massive neighbourhood Chinese restaurants, recognisable by the characteristically cheesy décor of red velvet, glaring carpet, and the gold-plated dragon and phoenix sculptures with blinking eyes. That would be where nearby residents go for dim sum, family gatherings and wedding banquets (hence the carved mythical creatures, signifying the union of a man and a woman). **Tai Wing Wah** (Map pp50-1; 2/F, Koon Wong Mansion, 2-6 On Ning Rd; all dishes \$48; 🚗 6am-midnight; 🚶 968 or N968 from Tin Hau bus terminus) was once the neighbourhood Chinese restaurant of Yuen Long, a New Territories township not far from the border with the mainland. But like its counterparts in other districts, changing times and changing tastes forced it into closure in the early '90s. Its head chef and managing partner Hugo Leung Man-to migrated to Canada, but made a comeback five years later. He decided that after years of being fed industrialised foods, Hong Kong diners were missing the good ol' days of no-frills dishes and seasonal produce. He reopened Tai Wing Wah and reintroduced many Cantonese and walled village dishes, which most other restaurants had stopped serving because of their labour intensiveness and low profitability.

Hugo sources local ingredients from small farms and food producers whenever possible, and compensates with his cookery skills if industrialised produce has to be used. Hugo thinks shrimps in Hong Kong, mostly farmed in China, taste bland, and he boosts them with Bexter's lobster bisque – an idea he came up with during his time in North America. His ideas work. People have been zooming into this far corner of town to line up for tables, and to savour everything from five-taste chicken (seasoned with soy sauce, star anise, Sichuan pepper, nutmeg and dried mandarin peel) and stir-fried translucent bean noodles with dried shrimps and vegetable, through to the signature steamed rice served with lard and Malay sponge cake. Leung has hosted TV food shows and writes newspaper columns on the subject. He is probably one of the few remaining chefs in Hong Kong who know how to make a dish out of pig's oviducts.

Yung Shue Wan

Yung Shue Wan has a large choice of places to eat. Along its main (and only) street, not only will you find Chinese restaurants, but also Western, vegetarian, Thai and even Indian ones. To get here, take a ferry from Central Pier in front of Exchange Square or from Aberdeen near the wholesale fish market.

MAN FUNG SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Map p132 Chinese, Seafood \$\$

☎ 2982 0719; 5 Main St; 🚗 11am-10pm

You can't judge a book by its cover, but you can certainly judge a seafood restaurant by its tanks. The live seafood is displayed outside, all seemingly having a good life in what looks like pristine water, until you end it by sending it to the kitchen. Don't be surprised to see your fellow diners diving into basketball-size spider crabs.

PIZZA MILANO Map p132 Italian \$\$

☎ 2982 4848; Flat A, Ground fl, 2 Back St; small/medium/large pizzas \$50/62/98; 🚗 6-11pm Mon-Fri, noon-11pm Sat & Sun

If you're looking for pizza, pasta, calzone or crostini, Lamma's only Italian restaurant is the right choice.

BOOKWORM CAFÉ Map p132 Café, Vegetarian \$

☎ 2982 4838; 79 Main St; 🚗 10am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat, 9am-9pm Sun

This place is not just a great vegetarian café-restaurant with fruit juices and organic wine (\$35 per glass), but a second-hand bookshop and an internet café (\$0.50 per minute) as well.

DELI LAMMA CAFÉ Map p132 Café \$

☎ 2982 1583; 36 Main St; set lunch \$70; 🚗 9am-1am

This relaxed café-restaurant serves everything, and that means everything. The menu features everything from continental fare leaning towards the Mediterranean, with a fair few pasta dishes and pizzas. It has an excellent bar and views of the harbour.

Hung Shing Yeh

This popular beach southeast of Yung Shue Wan, about 500m from the pier, has a convenient waterfront hotel where you can lunch on the terrace. It also boasts one of the most famous nonseafood restaurants on the Outlying Islands.

Sok Kwu Wan

An evening meal at Sok Kwu Wan is an enjoyable way to end a trip to Lamma. The restaurants line the waterfront on either side of the ferry pier and will be chock-a-block on weekend nights with Chinese and expats who have arrived by ferry, on boats laid on by the restaurants themselves, on company junks or on the ostentatious yachts known locally as 'gin palaces'. Most of the dozen or so restaurants offer the same relatively high-quality seafood at similar prices, but a few places stand out from the pack. There's a ferry service from Central Pier in front of Exchange Square.

RAINBOW SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Map p132 Chinese, Seafood \$\$

☎ 2982 8100; Shops 1A-1B, Ground fl, 23-24 First St; 🚗 11am-11pm

The Rainbow, with a waterfront location, specialises in seafood, especially steamed grouper, lobster and abalone. A plus is that when you book a table, you have the option of being transported by small ferry from Queen's Pier in Central (up to seven sailings on weekdays from 2.40pm to 9pm, and up to a dozen on weekends

from 11.30am to 9pm) or from Aberdeen (three optional sailings at 6.15pm, 7.15pm and 8pm).

TAI YUEN RESTAURANT

Map p132 Chinese, Seafood \$

☎ 2982 8386, 2982 8391; 15 First St; 🚗 10am-11pm

This small, intimate place offers less frenetic, friendlier service than most of the other places in Sok Kwu Wan.

Mo Tat Wan

Surprisingly, in this relatively remote corner of Lamma there's an upmarket Western restaurant, **The Bay** (Map p132; ☎ 2982 8186; 7 Beach Front; mains \$98-138; 🚗 11am-10pm; 🚶 from Aberdeen near the wholesale fish market).

CHEUNG CHAU

In Cheung Chau village, south of the cargo pier and at the start of Tai Hing Tai Rd, there are a number of food stalls with fish tanks where you can choose your favourite finned or shelled creatures at more or less market prices and then pay the stall holders to cook them the way you like.

Pak She Praya Rd, running northwest off Praya St, is loaded with seafood restaurants that face the typhoon shelter and its flotilla of junks and sampans.

There's a ferry service from Central Pier in front of Exchange Square.

EAST LAKE Map p143 Cantonese \$

☎ 2981 3869; 85 Tung Wan Rd; 🚗 10am-10pm

This Cantonese restaurant, away from the waterfront and close to Tung Wan Beach, is popular with locals and expats, especially in the evening when tables are set up outside.

HOMETOWN TEAHOUSE Map p143 Café \$

☎ 2981 5038; 12 Tung Wan Rd; 🚗 noon-11pm midnight

This wonderfully relaxed place run by an amiable Japanese couple serves lunch and dinner, but the afternoon tea – sushi (\$10 to \$15 each), pancakes, tea – is what you should come for. It's convenient to Tung Wan Beach.

NEW BACCARAT Map p143 Chinese, Seafood \$

☎ 2981 0606; 9A Pak She Praya Rd; set meals from \$138; 🚗 11am-10.30pm

LAMMA & LANTAU

Spending a day over the weekend on one of the outlying islands is a popular pastime in Hong Kong, and the two that are most famous for dining are Lamma Island (p198) and Lantau Island (below). The former is famous for its waterfront seafood restaurants, found both in the most populated and cosmopolitan village of Yung Shue Wan, in the north, and more rustic Sok Kwu Wan on the east side of the island, where a handful of fish farms remain. The locally produced shrimp paste, which can be bought for about \$20 a bottle from many of the shops on the village's main artery Sok Kwu Wan First St, is famous. The trail between the two villages, divided by a small hill, is popular among leisure hikers. The journey will take you through Hung Shing Ye Beach, where popular stopover **Concerto Inn** (Map p132; ☎ 2982-1668; 28 Hung Shing Ye Beach, Yung Shue Wan; ☎ 8am-10pm) is located. There is also the famous **Kin Hing Tofu Dessert** (Map p132; Yung Shue Wan Back St; ☎ 10am-6pm Sat, Sun & public holidays) and well-known pigeon restaurant **Han Lok Yuen** (Map p132; ☎ 2982 0608; 16-17 Hung Shing Yeh Wan; pigeon \$55 each; ☎ 11.30am-8.30pm Tue-Sat, 11.30am-7pm Sun & public holidays).

Lantau Island, the largest land mass of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, is home to many villages, luxury residential area Discovery Bay and the new satellite town of Tung Chung. Mui Wo, the main village whose ferry pier was once the only connecting point between Lantau and the city area, offers cafés and passable seafood restaurants. The newly renovated Discovery Bay Plaza features a range of dining options, most of which are branches of restaurant chains from the city, except **Hemingway's** (opposite). In Tung Chung, the main shopping mall Citygate offers everything from Thai and Vietnamese to Shanghaiese and Kentucky Fried Chicken, but it's nothing to write home about. The adjacent **Novotel Citygate Hong Kong hotel** (Map p136; ☎ 3602 8888; 20 Tai Tong Rd; MTR Tung Chung, exit C), though, has a pretty decent Mediterranean restaurant called **Olea**, which serves tapas and pizzas fresh from the grill. Tai O, on the far west of the island, has lost some of its fishing village charm in recent years because of thoughtless development. But it remains a relaxing place for a day trip and some seafood.

This place has been around for so long you have to believe that it's doing something right. Seafood-wise it serves everything from a steamed fish served with soy sauce, ginger and scallion to mantis shrimp cooked with peppered salt.

LANTAU

The lion's share of Lantau's restaurants is, naturally enough, in Mui Wo (Silvermine Bay), but you certainly won't starve in places further afield, such as the settlements along South Lantau Rd, on the Ngong Ping Plateau and in Tai O. Discovery Bay has its own lineup of eateries around Discovery Bay Plaza (Map p136).

Mui Wo

You'll find a slew of restaurants, noodle shops and bars to the southwest of the ferry pier. There are also some restaurants on the way to Silvermine Bay Beach and on the beach itself. For some pub recommendations, see p213. There's a ferry service from Central Pier in front of Exchange Square.

SILVERMINE BEACH HOTEL

Map p139 International \$\$
☎ 2984 8295; Tung Wan Tau Rd
The coffee shop and Chinese restaurant at this relatively flashy hotel is no great

shakes, but it can be recommended for its all-you-can-eat buffet (\$138) from Sunday to Friday and its barbecue buffet (\$198) on Saturday.

BAHÇE Map p139 Turkish \$

☎ 2984 0222; Shop 19, Ground fl, Mui Wo Centre, 3 Ngan Wan Rd; kebabs from \$80; ☎ 11.30am-11pm Mon-Fri, 10am-11pm Sat & Sun
'The Garden' might be a somewhat ambitious name for this small eatery but it has all our Turkish favourites, including *sigara böreği* (filo parcels filled with cheese) and *yaprak dolması* (stuffed vine leaves), as well as kebabs and felafel.

LA PIZZERIA Map p139 Italian \$

☎ 2984 8933; Ground fl, Grand View Mansion, 11C Mui Wo Ferry Pier Rd
Most people come here for the pizza (\$45 to \$95), but there are lots of pasta choices and main courses such as fajitas and barbecued sparereibs.

Discovery Bay

The restaurants in the circular plaza opposite the ferry pier at Discovery Bay (Map p136) offer a wide variety of cuisines. There's a ferry service from Central Pier in front of Exchange Square.

HEMINGWAY'S

Map p136 Caribbean, Barbecue \$\$
☎ 2987 8855; Shop G09, Block A, Discovery Bay Plaza; ☎ 10am-2am; 🍷 Discovery Bay
It may not feel exactly like Key West or Havana here, but when the weather is clear, this beachfront restaurant makes for a great escape. Try the barbecue salmon jerky (\$120) and the great cocktails (\$58).

South Lantau Rd

Two of the villages along South Lantau Rd, Lantau's main east-west thoroughfare, have decent restaurants from which to choose.

GALLERY Map p136 Barbecue \$\$

☎ 2980 2582; 26 Tong Fuk Village; ☎ 6pm-midnight Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun; 🍷 1, 2 or 3

This Middle Eastern(ish) restaurant, on a terrace with an harbour overlooking South Lantau Rd, has some good international dishes and, on the weekend, a decent barbecue, with Australian seafood, kebabs and other grills, such as the signature black Angus. Oven-baked pizzas are another must-try.

OOH LA LA! Map p136 French, Mediterranean \$\$

☎ 2546 3543; Pui O Beach; ☎ 10.30am-11.30pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-10pm Sun; 🍷 1 or 2 from Mui Wo

This simple place at the Treasure Island on Lantau hotel (Map p136) has a meat and seafood barbecue in the summer and fondue (\$280 to \$320 for two) in the winter. The terrace directly on the beach is a bonus, as is the Ooh La La! signature Pui-O-Punch.

STOEP RESTAURANT

Map p136 Mediterranean, South African \$\$

☎ 2980 2699; 32 Lower Cheung Sha Village; ☎ 11am-10pm Tue-Sun; 🍷 1 or 2 from Mui Wo
This Mediterranean-style restaurant with a huge terrace right on Lower Cheung Sha Beach has acceptable meat and fish dishes and a South African *braai* (barbecue; \$80 to \$150). Be sure to book on the weekend.

Ngong Ping

An artificial Chinese village has been built alongside the ill-fated Ngong Ping Skyrail, featuring a range of casual dining options that include noodle joints, fusion restaurants, Starbucks as well as a branch of **Honeymoon Des-**

sert (Map p136; see also p197). For some no-frills vegetarian treats, the Po Lin Monastery is only a short walk away.

PO LIN VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT

Map p136 Vegetarian \$

☎ 2985 5248; Ngong Ping; set meals regular/deluxe \$60/100; ☎ 11.30am-4.30pm; 🍷 23 from Mui Wo

The famous monastery (p135) in west-central Lantau has a good reputation for its inexpensive but substantial vegetarian food. The simple restaurant is in the covered arcade to the left of the main monastery building. Buy your ticket there or at the ticket office below the Tian Tan Buddha statue. Sittings are every half-hour.

Tai O

Tai O, a village on the western coast, is famous for its excellent seafood restaurants, many of which display their names in Chinese only. Take bus 4 from Mui Wo.

PENG CHAU

The couple of waterfront pubs and restaurants on Peng Chau used to survive on business from residents of the Discovery Bay across the narrow channel. But the renovation of Discovery Bay Plaza that has seen many new dining options springing up spells the end for them. No one is going to starve here though, with the many local Chinese places serving up noodles and rice. Take a ferry from Central Pier in front of Exchange Square.

GREENY GRASSLAND Map p147 Café \$

☎ 2983 8182; 12 Po Peng St; ☎ noon-9pm
The food here is nothing to write home about, but the ultrafriendly service is. Take a seat outside, enjoy some pasta (with soup and coffee for \$28) or the signature pork loin bun (\$10) and soak in the village charm.

PO TOI

MING KEE SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Map pp50-1 Seafood \$\$

☎ 2849 7038; ☎ 11am-11pm; 🍷 Po Toi ferry from Ma Liu Shui (University KCR)

This is one of a handful of restaurants in the main village of Po Toi Island, south of Hong Kong Island, and is by far the most popular with day-trippers. Make sure you book ahead on the weekend.

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