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**eating out**



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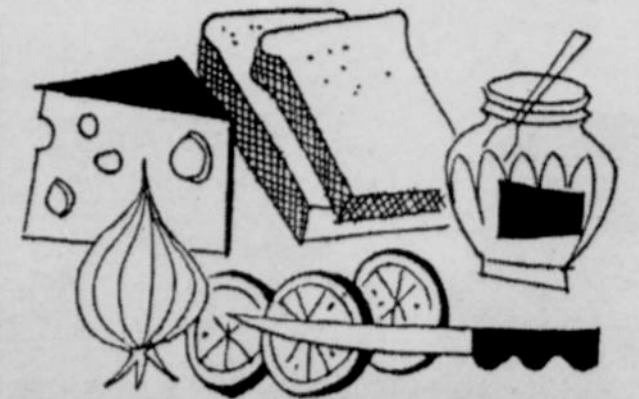


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**epiqueerean**

BY MICHAEL E BARRETT

**East by Northwest**

The Western world's most popular Asian import isn't cars, toys, electronic gadgets or even apparel, but cuisine. You'll find a diverse and outstanding selection of Asian restaurants in Northwest Portland's dining hub.

**BeWon Korean Restaurant • 1203 N.W. 23rd Ave.**

Tucked in a cubbyhole of an office building sits a true gem of culinary delight. BeWon won me over on all counts. The flavor of its creations, presentation and impeccable service are all the reasons for return visits. Traditional Japchae, an appetizer of cool glassy noodles made from sweet potatoes, features a tantalizing hint of red pepper spice. Koreans are famous for their beef marinades, but BeWon's recipe is a patriotic tribute to the homeland. Galbi short ribs arrive simmering in this concoction of sesame, soy and garlic. Temper the spice with rice to diminish the sweaty brow factor for this and other dishes, particularly the Kimchee cabbage pickled in flaming hot red pepper.

**E-San Thai Cuisine • 2764 N.W. Thurman St.**

Though not quite as common as Starbucks, Thai restaurants have popped up all over Portland. E-San leaves an indelible mark. Their Pad Mamoung achieves a realm of fabulousness so remarkable, it compels me to stop for a moment and savor its combination of mango, peppers, onions, basil and chili sauce stir-fried with chicken. The huge chunks of fresh mango make this perhaps the best Thai dish I've ever enjoyed. Move on to E-San's beef Satay, which again exceeds all expectations. Reminiscent of Korean barbecue, you could forgo the auxiliary peanut sauce and enjoy it on its own, though that would be a bit unfair to your taste buds. Pad Thai rice noodles, the standard-bearer of Thai cuisine, will impress you—twice. Portions are so generous, you'll be eating half your order the next day for lunch.

**Tibet Kitchen • 103 N.W. 21st Ave.**

In the mood for some good yak? You'll find it at Tibet Kitchen, where the dumplings feature large meatballs of Washington state yak meat wrapped in thick, tender shells. Mixed with vegetables, onions, garlic, ginger and cilantro, this unique delicacy leaves a hint of honey on your palate. Featured appetizers include Lephing, a mung bean cake that has the consistency of a taut flan drizzled with a slightly sour and full, rich flavor of spicy soy vinegar, garlic, chili and chives. Phing Alla is a hand-rolled Tibetan crepe filled with bean thread, vegetables and shiitake mushrooms similar to Southeast Asian salad rolls. Don't miss the house blend herb tea—a magnificent mixture of cloves, ginger, cinnamon and cardamom.

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