



INTERNATIONAL FLAVORS ON MAIN STREET USA

Chef Wan Pan
PHOTOS BY TODD COOPER

Noodle N Thai dishes up a taste of Thailand BY RACHAEL CARNES

As a “theater mom” whose kids more often than not perform at the Wildish Theater on Main Street in Springfield, I’ve put in my time walking those blocks in search of a tasty lunch or dinner before a show.

And in the 10 years or so that I’ve been on my quest for diverse and interesting food options, I’ve seen an uptick in possibilities — downtown Springfield is officially hopping.

A restaurant that first developed a big following for its takeout-only chow, **Addis Ethiopian** will open its first storefront. Rejoice! Some of us might have a slight addiction to its *kik wot*, split peas simmered in turmeric, onion and garlic, or *fasolia*, a scrumptious carrot and green bean dish, slightly spicy, and best scooped with as much *injera* bread — a moist, tangy, sourdough flatbread — as you can stuff in your face.

We’re delighted that Addis will have a brick-and-mortar restaurant, because this is food that’s meant to share.

Takeout is good, but tucking into a big platter of this stuff with your family and friends is just better.

Also in the works? The vegans are coming.

Yep — **Cornbread Café**, those popular dairy-egg-meat-free alchemists, will open a new shop smack-dab in the action on Main Street, offering their signature sandwiches, soups, salads and vegan comfort-food favorites.

But my go-to is still **Noodle N Thai**. Chef Wan Pan whips up fresh, hearty meals with a constant eye to quality ingredients.

The restaurant is in a former diner — it still has the booths and the counter seating of a bygone era. But from there, your taste buds depart for Bangkok, where Pan learned to cook in her family’s restaurant.

A platter of appetizers features garden rolls with delicate chicken, bean noodles and diced carrots. Sharing top billing are morsels of nutty pumpkin tempura and crab rangoon, with its crispy shell and creamy, warm interior.

I’m fussy when it comes to *tom kha* soup — and Noodle N Thai does a nice job. The broth is flavorful and richly aromatic, with sweet coconut notes and just the right hit of spice. Fresh onion, mushroom, tomatoes and galangal elevate slices of tender chicken. (If you have a cold, this soup will destroy it.)

A roasted duck curry is dense and meaty, with a delectable umami texture and flavor, sheltered with a balance of basil, lemongrass and red curry.

Save room for dessert, and order the sticky rice ice cream. Clouds of fresh vanilla coconut ice cream sit atop warm sticky rice, dotted with peanuts. It’s the ultimate comfort food, and cheaper than an airline ticket to Thailand. ■

Noodle N Thai is located at 553 Main Street. They’re open 11 am to 9 pm Monday through Friday and noon to 9 pm Saturday and Sunday; 541-505-7349. Neighboring Cornbread Café, in the historic Stevens-Perkins Building (330-336 Main Street) and Addis Ethiopian (321 Main Street) opening soon.

Coconut shrimp



Ice cream with sweet sticky rice

