

# Review | Chi Kitchen

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No Comments



*Grace Cain discovers contemporary pan-Asian cuisine in the heart of Central London*

Confused tourists, manic-eyed shoppers clutching oversized carrier bags, bands of performers banging out songs on up-turned bins and saucepans...no doubt about it, walking along Oxford Street can be something of an overwhelming experience.

Thankfully, there is a way to escape the chaos. Tucked away at the very back of Debenhams department store, **Chi Kitchen** offers a tempting selection of pan-Asian culinary delights in a relaxed and welcoming setting that promises to whisk you away from the noise of Central London – if only temporarily.

Boasting a wide range of dishes characterised by contemporary presentation and authentic flavours, Chi Kitchen is the first restaurant venture for Masterchef 2014 winner, Chef Ping Coombes. Now celebrating one year since it opened on the ground floor of Debenhams, it seemed about time that we saw for ourselves what all the fuss was about.



Seated in a corner of the already buzzing restaurant, we enjoyed a glass of prosecco and a peruse of a menu that invites diners to embark on a culinary adventure through South East Asia; Thai, Malaysian, Chinese and Japanese cuisines are all strongly represented, alongside dishes from Vietnam and Korea.

To begin, I chose vegetable spring rolls, which were light and full of flavour. My companion opted for the vegetable sushi rolls, and I just had to try one (for research purposes, of course) – but it was so delicious, I ended up going back for another. Served on an elegant long plate and wreathed dramatically by smoke emitting from a small jug (just for decoration, our waitress explained, as I stared at said jug in wonder) this is one for the food-Instagrammer, as well as for the sushi-lover.



On to the main event. From the varied pan-Asian menu I selected Nyonya curry with vegetables, a Malaysian dish with a warm and subtly spicy heart. Flavoursome and satisfying without feeling too heavy, I happily finished the entire dish. My friend opted for Thai Green Curry with vegetables, and her plate was also completely empty by the time our waitress came to collect it.

As an accompaniment to our curry dishes, we enjoyed a portion of the steamed jasmine rice and a portion of the Cha Bee Hoon noodles, both of which proved to be delicious. This was on the recommendation of our waitress, who was incredibly helpful and attentive throughout the evening, and who had been more than happy to explain to a couple of inexperienced diners which flavours and sides would pair well together.



Main course down, and it was on to the highlight of my Chi Kitchen experience – the dessert. On another stellar recommendation of the waitress, I ordered the Chocolate Sphere; a globe of chocolate, over which is poured hot caramel sauce until the casing melts away to reveal a perfectly spherical heart of vanilla ice cream. It was rich and irresistibly sweet, with the perfect balance of textures and flavours; is there anything better than hot, chocolate-caramel sauce and cold ice-cream? My dining companion tried the toffee cheesecake, which was deliciously creamy and sweet, with a melt-in-the-mouth biscuit base.

Chi Kitchen seems to offer a solution to most culinary quandaries commonly presented by this part of London. Need a break from shopping? Chi kitchen. Quick after-work dinner & drinks? Chi Kitchen. Want a pre-theatre bite to eat in a restaurant not completely overpriced and overrun? Look no further than Chi Kitchen. A stylish, all-purpose restaurant with a menu that offers variety without compromising on taste; I will definitely return (especially if the chocolate sphere remains on the menu!).