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Taste of Thailand

Delicious lunch specials for under \$12 are just a short walk from El Camino

Story and photo by Erica Lee

Located across the street from El Camino on Crenshaw Boulevard, Noodles Noodles' lunch specials offer a diverse range of dishes from fried rice and salad to noodle soups and curries for a reasonable price.

At first glance, Noodles Noodles is inconspicuous from the lineup of storefronts populating the strip mall it resides in. Visitors are greeted by a cheerful, airy dining room where colorful paintings of boats and elephants hang on saffron yellow walls. Pots of white and purple orchids and leafy tropical plants wait by the door while soft music wafts in from the television mounted in the corner.

From 11 a.m. until 3 p.m., from Monday to Friday, diners have their pick of 11 dishes for the lunch special ranging from pad thai to fried rice, soup to four kinds of curry for \$11.95.

Each lunch special comes with steamed, fluffy white rice and a side of crispy wontons fried to a golden brown crisp and enveloping the tender chicken center or a green salad garnished with shoestring slices of carrot and tossed in a tangy dressing.

The green curry is a springtime-colored medley of colors and flavors. The medallions of carrots, slices of red bell pepper and green beans remain crisp and crunchy as it swims in a soup of creamy coconut milk flavored with spicy green curry paste, lemongrass and whole mint leaves. The broccoli florets that had sunk to the bottom added a pleasant surprise while thick strips of tender white meat chicken floated on the surface.

The thin rice noodles of the pad thai are sweet and slightly spicy, with a shock of red cabbage on the side and sprinkling of slices of long green onions on top. The soft noodles are enhanced by the crunchy
d i c e d
peanuts
and

bean sprouts.

The Thai fried rice is fluffy and fragrant with an abundance of velvety chunks of tofu, translucent slices of onion, medallions of carrot and green onions and golden fried eggs.

The richly spiced Thai ice tea (\$4) is tempered by the sweet milk poured on top that seeps its way through the gaps in the ice to the bottom of the glass. A couple of revolutions of a spoon transforms the two-toned drink into a burnt ochre beverage that balances the rich spices of the cardamon and star anise with the creamy milk.

The Thai iced coffee (\$4) is so strong, it can perk up even the most sleep deprived El Camino student. The condensed milk floating on the surface takes the edge off the bitterness from the strong black coffee while keeping its caffeine-packed punch.

Noodles Noodles is an up-and-coming lunchtime destination for El Camino students looking for filling, delicious food at a reasonable price. The diverse flavor profile of rich spices and refreshing herbs adds a whole other dimension to familiar Thai comfort food such as pad thai and curry. Even during its busiest lunch rush, the employees are friendly and fast.

Come stop by anytime before 3 to try out a taste of Thailand. And tell Daisy and Macky that Warrior Life sent you.

Location: 15900 Crenshaw Blvd. Unit C, Gardena, CA 90249
Phone: 424-266-9564

Hours: Monday-Sunday 11 a.m. - 3 p.m./4 p.m.
- 8:30 p.m.

Website: www.noodlesnoodlesthai.com

