



Huong Phuc

Just plain tasty

What the eateries of Sydney's Marrickville lack in aesthetics they make up for with plentiful servings of authentic Asian food.

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AFTER MANY YEARS of migration Marrickville, in Sydney's inner west, has developed a vibrant mix of cultures and a buzzing culinary scene. The postwar years saw the area dominated by Greek residents, but today a mix of Vietnamese and Chinese locals means the range of good, cheap Asian eateries and providores is unrivalled outside Chinatown. Avoid the crowds and parking problems you're likely to encounter in the city and cruise the strips of Victoria, Marrickville and Illawarra Roads. But remember, if you're coming to Marrickville, come hungry. ➤



Mr Chao BBQ Bar

Marrickville has many good places serving pho, Vietnamese aromatic soup



Bay Tinh



Pho Bac Hai Duong



Thuy Huong

EAT

BAY TINH

**318 Victoria Road.
(02) 9560 8673.**

Although this popular spot has just had a facelift and new owners, the menu remains unchanged, with delectably wobbly rice cakes for starters and a heap of tabletop hotpots for mains. The whole fish is a must – crisp and gingery – with entertainment thrown in as your waitress deftly extracts the skeleton in a single piece.

EKA RIA

**393 Illawarra Road.
(02) 9554 6119.**

If anything sums up Indonesian food it's *ayam goreng* (fried

chicken). At Eka Ria, they do it to perfection with superbly crisp skin and tender, juicy flesh. But don't forget the zillions of noodle, rice, seafood and salad dishes, all authentically done to keep their regular Indonesian expat customers happy.

MR CHAO BBQ BAR

**289 Marrickville Road.
(02) 9518 3186.**

First the glazed ducks and *char sui* (barbecue pork) hanging in the window will grab your attention, or maybe those shiny quails with maltose-syrup stalactites clinging to their ankles. There's nothing for it but to charge on in, order a

serve of, say, the soy chicken with rice and vegies to eat there and then some roast pork and crackling to take home.

HUNG CHEUNG

**CHINESE RESTAURANT
338 Marrickville Road.**

(02) 9560 4681.

If you're after decent yum cha without parking hassles, this is the place. All the classics are there and they're all good: prawn gow gee, barbecue pork buns, Chinese broccoli with oyster sauce, garlic-chive dumplings and a great selection of specials, such as pipis in XO sauce. Come at night for the fabulous mud crab with glass noodles.

PHO BAC HAI DUONG

**304 Illawarra Road.
(02) 9559 5078.**

Marrickville is blessed with many good places serving *pho*, Vietnamese aromatic noodle soup, and quite frankly they're all pretty tasty. This place is particularly popular for its *bun bo hue*, a spicy beef version from the central Vietnamese Imperial City, known for its great food.

THUY HUONG COFFEE LOUNGE

**252 Illawarra Road.
(02) 9558 4022.**

Perched on the corner of an arcade, this simple little spot does a brisk trade in pho, the beef version a particular



Lucky Meats



Huong Phuoc



Nhat Tan



Nhat Tan

Years of migration have led to a vibrant mix of cultures and a buzzing culinary scene

favourite with its generous grating of fresh ginger on top. Join the tables of families and students munching on fresh prawn rolls and crunchy Vietnamese pancakes bursting with beansprouts, school prawns and pickled vegies.

NHATTAN
310 Illawarra Road.
(02) 9558 4309.

Yes, it serves pho – this is Marrickville, after all – but that’s not all. In business for more than 16 years and fitting the formula with its mirrored walls, tabletop tissue boxes and rattling trays of condiments, Nhat Tan also does a good laksa or, if you’re after

something less liquid, order the salt-and-pepper squid.

PROVIDORES
 If a few hours mooching around Marrickville doesn’t inspire you to cook, I don’t know what will. Here’s where to stock up on great Asian ingredients – usually at bargain prices.

GROCERIES
HUONG PHUOC
297 Illawarra Road.
(02) 9559 2908.

Fresh fruit and vegetables play a starring role. Tables out the front and down the middle of the shop are laden with mangosteens, lychees, limes, tiny sugar bananas, galangal

and bunches of morning glory. Press on for myriad noodles – fresh and dried – sauces, nuts and exotic sweets. Plus, there’s always a good supply of ready-boxed fresh prawn rolls and sticky rice in banana leaves. Did somebody say picnic?

MEAT
LUCKY - MARRICKVILLE’S BEST MEATS
275 Illawarra Road.
(02) 9558 3118.

That’s their name, but I’m inclined to agree. This brightly lit, pristine place has a rapid turnover of all kinds of pork, lamb and beef cuts, as well as a good range of ducks and other poultry. Anything you

care to order they’ll probably have and it’ll be spanking fresh. But at these prices, don’t expect it to be organic.

FISH
FAROS BROTHERS SEAFOOD
34 Buckley Street.
(02) 9519 7878.

Tucked away from the main action, this place might not be Asian, but that doesn’t stop canny Vietnamese, Chinese, Thai and Korean shoppers taking a ticket and perusing the incredible variety of whole and filleted fish as well as shellfish, sea urchins and squid as they wait to be served. And they have the best-value smoked salmon I’ve found anywhere. 🌐