

Top 10 international restaurants

By Scott & Therese Garceau

BEST SINGAPOREAN/ MALAYSIAN

Asia has arguably the best cuisines in the world, and one restaurant excels at most of them (the Southeast Asian ones, anyway). Banana Leaf dishes out greatest hits from Malaysia, India, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam with flair and the stamp of authenticity only chefs native to the region can give. If you doubt, just peer through the kitchen window at the Malaysian and Indian cooks tossing roti canai like pizza.

At Banana Leaf, the recommended mode of eating is pan-Asian, letting your taste buds travel like a parachute journalist. Sample Singapore in the mussels or clams stir-fried in chili sauce. Visit India through tilapia fish drizzled with Assam sambal. Taste a bit of China in that comfort food classic, Hainanese chicken rice. Banana Leaf deflates the myth that Filipinos don't like spicy food. And the atmosphere is strictly casual, communal and laid-back — eating from a banana leaf (with your hands, preferably) tends to reinforce a relaxed vibe.

Banana Leaf is on the 2nd level of The Podium, Ortigas Center, tel. 687-6808 and 687-6818, with four other branches in Greenbelt 3, Makati; Power Plant Mall in Rockwell, Makati; The Block in SM North Edsa; and Robinsons Place-Manila.



Asian favorite: Freshly made *roti canai* at Banana Leaf



Mussel control: Banana Leaf's stir-fried mussels in Singaporean chili sauce