

TURKEY meal

nt,

M (Dinner)

A

purchase!!*

*purchase of \$20 or more
expires 12/1/2010



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\$2.25

mini Pizzas
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live and work as independent citizens. Enter Monkey Business, a café that is part of Hart Community Homes' effort to reach these teens and give them employment and life experience. Stop by for the addictive breakfast burrito (it has to be the bacon), or drop by for a pick-me-up in the afternoon. The furniture is completely mismatched and supremely comfortable; stacks of games, shelves full of books and a piano provide alternatives to the free WiFi. Monkey Business also uses local organic products whenever possible; a bowl of fruit on the counter in summer looks like a farmers'-market grab bag of peaches, plums and grapes rather than an airport café still-life of apples, oranges and bananas.

301 E. Amerige, Fullerton, (714) 526-2933;
www.hartcommunityhomes.org. Open daily,
7 a.m.-3 p.m. \$.

READERS' CHOICE: KÉAN COFFEE

BEST TEA HOUSE Tranquil Tea Lounge

Tea snobs, this is your Mecca, and its owners are your kin. Michélee Phelps and her brother, Jonathan Munsayac, have stocked their tea store and café with so many tea varieties you could conceivably visit for a hundred consecutive days and never repeat the same drink. Black, green, oolong, white, pu-erh, rooibos, maté, herbal and tisane constitute the base types of brewing leaves, but then there are blends with dried fruit, chocolate, even chiles. And what's tea without something to nibble? Sandwiches, appetizers good enough for the *Top Chef* judges, and the occasional dainty desserts are offered. They are like catnip to the ladies because, above all, Tranquil is a proudly feminine refuge for mom groups, as well as the site of bridal showers and other rites of passage for the prototypical adult female who still likes tea parties. You'll catch the occasional human with a Y chromosome, but it's likely to be a homesick Brit out for spot of tea.

106 W. Wilshire Ave., Fullerton, (714) 869-3577;
www.tranquiltealounge.com. Open Mon.-Sat.,
9 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sun, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. \$.

BEST VEGETARIAN/VEGAN RESTAURANT Zen Vegetarian

Like the best magic shows, you'll come away from Zen Vegetarian marveling at its mastery of deception. Never before has eating meatless been so fun and so darned discombobulating. If you walk in oblivious of its mission statement, you are liable to walk out clueless that what you just ate contained no trace of an animal. The fake chicken not only tastes like chicken, but also looks like chicken, complete with wings and drumsticks. The shaken beef has both the peppery notes and the pep of the real thing. And the tofu? Well, it's tofu.

9329 Bolsa Ave., Westminster, (714) 895-3637;
www.zenvegetarian.com. Open daily, 8 a.m.-
9 p.m. \$-\$\$.

READERS' CHOICE: NATIVE FOODS

know what it is: loud, crowded and the kind of place where alcohol flows as freely as the good times. You know what it isn't: expensive and pretentious. All are contrary to the fact House of Big Fish & Ice Cold Beer is located in Laguna Beach, where it's rare to find a full meal for \$5 and rarer still to find one in a restaurant that serves seafood. If you get only one thing, let it be the spicy seafood stew, a cioppino-like dish served in vessel as big as a sink, boasting what looks to be about \$20 worth of seafood but costing only \$10. It's enough to warrant a new nickname: House of I Can't Believe How Little I Paid.

540 S. Coast Hwy., Ste. 200, Laguna Beach,
(949) 715-4500; www.houseofbigfish.com. Open
daily, 4:30-10:30 p.m. \$-\$\$.

READERS' CHOICE: THE CRAB COOKER

BEST THAI RESTAURANT Rice and Spice Thai Cuisine

Situated in a former Chinese restaurant in the remotest, most-suburban city in the county, unsuspecting diners might expect a menu that panders to Real Housewives and white-bread, meat-and-potatoes families. Dive into a bowl of Rice and Spice's beef panang curry, however, and fireworks will start going off in your mouth—though you have to visit a couple of times before the kind owners will really turn on the capsaicin spigot. The pad kee mao (drunken noodles) are the finest example in our fair acres, and the crying tiger beef will turn your cheeks inside-out (in a good way, naturally). For appetizers, forsake the fried competition and order the healthy, crunchy fresh summer rolls, a Thai take on Vietnamese salad rolls. Mango and sticky rice with coconut cream provide a smooth, sweet finish, after which you'll walk outside and realize you're not in Garden Grove, but rather way at the end of the 241 toll road.

22431 Antonio Pkwy., Ste. B-130, Rancho Santa
Margarita, (949) 888-0222; www.
riceandspicethaicuisine.com. Open Mon.-Thurs. &
Sat., 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Fri., 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m.; Sun.,
11:30 a.m.-9 p.m. \$-\$\$.

READERS' CHOICE: THAI SPICE

BEST THAI RESTAURANT PER SQUARE FOOT Sutha Thai Kitchen

Sutha seats maybe 12 to 15 people. The square footage is so scant you've been inside closets with more space. Any more cramped, and it would be illegal to be a restaurant. A thin layer of drywall separates you from the kitchen. From the other side, you hear the unseen roar of the burner and the loud clang of a metal spatula beating up a wok. All the while, the smells of whatever the next table is having waft to your nostrils. You're close enough to pluck out a few morsels and, for sure, hear or participate in their conversation. Most will agree, however, that this claustrophobic Thai joint does big-Thai-restaurant flavors.

1161 Irvine Blvd., Tustin, (714) 734-6100; www.
suthathaikitchen.com. Open Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m.-9 p.m.