



CAFÉ PAPIKA

DINING

GOING GLOBAL

With more than 200 languages spoken locally, Aurora is a melting pot of ethnic culture. Luckily for visitors, this translates into a dining scene that’s as diverse as it is delicious. Here are six ethnic eateries not to miss. – *Rebecca Caro*

African Grill and Bar

Inspired by the ubiquitous “chop bars” in his native Ghana, owner Sylvester Fordwuo serves up sweet and spicy flavors from West Africa. Dishes like rich lamb stews and *moimoi*, a kind of tamale made from ground black-eyed peas, feel like comfort food. And if offerings like *kelewele* (a spicy pile of fried plantains and peanuts) or *egusi* and *fufu* (spinach-melon seed stew with cassava root) are a first for you, no matter—Fordwuo relishes his role as cultural ambassador, cheerfully explaining every dish and imparting a familial vibe. *1010 S Peoria St.; 720-949-0784; africangrillco.com*

Thai Street Food

In just three years, Anna Killoran’s business has blossomed from a 16th Street Mall-based food cart to a full-blown restaurant. While diners are now sheltered from the elements, the emphasis is still on the street—specifically the peppery roadside cuisine favored in northern Thailand. Chili-heads dial up the heat in made-to order handmade noodles plates with fiery sauces, but any dish can be tamed by requesting “baby spice.” Lunch crowds are daunting, but favorites like the green papaya salad and the green curry reward patience. *11650 E Montview Blvd.; 303-587-2293; cash only*

DID YOU KNOW?

Each October during On Havana’s Restaurant Week, more than 40 restaurants offer a unique experience in Aurora dining.



PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE BY AUTHOR’S NAME, RIGHT BY AUTHOR’S NAME

DINING

Kim-Ba

This humble kitchen tucked along busy Havana Street helped pioneer Vietnamese eating in the metro area some 20 years ago. Today, it's a perennial darling of area food critics, having snagged multiple "Best of Denver" awards in recent years. Gargantuan noodle bowls draw crowds throughout the day. Other winners include the house-special green-lip mussels set in a zesty coconut curry and *bo xao gung*—beef sautéed in ginger sauce. 2495 S Havana St. #F1; 303-745-1637; kimbavietnamese.com

Silla

Named for one of the ancient kingdoms of Korea, Silla plates feasts fit for royalty. Try the *bibimbap*, a bubbling, cauldron-like pot filled with rice, marinated grilled beef, veg-

etables, and a poached egg, served with an endless parade of side dishes like kimchi, marinated mung beans, mashed potatoes, and fermented radishes. On hot days, order *bibim nengmyun*, a nest of buckwheat noodles in a cold broth. 3005 S Peoria St. Ste. F; 303-338-5070; daily 11 a.m.–10 p.m.

Café Paprika

Outside of a Moroccan *riad*, you won't find a homier destination for Middle Eastern fare. This jewel box–size restaurant swirls with aromatic *tagines* (Moroccan stews) imbued with lamb and apricots, couscous studded with prunes, cinnamon, and almonds in saffron sauce. Adding to the appeal is chef-owner Chakib Marrakchi, known for his

heartfelt rapport with diners. Don't miss the *m'hench*a—a stellar dessert of phyllo dough stuffed with almond paste, topped in honey and rose water. 13160 E Mississippi Ave.; 303-755-4150; cafepaprika.com

Jai Ho

Don't let the cryptic menu descriptions deter you; Jai Ho's expansive and well-tuned Indian menu rarely steers diners wrong. Dishes like *karaikudi ennai kathirrikai*, a spicy eggplant stew from the Chettinad region, are layered in complex spices and flavors. Better-known offerings like tandoori chicken are equally satisfying. If all else fails, the ever-changing buffet spread makes it easy to pick and choose as you go. 3055 S Parker Road; 303-751-5151; jaiho.us.com



AFRICAN GRILL AND BAR



SILLA

ANCHORS AWAY

Dry Dock Brewery charts the course for great-tasting microbrews.

A mast-laden galleon of yore might seem a strange logo for an extremely landlocked Colorado brewery. That is, until you consider the amount of gold and silver medals the award-winning **Dry Dock Brewery** (15120 E. Hampden Ave., 303-400-5606; drydockbrewing.com) has stuffed in its holds (not to mention its proximity to popular sailing destinations like Cherry Creek Reservoir). Since opening in 2005 as an offshoot of a popular neighborhood homebrew shop, the Aurora-based brewery has racked up better than 30 awards at prestigious competitions such as the Great American Beer Fest, the World Beer Cup, and the Colorado State Fair.

A newly expanded tasting room provides a fitting environment to sample Dry Dock's considerable bounty. Long, galley-style tables, walls lined with oak casks, and sailing pennants

give the feel of visiting the hull of a ship. First-time visitors can sample a beer flight and find their favorite among 14 taps that range from year-round staples like Apricot Blonde to seasonal favorites like the chocolate-noted Naked Porter.

Among a number of ongoing events, the brewery hosts Firkin Friday—when brewers tap unique cask-conditioned brews. And while Dry Dock's founder, Kevin DeLange, says he enjoys experimenting with new recipes and ingredients (like those in the heady seasonal Wee Heavy), Dry Dock also stays focused on traditional styles like a popular Hefeweizen and amber beers for more timid palates.

So what's the key to the brewery's success? DeLange puts it simply: "To use the best ingredients we can get to make the best beer, and the rest will work itself out." Whatever the reason, this is one ship worth signing aboard. —Rebecca Caro



DRY DOCK BREWERY