



Grassroots Pantry

### CAFE HUNAN

**Hunanese** Shop B, G/F, Koon Wah Building, 420-424 Queen's Rd. West, Sai Ying Pun  
**2803-7177** Daily 11am-11pm \$

The menu is in Chinese, so it's best to bring someone who can read—or is willing to be adventurous. One defining characteristic of Hunan cuisine is its sharp, spicy flavors, so many of the dishes are either mixed, topped or fried with chopped red chili peppers. But it manages to set itself apart from the equally feisty Sichuan cuisine, since Hunan dishes tend to skip on the mouth-numbing peppercorns. We had winter melon and clam soup served in a giant silver-colored wok, which pleasantly surprised us with the relatively mild profiles of the broth and the harmonious balance between tiny, sweet clams and the soft melon pieces. The pork meatballs covered in sticky rice was another winner: the meat was drenched in a pure chicken stock broth, making every bite succulent and flavorful.

### EL FISHAWY

**Middle Eastern** G/F, Hang Hing Court, 123-125 Third St., Sai Ying Pun **5921-8796** Daily noon-1am \$\$  
 Sai Ying Pun's High Street is exploding with

restaurants at the moment, but you shouldn't think that's the end of it. Third Street—especially west of Western Street—is home to plenty of delicious restaurants, including the cozy El Fishawy. The hummus was good and the *zaalouk* (eggplant) dip had a delicious sweetness thanks to plenty of roasted red pepper. The pita bread was fresh, hot and soft, a littler thicker than we were used to and perfect for greedy scooping. Then a mixed grill for two: a mountain of gently seasoned chicken, lamb and beef arrived, piled high over flavored rice with roast peppers and tomatoes on the side. The chicken in particular was a touch dry, but the beef came tender and juicy.

### GRASSROOTS PANTRY

**Vegetarian or Organic** G/F-1/F, 12 Fuk Sau Lane, Sai Ying Pun **2873-3353**  
 Tue-Sat noon-10pm; Sun 10am-4pm \$\$\$  
 This cutesy vegetarian restaurant looks like somebody's house; you walk straight into a living room decorated with flowers, there's a kitchen at the back and a staircase on the left takes you up to a more private dining section. Beyond its vegetarian label, Grassroots Pantry serves a mishmash of dishes—you can get anything from Thai vegetable curry to pasta to Japanese soba noodles.

### METROPOLITAIN

**French** G/F, 46 High St., Sai Ying Pun  
**6271-6102** Tue-Sun noon-11pm \$\$  
 Metropolitan is from French Creations, the group behind Pastis, Le Boudoir, F.A.B. and Saint-Germain. We decided to sample both lunch menus (\$88 for two courses) and a staff-recommended dish from the à la carte: steak tartare with fries. Our first lunch was a bizarrely literal poached egg salad (whole egg to the left, greens to the right) and a deliciously creamy sole and roasted potato main. We gobbled up the second set of mushroom soup and a stewed chicken leg in red wine sauce—despite the sauce's unappetizing gray color. The steak tartare was a touch on the salty side, but had nicely chilled chunks of beef.

### OPPA CHICKEN

**Korean** Shop M, 419 Queen's Rd. West, Shek Tong Tsui **6608-0803**  
 Daily 11am-midnight \$ **NEW REVIEW**  
 Despite visiting at lunch, we skipped the very affordable lunch deals and went straight for the à la carte KFC. We tried two big combo baskets: honey and original chicken; and original and sweet-and-spicy fried chicken. All were tender, juicy and piping hot from the kitchen, but our favourite was the chicken glazed in sweet and spicy sauce—extra crispy skin with just enough heat, and just enough sweet. For sides, we enjoyed the seaweed-covered rice balls, crispy and well-cooked fries, and the moreish egg rolls with gooey cheese.

### PRUNE ORGANIC DELI AND WORKSHOP

**Vegetarian** 14 Fuk Sau Lane, Sai Ying Pun **2873-3353**  
 Tue-Sat noon-3pm, 6-10pm; Sun 10am-4pm \$\$ **NEW REVIEW**  
 Little sister of (and next door neighbor to) veggie restaurant Grassroots Pantry, Prune Organic Deli & Workshop is a vegetarian's dream. Serving up lots of gluten-free and vegan-friendly dishes, the menu isn't lengthy, but the options change every couple of days to keep things fresh and interesting. We ordered two of the set menus: a curry tofu sandwich and Thai noodle salad (which, for \$90, seemed a bit pricey), and a tomato soup and chili combo (\$85). Our sandwich was awesome: tender tofu, big slices of fresh avocado and juicy tomatoes, but the Thai noodle salad was disappointing—it completely lacked spice and was soaked in a bland, creamy sauce. On the other hand, the tomato soup was a highlight: perfectly creamy with a drizzling of pesto olive oil, and the portion was just the right size.