

Citylife TRAVEL



## A Rare Raw Treat

by Pim Kemasingki

Since The Spa Resort Samui opened its doors in 1992 on a small stretch of lily white beach, it has become a destination \_ a mini Mecca \_ for thousands of health aficionados, or those seeking an alternative solution to their often unhealthy lives. Celebrities, overweight people, the sick, and more often than not, those whose careers pressure them into a frenetic lifestyle, come to The Spa Resort to detox, to fast, to healthily dine at the world famous Radiance restaurant, to exercise and, importantly, to relax. Over the years magazines, newspapers, reality television (Channel 4 UK's Extreme Celebrity Detox) and its thousands of 'Spa Resort Alumni', as founder, Guy Hopkins fondly calls the thousands of guests who have passed through, and often repeatedly returned, to his resort have gushed rave reviews and professed an almost cult-like adulation for this pioneering spa.

The Spa Resort Chiang Mai, where Hopkins now makes his home, is set on 100 rai of mountainside land overlooking a rare unspoiled valley, where cowbells chime in distant paddy fields, and the quiet village below is surrounded by rolling hills, a mere three kilometres beyond Prem International School (a forty minute drive from the city centre).

While most guests come to fast - the only sustenance being herbal tablets and diluted fruit juice - and are only allowed to eat after their seven days' detox, The Spa Resort's restaurant Radiance is on the world map for its stunningly healthy, yet creative, cuisine. While Radiance serves dishes to satisfy the carnivore, it also offers alternative menu choices for vegans, vegetarians and, intriguingly, raw foodists.

A two hour cooking class (1800 baht) is available for those wishing to be introduced to raw cuisine, where food is uncooked, unprocessed and organic - nothing is heated at a temperature over 40 degrees Celsius. This is not a new age culinary fad, as raw food has

gained prominence in the west since the turn of the 20th century, and has been adopted and adapted by the health conscious world wide ever since. For raw foodists, this is the ultimate form of healthy eating, believed to aid, and maintain weight loss, cure a number of health related problems, and remove toxins.

For the uninitiated, beans, fruits, vegetables, sprouts, seeds and nuts probably don't immediately bring the term 'gourmet' to mind, but that is exactly what Radiance achieves with its raw ingredients.



In a breezy sala local staff, mostly from the nearby village, are trained to demonstrate a few of Radiance's specialties. Starting with the cashew caramel smoothie, a simple mix in the blender of ingredients including coconut juice, cashew nuts, honey, cinnamon and vanilla pods\* and voila, one of the most aromatic and refreshing drinks you can imagine. Another delightful creation is the raw pad tai which creatively uses slithers of zucchini in lieu of pasta and simply mixes and tosses spring onion, cashew nuts, bean sprouts and other ingredients together, with a dash of tamarind

juice to make for a very moreish dish.

If you are not interested in learning how to cook (if indeed you can call raw food cooking) then simply take the drive up to the restaurant and sample some of the surprisingly delicious dishes on offer. From raw vegetable lasagna which cleverly uses macadamia nut dressing as its sauce, to a raw garden burger sandwich which combines almonds, sunflower, sesame, bell pepper, onion, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, garlic, cumin, cilantro and apple vinegar, served in a bed of lettuce which assumes the role of buns, the three page raw menu offers such intriguing delights as raw tropical miso soup, raw zucchini pasta (mariana and pesto, no less), raw pizza, raw zen of chocolate, raw apple pie and...wait for it...raw just-like-cheesecake. And, slap me with a zucchini, it really is!

For a unique, healthy and absolutely delicious dining experience, take this beautiful drive out of the city and enjoy this rare treat.

Please call 053 920 888 or visit [www.thespachiangmai.com](http://www.thespachiangmai.com).

\* Citylife has not included all ingredients to each dish, if you wish to know please join the Raw Food Class at The Spa Resort.

by Pim Kemasingki