

NOW *Travel Asia*

SMART TRAVELLERS ISSUE

HONG KONG
BEIJING
TAIPEI
SEOUL
TOKYO

WONDERLAND
CHENGDU

PASSION FOR FASHION
THAKOON PANICHGUL

THAILAND INSIDER
KHON/THE ROYAL BARGE PROCESSION

DINING
IN STYLE

PLUS
NEW ZEALAND
INDONESIA

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METROPOLE IDENTIFIES

TOP 5 VIETNAMESE
DISHES

IN HANOI



ONE OF VIETNAM'S MOST
ESTEEMED CHEFS PLATES
UP FIVE MOST
POPULAR DISHES TODAY

Sampling authentic street food is a rite of passage when it comes to traveling through Southeast Asia, a passage made all the more romantic by the grit of the streets, the fluorescent-lit stall, the proximity of traffic. What a delicious adventure. It's the only way to go. Or is it?

At Spices Garden, They deliver the most authentic Vietnamese food possible – with no short cuts. In other words, with no MSG. One of the most important things to understand about Vietnamese food is this: They respect the integrity of the food at the heart of each dish. If you eat fish, you have to smell fish first — not chili, or turmeric or ginger. Complementary ingredients should only help to release the main taste.

Recently, they examined the ordering habits of their guests, and found these five dishes to be most frequently ordered.

Pho. This is Vietnam's most popular dish. Their broth is seasoned with ginger, shallot, star anise, cinnamon and cardamom to give it that mouthwatering flavor. Accompanied by a choice of chicken or beef, pho is perfect for any meal of the day.

Bun Cha. Their professional butcher prepares and marinates the pork every day

to keep it fresh. They combine hot charcoal-grilled pork with fresh noodles, herbs and a dipping sauce made of fish sauce, vinegar, sugar, lime juice, green papaya, chopped garlic and red pepper to create what he describe as dipping splendor.

Cha Ca. If you're going to eat Cha Ca the only place to eat it is right here in Hanoi. With this dish it's all about the marinated fish. Their secret recipe combines the perfect proportion of ingredients — not too much galangal spice and just a hint of shrimp paste paired with succulent, marinated fish. They take the basic recipe and put a spin on it so our fingerprints are all over it!

Fresh/Fried Spring Rolls. Delicious, healthy and easy to make, our spring rolls appeal to all. Their fresh rolls are made with dried rice paper, a whole prawn and pork mixture for a playful taste. For the fried rolls they use dried rice paper and roll it with green mango, sour pineapple, herbs and pork belly.

Beef & Seafood Skewer. Here, at Spices Garden, they've brought the street food concept to their restaurant with high quality meats creating five different delicious types of combinations. They marinate the meats



Nem cua be ran



Nem



Cha ca la vong



Beef Skewer



Bun cha



Fresh/Fried Spring Rolls.

the same way the ethnic minority groups do in the mountains using Talauma plant seeds from the high trees, lemongrass and turmeric. The spring rolls and skewers can be found in almost any local restaurant.

Nguyen Thanh Van is the Executive Sous Chef at the Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi's Spices Garden. With proficiency in English and French, Van originally came to Spices Garden in 1996 to help translate all of the recipes. Eventually, she won a position as a Sous Chef at the Metropole, and has served as Executive Sous Chef for five years. Her passion for Vietnamese cuisine has brought her to kitchens all over the world cooking gala dinners, leading classes, extending her skills in various restaurants and cultural festivals. Van's techniques have taken her from the far corners of the U.S. to Korea, Japan, Australia, Indonesia and France — introducing delicious flavors to curious palettes. Whether she is in SE Asia or traveling overseas, she carries rice paper, fresh noodles, shrimp paste — whatever it takes. For her, consistency and authenticity is key when it comes to cooking.