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In the Hot Seat

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In the hot seat

The set-up

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NEWSPAPER SECTION: GURU | WRITER: JARUPAT BURANASTIDPORN

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When conversing about Chinese cuisine in Bangkok, the mention of Chef Man Wai Yin and his restaurant Chef Man is inevitable. Who popularised the lava bun? He did. Whose restaurant once had a month-long waiting list? Guilty. He managed to turn ubiquitous dim sum into a new dining experience with his restaurants. Then came the fancy flair and five-star presentation of M Krub, which seems to have won over those foodies who could afford it. His latest venture, Chairman, is a world apart, spurning lazy Susans, leather seats and tablecloths, and instead looking back to childhood days in Hong Kong spent at a traditional cha chaan teng (local cafe or eatery). Chairman's decor is reminiscent of exactly that, with vintage tiles, wooden counters, iron partitions and verdant green window panes looking out on a 2D mock-up of a sea of neon-lit billboards. Surprisingly, the cafe hits the casual mark for which it was aiming, avoiding gimmickry — a difficult task indeed, especially when you've set up shop inside a glitzy mall.

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The menu

Designed to resemble a typical Hong Kong newspaper, the menu folds out and is broken into different sections of East-meets-West dishes. Without a doubt, the bonus of the food served here is that it can be enjoyed all day long. We started with the French toast (B120), which couldn't be more different than the usual brunch option smothered in berries and icing sugar. Simple and unfussed, the home-baked milk bread is dipped in egg batter and fried until golden brown. A slab of butter is placed on top — watching it melt and seep through the middle of the bread is a joy in and of itself, although eating it is all the more satisfying. Strange combinations rarely work, but when they do, it's pretty epic. French fries and milkshakes, uni and Wagyu — heck, even men and man buns (applicable only in some cases) — the list could go on. In Chairman's case, the winning combo comes in the form of Deep-fried eggplant with pork floss (B140). The sweetness from the pork paired with the spicy salt and paprika was an instant hit with our palate. On to something more substantial — and by "more" we mean you probably need three friends with whom to share the dish. The Baked rice with chicken chop in Portuguese sauce (B230) is served piping hot on a baking tray. The egg-fried rice is topped with succulent pieces of chicken and rich amber sauce that delivers a huge punch, thanks to coconut milk and mild curry powder. Don't skip the Luncheon meat and sunny-side-up soup Nissin noodle (B170) if you're up for a bowl of comfort. Made with Hong Kong's beloved noodle brand, it's cooked to perfection and pairs nicely with the savoury broth. If you're wondering what on Earth the meat is, it's possibly man's greatest creation (as well as every university student's life-saver): Spam. For dessert, opt for the Caramel custard (B80), which has the right balance of sweetness to round off your meal. The Chilled milk tea (B110) is served in a retro bottle with a bucket of ice, and certainly merits a few likes on Instagram.

Insider's tip

Additional Chairman branches are in the works, so don't worry if you can't conjure the energy to wade through Sukhumvit traffic. You'll soon be able to dine at The [JAS@Ramintra](#) (Lat Plakhao Road), Empire Tower (Sathon Road), Anthenee Tower (Witthayu Road) and Riverside Plaza (Charoen Nakon Road) in the very near future.

Value & Verdict

Centrally located and sensibly priced, Chairman is an ideal destination for a quick fix. But don't mistake it for a fast-food joint; dishes are on point and hard to fault, and the restaurant is certainly on our list of places we'd like to visit on a weekly basis.



Luncheon meat and sunny side up soup Nissin noodle.



French toast.



Deep-fried eggplant with pork floss.



Caramel custard.



Chilled milk tea.

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