



Westways

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EAST MEETS WEST

The Southland's melting pot just got a little bigger. The L.A. City Council recently designated a six-block stretch along Hollywood Boulevard between Normandie and Western avenues as "Thai Town." The area is now one of several designated ethnic communities in Los Angeles.

"Southern California is home to about 80,000 Thais, the largest Thai community abroad," says Chanchanit Martorell, executive director of the Thai Community Development Center in L.A. "This designation means a lot to us." The center plans to spearhead several community projects, including a public Thai orchid garden, and offers a self-guided area tour, which makes a stop at nearby Wat Thai (pictured below left), the second-largest Thai Buddhist temple outside of Thailand.

Culinary explorers can sample Thai specialties, such as tom yum soup, *pad thai* noodles, or red or green curry served with chicken, beef, or tofu, at any number of restaurants. The food is typically spicy, but you can request it to be prepared "mild." Wash it down with a Singha (a zesty Thai beer) or Thai iced tea. You'll find Buddha statues, incense, and Thai books and music in the shops, and the grocery store in Thailand Plaza is the place to stock up on staples such as peanut sauce, chili paste, and curries. For more information, call the Thai Community Development Center at (213) 739-8455.

—Mark Hawthorne



MARK HAWTHORNE