

VICTORIA'S TABLE

LOCAL RESTAURANT
REVIEWS BY OIA PEER
ADVISOR, VICTORIA LOMELI

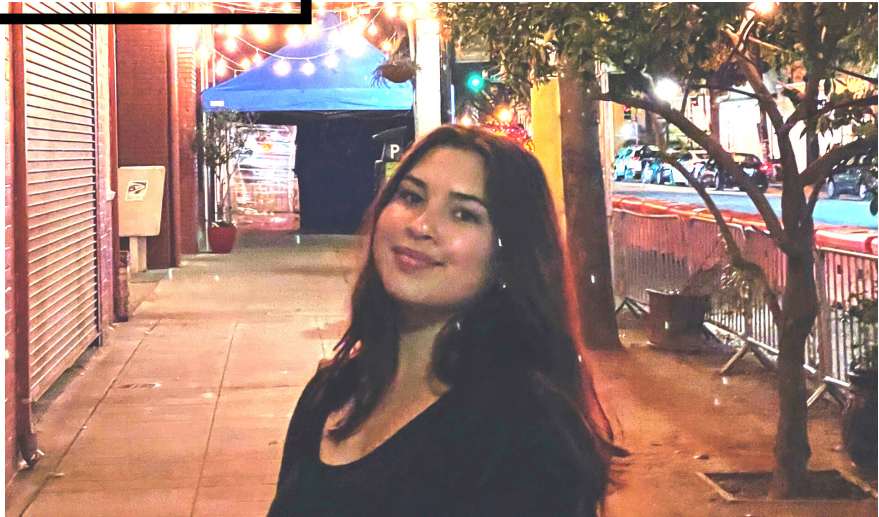


Words by Victoria Lomeli

Photos Courtesy of Victoria Lomeli
and [instagram.com/coconutcafe](https://www.instagram.com/coconutcafe)

Coconut Cafe is a Thai and Laotian restaurant that opened in September of 2020. Since its opening, it has received consistently positive reviews from the broad range of customers that it attracts. Due to its location on Highway 59, many people stop here while traveling to and from Yosemite. But of course, it is a local favorite as well.

My own experience at Coconut Cafe was extremely positive. A friend and I were catching up and she suggested that we go to Coconut Cafe for dinner, saying this was her favorite Thai restaurant in Merced from which she regularly ordered take-out. I



had only heard of Coconut Cafe a few times since students at the university tended to opt for closer locations. However, I am a huge fan of Thai food and it took hardly any convincing for me to try out this restaurant.

When we walked into Coconut Cafe, I immediately noticed how friendly the staff was. The ambiance was very bright and inviting and created a truly welcoming atmosphere. After greeting us, we were seated right away. We both ordered Thai iced tea and decided on spring rolls as an appetizer. Our service was fast, but the staff definitely did not compromise on quality. It was clear that all of the ingredients were super fresh and had great flavor. The spring rolls contained chicken, shrimp, lettuce, carrot, cucumber, and noodles wrapped in rice paper. The vegetables were perfectly crisp and complemented by the sweet and sour sauce. The appetizer portions were extremely generous and made me worry if I still had room for my entree.

Since it was my first time at this restaurant, I played it safe and ordered Pad Kee Mao which is a pan-fried wide noodle dish with your choice of meat, tomatoes, chili, garlic and vegetables. I ordered it with chicken and a spice level of 5. This is one of my favorite Thai dishes and Coconut Cafe is now my favorite place to order it. It satisfied my noodle craving while also being packed full of fresh vegetables and a great sauce. The spice level was perfect for me - I wanted a little bit of a kick but nothing too spicy. When I wanted a hotter bite, I just added a bit of the chili oil on the table.

Overall, I was really impressed by Coconut Cafe and definitely recommend it to students looking for a Thai/Laotian restaurant! The pricing is very fair and comparable to other Thai restaurants in town. I'm looking forward to making Coconut Cafe my go-to Thai place!

[instagram.com/coconutcafe](https://www.instagram.com/coconutcafe)

