

NOSH

Flavorful, scratch-made pot pies worth seeking out in Hayward

Theresa Gunawan's Pot Pie Paradise offers tried-and-true classics as well as uncommon pies filled with Hungarian beef goulash and spicy Javanese tempeh. She can be found at local farmers markets too.

By Melati Citrawirya
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Pot pies and side salsas at Pot Pie Paradise. Photo: Melati Citrawirya

Pot Pie Paradise & Deli
3522 Arden Rd.,
Hayward

It's unlikely you'll stumble upon Pot Pie Paradise. The deli is nestled in a forgettable corporate parking lot between a marsh and Highway 92 in Hayward. But those lucky enough to happen upon this little gem often return. Inside, the diminutive Theresa Gunawan serves pot pies made from scratch and filled with flavors from all corners of the world. These are pies worth seeking out.

Gunawan's pie oeuvre spans from the classic chicken pot pie to ones filled with Hungarian beef goulash and spicy Javanese tempeh.

Raised in Java, Indonesia, Gunawan went on to cook her way through medical school in Munich, Germany. After nearly two decades she moved to California in 1990, but her medical credentials didn't carry over with her, so she stayed in the kitchen.

"I closed the book and said no more medical school. I loved cooking still," she said.



Theresa Gunawan, owner and chef of Pot Pie Paradise. Photo: Melati Citrawirya

One night, when Gunawan was working as a chef at Mills College in Oakland, something unexpected came to her that changed everything: a fever dream about making pies. She had these types of dreams periodically, but this one felt like a premonition worth paying attention to.

Not very familiar with pot pies, Gunawan began researching and experimenting with the dish. In 2006, she offered her first pot pies at the Temescal farmers market. They sold out on the first day, so she came back the next weekend and the one after that, eventually gaining enough momentum to open the brick-and-mortar restaurant in Hayward in 2007. The restaurant is only open on weekdays for lunch, mostly serving workers at nearby businesses.

When not at the deli, you'll still find her at the Temescal farmers market on Sundays. She's also at the Castro Valley farmers market on Saturdays. That means Gunawan slings pies seven days a week. She said she has customers from her early days who still come to her every weekend.

The Classic Free Range Chicken pot pie. Photo: Melati Citrawirya

Customers can choose from several freshly baked pot pies to eat right away, or frozen ones to heat up for a quick meal at home. The menu boasts 40 varieties, although Gunawan prepares a daily selection of these pies for dine-in customers. Five-inch pies range between \$6.50 to \$8 and 10-inch pies from \$25 to \$30.

There are several vegetarian and vegan options, including Roasted Butternut Squash, with potatoes, soybeans and roasted gouda; Piccata Mushroom, made with a medley of shiitake, oyster and portobello mushrooms, capers, orzo and fresh herbs; and Lime Garden Curry, that features vegetables, beans and coconut milk, as well as basmati rice.

Gunawan cuts into the Indo Lamb Curry pot pie. Photo: Melati Citrawirja

Sweets lovers can try her popular Bavarian Apple pie baked with sour cream, or the Rhubarb Strawberry Pie with orange liqueur. And those who aren't down for pie at all can opt for deli sandwiches, wraps, soups and salads.

From prepping vegetables to simmering bones for gravy to making pie dough, the process of making a pie from start to finish takes four days, but Gunawan says the work isn't monotonous because she's always playing with new recipes.

Gunawan came up with the idea of opening Pot Pie Paradise in a dream. Photo: Melati Citrawirja

"The ideas never stop. It's never boring," Gunawan said. "You listen to your customers' suggestions and you say 'Why not? This could be good to put in a pie.'"

Pot Pie Paradise & Deli is open 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. You can also find the Pot Pie Paradise stand 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturdays at the Castro Valley farmers market and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sundays at the Temescal farmers market in Oakland.

Feast Your Eyes is a photo-driven introduction to an East Bay restaurant that's been open for at least one year. We hope these stories will inspire you to check out these eateries for the first time, or remind you to visit again. If you have a recommendation for a restaurant we should feature, email us at nosh@berkeleyside.com.

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Melati Citrawirja is a writer, photographer and curious thinker about the underbelly of places. She began contributing to Berkeleyside after a summer internship in 2015 and earned a BA in Development... [More by Melati Citrawirja](#)
✉ melaticitrawirja@gmail.com

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