

This unique deli in Hayward offers a variety of pot pies that incorporate international flavors

Some dreams come and go, but for Theresia Gunawan, one dream stuck until she finally brought it to life. In 2003, while visiting Melbourne, Australia, she dined at an international pot pie restaurant that left an impression so strong she dreamed about selling pot pies herself that very night. Inspired, she returned home and began researching recipes, techniques, and the stories behind this timeless dish. After three years of planning and testing, and with more than two decades of culinary experience to draw from, she opened Pot Pie Paradise & Deli in Hayward in 2007.



Photo by Melati Citrawireja

Gunawan's path to business ownership was as international as her menu. She first honed her skills working in restaurants in Indonesia, later cooking at

a Japanese restaurant in Munich, Germany, before moving to the United States where she worked in food service management at an elementary school and a private college. Each step added to her knowledge and broadened her sense of flavors and techniques. "People say pot pies are comfort food," she explained. "And with so many recipes and ideas that can go into them, they really can be for everyone."



Photo by Pot Pie Paradise & Deli

That philosophy became the foundation of Pot Pie Paradise. Today, the deli offers more than 40 flavors of gourmet pot pies — from classic American chicken and beef to international-inspired creations, along with vegetarian, vegan, seafood, and even fruit varieties. The menu extends beyond pies, too, with sandwiches, soups, salads, and daily specials that give customers plenty of choices. Every dish is made from scratch with fresh ingredients, never preservatives, MSG, or hydrogenated oils.

The name of the restaurant reflects Gunawan's vision. "Pot Pie" anchors it in the signature dish, while "Paradise" evokes the everlasting happiness of comfort food and the joy of flavors that satisfy every taste. The best-selling

comfort food and the joy of flavors that satisfy every taste. The best-selling Classic American Chicken Pot Pie remains the star, but regulars often branch out to try something new, knowing they're in for a treat.



Photo by Pot Pie Paradise & Deli

Launching the business was not without its hurdles. Gunawan had to secure startup capital, find a location with affordable rent, and learn the ins and outs of local business regulations. Marketing was another challenge — how do you introduce an unfamiliar concept like international pot pies without the budget for big advertising campaigns? Her solution was deeply local. She started out at Hayward-area farmers markets, not only as a vendor but also as a customer, sourcing fresh seasonal produce from nearby growers. She also participated in fundraisers, chamber of commerce events, school fairs, exhibitions, and local charity drives, helping her build connections and visibility in the community.

That grassroots approach mirrors Hayward itself, a city long known for its working-class roots and entrepreneurial spirit. Nestled between Oakland and Fremont, Hayward has historically been an industrial hub — and Pot Pie Paradise reflects that character. Located on Arden Road in the city's

Paradise reflects that character. Located on Alden Road in the city's industrial district, the restaurant is tucked among warehouses and businesses rather than a busy downtown strip. While the location means limited hours and less foot traffic, it also gives the deli a certain charm: customers know they've discovered a hidden gem.

For Gunawan, the rewards outweigh the obstacles. "The freedom to execute my ideas and the customer gratification motivates me," she said. "Even if it means long hours every day, knowing people enjoy what we create keeps me going." That passion shines through in every pie she serves.





Photo by Ben F

Looking ahead, Gunawan hopes to find an investor to help her expand into a downtown Hayward location, where the restaurant's unique concept of International Gourmet Pot Pies could draw more customers. With the Bay Area's diverse food scene and Hayward's growing appetite for global flavors, the timing may be just right.

Until then, Pot Pie Paradise remains a true local treasure: a place where comfort food meets creativity, and where one woman's dream continues to warm both stomachs and hearts. "I just hope people enjoy reading this story," Gunawan said with a smile, "and that it encourages them to stop by and try us when they're in Hayward."

Pot Pie Paradise & Deli

📍 3522 Arden Rd, Hayward, CA 94545

👤 Owner: Theresia Gunawan

🥘 Signature Dish: Classic American Chicken Pot Pie (plus 40+ gourmet flavors)

🍲 Also Serving: Sandwiches, salads, soups, and daily specials

🌍 Mission: Sharing international comfort food made from scratch with fresh, wholesome ingredients

Opening Hours

M-F: 1130 am - 3pm