



KEY

- ★★★★ Outstanding
 ★★★ Excellent
 ★★ Good
 ★ Fair
 ○ Subpar

SPECIAL EVENTS

Brasserie La Provence Through the end of February, the swank new brasserie upstairs at La Provence offers half-price specials on lunch, seven days a week. The new menu includes seafood platters, oysters, choucroute garnie and other traditional favorites. Impressive to the extreme. *Štěpánská 9, Prague 1-Old Town. Tel. 257 535 050.*

Lamb Roast On Wednesday, Feb. 2, New Town pub Jáma presents a night of roast lamb and more: quail with almond stuffing, fresh spinach and wild sour cherries, grilled lamb marinated in aged red wine, honey and oranges and served with creamed rosemary potatoes and fresh green beans, followed by an apricot dumpling with sour cream for dessert. The evening starts at 6 p.m. The price is 390 Kč. *V Jámě 7, Prague 1-New Town (off Vodičkova). Tel. 224 222 383.*

EXPENSIVE

(more than 500 Kč)

★★ **Botanic** Good things await those who venture outside of the city center: Botanic features good food, gracious service and a pleasant atmosphere far from the camcorder crowd. Recommended: avocado stuffed with shrimp and mascarpone, French onion soup, beef tournedos in mustard-seed crust, lamb cutlet with vegetable ratatouille. Bravo. *Olbrachtova 54, Prague 4-Krč (near metro Budějovická). Tel. 241 440 504.*

Open daily 11 a.m.-midnight AmEx, Euro/MC, Visa. 400-700 Kč.
 ★★ **Byblos International.** Lebanese dishes are the raison d'être of this slightly overlooked modern eatery, although pizzas, pasta and salads are also available. Recommended: Byblos mezze menu for two, baba ghanouj, tabbouleh and hummus, batinjan makdus, Lebanese sausages, grilled meats. Very, very good. *Rybná 14, Prague 1-Old Town (inside Burzovní palác). Tel. 221 842 121.* Open Mon.-Thurs. 9 a.m.-11 p.m., Fri.-Sun. 11 a.m.-11 p.m. AmEx, Euro/MC, Visa. 450-950 Kč.
 ★★ **Il Conte Deminka** Italian. The century-old Café Deminka, doomed by a capricious forest sprite to undergo a series of unsuccessful reincarnations.

Great temptations

Terrific tofu and more at a new Korean hideaway

By EVAN RAIL
 STAFF WRITER

If you're put off by the hard, flavorless tofu available at most supermarkets, you should try Kimchi, a recently opened Korean restaurant in Prague 6. A mom-and-pop shop inside a small hotel with a funny (as in ha-ha) name — Prahatel — Kimchi offers excellent Korean fare, including great seafood, pork and beef dishes. But Kimchi's claim to fame is its own house-made tofu, which is as silky smooth and as flavorful as a fine cheese, acres ahead of the average soy brick in town.

Kimchi's location on a quiet residential street in Střešovice will make sure that it is never as busy as many places in the center. Nonetheless, that remote location conveys a special ambience of its own; you have to be in the know to get there. The atmosphere is very good, if a bit cold, and the excellent service of the family staff is extremely welcoming, fluent in Korean, Japanese, English and Czech.

Highly recommendable as an appetizer is the eponymous, culture-crossing kimchi — multiple layers of pickled cabbage leaves as tart as Kosher gherkins and spicy as harissa, with an extremely satisfying crunch. Also excellent are the potstickers, here called kun man du (and also known as gyoza). A warning for hardcore vegetarians: these six fried dumplings are stuffed with what appears to be ground pork, herbs and onions. But that's not the real danger. The scary part is that they are delicious enough to make you consider going back to eating meat regularly.

Never fear: Kimchi's tofu will give you plenty of reason to stay the meatless course. Several tofu-based dishes are available and all are worth the trip. In the case of the du bu ya chae, you get a plate of fried tofu pieces with sliced bell peppers, white onions and mushrooms. The vegetables are great. The tofu, however, is outstanding: nutty and creamy as Alpine fromage, dressed up with a slightly gingery sauce and a light breading. Awesome.

If your diet includes fish, the mi yeok guk pairs pieces of breaded crab, egg-battered zucchini, mushroom caps, fish cakes and other fried goodies on a single platter. It's an excellent meal for one, or a good choice as a shared starter for two.

In addition to the soy and veg, the kitchen boasts a deft hand with meat, again tempting vegetarians away from the path. Beef bulgogi is one of the classics of Korean cuisine; Kimchi offers that as well as a pork version, due ji bulgogi, which mixes very tender pork morsels with mushrooms, leek and onions, with everything stewed in a sweet and spicy, peanuty sauce. It goes very well with a side of sticky rice.

Another pork dish, bossam, is good enough to deserve a multipage entry of its own in your personal dream journal: chunky slices of roast pork with a delicious, almost-deliqescent ribbon of fat, served with more spicy kimchi, which



Photos by DANA WILSON/The Prague Post

Look out, vegetarians! Kimchi offers great tofu and excellent meat dishes.



Kimchi serves its own creamy tofu, available with vegetables, top, and in an elegant pan-fried version.

FROM THE MENU

- **Kimchi** 50 Kč
- **Du bu ya chae fried tofu** with vegetables 230 Kč
- **Kun man du potstickers** (gyoza) 120 Kč
- **Mi yeok guk mixed plate** — fried fish, crab, squash and mushrooms 400
- **Due ji bulgogi barbecued pork** dinner 300 Kč
- **Bossum roast pork** with kimchi 380 Kč
- **Half-liter Budvar 12°** 50 Kč

Kimchi

Nad Hradním vodojemem
 29/11
 Prague
 6-Střešovice
 (Tram 1, 2 or 18
 to Ořechovka)
 Tel. 224 315 511
 Open Mon.-Sat. noon-3 p.m., 5 p.m.-11 p.m.
 Euro/MC, JCB, Visa
 Appetizers 40-160 Kč
 Main courses 160-450 Kč
 Desserts 70-90 Kč



Food ★★★★★
 Service ★★★★★
 Atmosphere ★★★★★
 Overall ★★★★★

offers a palate-cleansing counterbalance.

Kimchi is in the process of improving its limited wine list with some Spanish vintages. However, hearty, semi-spicy, semi-sweet fare such as this pairs exceptionally well with the bittersweet taste of a Czech Pilsner. Kimchi offers Budvar 12° at 50 Kč for a half-liter; expensive for Prague, but par for the course at many Asian restaurants in town.

As is often the case, I found out about Kimchi through a reader tip — without exaggeration, this is one of the best pieces of clandestine information ever sent to the food desk. If you live in the center, Kimchi may seem hard to find. But the result of a four-stop tram ride from metro Hradčanská is an unusual restaurant with extremely hospitable family-style service and hearty Korean fare, to say nothing of the uniquely delicious tofu. Highly recommended.

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Please note: Restaurant listings represent a selection of recently reviewed restaurants. Selections vary weekly. Reviewer visits are anonymous and expenses are paid by The Prague Post. Reviews of restaurants can be read on The Prague Post Online at www.praguepost.com. Prices listed indicate average cost per person and include appetizer, main course, dessert and drinks.



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Na Hutích 13, Prague 6 Dejvice

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