

# THE BANKSTOWN FOOD & RESTAURANT GUIDE

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
BANKSTOWN CITY COUNCIL



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*from pho  
to falafel  
- and then  
some*

**BY HELEN GREENWOOD  
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## vietnamese

### Phu Hai

**330 Chapel Road Bankstown  
9708 1936**

**Map ref** 18

The secret of a good fish shop is that it doesn't smell fishy, like this pristine place. Phu Hai is packed with beautiful fish so fresh that on one occasion when we were there, the sand whiting were still in rigor mortis. Depending on the season you'll find coral trout, glistening whitebait, local and imported catfish, slimy mackerel and at least five varieties of prawns (green and cooked). There are Queensland hussar, and imported (from south east Asia) species red tinfoil and barb (often sold as dace or tench). Although most of the fish is whole, there is a good selection of filleted fish, including blue eye cutlets, king snapper fillets and bar cod. You'll find mackerel paste for making fish balls and salmon heads (a Vietnamese friend makes a tom yum soup with them).

### Xuan Son Seafoods

**TK Plaza 316 Chapel Road  
9796 3115**

**Map ref** 11

This place is always worth a look, with good whole and filleted fish and interesting specials from time to time – for example, fresh sea tiger prawns, which we buy whenever we see them. Adjacent to the shop proper are the fish tanks holding live baby barramundi, coral trout, mud crabs in season, yabbies and red claw crayfish (aka Queensland yabbies).

# fruit & veg



## fruit & veg

## european

### Fields of Fruit

**Shop T236 Centro Bankstown  
9796 4205**

**Map ref** 4

A large expanse of good fruit and veg located conveniently in the food hall. We spotted exotics in season like mangosteens and fresh dates, new season nectarines that look better than most and had no trouble finding everything we needed. There are bulk nuts and pulses.

### Compass Centre Fruit Shop

**Shop 1 Compass Centre Bankstown  
9796 3182**

**Map ref** 2

We've put this curious space – there are no walls, just low wooden partitioning to separate it from the rest of the shopping centre – into European, but it might just as well be in Lebanese or Asian. You'll find chokoes next to broad beans, chicory next to cos lettuce, and bok choy with the English spinach. Old Chinese ladies rub shoulders with young Lebanese girls and Aussie locals, all in search of bargains. At these prices, you can't expect everything to be top quality but there is enough good stuff to make it worth a scan.

## asian

**Best Value Supermarket**  
**32 Centro Bankstown**  
**9708 2288** **Map ref 7**

This huge grocery store also boasts an impressive array of fresh fruit and vegetables at good prices at the front.

## vietnamese

**Thanh Long Fruits & Vegetables**  
**Shop 6 TK Arcade 316 Chapel Road**  
**Bankstown**  
**9796 7754** **Map ref 11**

We'll stick our necks out and say this is the best fruit and veggerly in Bankstown. Everything is in good nick and well cared for. The service is amazing. We went to buy rambutans, and were surprised when the assistant changed the ones we had chosen: these are better quality, she said. She was right. Later, Vietnamese contacts confirmed we were right about it. In season you'll find all the varieties of mangoes, both green and ripe, the aforementioned rambutans, longans, lychees, even dong dongs, a small hard green fruit (eaten tart with salt and chilli). Above the counter are fresh coffee beans and rum butter, and out the back is a small selection of fruity drygoods: dried longans, tamarind soup base. The greens, as you'd expect, are also excellent.

**1. Duy Linh**  
**Shop 55 Bankstown City Plaza**  
**9791 6467** **Map ref 12**

**2. Thien Huong**  
**Shop 56-57 Bankstown City Plaza**  
**9790 2150** **Map ref 12**

**3. Nhut Than**  
**59 Bankstown City Plaza**  
**9707 4237** **Map ref 12**

These three grocery stores and greengrocers are cheek by jowl on Bankstown Plaza. The owners of the first two are northern Vietnamese; the last is owned by south Vietnamese who also speak Chinese. They offer similar produce but one will have small green mangoes and the others might not. With their similar offerings, there are still daily variations in quality and price so we suggest you cruise all three before making a decision

## lebanese

**Bankstown Lebanese Bakery**  
**& Mixed Business**  
**287 Chapel Road Bankstown**  
**9708 3976** **Map ref 5**

Though the quantities here are smaller than Abu-Salim, the quality is equally good.

**Golden Nights Restaurant**  
**1st Floor 10-12 Restwell Street**  
**Bankstown**  
**9790 5555**

**Map ref 13**

To call this a restaurant is to seriously undersell a Bankstown institution. Yes, there is good food – mezes on the tables as you arrive and more and more rolling out through the night.

But the place is actually somewhere between a nightclub and a dance hall. A vast room, with silver and gold striped ceiling in imitation of a luxury tent, has long tables packed with beautifully dressed and coiffed Lebanese girls, their mothers, fathers, grandparents, brothers and cousins. On the stage is a loud and tight Middle Eastern band belting out driving music all night long. Guest singers take the stage and, much later, there is occasionally a belly dancer. Long lines of dancers join hands, the girls moving rhythmically, the men dancing together with elaborate steps. It's enormous fun and we strongly recommend at least one visit to Golden Nights, preferably with a large table of uninhibited friends. Friday and Saturday nights only till 4am (you'll need to book) or ask about functions.

**Hadla**  
**222 South Terrace**  
**9790 6886**

**Map ref 14**

Slurp up the best Lebanese ice cream in town (the wild berry is a must) until midnight most nights, and until 1am in the summer. See also Cakes Bread and Sweets

**Titanic Sweets Café**  
**49 Raymond Street Bankstown**  
**9708 3688**

**Map ref 23**

Puff on the nargile (water pipe) or drink cardamom-scented Lebanese coffee; nibble on cakes, chocolates or ice cream as late as you like in the summer time or until around midnight during the rest of the year.



## lebanese/middle eastern

### **Gebran**

**175 Wattle Street Bankstown**

**9707 3044**

**Map ref 27**

Some of the finest Lebanese food in Sydney was served the last time we went to this lively place off the beaten track in a shopping enclave. From mezes to mains, every dish showed the hand of a careful and skilful chef in the kitchen. The customary bowl of vegetables in the centre of the table was exceptionally fresh, and the little bowls of soujouk (spicy sausage), hommos, labneh and baba ganouj are among the best examples we've found in Sydney. So too is the kibbeh nayeh in two versions, with and without burghul and its accompanying toum (garlic and olive oil sauce). The meal was rounded off with a huge platter of char grilled meats – chicken, beef, kofta (minced meat kebabs), and samke harra, whole boned snapper in a sauce of coriander, onion garlic and chilli. The oud player (Friday and Saturday only) keeps the vibe up, and if you know the (Arabic) words, you're welcome to sing along.

### **Sindbad Bakery**

**Shop 4/2-10 Restwell Street**

**Bankstown**

**9796 3165**

**Map ref 19**

This is one of the large handful of 'Lebanese pizza' joints scattered around town, and, in our opinion, one of the very best. There are two words you need to know if unfamiliar with this style of pizza. The first is manoush, which means a crust topped with za'atar, a Lebanese herb and spice mixture containing, among other things, thyme, sumac and sesame seeds. It's the breakfast pizza and is addictive. Second is lahmacun (pronounced lahmajoun), a base topped with spiced minced lamb and a choice of vegetables, soujuk (spicy sausage) or simple and luscious haloumi cheese. Try it with the refreshingly sour Lebanese tamarind soft drink or Grandpa's ayran, a salty yoghurt drink.

### **Summerland**

**457 Chapel Road Bankstown**

**9708 5107**

**Map ref 21**

After more than 30 years in Punchbowl, this famous, family-run restaurant (by Ali and Fouad Sayed, with Ali in the kitchen) moved to Bankstown in 2003, but nothing has changed. The fantastic food still arrives in waves and we strongly suggest you try this place in the company of at least six people – the more the merrier. There is a belly dancer on Friday and Saturday nights.