

# Bangkok Xpress Grows from Food Cart to Restaurant at PDX

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Bangkok Xpress Thai Food at Portland International Airport is a story of firsts.

The new restaurant is the first Thai food restaurant at PDX.

It's also the first brick and mortar location for Bangkok Xpress.

And Bangkok Xpress is the first to graduate from the PDX food cart program into a traditional restaurant location in the airport. The food cart program is designed to give locally owned small businesses a chance to operate at the airport with low overhead to see if it's the right fit for them.

Development in the airport environment can be intimidating and expensive for small businesses, and Port of Portland strives to maintain an inclusive atmosphere by lowering the barriers to entry with efforts like the food cart program.

Located in the PDX Clocktower Plaza, the minority-owned, woman-owned, and certified Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise restaurant reflects owner Cheryl Nhun's passion for cooking.

"In a lot of Asian families, we learn our cooking methods with mom and dad and the family," Cheryl said. "I was also able to meet a lot of people in the community and share recipes and broadened our cooking experience. Eventually, I thought I would share that with the rest of the world."

Cheryl founded Bangkok Xpress in 2012 with a food cart at Rose City Food Park on Northeast Sandy Boulevard. “When I had the opportunity to start my own business, I thought what would be better than jumping into the food cart scene,” Cheryl said. “Portland is just such a foodie town, it seems like a great opportunity, so we gave it a try and we were very well received.”

“When I first heard about PDX having a food cart program, we expressed interest, and one day we were presented the opportunity,” Cheryl continued. “It was such a wonderful experience for us. We learned so much about the airport culture and met wonderful people. I feel like there was a lot of support from staff. We said if there was ever an opportunity to stay longer, we would. And when that option came up, we jumped at it, and here we are.”

Bangkok Xpress offers very traditional Thai cuisine, Cheryl explained. That includes an array of noodle dishes like the Drunken Noodle, Phad Thai and Phad Sa Ew. There’s also a variety of rice dishes, combination plates, and the new Lemongrass Chicken and Beef Basil dish offered with white or brown rice, all made to order and fresh every day.

The restaurant is open 7 a.m.-9 p.m. daily and offers gluten free and vegan options. Bangkok Xpress echoes PDX’s commitment to representing local business, offering street pricing and serving travelers 365 days a year.

“My advice for anyone considering starting a business at PDX is to shadow an existing business,” Cheryl said. “You should be open to peaks and valleys with customers as they travel through the airport. The airport is very different from anything out on the streets. We are very happy to be here and to share our food with everyone, and I hope everyone enjoys it.”