



VIETNAMESE SYDNEY

Besides favourite destinations such as Cabramatta and Canley Vale, Vietnamese cooking is also prevalent in Bankstown, Marrickville, Homebush and the CBD. Inner-city locations include Pasteur (709 George Street, Haymarket. Phone: 9212 5622), Non La (59 Fitzroy Street, Surry Hills. Phone: 9332 1050), Thanh Long (622 Crown Street, Surry Hills. Phone: 9319 3206), Misschu's (see Hole in the Wall, page 19) and Red Lantern (545 Crown Street, Surry Hills. Phone: 9698 4355).

Best strip: John Street, Cabramatta

Between fabric stores and electronics outlets, this busy strip boasts dozens of takeaway outlets, fast-and-furious eateries, grocery stores and juice bars. Mandatory pit stops are Bau Truong (42 John Street. Phone: 9727 4492), for barbecued meats and "broken" rice, and Tan Viet Noodle House (100 John Street. Phone: 9727 6853), for crisp-skin chicken and egg noodles in soup. Fresh sugar-cane juice and wicked, hot custard doughnuts can be purchased afterwards from the bakery bars across the road.

Best pho: Pho Bac Hai Duong

Addicts of pho, the archetypal beef (or chicken) noodle soup, abound. Pho fiends love this simple spot with its feisty, sweet broth (from \$7.50) and generous amounts of sliced fillet. Added squeezes of lemon, fish sauce, table herbs, chilli and hoisin for dipping are up to you. There's free-range-chicken pho, too. 304 Illawarra Road, Marrickville. Phone: 9559 5078.

Best takeaway: Ngo Duc

An oldie but a goodie for dozens of meals and snacks. Rice-paper rolls, spring rolls and grilled meat on egg noodles (\$6) with appropriate dipping sauces are assembled to order. Great value, delicious taste. Shop 19, 105 John Street, Cabramatta. Phone: 9755 0844.

Best bun cha: Hanoi Quan

Some of the best meals are of the all-your-food-groups-in-one-bowl variety. The northern Vietnamese specialty of bun cha falls into that category: noodles, vegetables, grilled marinated meat and a protein-rich nuoc cham or fish-sauce-based dressing. Try it at this low-key Marrickville diner on the Illawarra Road strip. They do it proud. 346 Illawarra Road, Marrickville. Phone: 9559 1637.

Best family restaurant: Hai Au

This is all about grill-your-own clay-pot rice (love that crust) and braised classics such as pork belly in coconut juice (\$12) and canh chua (southern-style sweet-and-sour fish soup, \$15). Fresh juices, too. 48a Canley Vale Road, Canley Vale. Phone: 9724 9156.

Best banh mi: Hong Ha

An airy crumb and a light crust characterise the Vietnamese baguette (from \$4), which is typically filled with several kinds of pork – from roast to pâté to pressed – and salad, plus dipping sauce. Fresh chilli rings are a must. 324 Forest Road, Hurstville. Phone: 9580 1268. And they still queue at the original Mascot bakery. 1151 Botany Road, Mascot. Phone: 9667 2069.

Best food shop: Eastland (Dong Khanh) Supermarket

The Tran family business supplies Asian dry goods, fresh Vietnamese herbs, and fruit and veg to the public and other Asian grocery stores. They import a lot of goods directly. Head here for spices, sauces, fresh herbs, exotic fruit, woks and steamers. It's a favourite with Red Lantern's Luke Nguyen. 109 John Street, Cabramatta. Phone: 9726 9104. →




Best bun cha
Hanoi Quan