

# SPICE IN THE CITY!

*Our guide to the sexiest eats with heat in the ATL.*

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Does spice promote better sex? You bet! It seems spice just makes everything hotter. That's why we're all fired up to present Atlanta's ultimate guide to all things spice. Want to down the perfect Bloody Mary? Why not throw back a Sweet Heat martini, too? And go ahead and sample the best lobster red curry, cayenne fried chicken and chile-infused chocolates in town. We've also traced our own spice route to track down favorite dishes from Korea, India, Morocco, Indonesia and more. Still not fiery enough for you? Seek the heat at 3 new hot spots including the aptly named Spice Market!



## SPICE GIRLS

When it comes to Thai food in Atlanta, everyone knows Nan. Though Nan's daughter DeeDee will soon take the helm of the kitchens at *Nan Thai* and *Tamarind Seed*, fans of Nan's green curry and barbecue lamb chops have nothing to fear. DeeDee will use the same Bangkok recipes that have been in the Niyomkul family for 10 generations. The summer menu promises inspired twists on tradition with dishes like pan-seared salmon with red curry pumpkin fried rice. Any secret weapons stashed in the spice drawer? "Kaffir lime gives food a nice punch and adds a zestiness—an extra zing that's subtle," Nan says. *Nan Thai Fine Dining*: 1350 Spring St., 404.870.9933; *Tamarind Seed*: 80 14th St., 404.873.4888 or [www.nanfinedining.com](http://www.nanfinedining.com).

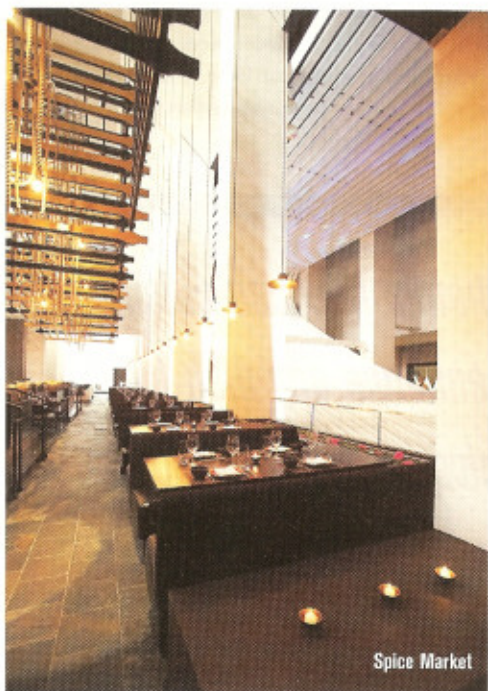
## HOT SPOTS *Three tantalizing new lairs with spices to spare.*

Parish Foods & Goods, the latest Concentrics Restaurants' offering, combines a restaurant, market and to-go concepts. Chef Tim Magee, whose résumé includes stints at Buckhead Diner, South City Kitchen and Lobby at Twelve, promises "aggressively seasoned food" like crab claws bordelaise, barbecue shrimp and crawfish pie based on classic Creole cuisine and local seasonal ingredients. The to-go counter has crispy po-boys, while the market stocks New Orleans' Abita beer, house-made salami and other spicy Creole sundries. 240 N. Highland Ave., 404.681.4434 or [www.parishball.com](http://www.parishball.com).

First launched by famed chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten in the Manhattan meatpacking district, Spice Market features sexy cuisine inspired from the street food of Southeast Asia. Chef Ian Winslade (formerly of Posh) whips up pork vindaloo with a 20-spice marinade, duck curry (which balances the heat of house-made red chile paste with coconut milk) and chicken samosas with flavors of tumeric, cilantro and cumin in an equally spicy and sultry dining den. 188 14th St. in the W Hotel, 404.549.5450 or [www.spicemarketatlanta.com](http://www.spicemarketatlanta.com).

With three successful locations in the San Francisco Bay area, chef Chris Yeo has now expanded his Straits restaurant empire to Atlanta

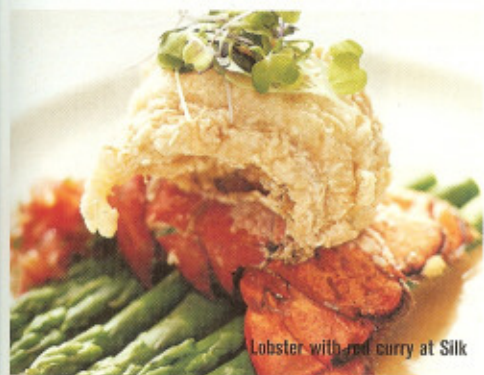
with business partner and rapper Chris "Ludacris" Bridges. Showcasing exotic Singapore cuisine, the menu is spice personified: deep-fried crab or lobster sautéed in a garlic and serrano chili sauce, aromatic basil chicken simmered with shiitake mushrooms and traditional Singapore curries. 793 Juniper St., [www.straitsrestaurants.com](http://www.straitsrestaurants.com).



Spice Market

## RED ON RED

Lobster meets its match at Silk with a clever kick of spice in the restaurant's signature red curry sauce. Chef Kochi Chiba weaves aromatics such as lemongrass, shallot and garlic into a coconut milk seasoned with cumin, coriander and red milk curry paste. The lobster is then battered and fried. Wash down each decadent bite with chilled Jizake Tenzan sake. 919 Peachtree St., 678.705.8888 or [www.silkrestaurant.com](http://www.silkrestaurant.com).



Lobster with red curry at Silk



Pozole's heat-laden margarita

## LIQUID FIRE

Hot Stix's Sweet Heat martini strikes with Mazama chili vodka tempered by a silken splash of cane syrup. 570 Main St., 404.844.200 or [www.hotstixstirfry.com](http://www.hotstixstirfry.com).

Pozole's made-from-scratch margarita with pickled jalapeño juice can be customized with 50 tequila brands. 1044 Greenwood Ave., 404.892.0552 or [www.pozolerestaurant.com](http://www.pozolerestaurant.com).

Earthy aromatics and naked heat define Thrive's Il Borghese of single malt scotch laced with Tabasco, lime and a bit of simple syrup. 101 Marietta St., 404.389.1000 or [www.thriveatl.com](http://www.thriveatl.com).

Room's feisty Red Pepper Mojito includes rum, a splash of lime, mint simple syrup, and a healthy dose of house-made, racy red pepper juice. 400 W. Peachtree St., 404.418.1250 or [www.roomattwelve.com](http://www.roomattwelve.com).

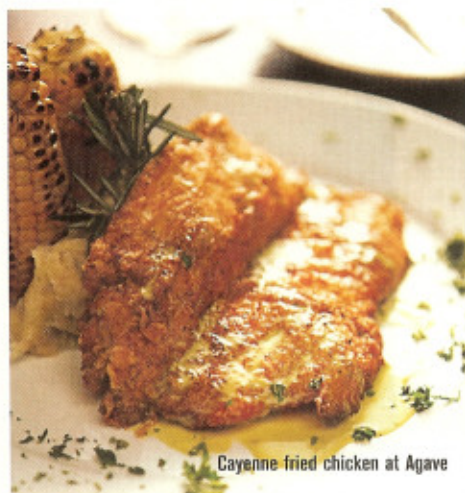
Peasant Bistro distills the perfumes of saffron and ginger into a creamy duo of shooters spiked with Absolut vodka. 250 Park Ave. W., 404.230.1724 or [www.peasantatl.com](http://www.peasantatl.com).

*"The notion that fat is flavor, well, I challenge that. Getting extreme with spice is what we do for flavor. It's the only way to keep your mouth from getting bored. People should have multiple taste experiences with a meal."*

*-Executive chef Clifford Pleau, Seasons 52*

## CAYENNE CALLING

Fried chicken is a southern staple, but Agave works poultry magic by slathering its chicken with a secret 15-spice rub and a healthy additional dose of cayenne to juice up the heat factor and add a kicky twist to a traditional dish. Fried and served with a heap of Yukon gold potatoes, it's just spicy enough to keep those taste buds interested. Put out any lingering fires with a reposado Corzo tequila margarita sweetened with agave syrup and a splash of lime. 242 Boulevard, 404.588.0006 or [www.agaverestaurant.com](http://www.agaverestaurant.com).



Cayenne fried chicken at Agave

*"What fascinates me about authentic Mexican cuisine is the variety of chiles. Chiles enhance any dish by contributing heat, smokiness, spice and even sweetness."*

*—Executive chef Thomas Schoborg, of Rosa Mexicano*

## THE FAB FIVE

We've tracked five exotic spices that rank high on the trend-meter to make your spice rack racier:

**Sumac:** This Mediterranean spice is deep red in color, with a tart, lemony flavor.

**Shichimi Togarashi:** Sexy Japanese 7-spice blend that includes: red chile pepper, sesame seeds and roasted orange peel.

**Za'atar:** Exotic Middle Eastern spice and herb blend that includes sumac, thyme salt and sesame seeds.

**Grains of Paradise:** A peppery seed spice from West Africa with a hint of coriander.

**Ras El Hanout:** Moroccan blend of 10 or more spices. This is for true spice fiends.

## PIQUANT PAIRINGS

When it comes to food and wine pairings, "there are no rules," says Brady Lowe, founder of **The Taste Network**, an experiential marketing and custom event company. The self-taught enthusiast has helped thousands learn how to best pair wine with cheese, chocolate and cuisine. "Your palate rules," he says. "If you like it, you like it." However, Lowe offers this cheat sheet for pairing wine with spicy food: (Sweet + Cool) + Heat = Good. Spices can burn the tongue, but wines that are high in sugar content and served at a cool temperature can help calm that fire. "Riesling, Pinot Gris, Gewurztraminer, Chenin Blanc, Alsatian wines and rosés generally pair well with spicy cuisine" Lowe says.

Avoid wines such as Bordeaux, Cabernet Sauvignons and Merlots that tend to be very tannic or acidic such as Sauvignon Blanc. 404.849.3569 or [www.tastenetwork.org](http://www.tastenetwork.org).

## SUGAR & SPICE

Add spice to chocolate and your coveted cacao gets some extra kick! These grown-up desserts add another level of sophistication to your sweet tooth (and their aphrodisiacal qualities may also spice up your bedroom as well).

Valrhona chocolate gratin with basil ice cream at **Aria**. 490 East Paces Ferry Road, 404.233.7673 or [www.aria-atl.com](http://www.aria-atl.com).

White chocolate curry lollipop at **The Chocolate Bar** paired with their spicy chocolate tequila old fashioned. 201 W. Ponce de Leon Ave., Suite C, 404.378.0630 or [www.thechocolatebardecatur.com](http://www.thechocolatebardecatur.com).



White chocolate curry lollipops at The Chocolate Bar

A trio of aphrodisiacal dark chocolate truffles at **Beleza** spiked with chile and Caribbean spices such as cauaba and maca root. 905 Juniper St., 678.904.4582 or [www.belezarestaurant.com](http://www.belezarestaurant.com).

The chestnut and buckwheat crepe gateaux with smoked tea chocolate mousse at **Repast**. 620 N. Glen Iris Dr., 404.870.8707 or [www.repastrestaurant.com](http://www.repastrestaurant.com).

## KICKY CONDIMENT

MF Sushibar has the lock on pure wasabi root. Difficult to grow, expensive and hard to procure, this pungent root is coveted for its raw heat and tang. If you crave the real thing, MF has it shipped in twice weekly from Japan, and grates it tableside. 265 Ponce De Leon Ave, 404.815.8844 or [www.mfsushibar.com](http://www.mfsushibar.com); 3280 Peachtree Street, Ste 110, 404.841.1192 or [www.mfbuckhead.com](http://www.mfbuckhead.com).



Fresh wasabi root at MF Sushibar



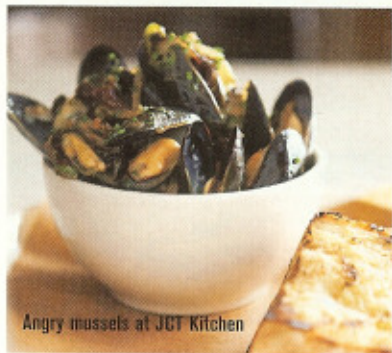
Spicy guacamole at Rosa Mexicano

## GET SAUCY!

Immerse your taste buds in authentic Mexican flavor at Rosa Mexicano. Guacamole is prepared to your heat specifications tableside, using fresh avocados, tomato, onion, cilantro and jalapeno. Add further kick by mixing in green habanero, pasilla de Oaxaca, black bean and pomegranate, pineapple or chipotle tomato salsa. Or buy a jar and dive into your favorite salsa at home. Atlantic Station, 245 15th St., 404.347.4090 or [www.rosamexicano.com](http://www.rosamexicano.com).

## MAD ABOUT YOU

Searing heat from serrano chillies and peppered bacon give these "angry" mussels from JCT Kitchen a one-two punch. To soften the blow, chef Ford Fry adds butter to the broth. Order the decadent parmesan truffle fries to soak up the leftovers. 1198 Howell Mill Road, 404.355.2252 or [www.jctkitchen.com](http://www.jctkitchen.com).



Angry mussels at JCT Kitchen

## THE CHILE WHISPERER

Chile pepper spices run from smoking hot to mild at Pura Vida. "When the heat is tamed you can actually appreciate the flavor," says chef Hector Santiago. "It's about balance. I don't want the chile to take over the dish." His tantalizing tapas at his Inman Park hotspot play notes of sweet, salty, sour, spicy, savory and heat. Informed by travels to his native Puerto Rico as well as South America and Spain, Santiago's innovative menu features dishes like salmon ceviche with a heatless habanero sauce and chocolate paired with foie gras that's spiced with cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg and coriander. 656 N. Highland Ave., 404.870.9797 or [www.puravidatapas.com](http://www.puravidatapas.com).



## ATLANTA'S SPICE ROUTE *Take your taste buds on a global tour.*

**BEST SPICY BARBECUE** The hickory-smoked barbecue beef short ribs at **Kevin Rathbun Steak** boast a cayenne dry rub and tangy house-made sauce loaded with black pepper and garlic. 154 Krog St., Suite 200, 404.524.5600 or [www.kevinrathbunsteak.com](http://www.kevinrathbunsteak.com).



The Hells roll at Steel

**BEST SPICY INDIAN** Tongue-tingling tilapia curry at **Bhojanic** sizzles with curry leaf, mustard seeds and nigella seeds. 1363 Clairmont Road, 404.633.9233 or [www.bhojanic.com](http://www.bhojanic.com).

**BEST SPICY GREEK** Swordfish Spetsofai at **Kyma** gets its kick from traditional loukaniko sausage and calabrese chiles. 3085 Piedmont Road, 404.262.0702 or [www.buckheadrestaurants.com](http://www.buckheadrestaurants.com).

**BEST SPICY VIETNAMESE** Lamb with flat rice vermicelli at **Co'm** tempers top notes of soy sauce, lemongrass and caramelized red peppers with honey and orange juice. 4005 Buford Hwy., Suite F, 404.320.0405 or [www.comgrill.com](http://www.comgrill.com).

**BEST SPICY NEW AMERICAN** A 14-foot fire rotisserie and spicy apps (lamb lollipops with grape chile, crab beignets with jalapeno glaze, etc.) satisfy heat-seekers at **TWO, urban licks**. 820 Ralph McGill Road, 404.522.4622 or [www.twourbanlicks.com](http://www.twourbanlicks.com).

**BEST SPICY SUSHI** The Devil roll at **Steel** lives up to its name. Pair it with a Hells roll (tuna, asparagus, spicy mayo, sriracha and Japanese chili) for a fire-breathing twosome. 950 West Peachtree, 404.477.6111 or [www.steelatlanta.com](http://www.steelatlanta.com).



Bobotie at 10 Degrees South

## AFRICAN AROMATICS

The South African cuisine at **10 Degrees South** represents global fusion on a magnificent scale, weaving together spices and influences from French, Portuguese, Dutch, Malaysian, German and Mediterranean sources. Heat from spices such as curry and peri peri is balanced with rich fruit essences found in the chutneys. Experiment with the traditional dishes such as sosoties (beef tenderloin cubes tenderized in a vinegar marinade, grilled and topped with apricot curry sauce) or bobotie (a ground beef curry sweetened with and served with chutney). Mind yourself with the classic peri peri spice (derived from African bird's eye chili) as owner Justin Anthony explains, "The heat factor varies widely. Peri Peri is always spicy but no two concoctions taste the same. Our version has smoky-sweet elements in it, laced with garlic, lemon and a touch of barbecue. It's very user-friendly." Try their version on the prawn appetizer or as a dipping sauce for the chicken spring rolls. 4183 Roswell Road., 404.705.8870 or [www.10degreessouth.com](http://www.10degreessouth.com).



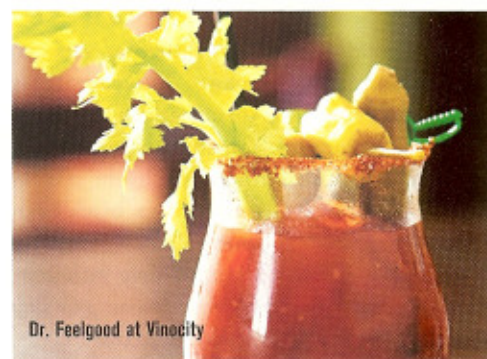
Sorbet trio at The Ritz-Carlton, Atlanta

## GET THE SCOOP

Spices bring a provocative twist to a trio of "spice ice" sorbets, at **The Ritz-Carlton, Atlanta**: chocolate Szechuan peppercorn, earthy cardamom and delicate saffron. **Twist** offers an equally captivating version of cardamom ice cream on its global menu. **Ritz-Carlton**, 181 Peachtree Street, 404.659.0400 or [www.ritzcarlton.com](http://www.ritzcarlton.com), **Twist**, 3500 Peachtree Rd., 404.869.1191 or [www.beretoserverestaurants.com](http://www.beretoserverestaurants.com).

## BLOODY SUNDAY

Spice up Sunday brunch with **Vinocity's** Dr. Feelgood Bloody Mary, a zippy blend of house infused four-pepper vodka and made-from-scratch bloody mix. It should hold its own nicely with a Truck Driver omelet: three eggs, fried buffalo chicken and a hefty dose of bleu cheese. 1963 Hosea Williams Dr., 404.870.8886 or [www.vinocitywinebar.com](http://www.vinocitywinebar.com).



Dr. Feelgood at Vinocity



Chef Doug Turbush of Bluepointe

## THE CURRY KING

"Spice can help make things a little more interesting," says Bluepointe chef Doug Turbush, who proves it with dishes like peanut crusted grouper in Massaman curry, crispy duck steak with Panang curry and Maine lobster in Thai coconut curry. His fresh curries are inspired by first-hand experiences in Thailand. "Travel has opened up a whole new world to me," he says. At his pan-Asian

restaurant, Turbush favors spice blends like vindaloo, which combines chile peppers, clove, cardamom, cinnamon, mace and coriander, and seven spice blend (used for spicy tuna tataki), which mixes black and white scsame seeds, chile flakes, mandarin orange peel, nori, ginger and hemp. A trip for your tongue, indeed. 3455 Peachtree Road, 404.237.9070 or [www.buckheadrestaurants.com](http://www.buckheadrestaurants.com).

*"The southern American palate is changing from salt and black pepper to salt and chili peppers. Red is the new black."*

*—Chef Cameron Thompson, TWO. urban licks*