

Dine on the River of Kings

 By [Brian Berkman](#)

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The Chao Phraya River winds its way through Bangkok like an arterial vein. Life in this magical city begins on the river - from the grand Royal Palace complex to the bewilderingly beautiful Wat Arun or Temple of Dawn with its towering centre column that seems to reach to heaven. There are many river cruise companies offering food and entertainment but the Manohra Cruises by [Anantara Riverside Resort](#) is among the most elegant.



Meet either at Anantara's jetty for a 7.30pm sailing or at the Saphan Taksin junction which is where the Skytrain meets the river. The Manohra is a beautifully restored, gleaming teak former rice barge with open sides that allows the air to circulate and cool things down while cruising. The great appeal of this authentic, regional cuisine experience, is that the river and its attractions seem to yield to you while on board. The menu also has details of the buildings of interest along the way which we get to see from a second perspective on the return voyage.

Miang Kham is the first dish served to the tables as we head down The River of Kings. I love the flavour gymnastics from this DIY starter of wild betel leaves in which to wrap tiny wedges of lemon, chilli slivers, lemongrass rounds, toasted coconut and peanuts before being topped with a nutty and sweetly hot sauce. The Thai classic, Tom Yum, the hot and sour soup, here served with river prawns, is outstanding and the rest of the meal simply builds on the layers of flavour and scintillating sensations in your mouth.

We pass the Grand Palace, its golden spires lit up to further accentuate its majesty, as we enjoy the deeply golden Massaman Nua curry with slow cooked beef which is followed by crisply fried sea bass, chicken in tamarind and wok-fried vegetables and Shitake mushrooms. Brown and white jasmine rice accompany the meal. Traditional Thai sweets provide a satisfying end. There is also a vegetarian set-menu option.



We've stayed at Anantara Resorts in the Maldives so it was a particular pleasure to see this landmark five-star Bangkok property before our dinner cruise. It was also an opportunity to visit the newly completed AVANI Riverside Bangkok Hotel, a sister property, also part of Minor Hotels, but appealing to a more price-conscious traveller.

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