

A Home Away *from Home*

Light, bright and organic, **Living Room** is one of Phnom Penh's latest cafés and expat haunts. **Liz Ledden** pays a visit.

'Living Room' is an apt name for this new café. Its comfortable ambience encourages a lengthy visit while trying one of the innovative herbal tea flavours (green tea with star anise, anyone?). It is also the type of space that evokes house envy among many of the Phnom Penh residents who visit.

Situated in BKK just off Norodom Boulevard, Living Room is secluded in a quiet street with mostly residential dwellings. The café itself is set in a large, peaceful villa, with seating inside and out, both on the ground level and upstairs. High ceilings and bright, clean, cheerful décor create a look of spaciousness and light. The atmosphere, too, is far from stuffy, with magazines available to read, a kids' playroom to keep young ones entertained, and a very relaxing vibe throughout, particularly on the upstairs terrace overlooking lots of greenery.



The terrace:
The Living Room is more than a living room

“The type of space that evokes house envy among many of the Phnom Penh residents who visit”

■ ORGANIC AND FAIR TRADE

Owner Meg Endo promotes the use of organic and fair trade products, using fresh vegetables and herbs produced by local NGO farming projects. The coffee in the café is fair trade, sourced from both Cambodia and abroad. By creating a cycle of improved conditions for agricultural workers and delivering safer produce to consumers, the owners believe that a positive ecological impact is created.

The predominantly vegetarian menu has only a few dishes containing meat. Breakfast options include eggs, pancakes, fresh fruit and bread sourced from The Deli, while the lunch menu has

salads, a few pasta and sushi options and vegetable soups. Prices are in the typical US\$3 to US\$4 a dish range, as per most western cafés in the city.

■ ALL ABOUT APPETISERS

A unique specialty of Living Room is their plates of finger foods, which can be ordered to share for US\$12, with enough food for two or three people. There are also individual tasting

plates at US\$4 each, with four different combinations of appetisers available.

We tried the second 'veggie plate' on the menu consisting of bread, strips of carrot and cucumber, aubergine dip, a cooked vegetable salad with Caesar dressing and three small vegetable curry samosas with a sweet chilli dipping sauce. At US\$4 it was a good value

meal – fresh, tasty, healthy and a substantial size.

The samosas are also available in a plate of six for US\$3.50, as are some of the other ingredients found in the mixed plates. Containing chunks of tuna and a combination of both cooked and raw vegetables, the Italian salad (US\$3 for small, US\$3.50 for regular) is a fresh and tasty meal. Alcohol is served at Living Room too, including wine by the glass for US\$2.50. The appetisers and tasting plates make for perfect snack food to accompany pre-dinner drinks.

Service at the café was exceedingly polite, with the staff continuously returning to refill drinks without having an overwhelming presence.

Environmentally friendly, family friendly and vegetarian friendly, Living Room is a wholesome and holistic café alternative.

Living Room, 9 Street 306,
Tel: 023 726 139, email:
livingroom@citylink.com.kh
Open Tuesday to Thursday from 7am to 6.30pm, Friday to Sunday from 7am to 9.30pm. Closed Mondays.



Healthy option:
Living Room's veggie plate