

# INTRODUCTION

Why a brand new edition of *The Food Lovers' Guide to Perth*, rather than a reprint? Well, it's two years since we wrote the first guide and much has changed.

We have discovered 79 new shops and businesses. We have extended our geographical area and included several of the farmers', growers' and producers' weekly markets which have now opened. The organic and health food chapter has more new entries than any other, and every existing entry has been revisited and revised. Quite a few places have closed or been sold; many have altered their opening hours; some have changed their philosophy or are now placing new emphasis on a particular area of their business, like the new-style food-to-go.

Today the economic climate is very different and we are all more conscious than ever of the cost of food.

'Cheap food isn't good and good food isn't cheap' – the old adage goes. Instead of searching for the cheapest food, what we suggest is that you look for the best value food you can find. But what is best value? It's the highest quality, freshest and most flavoursome food you can find at a price you can afford. This means buying fresh, locally-grown food in season and, maybe, buying less of it. Good value and cheap are different.

Fresh, local and seasonal are all closely linked. Why buy food in season? Because it's plentiful and not expensive, it's at its ripest and tastiest, ready to eat and full of the nutrients our bodies need at that particular time of the year. Strawberries and melons rehydrate us in our hot summer; roasted root veggies full of carbohydrates keep us warm in winter. Local and fresh just go hand-in-hand. If it's local, it's fresh; if it's fresh, it's grown close to home. Why fly in fruit and vegetables from overseas when our bountiful WA – from Kununurra to Albany – produces everything we need year round? Why buy an imported orange, picked when

green and then ripened by gas, when we have the Chittering Valley on our doorstep? (Save the food miles for Belgian chocolate and Roquefort cheese!)

And buying less? Go to a butcher, fishmonger, local delicatessen or *provedore* who will cut to order for you, so you are in control: in control of the quantity of food you buy, how much you pay and how much you eat. With pre-cut goods, someone else has made those decisions for you. Buy cheaper cuts of good quality meat from your favourite butcher and cook it long and slow ... think delicious braises and stews. You can be lean, without being mean.

The essence of good food is good ingredients. Go for quality, not quantity. A smaller amount of higher quality protein – meat, fish, chicken, cheese – will not cost more and will be much more satisfying. Not only is it tastier, it's healthier. And it's better for you to eat a smaller quantity of a higher quality product, because Australia has a growing problem – it's called obesity.

Food shopping should not be a chore – it should be enjoyable, interesting and fun. It's the stuff of daily life. To go forwards with food perhaps we need to take a step backwards and shop like our grandmothers used to do ... shop with an open mind, go and see what's there, what the merchant favours, and create your meals from what you find. Make friends with the shopkeepers and ask them: What's best today?

While writing *The Food Lovers' Guide to Perth*, we have discovered a treasure-trove of dedicated food retailers: everyone we met is passionate about what they are doing and has given us much of their time. We cannot thank them enough.

We have chosen what we consider to be a selection of the finest food retailers and food-associated businesses in Perth. With the help of this guide, please go out there and find them.

Shop smart and have fun!

Julie Mews and Lisa Hummel-Robson  
September 2009

# ASIAN FOOD

By far the largest concentration of Asian food shops is in the Chinatown area of Perth ... William Street north of Northbridge and the streets running off it between James and Brisbane ... and that area has a category all of its own – *Chinatown* (p 109).

But not everyone wanting to buy something Asian wants to go into Chinatown each time, so here is a small selection of food shops in a few different areas, all of which we patronise personally, and all of which have always been able to provide anything we've been searching for.

## DAILY SUPERMARKET

527 Beaufort St  
Highgate WA 6003  
9328 9570

Monday–Saturday 8.30–7.00

Sunday 9.00–6.00

In busy Beaufort Street, a new trendy shop or café seems to spring up every week, and for every new one, an old one closes. Amidst all this churning activity, it's reassuring to see that there are some constants, some old faithfuls. The Daily Supermarket, a thriving family business, owned and run by Ming and Kim Tran for over 14 years, is regarded as an institution by the locals and is much loved.

There are lots of fresh fruit and vegetables – everything you would expect to find and some exotic ones too – including luffa, bitter and long winter melons, choko, banana flowers, Thai eggplant, okra, turmeric and Chinese radish. The fridges are full of spanking fresh Asian greens including Chinese broccoli and bok choy, beansprouts and fresh herbs – fabulous mint, basil, coriander and curry leaf – as well as soft and hard tofu, fresh noodles, King oyster mushrooms and shiitakes and kimchi pickles.

They are famous here for the wonderful Vietnamese rice paper rolls which Ming's sister Yen makes fresh each day, and there's always a Chinese bun or two in the warming cabinet if you need a snack.

The freezers are full of frozen fish, prawns, curry puffs, dim sum and samosas and a large selection of frozen vegetables.

It's hard to believe that such a small shop can carry such a large variety of dried grocery goods; there's also a huge stock of Japanese products, Indian and oriental herbs, spices, sauces and a vast range of Indian sweets.

Ming told us: 'You have to stock *everything* – and we do.' We think that they deliver on that promise. Don't miss coming here.

## FREMANTLE MINI MART

5/West Gate Shopping Mall

Cantonment St

Fremantle WA 6160

9430 5839

Monday–Friday 9.00–6.00

Saturday 9.00–5.00 Sunday 10.00–5.00

CASH ONLY

Run by the Lim family for the last 20 years, this wonderful shop sells the most amazing variety of groceries, dried fruit, noodles and mushrooms, as well as many different kinds of tea and rice, sacks of coffee beans, tubs and sacks of wholefoods (including lentils, borlotti, kidney, black-eyed and lima beans), maize (kernels and ground), mealie meal (they have some African customers), rice flour, polenta, chickpeas and nuts as well as fresh Chinese and Asian greens and a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables. They stock products from China, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand and Spain.

Eileen Tay, one of the daughters, told us that their green vegetables and fresh fruit come from farmers in Wanneroo and other parts of WA. We saw beautiful dark purple Oriental eggplant, green papaya for Thai papaya salad, bitter melon (good for people with high blood pressure and for diabetics), a selection of Asian greens, fresh curry leaves and bird's eye chillies, wonderful-looking watercress and kang kong, a long, sharp-leaved green with hollow stems which is good in stir-fries. The beansprouts, delivered in small quantities three times a week, are some of the freshest we've found.

There's a whole section of exotic sweets, lots of different sauces, dried leaves (curry, banana, lime), every imaginable spice and, in the right-hand corner, a large selection of cooking pots, rice steamers, bamboo steamers, cook's knives, tableware and rice bowls.

By the checkout counter there's a little cabinet containing hot steamed buns and glutinous rice wrapped in banana leaf.