

TRENDING

DINE WITH ME

Chefs across the region are flexing their culinary chops with boundary pushing, multi-course meals at their exclusive tables. By Diana Hubbell

The latest craze in fine dining requires a leap of faith—you have to entrust the fate of your meal to the whims of the experts. Southeast Asia's big-name chefs are offering intimate tables with unconventional set menus to satisfy both the bold and the indecisive. Sashimi masters have been hosting chef's tables for ages with *omakase*, that carefully choreographed parade of Lilliputian dishes. One of the best new places on the scene is Singapore's **Shinzo** (17 Carpenter St.; 65/6438-2921; shinzo.com.sg; S\$138 per person), a spartan, blonde-wood temple to all things piscine. Opened last year, sushi veteran Lawrence Chia offers a seasonally influenced *omakase* that has all the elegance of a *kaiseki* menu without the austerity. + Tradition is left at the door at **Bo Innovation** (60 Johnston Rd.; 852/2850-8371; boinnovation.com; chef's table HK\$2,380 per person) where Alvin Leung Jr., nicknamed "The Demon Chef" for his clever reinterpretations of Cantonese cuisine, takes the classic dim sum for a molecular-gastro spin. With taste bud-teasing dishes like lobster with a Sichuan-inflected hollandaise, and foie gras with sea urchin and Korean miso, it is no wonder this Hong Kong restaurant has three Michelin stars. + Thailand's chefs are no slouches when it comes to inventive eats, and private chef's tables are popping up all over Bangkok. At **Smith** (Sukhumvit Soi 49; 66-2/261-0515; smith-restaurant.com; chef's table from Bt3,800 per person), a reclaimed warehouse with an ambitious nose-to-tail menu, Ian Kittichai and his two co-chefs show off their house-made charcuterie. It might be a splurge, but if you brave the leap, the pros promise to serve you up a plateful of paradise. +



Clockwise from top: Expect the unexpected at Bo Innovation; sashimi set from Shinzo; Smith's chefs plate with care; a meaty main at Smith; chef Lawrence Chia prepares *omakase* at Shinzo.