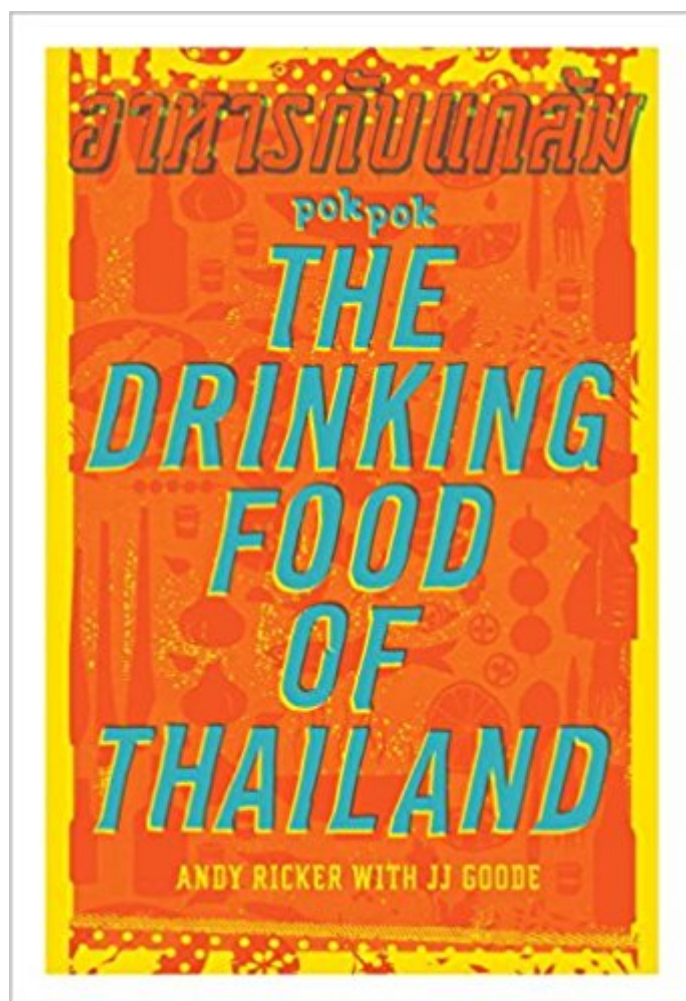


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POK POK The Drinking Food Of Thailand: A Cookbook



Synopsis

A cookbook featuring the rich and varied drinking food of Thailand (and the drinks it's consumed with), with 50 recipes and travelogue-like essays, inspired by Whiskey Soda Lounge, Andy Ricker's Portland, Oregon, restaurant. A celebration of the thrill and spirit of Thai drinking food, Andy Ricker's follow-up to Pok Pok brings the same level of authority, with a more laid-back approach. Just as America has salted peanuts, wings, and nachos, Thailand has its own roster of craveable snacks: spicy, salty, and/or sour, they are perfect accompaniments for a few drinks and the company of good friends. Accessible and detailed recipes like phat khii mao (drunkard's stir-fry), kai thawt (Thai-style fried chicken), and thua thawt samun phrai (fried peanuts with kaffir lime, garlic, and chiles) provide all the tools to create the food and the experience of Whiskey Soda Lounge at home.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

View larger Yam Met Mamuang Himaphaan Fried cashews with salt, chiles, and green onions Bangkok's Lam Sing Pla Tong is part bar, part music hall, and part cabaret. It's on a busy strip that comprises a sort of entertainment district for people from Isaan (Northeast Thailand), who make up a good portion of the working class in the city. All of the city's cab drivers, primarily men from Isaan, seem to know the place. The crowd is a mix of construction workers, also primarily men from Isaan; women; and kathoey, men who dress flamboyantly like women. Before you pass through the dark door, a gentleman brusquely pats you down to make sure you're not packing. Sadly, in this atmosphere, acts of passion-fueled violence are not uncommon. You join the rabble in the audience, dodging inebriates and noting the visiting dignitaries and I

don't mean heads of state. Amid the shit show, they're the ones with the cherry tables, expensive whiskey, and many admirers who crowd around hoping for handshakes. On a stage that looks as if it's been plastered with glitter, a band plays almost nonstop, and a varying cast of characters—nearly a dozen different singers who later reappear as backup dancers and, sometimes, end up pouring your drinks—perform deafening renditions of songs that everyone but you seems to know. The music is morlam and lukthung, mournful songs depicting the hardships of country living or ribald stories of love. The numbers are highly choreographed. Some particularly happy customers show their appreciation by stuffing money into shirt collars and waistbands. A couple of friends, two longtime expats and enthusiastic explorers, put me onto this place, which they stumbled into while on the prowl for duck laap. As soon as I got to Bangkok—or at least, after a few plates of laap and some deep-fried duck bills at a restaurant next door—I went to experience Lam Sing Pla Tong for myself. The night before I flew back to the States, I went again. I came for the fun. I came back for the cashews. To sustain us that first night, my entourage and I ordered a few dishes from the menu, a typical booze-friendly collection of fried stuff and salads but with an Isaan bent. What got me was a plate of fried cashews, aggressively salted and tossed with roughly chopped green onions and fresh red chiles in chunks big enough to inspire alarm. I spent the rest of the night shoveling down this salty, spicy, crunchy snack between slugs of beer. Since then, I've ordered the dish every time I've spotted it. Sometimes what I receive is a variation that's closer to yam (or so-called Thai salads), complete with fish sauce, lime juice, raw shallots, and ground pork. The version at Lam Sing Pla Tong reflects the dish at its simplest. And it's the one I like best.

Recipe (serves 2 to 4) Pour the oil to a depth of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch / 12 mm into small saucepan, set over medium heat, and heat to 325°F / 165°C. Use the thermometer to test the temperature, measuring the oil at the center of the vessel and carefully stirring the oil occasionally to ensure a consistent temperature. Line a bowl with paper towels or newspaper and put it near the stove. Carefully add the cashews to the hot oil and cook, stirring constantly, until light golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Keep in mind that the cashews will get a shade or two darker once they leave the oil. Using the spider or a slotted spoon, transfer the cashews to the prepared bowl to drain. Immediately season the cashews with the salt, tossing them as you season. Transfer the nuts to a plate and sprinkle on the green onions and chiles. Serve warm.

Special Equipment A deep-fry thermometer. A large spider skimmer (recommended).

Ingredients Neutral oil (such as soybean or palm) for deep-frying (about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup / 120 ml) 85 g / $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raw cashews 85 g / $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raw cashews 10 g / 2 tablespoons sliced ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch / 6 mm) green onions 6 g / 1 tablespoon sliced ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch / 6

mm) fresh Thai chiles, preferably red

Andy and JJ have done it again! This is a book you will love to cook from and a superb deep dive into an overlooked part of Thai culture. From my personal experience, this is how much of the eating is done in villages and towns around Thailand: unadorned and without the fanciful whimsy of the hotels, restaurants, and even the street foods of the big cities. The recipes in this book from Isaan "an underrepresented corner of this amazing country" are particularly thrilling to see. The lads have beautifully art directed the book as well: raw, naked flash photos for a raw and naked aspect of the local food scene. The "it is what it is, take it or leave it" attitude of the bars and small eateries is so perfectly captured in the imagery that I think this could be the first post punk-Thai cookbook that I've ever seen. - ANDREW ZIMMERN "A punk rock version of what Ricker serves at his popular Whiskey Soda Lounge. This is meant to be bar food, but there's more to it than spicy fried peanuts: stir fries, curries, fried chicken, and the bold flavors Pok Pok is known for jump off each page. Even novice cooks will be drawn into this colorful, flavorful world." - EATER

ANDY RICKER is a two time James Beard Award winning chef and owner of Pok Pok Restaurant in Portland, Oregon and several other establishments in Portland and New York, such as Whiskey Soda Lounge, Pok Pok Wing, Pok Pok Noi, Michelin Starred Pok Pok Ny, charcoal company Thaan and a drinking vinegar company called Pok Pok Som. He first visited Thailand as a backpacker in 1987. Since 1993, he has spent several months each year traveling, eating, cooking, and studying the food culture in Thailand. Andy currently splits his time between Portland, New York and Chiang Mai. JJ GOODE has co-written several books including Pok Pok with Andy Ricker, April Bloomfield's A Girl and Her Pig, and Morimoto with Masaharu Morimoto.

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