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Simple Thai Food: Classic Recipes From The Thai Home Kitchen



Synopsis

Thai takeout meets authentic, regional flavors in this collection of 100 recipes for easy, economical, and accessible Thai classics--from the rising star behind the blog *She Simmers*. Who can say no to a delicious plate of Pad Thai with Shrimp; a fresh, tangy Green Papaya Salad; golden Fried Spring Rolls; or a rich, savory Pork Toast with Cucumber Relish? Thai food is not only one of the most vibrant, wonderfully varied cuisines in the world, it also happens to be one of the tastiest, and a favorite among American eaters. The good news is, with the right ingredients and a few basic tools and techniques, authentic Thai food is easily within reach of home cooks. Take it from Leela Punyaratabandhu, a Bangkok native and author of the popular Thai cooking blog *She Simmers*. In her much-anticipated debut cookbook, Leela shares her favorite recipes for classic Thai fare, including beloved family recipes, popular street food specialties, and iconic dishes from Thai restaurant menus around the world. All of Leela's recipes have been tested and tweaked to ensure that even the busiest cook can prepare them at home. With chapters on key ingredients and tools, base recipes, one-plate meals, classic rice accompaniments, and even Thai sweets, *Simple Thai Food* is a complete primer for anyone who wants to give Thai cooking a try. By the end of the book, you'll be whipping up tom yam soup and duck red curry that will put your local takeout joint to shame. But perhaps more importantly, you'll discover an exciting new world of Thai flavors and dishes—including Stir-Fried Chicken with Chile Jam, Leaf-Wrapped Salad Bites, and Crispy Wings with Three-Flavored Sauce—that will open your eyes to all the wonderful possibilities that real Thai cooking has to offer.

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Customer Reviews

Many ethnic cuisines seem forbidding to the home chef because exotic ingredients aren't readily available and because of the required painstaking (and time-consuming) preparations. Relax in the hands of newbie author and experienced food-blogger Punyaratabandhu, who streamlines her way to the table with popular dishes like satay, pad thai, curries, and congees, among others. Not content with simplifying instructions, she also identifies which foodstuffs can accept substitutes and which can't (like lemongrass and galangal). Even better, there's an appended list of online ordering sources for those nonmetro dwellers. The more than 100 recipes fall into one of four categories: noshes and nibbles, rice accompaniments, one-plate or bowl meals, and sweets, each with a colorful preface. With her instructions (and assurances), readers just might try oxtail soup, rice congee with pork dumplings and eggs, herb-baked cashews, and pumpkin custard. Many of the basic recipes that inform Thai cooking are gathered at the back, from steamed glutinous rice (aka sticky rice) to all types of curry paste. This is a new appreciation for a quiet cuisine. --Barbara Jacobs

"Thai has long been underrepresented in my pantry, my refrigerator and on my cookbook shelves because I never felt I had enough support to cook much beyond a beef curry made with canned coconut milk and a commercial red curry paste. Punyaratabandhu's practical and calming tone -- plus her delicious-sounding recipes -- make me want to do much more Thai cooking." -

The Chicago Tribune "I have generally found "Quick," "Easy," and "Simple" to be disingenuous labels when it comes to Thai cookbooks [...] But Punyaratabandhu seems to pull it off, coming up with recipes that are weeknight-doable yet electric with ingredients you can just about find if you try hard [...]. Shortcuts or not, they're desperately delicious." - National Public Radio "... blogger Leela Punyaratabandhu (shesimmers.com) has a way of marrying convenience with high flavor" -

GOOD READS OF 2014, National Public Radio "Punyaratabandhu [...] does simplify the complexity of Thai cuisine. [...] To write this book, she travelled back to Bangkok where she visited friends and family and interviewed street vendors and other cooks so she could best capture the flavours of her home country in a way that a North American could get." - The Globe and Mail "...

Punyaratabandhu's [...] a masterful hand-holder: If you love Thai food but the ingredients and preparation have you cowed, this is the book to get ..." - THE 20 BEST COOKBOOKS OF 2014, The Globe and Mail "... The work developed into this, her first cookbook, and it shows a confidence and care absent in many books by more seasoned authors. [...] "Simple Thai Food" is what it says: unusually simple, and still really Thai. It's written with grace, dedication, and humor,

and there's nothing like it on the market." [...] In other words, if you want a single Thai book, this is it." - The Boston Globe "... Written by the popular shesimmers.com blogger, this is the best home Thai book currently available ..." - TOP 10 COOKBOOKS OF 2014, The Boston Globe "Simple Thai Food [...] takes a measured approach to traditional Thai cuisine; it is neither dogmatic nor full of shortcuts. [...] Punyaratabandhu writes most of these recipes as she would prepare them for Thai guests [...]. Yet in her extensive and detailed headnotes, she includes helpful hints for preparation, shopping tips, and, most importantly, good ideas for substitutes. In this way, readers are given a wealth of options, none more (or less) delicious than the last ..." - THE YEAR IN COOKBOOKS: OUR FAVORITE READS OF 2014, Serious Eats Best Book of 2014, NPR Best Cookbook of 2014, The Globe and Mail Best Cookbooks of 2014

• Serious Eats "Simple Thai Food is just what folks need: a simple, easy-to-follow cookbook on a delicious cuisine (and one of my favorites!) that most people aren't used to making at home. With clear, friendly instructions and valuable tips and techniques, Leela unlocks the flavors and seasonings of real Thai cooking - spicy salads, coconut-rich soups, blazing bowls of curry, and the fiery, flavorful condiments that go alongside. Thanks to Leela, I'm excited to create these authentic Thai dishes in my own kitchen!"

• David Lebovitz, author of My Paris Kitchen "In this compendium of favorite Thai dishes, Leela has managed to make the recipes accessible and straightforward for a home cook, and to keep them very true to what a modern Thai cook (in Thailand as well as in the West) would recognize as authentic. She does offer substitutions when ingredients are more difficult to find, but they never skew far from what a Thai mom would use in her own kitchen. Leela even sneaks in a few dishes that you might not find in your local Thai restaurant, but will probably become your favorites!"

• Andy Ricker, chef/owner of the Pok Pok restaurants and author of Pok Pok "Leela has crafted an authoritative, opinionated, and thoroughly down-to-earth collection of traditional Thai recipes, written especially for cooks who weren't lucky enough to be born in Thailand. All the basics are here, beautifully organized, from curry paste to coconut milk and beyond."

• David Tanis, author of One Good Dish "Simple Thai Food is a beautiful snapshot of Leela's effort to stay connected to her Bangkok roots through food, and a wonderfully practical guide for those of us who want to create authentic Thai flavors at home."

• James Oseland, editor-in-chief of Saveur and author of Cradle of Flavor "Leela re-creates her beloved taste memories, and then invites us in - offering tools, inspiration, and fresh context in equal measure. You will want these recipes for so many reasons - the craft, joy,

deliciousness, backstory – and you will want (and come close to experiencing) Leela herself at your table, imparting her fine intelligence and warmth. – Mollie Katzen, author of The Moosewood Cookbook and The Heart of the Plate

I'm a Thai who grew up in Thailand and now live in the US. I have been cooking some simple Thai dishes at home. Now that I'm pregnant and have morning sickness I have no energy to cook. I asked my husband (American) to cook some Thai foods following the instructions in this book. He hasn't cooked any Thai foods before but he has tasted several exotic Thai dishes. I'm very impressed with the results as he carefully follows the recipes and instructions in this cookbook. He said the instructions are very clear and the cooking is fairly simple. I looked at a few other Thai cookbooks and found this book contained the most day-to-day homemade meals that I grew up with. The cooking style is homemade and authentic Thai. The dishes once done may look different than what you will see from Thai restaurants in the US. For example, Pad Thai, I grew up seeing how it was made on a daily basis. Pad Thai in Thailand will have a light (clear) color which I prefer while Pad Thai at most Thai restaurants in the US will have red or dark brown color which I believe the sauces have been modified. Needless to say my husband and I are very happy with this cookbook. If you'd like to try the homemade versions of Thai foods, I highly recommend this book.

Let me start by saying that I have lived in Thailand for the past two years. Some other reviewers have mentioned the title of the book perhaps being something of a misnomer. I can understand that sentiment, but I disagree. This cookbook is all about simple Thai food. Not American-simple, "ready in 20 minutes using ingredients always in your pantry," but simple as in truly, simply, the food that is served in Thai homes. Not trendy restaurant Thai, not Thai fusion, not Thai-influenced: simply, Thai. The recipes are authentic, the instructions detailed, the photography beautiful. Leela gives acceptable substitutes for potentially hard-to-find ingredients when they exist, and when a substitute just won't do she makes that clear as well. She also includes an introduction for most recipes which includes where she got the recipe or the traditional background of that food. In short, this is the perfect cookbook for someone who simply wants to learn about and cook real Thai food.

I follow Leela's blog and pre-ordered her book when she announced she was working on a cookbook. Look, I'm not a Thai food connoisseur, but I freely and readily admit that at the heart of it, this cuisine is constant in regards to taste. The way it tastes in Thailand and the way it tastes in a good Thai restaurant, or if you're lucky, in a Thai home outside of Thailand is the same. AS LONG AS

YOU SOURCE THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS AND PREPARE IT PROPERLY. i get some places won't have access to galangal or kefir lime leaves, but leela provides good alternatives or flat out says to buy the prepared sauces and pastes. what gets me is that people took it literally about the SIMPLE aspect of the title. when compared to how traditional thai food is prepared (i've witnessed it as i lived in thailand for 3+ years and i was lucky to cook with a family friend who is thai), leela has simplified the recipes without losing the integrity of the dish and taste. if people are expecting the recipes to be completed, without prep or proper sourcing, in less than an hour, they will be disappointed. good food comes with good preparation and thought process, which leela clearly shows in her cookbook.

This book has very detailed general explanations, and very informative - and conveniently structured - recipes. Photos are very nice, and the book itself is a very nice read. Got it a few weeks back, made two recipes so far - 1 - Spicy basil chicken (p 147) - a total "yummy in my tummy" dish, really easy to make. very fragrant and balanced dish, a perfect lunch accompanied by some rice. 2 - Northeastern minced chicken salad (p 74) - bright, fresh flavor, didn't even last for 24 hrs in our fridge... Both dishes immediately reminded me of my trips to Thailand. Other than the great recipes, I love that this book is not a victim of the current trend of overly "authentic" books - no need for dedicated utensils, no need to travel to different time zones for ingredients or order from obscure online resources... I bought most of the ingredients in my local asian-ish market (Fresh Farms in Niles). Other stuff can be easily ordered online (importfoods.com comes to mind). I will be working my way through this book during the next weeks, hopefully getting more delicious results. Highly recommended,

First, my perspective comes from being an adventurous cook who isn't intimidated easily, but not having a lot of time. Having purchased both David Thompson's tome Thai Food and Pok Pok I can say this book is the perfect speed for me. These recipes are not nearly as time consuming as those contained in Thai Food and Pok Pok, and they are delicious. I have followed the author's blog so I know her passion for Thai cooking runs deep, and that passion comes out here. Tasty, simple real Thai Food. I only wish for more pictures, though their absence doesn't hinder the following of these recipes.

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