



Thai Food

David Thompson (Photographer)

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Thai Food gives the most comprehensive account of this ancient and exotic cuisine ever published in English. David Thompson shares his passion for the unique style of cooking that he believes to be one of the world's greatest cuisines.

Thai Food Details

Date : Published October 3rd 2002 by Pavilion Books (first published August 27th 2002)

ISBN : 9781862055148

Author : David Thompson (Photographer)

Format : Hardcover 688 pages

Genre : Food and Drink, Cookbooks, Cooking, Food, Nonfiction, Reference

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From Reader Review Thai Food for online ebook

Imogen says

The **absolute** best thai recipe book I have ever come across. The photography is stunning, the writing is clear and then the recipes - oh, the recipes. They take a lot of work, but followed faithfully, they are absolutely stunning.

I've seen a few comments about not being able to find the ingredients. I can sympathise, but I think the point of this book was to faithfully encapsulate Thai food, not give substitutes. Fish sauce, palm sugar, kaffir lime leaves, birds eye chillies, coriander roots and shrimp paste are pretty standard. But I have substituted ginger for galangal (only when absolutely necessary), small, regular eggplants for pea eggplants (a different taste, I know!), slightly under-ripe mango for green mango and so on.

The best advice if you want to cook from this book is find the best asian supermarket near you, and start frequenting it.

Benjamin Chandler says

This is a difficult book to rate, so I will refrain from giving it stars. For those of you who want to know immediately what I think about it, I'll say: I like it and it impresses me.

Saara and I both recently agreed that Thai food is our favorite cuisine. There's something rich in the deep combination of flavors the food imparts. The spicy, the sweet, the sour, the umami. I've missed Thai food a great deal while I've been over here in Slovakia—there just isn't a place to get it in my little town, and I've only mastered 2 curry dishes by myself since I came here—so I've been dreaming of getting a Thai cookbook for some time. When I saw this one had been placed on several Best Cookbooks Ever lists, and that it included recipes of items I'd been missing (panang curry, I miss you most of all) I thought it might be what I'd been needing.

This book is like a bible, both in size and spirit. It's gigantic and exhaustive. Thompson delves into not just the how-tos, but the whys, the wheres, and the what's that's. He has a small history of Thailand at the beginning, several pages of Thai cuisine theory, and an extensive (and very, very helpful) glossary of Thai ingredients. Don't know what galangal is? I didn't either until I found it in the glossary. Wonder what shrimp paste is? Turn to page 177 and wonder no more. The author really gives excellent explanations of all the obscure ingredients—cousins of ginger, exotic basil, relishes made of fermented and dried seafood—describing their origins, flavors, and uses.

But Thompson's fidelity to authenticity does make the book difficult for me to use. Although I can find many ingredients, some of the recipes' needs include items I will never find in small-town Slovakia. Lotus stalks? Hog plum? Kaffir lime leaves? Pla grop? Those aren't at the Koruna across the street. I was lucky to find freeze-dried lemon grass at Lidel during their "Asian Week." Occasionally I can find a substitute listed on line, but some of the more complicated recipes will have to go without a few ingredients, no doubt the ones that really lend the food an individual flavor.

The recipes are easy to follow as long as you have the parts, but they may take a while to execute. The book

really give me a greater appreciation for the work behind Thai cuisine. It is significantly more labor intense than the quickly-serving restaurants I frequented in Chicago led me to believe. Thompson lays out specific curry pastes and sour sauces for almost every dish, things that are to be ground or blended or mashed while other items are chopped, grilled, fried, and tossed.

However, even if I won't be able to make three-quarters of the recipes authentically, the book is a delight to just page through and read. I seriously enjoy simply browsing, daydreaming menus and imagining flavors. The book may not be practical for my current life, but it does fire my imagination and remind me of long-lost flavors I once could have had at the touch of a phone.

Jason Lewis says

This book is great. You'll have to go to an asian market for ingredients when you get down to cooking many of the recipes in this but when you do it is so worth the effort. Made the Pat Thai a couple of times now and it is one of the most flavorful dishes I have ever tasted. Green curry from scratch is amazing as well. Love, love, love this book

Ruzzel says

To experience true Thai flavors you need to wander the streets and alleys of Bangkok or Chiang Mai and sample the street food or eat in one of the rambling wooden restaurants where the Thais go. You can also try Tempe thai food.

This is a large and rewarding book. We say rewarding because every sentence adds something to your understanding of Thai cuisine. Also, the photographs by leading Australian photographer Earl Carter illustrates the importance of the visual aspects of the cuisines being promoted.

Bookshop says

I came the book at Cindy's and I fell for her review. I decided I must posses one so I immediately proceeded to Amazon to purchase my copy.

It is indeed a beautiful book. The hardcover is sheathed in deep pink fabric with a simple sash made from photograph of rice and simple writing of the title and the author. The whole look reminds me of a tasteful yet simple kimono. Quaintly, two ribbons are provided as bookmarks.

I initially had my reservation about this book despite the great review simply because I do not quite like Thai food as much due to its emphasis on vibrant sourness. I read Part One, Thailand and Food with much apprehension but soon I was captured by how detailed he describes the connection between Thai people and their food, particularly on how distinct cultures and geographies shape food.

I then moved on to Part Two with less suspicion and more excitement. I was not sorry. This part is technically more rewarding as it describes in details the various utensils, ingredients, and techniques of Thai cooking. I learn a lot in terms of cooking techniques which I believe can be applied across all cooking

repertoire. In fact, I did just today by improving my Mie Kangkung recipe with great results as I applied the importance of balancing tastes. I also learned that frying ingredients separately pays and mixing everything in a mess is not worth the laziness.

If there is one fault in this book is his finality on lack of substitute for certain ingredients. Perhaps it is the exacting nature of the Thai cooking although that contradicts his emphasize that Thai cooking is fluid depending on seasonality and availability. Perhaps it's just him although that also contradicts his oft-mentioned improvisation. Living away from Asia, I would appreciate more if the recipes are also tested to suit people who are far away from home.

Despite the one irritant above, the book eventually just gets to me. I believe it is in his way of writing. He is not only a great cook but also a talented and funny writer. Stories are told in a fastidious yet passionate manner, recipes written clearly, methodically, yet deliciously.

I still have 200 pages of recipes left but I can say that this book is a worthy investment. I've marked 21 recipes to try so far and more to scrutinize. I'll let you know how that turns out.

Terri says

5 stars, 5 stars, 5 stars!! I adore this book. It not only taught me to cook Thai properly, but it taught me how to do it with confidence. Recipes from this book and recipes inspired by this book are now a major part of our weekly meals.

Nick says

This is a beautiful cookbook featuring extremely authentic thai cooking. By authentic, I mean that every recipe starts, "First, forage in the jungle for wild ginger and galangal." I've learned a lot from the recipes, there are a couple I can now make fairly successfully, and some of the basic techniques and ingredient combinations have been useful. But I don't think I've made a single recipe where I had all the ingredients on the list, or followed more than half of the instructions. The learning curve on this book is pretty ridiculous, and I wouldn't recommend it as an introduction to the cuisine.

notgettingenough says

This is the only cookbook I've ever bought that's plain scared me....find out why here:

<http://alittleteaalittlechat.wordpress...>

An amazon goodreads is no place for Thai food. It has too much taste.

Emily says

This is a cookbook for a lifetime. Thompson records the traditional recipes of both the Thai palace and Thai street food. Labour intensive at times (and thus probably why these recipes are in danger of being lost through modernisation) the recipes can be quite complicated, with long ingredients lists. However, there are many simple recipes to follow as well, and all are guaranteed to be authentic.

Melenie Reiter says

Job well done. A bible of sorts. I found recipes in here that I haven't even seen or smelled in YEARS. Now, I can totally show off to mom on her next visit!

Valerie says

This book quite properly belongs in both the cookbook and food history categories. Anyone who knows me well knows how I dislike categorization, a preoccupation no doubt contributing to my difficulties with my grad committee. Categories are limiting; this book perfectly illustrates the point. I have yet to make anything in this richly comprehensive tome, but have drunk many hot cups of tea while reading about Thai food history, which Thompson, an Aussie, has taken the trouble to master.

Not a book for beginners by any means, but absolutely one of the most impressive texts on my shelf. It is the kind of book I feel honored simply to own.

Pablo says

I never really felt the need to know how to cook Thai food. It seemed like a lot of work and it was always so quick and easy and cheap to eat out wherever I was. That is of course until I moved to Toronto where, in my three years, I've yet to eat a decent Thai meal. I'm sure there is good stuff to be had somewhere, but I've yet to find anything beyond moderately palatable.

I don't remember where I found a listing about this book, but we got it from the library last summer in the attempts to satiate the never ending desire for Thai food. Admittedly, a compendium of Thai cooking penned by someone named David Thompson (who I can only presume to not be Thai) clothbound in hot pink left me feeling a little skeptical, but flipping through it seemed to be reputable and thorough in its information.

I'd really only attempted a couple variations of a Penang curry, which turned out pretty magical despite adapting it to be vegetarian and Leslie and I had written down that recipe to use in the future. I've a lot of ground to cover in the book, but on the whole it seems like an excellent reference for making Thai food from fresh ingredients (not the standard Asian market prepackaged Mae Ploy stuff, which I find to be pretty good, but doesn't compare to fresh galangal and lime leaves...)

Obviously thai food is far from vegetarian, so if you're strict, or uncertain about adapting recipes to not use shrimp paste this book is going to be useless. But i find the information about ingredients and techniques to be really insightful.

Oddly enough, we'd written down the recipe for penang curry to use after returning the book. Last weekend when we had a craving i scribbled out a grocery list and headed to the market to pick up supplies. It being a lazy sunday afternoon i of course got sidetracked with my usual weekend route of book/record store stops. Magically, with a hand written recipe in my pocket, i stumble across a used copy and She Said Boom on College.

erik says

The purpose of this book was to record the history and practice of traditional thai cooking before it is eroded and modernized. The author moved to Thailand and researched for 14 years, reading old cookbooks, cooking with grandmothers and old palace cooks, speaking to farmers, and working in restaurants. The resulting 670 pages provide more complete a picture of a cuisine and food culture than anything you'll ever read. Thompson doesn't just tell you what fermented fish sauce is, it describes how to make your own! Daunting, impractical, perfect

Brett says

Right on. Lovingly compiled without the over-romanticization with which this cuisine is often smothered. Accessible to Westerners with no previous Thai food experience. Relatively "authentic," sure, but not overly obscure (I've chowed on some funky business in backwoods Thailand). Offers history pertaining to regional cuisines. Damn I love Thai food. Only thing I would change: more space given to my regional favorites, complete with awful poetry. That is, this book is solid. Lots of info. but still concise. ?????????!

Cedric says

A superb and detailed introduction to Thai cuisine. How many cookbooks start with a 180+ page essay on geography, history, ethnology, cultural anthropology, agriculture and religion? And then each chapter which details a particular group of dishes (relishes, curries, soups, salads and side dishes) is in turn prefaced by a mini-essay on how the styles evolved and how different ingredients and techniques were incorporated. The recipes then follow a more or less historical sequence, from the original dishes of the highland Thai to the elaborate palace cuisine of the late nineteenth century. In addition a massive compilation of ingredients and techniques. Working through this book (as I am trying to do) is a comprehensive education in this elaborate and sophisticated cuisine.
