

AuthenticAsian



Let's
Cook



Welcome to Let's Cook!

Authentic Asian

Let's Cook! is a unique cooking school that teaches people with all levels of cooking skill how to select, prepare and present quick, easy nutritious meals for themselves, their flatmates, friends and families.

We have developed this series of cookbooks so those that can't get to our classes can still enjoy the benefits of our down to earth, practical approach to cooking instruction and culinary skill development.

The cookbooks also allow those who have been to our classes to expand thier range of dishes that they can show off at home at dinner parties, spend time exploring cooking with the kids or simply keep the family fed with new some new day to day dishes.

This cookbook is designed to give you a practical, down to earth guide in the preparation, cooking and presentation of meals cooked in the home kitchen.

By introducing you to the practical theories of cooking, we expect that this is a book that you can enjoy for a lifetime.

The recipes provided develop the skills necessary to provide good food, inexpensively, with a minimum of effort.

Importantly, you are also shown many of the short cuts that professional chefs use to produce great results quickly – a bonus for people on the go.

Much more than the current recipes from our cooking classes such as Super Sri Lankan, Terrific Thai and The Course, extra recipes include; Salmon Baked in Banana Leaves, Grilled Tasmanian Scallops, Vattalappan, and lots more that are only available in the cookbooks!

There is a diverse influence in the range of recipes, which includes dishes from Indonesia, China, Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam and Tasmania.

The recipes are (mostly) organized alphabetically by country of origin, with matching side dishes and condiments included next to the recipe they refer to.

As a bonus, there are also articles on Sri Lankan Cuisine and Cooking Techniques, Thai Cooking Philosophy and Tips, Pictorial Glossary of Grocery Items for Thai Cooking, as well as a Glossary of Some Common Asian Vegetables and Groceries for your reference.

Desserts have their own section at the back.

Generally, where a word is in italics, it means that there is a definition for your reference in the Glossary at the back.

Also included are a Weight ConversionTable from Metric to Imperial, and a Temperature Conversion Table.

Other books in the series include:

Easy European

Delicious Desserts

Let's Cook! (recipes from The Course since 2002)

Meat Game and Poultry

Sensational Seafood

Versatile Vegetarian

More info about who we are and what we do can be found on our website: www.letscook.com.au

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Balinese Crisp-fried Marinated Tempe (Tempe Goreng)

INGREDIENTS SERVES 4

250g plain tempe, sliced
½ teaspoon yellow asafetida powder
2 teaspoons sweet chili sauce (or more to taste)
2 teaspoons tamarind or soy sauce (or more to taste)
½ teaspoon salt, if required
small lettuce leaf 'boats' to serve
coriander leaves for garnish
peanut oil for deep-frying

EQUIPMENT

Medium Sized Pot or deep wok
Tongs
Paper Towel
Wooden Spoon
Serving Platter

METHOD

1. Deep-fry batches of the tempe in hot oil in a wok or pan until crisp and golden
2. Remove and drain on paper towels
3. Discard all but 1½ tablespoons of oil from the wok, and return to moderate heat
4. Sprinkle the asafetida powder into the warm oil, frying until aromatic, followed immediately with the tempe, chili sauce, soy and optional salt
5. Stir-fry until the mixture starts to caramelize
6. Remove from the heat, and serve warm piled up in the lettuce boats with a few coriander leaves

Tempe, sometimes spelled tempeh, is an easily digested soy product in the form of a cultured, cheesy slab. It is a great source of protein, and is frequently used in Balinese and other Indonesian regional cooking. When cooked (and it is usually fried) tempe tastes pleasantly nutty. It is often eaten as a snack or an accompaniment, or in this case, as an entree.



Nasi Goreng

Nasi Goreng

INGREDIENTS SERVES 4 TO 6

50ml extra virgin olive oil
4 medium eggs
1 clove garlic
1 x carrot
1 medium brown onion
1 x tablespoon fresh ginger
1 x teaspoon ground turmeric
1 x tablespoon sweet chilli paste or sambal olek
½ nappa cabbage
2 cups bean sprouts
4-6 cups cooked white rice
4 tablespoons coconut milk
2 tablespoons kecap manis (omelette)
½ bunch coriander
pinch salt
pinch sambel goreng udang (crispy fried onions)

EQUIPMENT

Wok
Whisk
Dinner Plate
Chefs Knife
Chopping board
Grater
Mixing bowl
Wooden spoon

METHOD

1. Crush the garlic, finely chop the onion, grate the ginger, chop the bean sprouts and coriander
2. Beat the eggs with a whisk
3. In a large diameter wok heat some of the oil and add the beaten eggs
4. Toss quickly to form an omelette, remove to cool
5. Finely shred this when cool enough to handle then set aside
6. Heat the remaining oil and quickly toss in the garlic and ginger
7. Cook for 20 seconds then add the onions and cook for 1 minute
8. Add the carrots, turmeric and chilli and stir-fry for one minute
9. Large dice nappa cabbage and add, along with chopped sprouts
10. Stir-fry for 3 minutes, then add the rice and combine well
11. Add the coconut milk and the *kecap manis*
12. Present garnished with the shredded omelette, coriander and *sambel goreng udang*

Easy Blackbean and Chilli Sauce

INGREDIENTS

50ml peanut oil
1 large knob ginger
3 cloves garlic
3 x shallot stems
2 long red chillies
1 x Spanish onion
150g salted black beans, unwashed
1 x red capsicum
50mls shao hsing
1 x teaspoon Korean hot bean paste
1 x tablespoon mushroom soy
1 x tablespoon white sugar
1 x tablespoon Chinese black vinegar
30ml sesame oil

EQUIPMENT

Chef's knife
Chopping Board
Wok or
deep frypan
Wooden spoon

METHOD

1. Peel and finely dice ginger
2. Peel and lightly crush garlic
3. Cut shallot stems into rings at an angle
4. Roughly cut chillies (remove seeds if you don't want it too hot)
5. Peel and roughly dice Spanish onion
6. De-seed and roughly dice red capsicum
7. Heat up the peanut oil in a wok over high heat
8. When the oil is smoking, add the ginger, garlic and onions, and stir-fry for a minute
9. Add the black beans, capsicum, shallots and chillies. Stir for 1 minute
10. Add the shao hsing and bean paste and cook until the rice wine is almost all evaporated
11. Add sugar and soy
12. Check for seasoning and add more soy or sugar, it should be sweet and a bit salty
13. Add the sesame oil and black vinegar and check for balance of sweet, salty, hot and sour

This sauce can go with Pork, Fish, Chicken or Beef as you prefer

Peking Duck Pancakes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 packet of Luv-A-Duck Peking Roast Duck Legs
- 1 packet of Luv-A-Duck easy peel Chinese pancakes
- 1 cucumber
- 1 spring onion
- 1 jar of Hoisin sauce

EQUIPMENT

- Chef's knife
- Chopping board
- Small bowl or dish
- Rubber spatula or tablespoon
- Tongs

METHOD

1. Slice the Peking roast duck
2. Keeping the slices firmly together, place on an oven tray skin side up and heat under a hot grill, or in an oven
3. Cut the spring onion and cucumber into match stick shapes and place on a plate
4. Pour Hoisin sauce into a dish
5. Place unopened pack of pancakes into microwave for 50-60 seconds
6. Peel pancakes apart and lay out on bench
7. Smear some hoisin sauce in the top centre of the pancake
8. Place a slice of warm Peking Duck on top
9. Add a slice of spring onion and cucumber
10. Roll up and enjoy!!!



For more Luv A Duck info, please visit www.luvaduck.com.au

Grilled Salmon Skewers with Wasabi Butter

INGREDIENTS SERVES 4

Salmon Skewers

200g salmon fillet portion (ask for skin on, scaled and pin-boned)
8 x skewers
sea salt
cracked black pepper
olive oil for brushing

Wasabi Butter

125g butter
1 x tablespoon wasabi paste
2 x teaspoons pickled ginger
2 x teaspoon lemon rind

EQUIPMENT

Barbeque, char grill or griddle iron
Chefs knife
Fork
Mixing bowl
Pastry brush
Chopping board
Chef's knife
Boning knife
Paring knife
Skewers
Fork
Wooden spoon
Tongs

METHOD

1. If using wooden skewers, soak them in water so they don't burn
2. Heat BBQ or char grill pan over medium high heat
3. Take butter out of fridge so its softens
4. Place the salmon on chopping board skin side down
5. Carefully remove skin from salmon by running knife horizontally between skin and flesh
6. Cut the salmon into 2cm cubes
7. Brush with oil, salt and pepper
8. Divide onto skewers
9. Place the butter, wasabi, ginger lemon rind, salt and pepper in a mixing bowl and mix with a fork until well combined
10. Cook the salmon for 1-2 minutes each or until cooked through
11. Spoon over wasabi butter to serve



Grilled Salmon Skewers with Wasabi Butter



Prawn Tempura

Prawn Tempura

INGREDIENTS SERVES 4

12 or more medium prawns

Batter

2 x egg yolks
2 cups ice water
2 cups sifted flour

Dipping sauce

1 cup dashi no moto (instant dashi)
1/3 cup mirin
1/3 cup light soy sauce

METHOD

Preparing prawns

1. De-vein prawn but leave tails attached
2. Cut off the tips of prawn tails and gently press out moisture from prawn with the flat of the knife tip
3. To prevent prawn from curling as they are deep-fried, make a few deep incisions along the belly and then lightly tap across each prawn with back of knife blade

Preparing the dipping sauce

1. Combine dashi, mirin and light soy sauce over heat and bring just to a boil, then keep it warm
2. Grate radish and ginger for dipping sauce

To deep-fry

1. Make the batter in 2 batches, the first batch just before you are ready to begin deep-frying, as you are waiting for the oil to heat
2. In a mixing bowl, lightly beat 1 egg yolk, then pour in 1 cup of ice water and give this a few strokes
3. Add 1 cup sifted flour all at once
4. Stroke a few times with chopsticks or fork, just until ingredients are loosely combined
5. The batter should be very lumpy. If you overmix, the batter will be sticky and the coating will turn out oily and heavy. Mix the batter with the least amount of movement. Make the second batch of batter as first is used up
6. The oil should be fairly hot about 170 degrees
7. First use fingers to dip prawn in flour, shake off excess, and then dip in batter
8. Lay or slide coated material in hot oil and deep-fry till golden, around 3 minutes, turning in the oil for even cooking
9. Briefly drain and rest briefly on paper towel before transferring to serving plate

Tempura Trout

INGREDIENTS SERVES 2

200g boned fillet of prime conditioned trout
1 cup very cold beer instead of water or sparkling wine
2lt fresh, clean oil (eg vegetable or canola) for deep-frying
½ carrot
½ zucchini
½ continental cucumber
(the ones wrapped in plastic)
30g young green beans
4 broccoli and cauliflower florettes
½ red capsicum
½ yellow capsicum
1 spring onion
25g shaved fresh ginger
25g pickled ginger
1 small bottle light soy sauce for dipping
1 packet wakame (Japanese seaweed)
1 packet tempura batter
ice cubes

EQUIPMENT

Chopping Board
Cook's Knife
2 x Mixing Bowls
Medium Pot
Dinner Plate
Paper towels
Serving Platter
Bowls for dipping sauce
Chopsticks

Tempura

Trout continued

METHOD

1. Dice the trout into 2 cm cubes
2. Slice carrot in baton shape about ½ cm thick
3. Slice zucchini in baton shape ½ cm thick
4. Trim ends of green beans and use whole
5. Cut broccoli and cauliflower into florettes (small bunches)
6. Cut capsicum into fingers
7. Coat vegetable pieces in some of the dry batter mix and then dip in the batter itself
8. Drop individually and in small batches into the hot oil
9. Don't cook for more than a minute -- remove from oil and place on paper towels
10. Do the same thing with the trout, but cook no longer than 30secs and drain separately
11. Once drained place vegetables on serving platter and trout on top.
12. Garnish with wakame, pickled ginger and a little spring onion on top
13. Serve with chopsticks (or toothpicks if you prefer, but chopsticks are more fun!) and two or three small bowls of soy sauce with grated ginger for dipping

Don't be put off by the long list of ingredients -- this is a very simple and eagerly devoured recipe whether used as pre-dinner nibbles, a main course or leisurely summer lunch

The Japanese pre-mixed batters are the best, as they are the genuine article. The only difference: when it says to make up the batter with 1 cup of very cold water -- replace this with very cold beer (or you could use champagne or good bubbly). It makes a very light batter and is the key to this recipe. Be careful not to over mix -- moderately lumpy tempura batter is the best tempura batter.



Grilled Tasmanian Scallops

Grilled Tasmanian Scallops, Marinated in Olive Oil, Chilli, Lime and Coriander, Served in the Shell

INGREDIENTS SERVES 2

6 scallops in half shell
½ fresh chilli (medium size)
1 lime (zest and juice)
2 sprigs coriander
10ml good olive oil
salt

EQUIPMENT

Mortar and Pestle
Zester
Mixing bowl
Spoon

METHOD

1. In this order, place chilli, coriander, salt, lime zest and juice in a pestle and mortar
2. Crush into a rough pulp, add olive oil
3. Spoon mixture onto the scallops
4. Place scallops under the grill for a minute then serve on a plate

Kangaroo Salad, Grilled and Served with a Tomato and Chilli Relish and Fresh Coriander

INGREDIENTS SERVES 2

1 x packet (c. 200g) kangaroo fillets
½ bunch coriander
1 ripe roma tomato or 8 x cherry tomatoes
1 long red chilli
2 eschallots
2 cloves garlic
1 lime
1 teaspoon fish sauce
40ml coconut cream
60ml olive oil
1 tablespoon brown sugar (palm sugar is even better)
salt and pepper

EQUIPMENT

Chefs Knife
Measuring cup
Mixing bowl
Chopping board
Tongs
Grill or Frypan

METHOD

1. Thoroughly wash hands with soap, rinse and dry **completely**
2. Shake tin of coconut cream well before using
3. Clean meat of any sinew and *marinate* kangaroo in a mixing bowl with olive oil with salt and pepper and coconut cream for between 10 minutes, and (but not more than) an hour
4. Meanwhile, on a hot char-grill or frypan place whole (with skin on) tomato, garlic, chilli and eschallots with a little oil
5. Grill until soft turning every few minutes, then remove from heat. Don't rinse the pan, as you'll use it soon
6. Juice lime while you wait for char grill ingredients to cool
7. Remove hard end off garlic and eschallots, then peel and crush in mortar and pestle
8. *Season* with fish sauce, lime juice and palm sugar. Relish should taste hot, salty, and sour. Remove and place in mixing bowl
9. Pan fry kangaroo fillets, being careful not to overcook. As kangaroo has very low fat content, if it's overcooked it will get very tough and sinewy very quickly. Always aim for medium rare using finger to thumb rule (chef will demonstrate this)
10. Remove kangaroo fillets from heat, and let *rest* for 10 minutes
11. Slice kangaroo, then flash in pan if it's a bit too rare for you
12. Serve with relish and top with picked coriander leaves



Kangaroo Salad, Grilled and Served with a Tomato and Chilli Relish and Fresh Coriander



Salmon Fillets Baked in Banana Leaves

Salmon Fillets Baked in Banana Leaves

INGREDIENTS SERVES 6

6 x 150g salmon fillets
6 fresh limes
1 leek
2 large carrots
salt and pepper
banana leaves
butcher twine
olive oil

EQUIPMENT

Chopping board and knives
Zester
Grater
Mixing bowl
BBQ Grill on low heat

METHOD

1. Peel and grate carrots
2. Cut leeks in halves, wash well, dry and cut thinly
3. Zest the limes and squeeze juice
4. In a mixing bowl add the lime zest, leeks, carrots lime juice, olive oil, seasoning
5. Rub mixture on salmon fillets
6. Wrap salmon in banana leaves, with leek and carrot mix placed on the top
7. Secure into a parcel with butcher twine
8. Cook gently on low heat BBQ (with lid closed) for about 15-20 minutes
9. When its ready, cut the twine off, cut an opening in the top part of the banana leaves and serve hot

Vietnamese Rice Paper Rolls with a Plum Dipping Sauce

INGREDIENTS SERVES 2

½ leek
½ carrot
½ zucchini
20g ginger
1 clove garlic
½ red capsicum
¼ bunch coriander
8 sheets rice paper
40ml sesame oil for frying

Dipping Sauce

80ml plum sauce
1 coriander root
¼ one long red chilli
20ml soy sauce
¼ lemon

EQUIPMENT

Chefs Knife
Cutting Board
Frypan or wok
Colander
Juicer
2 x Mixing Bowls
Wooden Spoon
Small bowl for dipping sauce
Platter and tongs to serve

HOW MUCH DIPPING SAUCE TO MAKE?

With some dishes, if you have three times as many guests (egg 6) you need to multiply the ingredients by 3. For the dipping sauce, this is not the case. Just double it and you'll have enough for 8 or even 10



Vietnamese Rice Paper Rolls with a Plum Dipping Sauce

Vietnamese Rice Paper Rolls with a Plum Dipping Sauce continued

METHOD

1. Thoroughly wash hands with soap, rinse and dry **completely**
2. Wash, peel, *top and tail* then *julienne* carrot
3. Do the same with capsicum, leek and zucchini and rinse
4. Set aside these ingredients to drain
5. *Chop* garlic and *dice* ginger
6. *Refresh* and *chop* half of *picked* coriander leaves, **remember to keep the root for the dipping sauce!**
7. In a warm pan add a little sesame oil, ginger and garlic and *sweat* for one minute on a medium heat
8. Add *julienned* carrot and *sweat* for one more minute
9. Add leeks and *sweat* for one more minute
10. Add capsicum and zucchini and *sweat* for two more mins
11. Take off heat and leave to cool in pan for 3 minutes
12. Remove from pan and add chopped coriander
13. Place into colander to drain any excess liquid and cool
14. Meanwhile, to start make the dipping sauce finely chop quarter of the chilli
15. Place 80ml plum sauce, 1 x coriander root, chilli, and 20ml of soy sauce into a small pan and bring to boil
16. Remove from heat and squeeze lemon juice onto sauce
17. Strain the sauce into a bowl and let it cool in fridge
18. Soak one rice paper at a time in shallow dish of water till they become pliable. They will begin to crinkle up around the edge when they're ready
19. Lay rice paper sheet flat on a damp, clean tea towel
20. Take a small amount of mix and place just to the left of centre
21. Ensure mix is evenly spread with 1.5cm gap from edge of rice paper sheet at top and bottom. Don't use too much mix!!
22. Fold left edge over mix and tuck under snugly
23. Fold bottom end up over tucked in parcel
24. Fold top edge down to make the packet square, open at right end
25. Roll into cigar shape and place on platter with seam down
26. Repeat process with remaining vegetable mix and rice paper sheets
27. *Garnish* with remaining half of coriander
28. To serve pour a dipping sauce into a small bowl and provide a spoon so guests can pour a little over each roll

CHEF'S TIPS ON BOILING VEGETABLES

If they are *root vegetables* (grown in the ground) cold water start. If they are green vegetables (grown above ground) hot water start

Once they are ready, *refresh* the vegetables by dunking in ice cold water. This will stop the cooking process, and give them a sharper, more colourful look

Rasa Cama (Tasty Food) - All About Sri Lankan Cuisine

PAUL VAN REYK

Paul Van Reyk wants to help Australians experience the richness of the cuisine of his native country, Sri Lanka. Paul has taught at the Seafood Cooking School and Accoutrement, runs a catering company – Buth Kuddeh – and often reviews South Asian restaurant for Sydney restaurant guides, as well as running foodie tours to Sri Lanka. Paul can be contacted at buthkuddeh@buthkuddeh.com.au

NOT JUST RICE AND CURRY

Sit down to a Sri Lankan meal, and you sit down to 2000 years of fusion cooking.

It began with the earliest settlers, Tamils from the South of India and Bengalis from the Gangetic plain of North Eastern India. Then, as seafaring technology advanced, came traders riding the monsoonal winds from the Mediterranean and Arab worlds on the one hand, and China and South East Asia on the other.

The foundations of this trade were spices, and when Portugal and the Netherlands took to the seas to seize control of the trade, they also naturally established trading posts in Sri Lanka.

With the incorporation of the island into the British Empire, the transformation of the cuisines of these various nations into modern Sri Lankan cuisine was complete. Rice and curry form the basic menu, but it's extended, turned on its head, and completely abandoned at times.

So today Dutch slow cooked pot roasting techniques and indigenous lime pickle meet in Smoor. Arab steamed egg puddings are transformed into the palm sugar based dessert, Wattalappam. The Portuguese brought chilli and in return had their cakes enriched with coconut. Mulligatawny, the British Raj version of Indian pepper water, gets even more developed with specifically Sri Lankan touches. Chinese spring rolls fuse into roti rolls. Even the classic French omelette gets a re-working with eschalots and green chilli.

But under all the fusion, there are some consistent regional ingredients that make the food distinctly Sri Lankan. There's coconut, grated coconut in particular. It's used fresh in the classic pol sambol and in mallungs, lightly sautéed and spiced mixes of shredded green vegetables. It's also soaked and squeezed out to make coconut milk, the main liquid used to cook curries.

Coconut oil is also extracted from it and used in some fried dishes, and it can also be turned into coconut vinegar. Versatile or what! By the way, the jury is still out on whether the fat in coconut is bad for you or not; but then, it's not as if you are going to be eating Sri Lankan every night of the week either!

Spice wise, you'll find cinnamon flavouring virtually every curry. That's no surprise. True cinnamon is native to Sri Lanka and that's the spice that everyone's wanted to get control of throughout the country's history

Some Important Sri Lankan Cooking Techniques

COCONUT MILK

What is coconut milk? It's not the slightly cloudy watery stuff that comes out of a coconut when you crack it. That's coconut water. You can drink that, and you can certainly use it in cooking as water, but it isn't coconut milk.

Some people reckon you can make coconut milk by zooshing up dessicated coconut. We recommend that you don't even think about it!

To make coconut milk you start by grating a ripe coconut. These are coconuts where the flesh has thickened into a band of white flesh within the hard shell. So, first up, you don't make coconut milk from young green coconuts. You make them from those round brown hard-shelled fibre covered coconuts that you are likely to find in Asian and South Asian providores.

You choose a good ripe coconut by doing a couple of things. First, it has to have that hard brown shell. Then shake it, and you should be able to hear the coconut water sloshing around inside. If you can't then it may mean the coconut is over-ripe, that all the moisture has been absorbed and the flesh is starting to turn.

If it's brown, and you can hear the water shaking, check the condition of the three 'eyes' in the coconut. These are the three darker, smooth slight depressions you'll find clustered together at one end (if there is such a thing as an end in a sphere). If these are nice and dry, you are okay. If they are wet, or have a bit of mould on them, then again the coconut has started to ferment and rot and you won't be able to use the flesh.

Whew! Now you have a coconut, crack it and scrape it. You can do this using a specialist utensil you get from Indian and Sri Lankan providores, or you can carefully cut chunks of it out of the shell and use a grater or food processor to grate it up fine. Now to extract the milk.

Chandra Dissanayke reckons to get the first extract, the creamiest milk that's usually put in at the end of cooking as a thickener, you mix grated fresh coconut with cold water in the proportion of 4 parts coconut to 3 of water. You slosh these around together a little and then you strain and squeeze off the cloudy liquid – your first extract.

For the second and third extracts you use coconut and water roughly in a proportion of 2:1. This will give you a very thin cloudy liquid which is generally the primary cooking liquid in Sri Lankan curries instead of plain water.

You can make the extracts by mixing the water and coconut by hand or in a mixer, with the latter giving you a creamier liquid at each stage.

Some Important Sri Lankan Cooking Techniques continued

Now, if you can't get a coconut and crack it, what do you do? Well, you may be able to find vacuum packed fresh grated coconut in freezer compartments of some South Asian providores these days. Oh, and if you do get a coconut and grate your own, you can always freeze whatever you don't use for later. Coconut is one of those things that freezes very well without loss of quality, or at least not much.

If you can't find fresh and you can't find frozen, then try and find powdered coconut milk. This does work very well and you mix it up with water to the thickness you want. You can add it directly to a cooking dish also, where you've used water initially as the cooking medium. Put it in when the liquid is hot so it dissolves well.

Then there is canned coconut milk. Most of this is very, very thick and intended for use in South East Asian and Pacific Island foods. It's way too thick to use in Sri Lankan curries straight out of the can. Always mix it up with water before using. For a first extract quality you want it thinned to about the consistency of plain milk. For second and third mix it down to a very weak milk, like a lite non-fat but even lighter.

Some people reckon you can make coconut milk by zooshing up dessicated coconut. We recommend that you don't even think about it!

COOKING RICE

In any halfway decent cookery book from Sri Lanka and it will tell you that the basic quantities of water to rice when cooking is 2 cups of water to 1 of rice. Then they will also inevitably tell you that nonetheless there is no hard and fast rule about it. That's because different kinds of rice absorb more or less water to reach that separate-but-whole-and-beyond-al-dente-ness that you are supposed to aim for.

In Sri Lanka there are a number of different kinds of rice. Chandra Dissanayake mentions raw white Sri Lankan rice, imported raw white rice, raw rice also known as country rice (rice with only the husk removed), and varieties of parboiled rice - milchard, samba, and sududuru samba.

For each type of rice the amount of water varies slightly between 2.5 cups and 1.5 cups of water to one of rice. Whichever rice you use, experiment with the water quantities until you are roughly sure of what amount of water you will need for the kind you are using.

Since most of you will be using raw white rice, let's go with the 2 cups of water to 1 of rice.

Past this, actually cooking the rice follows the same method. You begin by washing the rice. Yes, you must. It gets rid of any little bits of grit or husk (and, let's face it, the odd little insect) that are still in the rice, and washes off the starchy dust that inevitably forms whenever rice rubs up against itself as it will in any kind of storage of it and which will definitely plug up your rice.

You wash the rice in plenty of cold water in a saucepan, swooshing the rice and water with your hand or a wooden spoon and then carefully draining off the water. You will need to do this a number of times till the water runs reasonably clear

Now put your rice in the pan in which you are going to cook it. Add the cold water. You can add a pinch of salt in now if you cook with salt - and no Sri Lankans don't use salt in rice. Bring to the boil in an uncovered pan. If you get any scum on the top of the rice, scoop it off, it just means it isn't as clean as you could have it.

Some Important Sri Lankan Cooking Techniques continued

Continue to boil uncovered until the level of the rice and that of the water are equal, or you can keep going until you just start to get little steam holes forming in your mess of rice. Turn the heat right down (heat diffusing pads are a good idea at this stage) and cover the pan with a tight fitting lid.

Now leave it alone for 10 minutes or so. Then lift the lid off and check to see how well the water has been absorbed and how fluffy the rice is. If you need to cook it a little more add a little bit of hot water and put the lid back on again.

And there you have it. While it is cooking you can add turmeric or saffron to the rice to give you yellow rice/saffron rice, or you can toss in a couple of cardamoms, some cloves, some peppercorns, a piece of cinnamon and some rampa (pandanus leaf) or sera (lemongrass) and curry leaves to give you a subtly spiced and perfumed rice. You can add in some caramelised diced or thinly sliced onions, too, just before serving.

An alternative way of working out how much water to put in is once the rice has been washed put in enough water to cover the rice to about the level of the first knuckle of your thumb - sure, we don't all have the same size knuckle, but it seems to work anyway!

Finally of course, you can just give up and use an electric rice steamer - absolutely no shame in that.

Oh, and if the rice has gone gluggy anyway, just add a little coconut milk and let the liquid evaporate again, then turn it out on a plate into a flat cake shape and let it set in the fridge. Just before serving, cut the cake on the plate into diamond shaped wedges. It's a cheat's way of making kiributh, coconut milk rice. This will wow your guests when you tell them it's a very special celebratory dish, which kiributh actually is. For an added thrill, press a halved unsalted cashew into the middle of each diamond.

Some Important Sri Lankan Cooking Techniques *continued*

CURRY SPICE MIXES / POWDERS

Don't buy curry powders. Please. It's easy to make your own and you become the creator of flavour as a result, rather than leaving it up to some machine in some factory indifferently plonking together heaps of turmeric, some dust, some husk and every now and then a bit of some other ground spice. Harsh judgement? Sure. But it really is easy to make your own.

You don't need a pestle and mortar unless you want to impress people. You can buy spice grinders at all South Asian grocers from fancy ones like Suneet's (the best present to give a young Indian couple as a marriage gift - okay, money is good too), or just things that look like coffee grinders, and often in fact are.

You can of course use a coffee grinder, either a dedicated one just for spices, or the same one you use for coffee if you remember to wash it thoroughly after each use, unless you like a bit of curry spice flavour in your coffee.

Buy your raw ingredients - the seeds or dry chillies or cinnamon bark or pods or whatever - from South Asian grocers who will tend to have fresher product as they will have a higher turnover of stock and will most likely have better sourced product to keep their community members happy.

I know some people tell you only to buy in small quantities, but really, if you have some good airtight or some even not quite so airtight jars around the house - say empty instant coffee jars since you will now also be grinding your coffee on that expensive gizmo you bought for the spices - they will do to keep your spices fresh enough for several months.

But which ones do you buy? The basic currying spices in Sri Lankan cooking are coriander seed, cumin, fennel seed, cinnamon, turmeric and chili (often bought as whole dried ones). Have them on hand and you won't go wrong.

For meat and chicken curries, you put together a mix of coriander, cumin and fennel in the rough proportions of 2:1:1 (teaspoons / tablespoons or such). Add in as many dry red chillies as you reckon you can handle, and dry roast the chillies and seeds over a low heat in a clean frypan.

Keep them roasting till they are quite dark brown, almost black in colour. They will probably be pungently smoking a little by now. Try not to breathe the smoke in or you will have a nasty fit of coughing and have a very tingly set of nostrils. If you have an exhaust fan, use it!

Take the roasted spices off the fire and put them into your grinder. Grind till very fine. These, the cinnamon and the turmeric get added to your frypan / saucepan early in the cooking process, usually after you've sauteed some onions and other leafy things that you can also use late for tempering your curry.

For seafood, vegetable and egg curries, you use the same mix of coriander, cumin and fennel but this time you don't roast them before you grind them.

Some older cookbooks, like my grandmother's domestic one, ask you to grind the spices with a little vinegar. You can do that to add flavour, and it also means you can prepare the spices well in advance and make them into little balls that can be set aside till you are ready to use them. It's where curry pastes began, and see - again you can make your own!

Simple as that. Recipes will then ask for different additional spices, and some may leave out one or other of the basic 6. You can too. Experiment with different proportions and mixtures building on the basics. Curry making ought to be more haphazard than any recipe can codify.

Some Important Sri Lankan Cooking Techniques continued

DEVIL-ING

Every now and then you find a recipe for something 'devilled' - prawns, or chicken or such.

I wondered for a long time what the term meant. Looking through Chandra Disanayake's book *Ceylon Cookery* I found her recipe for devilled chicken among a set of Chinese recipes (the Chinese were in Sri Lanka for hundreds if not thousands of years prior to European colonisation).

It makes sense, as the method of making devilled dishes described in recipes called 'devilled' is basically stir frying. That is, rather than make a curry gravy through boiling up spices and the main ingredient, all ingredients are quickly fried over high heat, usually in a sequence corresponding to how long it will take to cook them just through. You don't use a chatty or saucepan, you use a thathchi, which is just like a wok.

TEMPERING

It's likely the term tempering comes from the Portuguese 'temperado' meaning to add flavour to, or to season.

In Sri Lanka cooking what it means is to shallow fry ingredients and add them to a dish just before it is served to add flavour or accentuate existing flavours.

Oil is heated in a frypan to a very high temperature and ingredients such as onions, rampa (pandanus leaf), sera (lemongrass), mustard seeds, curry leaves and sometimes ground but not roasted spices (corinader, cumin, fennel and perhaps cardamom and cinnamon depending on the dish), are put into the hot oil and cooked quickly.

Onions are usually allowed to brown and caramelise. Mustard seeds are usually fried till they pop, curry leaves till the crisp (careful, they spit), spices till they are dark, cinnamon till it starts to release its scent.

Coconut Sambol

INGREDIENTS

1 coconut grated
1 tbsp Maldiv fish, well ground (Maldiv fish is dried bonito. You can substitute dried prawns)
2 tsp chili powder
1 lime juiced
salt

EQUIPMENT

Coconut scraper or
Grater (see later notes on grating coconut)
Chef's Knife
Mixing Bowl
Wooden Spoon

METHOD

1. Mix together the coconut, chilli powder and Maldiv fish until the flesh of the coconut has become a rich orange colour
2. Add the juice of half a lime, and a small sprinkle of salt
3. Mix and taste
4. Add more lime or salt depending on your individual taste
5. It should taste tangy



Chicken and Cashew Curry

Chicken and Cashew Curry

INGREDIENTS

50g onion
2 cloves garlic
2 sprigs fresh curry leaves (or 2 tsp dried curry leaves)
2 x tablespoons roasted curry spices
(½ tablespoon cumin, ½ tablespoon fennel seed, 1 tablespoon coriander seed)
½ teaspoon fenugreek
1 x teaspoon turmeric
1 x teaspoon chili powder
500g chicken breast
150g raw unsalted cashew nuts
300ml thin coconut milk
pinch salt
pinch pepper

EQUIPMENT

Chef's knife
Chopping board
Saucepan
Wooden spoon

METHOD

1. Dry roast cumin, fennel and coriander seed. Remove and set aside
2. Peel and finely chop onion
3. Peel and finely slice garlic
4. Cut chicken into bite sized pieces
5. Put a little vegetable oil in the bottom of a saucepan
6. Heat the oil till a piece of onion dropped in will just sizzle
7. Add the onion, garlic and fresh curry leaves (if using dry curry leaves don't put them in just yet)
8. Sauté till the onions are soft and a little transparent
9. Add the roasted spices, fenugreek, turmeric, chili powder and sauté for about a minute, mixing it all up well
10. If using dried curry leaves add them now
11. Add the chicken and keep sautéing till the chicken gets lightly browned
12. Add the cashews and the coconut milk
13. Bring this all to a boil and then simmer for 30 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through but not falling apart
14. Add the peas and cook until they are soft

Dhal and Spinach Curry

INGREDIENTS

100g dhal (masoor dhal / red lentils)
50g onion
2 green chillies
2 cloves garlic
1 sprig curry leaves
½ stick cinnamon (about 5cms)
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 bunch spinach or silver beet
350ml thin coconut milk
pinch of salt
a little vegetable oil

Tempering

1 teaspoon chopped onion
½ teaspoon black mustard seed
half sprig curry leaves
1 red or green chili
½ lime

EQUIPMENT

Chopping Board
Chef's Knife
Small Fryingpan
Medium Saucepan
Wooden Spoon

Tempering Spices

1. Put a little oil in a frypan and thoroughly brown the onions on a high heat
2. Add the mustard seeds and when they pop add the chili and curry leaves
3. When the curry leaves wilt, take the mix off the heat
4. Pour the dhal into a bowl for serving and pour tempering spices on top of the dhal
5. You can add a squeeze of lime now if you like

Dhal and Spinach Curry continued

METHOD

1. First wash the dhal. To do this, put the dhal in the pan in which it is to be cooked
2. Add enough water to float the dhal
3. Using your hand move the dhal around in the water, which will start to turn milky

You are doing this for two reasons: the first is to get off the powdery dust that forms when dried dhals rub against each other when stored; the second is to get rid of any small pieces of grit that may be in with the dhal.

4. Do the washing as many times as it takes for the water to look reasonably clear when mixed with the dhal
5. Drain the dhal and put it to one side
6. Finely chop onions for dhal, and roughly chop onion for tempering spices
7. Finely chop chillies
8. Dice garlic very fine or crush
9. Put a little oil in the pan you are going to cook with
10. Add the finely chopped onions and garlic and sauté till the onions are soft
11. Add the curry leaves (careful – they spit), and when just wilted add the dhal, turmeric, cinnamon, green chillies and coconut milk
12. Bring this to the boil and let it simmer
13. Meanwhile chop the spinach reasonably small. If using silver beet, only use the green leafy bit
14. When the dhal has softened but not broken up, add the spinach and the salt
15. Simmer until the spinach is cooked through
16. Add a little water if the dhal gets thick or dry
17. Just before serving, add the tempering spices

Adapted from Chandra Disanayake in her Ceylon Cookery, one of the two foundation texts on Sri Lankan cooking,



Pumpkin Curry

Pumpkin Curry

INGREDIENTS

500g pumpkin
2 cloves garlic
3 thin slices ginger
2 shallots **or** 1 small brown onion
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp coriander seeds
1 tsp turmeric
1 medium sized dry chili **or** 1 green chili
1 tbsp black mustard seeds
1 sprig curry leaves
pinch of salt
1 cup coconut milk, 2nd extract if using fresh grated coconut to make it, or else thin canned coconut or powdered coconut milk to the consistency of non-fat milk
½ cup water
1 tbsp vegetable oil

EQUIPMENT

Chopping board
Chef's knife
Mortar and Pestle
Saucepan
Wooden spoon

METHOD

1. Peel and cut pumpkin into chunks of about 5cms square with the skin left on
2. Crush the garlic, ginger and shallots into a paste
3. Add the cumin, coriander and chilli and grind thoroughly
4. Heat the oil in a saucepan and when hot add the ground spice mixture
5. Fry till the aromas are released and the mixture is a rich golden brown
6. If it sticks to the pan, don't worry – a little bit of caramelising never hurt
7. Add the mustard seed, turmeric, curry leaves and the coconut milk, giving the pan a good scrape as you do to get that paste loose from the bottom
8. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer for a couple of minutes
9. Add the pumpkin and set to cook
10. Add water if the curry is getting dry
11. It should be ready in about 15 minutes – careful not to let the pumpkin overcook, and resist the impulse to stir the mixture too often
12. Season with salt to taste before serving
13. Garnish if you like with some more fresh curry leaves

Cauliflower and Pea Curry

INGREDIENTS

3 cups small florets of cauliflower
1 cup fresh or frozen peas
1 x teaspoon coriander seed
½ teaspoon fennel seed
½ teaspoon cumin
½ teaspoon turmeric
½ teaspoon chili flakes
1 x teaspoon fenugreek
1 sprig curry leaves
2 tablespoon shallots
1 clove garlic
½ teaspoon black mustard seed
1 x lime
250-300ml thin coconut milk
pinch of salt
oil

EQUIPMENT

Mortar and pestle
Medium pot
Wooden spoon
Chef's knife
Chopping board
Juicer

METHOD

1. Grind together the coriander, fennel and cumin seeds
2. Add these, the turmeric, chili flakes, salt and coconut milk and bring this to the boil in a medium pot
3. Simmer for 15 minutes
4. Cut cauliflower into florettes, add to pot and simmer for another 5 minutes
5. Add the peas and the first extract of coconut milk, cover and simmer for a further 5 minutes
6. If the gravy is too watery, turn the heat up and boil off fast till it is more like thin creamy milk
7. Just before serving, slice the shallots/onions and garlic and saute till caramelised and slightly burned
8. Add the mustard seeds and curry leaves and fry just until the mustard seeds pop
9. Spoon the curry into a serving bowl
10. Juice lime and gently mix through
11. Pour the fried ingredients over the curry and serve

Coconut Roti

INGREDIENTS

1 cup freshly grated coconut
2 cups self raising flour
milk
pinch of salt

EQUIPMENT

Coconut scraper or
Grater (see later notes on grating coconut)
Mixing Bowl
Wooden Rolling Pin
Cookie Cutter

METHOD

1. Mix together the coconut and self-raising flour and salt
2. Gradually add the milk as you mix until you have a firm but workable dough that is slightly moist
3. Roll the dough out on a floured surface till it is about ½cm thick
4. Cut rounds of the flattened dough using a biscuit or pasta cutter. The size of the rounds is up to you
5. Heat a lightly oiled frying pan or griddle plate till it's quite hot if you held it up against your face (don't do this, just imagine)
6. Pop the dough circles into the pan or on the plate
7. Let them puff up on one side and lightly brown on the other (about 2 minutes ought to do it)
8. Flip them over and brown the other side. They should stay a little doughy inside
9. My dad used to cut out rounds using the rim of a saucer and these made great sandwich style roti when split in half and topped with sambol or left over curry. Smaller ones make good bases for toppings for canapes.

Prawn Curry

INGREDIENTS

500g medium green prawns
1 tomato
50g brown onion or shallots
2 thin slices of ginger
2 cloves garlic
5 cm lemon grass
5 cm cinnamon stick kept whole
1 or 2 green chillies
½ tsp turmeric
1 sprig curry leaves and / or
1 small bunch fenugreek sprouts
375ml thin coconut milk*
2 tbsp oil
lime juice to taste
salt to taste

EQUIPMENT

Chopping board
Chef's knife
Saucepan
Wooden spoon
Medium Pot with lid
Fine mesh sieve or sieve with cheesecloth (also known as muslin)
Blender
Juicer



Prawn Curry

Prawn Curry *continued*

METHOD

1. Shell and de-vein prawns if the vein is noticeable. Cover and return to fridge until you need them
2. Peel and chop tomato
3. Finely dice onion or shallots
4. Thinly julienne ginger
5. Finely chop garlic
6. Thinly slice lemon grass
7. Finely chop green chillies
8. Heat oil in a pan and sauté onions, ginger, garlic, till onions are soft
9. Add the lemon grass, curry leaves/fenugreek leaves, cinnamon, chili, turmeric and tomatoes
10. Sauté for another 2 minutes or so
11. Add the thin coconut milk* and a little salt
12. Simmer gently for around 10 minutes or till the gravy has reduced and thickened to a creamy consistency
13. Put in the prawns and shoosh them around to coat them with the spice mixture. Let them cook at a high simmer for 10 minutes till they are cooked through
14. Take the pan off the heat
15. Add a squeeze of lime juice
16. Taste and add salt and lime juice as necessary

For added prawn flavor don't discard the prawn shells from step 1

1. Boil prawn shells up in some water with ginger, garlic, cinnamon, for about ½ an hour
2. Take them out and transfer them to a strong blender
3. Add a little of the stock you've now made
4. Blend until a good thick-ish broth
5. Now sieve the broth using a very fine sieve so you get all the little bits of prawn shell out of the liquid
6. Then you add the lime juice
7. Add a teaspoon or two of this sieved broth to the pan as well – you get this terrific infusion of prawn essence
8. Taste after the first teaspoon and add more if you like
9. Whether you tell your guests what you've done is up to you!

Sri Lankans go wild for prawn curry, crab curry, any seafood curry in fact.

This recipe is adapted from Chandra Dissanayake.

*** Easy coconut milk** - The easiest way to make coconut milk is to buy wither a tin of coconut milk or a packet of powdered coconut milk. Whichever you use, you want to dilute it until it has the consistency of watery lite milk. Or, you can add the amount of liquid given in the recipe, bring the water and dhal mix to the boil, and add in a couple of heaped tablespoons of either the powder or the canned coconut milk and stir in well.

Snake Bean Mallung

INGREDIENTS

500gm snake or other beans
50gms onions or shallots
2 sprigs curry leaves
1 tbsp mustard seeds
1 tsp turmeric
1 green chili sliced
4 tbsp grated coconut (fresh or frozen, never desiccated)
salt to taste
oil

EQUIPMENT

Chopping Board
Chef's Knife
Large Fryingpan
Wooden Spoon

METHOD

1. Finely chop onions or shallots
2. Put a little oil in a frying pan and when it's hot add the onions and curry leaves
3. Sauté till the onions are lightly browned
4. Add the mustard seeds and sauté till the pop
5. Now add the beans, turmeric, chili and salt and keep sautéing till the beans are cooked
6. Just before serving, add the coconut and mix through

This basic recipe can be adapted to any kind of fresh beans and leaf greens.

Raita

INGREDIENTS 2 PORTIONS

100g plain yoghurt
¼ medium Lebanese cucumber
¼ medium lemon
½ small Spanish (red) onion
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
¼ teaspoon chilli powder
½ green chilli each serve
½ pinch sea salt
½ bunch coriander

EQUIPMENT

Chopping Board
Chefs Knife
Medium Mixing Bowl

METHOD

1. De-seed and chop Lebanese cucumber
2. Juice the lemon
3. Finely dice Spanish onion
4. Dice green chilli
5. Pick coriander leaves and chop
6. Mix all ingredients in a bowl, checking taste
7. Serve as side dish or condiment

PETER KURUVITA

The Snapper Curry, Raita and Saffron Rice and Vattalappan recipes are supplied by our first Sri Lankan chef presenter Peter Kuruvita of Sydney's Flying Fish restaurant

For more info, go to www.flyingfish.com.au

Snapper Curry

INGREDIENTS SERVES 2

1 whole snapper
1 piece goraka (a sour fruit that can be substituted for tamarind)
¼ piece cinnamon stick
¼ teaspoon freshly ground tumeric
1 sprig curry leaves
1 large onion
1 whole tomato
½ medium sweet potato
¼ tablespoon Sri Lankan fish curry powder
2 whole green chillis
½ teaspoon fenugreek seeds
1 whole cardamom pod
¼ teaspoon fennel seed
1 clove garlic
250ml coconut cream
250ml coconut milk
1 x banana leaf
2 tablespoons ghee
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
coriander sprigs

EQUIPMENT

Chopping board
Chefs knife
Medium mixing bowl
Saucepan
Tweezers
Filleting knife
Muslin cloth
Heavy based frypan



Snapper Curry

Snapper Curry continued

METHOD

1. Scale and fillet snapper, leaving the skin on
2. Pinbone snapper fillets
3. Wrap the snapper head in muslin cloth
4. Finely chop onion and tomato
5. Cut sweet potato into small cubes
6. Slightly roast fenugreek seeds
7. Peel and slice garlic cloves
8. Keep all these ingredients separately
9. Sauté the onions, curry leaves and garlic in the ghee
10. Add the sweet potatoes, green chillies and cook until the onion is soft and transparent
11. Add all the dry spices and then coconut milk
12. Place the snapper head in the curry and gently simmer until sweet potato is soft, 15-20 minutes
13. Remove snapper head, add tomato and coconut cream
14. Just bring to the boil, then remove from the heat
15. Season snapper fillets, and place a frypan on the stove to heat.
16. Pour in the 2 tablespoons of oil and place snapper fillets skin side down into hot frypan
17. Cook until crisp
18. To serve, cut banana leaf into an oval plate shape
19. Place curry into a bowl, place snapper on top of curry and garnish with curry leaves
20. Serve saffron rice in a bowl decorated with the banana leaf and serve fish with the raita as side dish



Philosophy and Tips for Authentic Thai Cooking

WILL MEYRICK

Will Meyrick has a wealth of experience with Asian food, and loves to share his passion for herbs and spices, particularly in Thai regional dishes. Will has vast international culinary experience and has worked in some of Sydney's best Thai restaurants, including Longrain and Jimmy Liks.

PHILOSOPHY AND TIPS FOR AUTHENTIC THAI COOKING

Any number of Asian stir-fries begin with garlic cooked in oil. But if you add chillies, kaffir lime leaves, sugar, and fish sauce, a stir-fry takes on a delicious, unmistakably Thai flavour.

The result is an explosion of salty, spicy, sweet, and sour flavours that sparkle with personality yet all harmonize on the plate. Indeed, the art of Thai cooking is combining ingredients at opposite ends of the flavour spectrum—chilli paste and coconut milk, palm sugar and lime juice—and balancing them to create vibrantly flavoured food.

To create such dishes at home, stock your pantry with some basic Thai flavourings. Once you understand the main players, you can use them to cook authentic Thai food or to give your own cooking a taste of Thailand.

FISH SAUCE – THE SALT OF THAI CUISINE

Fish sauce, called nam pla in Thai or nuoc mam in Vietnamese, is used much like salt or soy sauce as a flavour enhancer. It serves as a seasoning in cooked dishes as well as a base for dipping sauces.

Made from the liquid drained from fermented anchovies, fish sauce is potent; it's usually combined with other ingredients when used as a dipping sauce. For cooking, you can use it straight, but never add it to a dry pan or the smell will be overpowering.

Like olive oil, there are several grades of fish sauce. High-quality fish sauce, which is the first to be drained off the fermented fish, is usually pale amber, like clear brewed tea. Because it has a more delicate and balanced flavor, I use a premium-grade fish sauce, such as Three Crabs or Phu Quoc brands in my dipping sauces.

For cooking, I'll use stronger-flavored, lower-grade brands, such as Squid or Tiparos, which are made from a secondary draining. Whichever grade I buy, I prefer it in a glass bottle; I find that fish sauces bottled in glass taste better and last longer than those packaged in plastic.

For heat, try fresh and dried chillies and ground chilli pastes

If you like hot food, add chillies and chilli paste to just about everything, as the Thais do. I start all my Thai stir-fries by foaming some little fresh bird chillies in hot oil with garlic.

If you can't find fresh Thai chillies, use fresh serranos or substitute dried.

Chilli paste, usually a mix of chillies, garlic, salt, and oil, is the base for many Thai soups, salad dressings, dipping sauces, and stir-frys.

Coconut milk and palm sugar are the most common sweet ingredients

The sweet element found in most Thai dishes isn't cloying. Instead, it balances the heat and counters the sour notes. Coconut milk, often added to curries, stews, and stir-fries, tones down the heat with its creamy sweetness. Palm sugar, made from the sap of various palm trees, comes packaged in plastic jars or as round cakes. It has a caramel flavour that enhances the salty and sour flavours of a dish.

Philosophy and Tips for Authentic Thai Cooking continued

If you can't find palm sugar, substitute light brown or granulated white sugar, increasing the amount called for by about 20 percent.

ACIDIC INGREDIENTS ADD VIBRANCY

Thai cooks use great amounts of tart ingredients, such as lime juice and tamarind juice (made by soaking tamarind pulp in water), to wake up the taste buds. Lemongrass and kaffir lime leaves give a dish a refreshing, lingering lift.

Lemongrass, the most popular herb used in Thailand, is a tall, scallion-like stalk that has a subtle lemony and citrusy flavor and fragrance. Before using, peel away the tough outer layers and crush or chop the stalk to release its flavour.

Kaffir lime leaves impart a most intense floral and citrus flavour and are almost required in Thai curries. Lime zest, while not the same, will give the dish a similar refreshing citrusy flavour.

BRIGHT, FRESH HERBS ARE AROMATIC FINISHES

There's another group of ingredients that further enhances all these basic flavors--the aromatics. Fresh herbs, such as basil, mint, and cilantro, are added to finished dishes in great quantities, sometimes by cupfuls, with leaves often left whole to give a burst of flavour with each bite.

THAI FOOD IS EATEN WITH A FORK AND SPOON

Even single dish meals such as fried rice with pork, or steamed rice topped with roasted duck, are served in bite-sized slices or chunks obviating the need for a knife. The spoon is used to convey food to the mouth.

Ideally, eating Thai food is a communal affair involving two or more people, principally because the greater the number of diners the greater the number of dishes ordered.

Generally speaking, two diners order three dishes in addition to their own individual plates of steamed rice, three diners four dishes, and so on. Diners choose whatever they require from shared dishes and generally add it to their own rice.

The ideal Thai meal is a harmonious blend of the spicy, the subtle, the sweet and sour, and is meant to be equally satisfying to eye, nose and palate.

A typical meal might include a clear soup (perhaps bitter melons stuffed with minced pork), a steamed dish (mussels in curry sauce), a fried dish (fish with ginger), a hot salad (beef slices on a bed of lettuce, onions, chillies, mint and lemon juice) and a variety of sauces into which food is dipped.

Spicy dishes are "balanced" by bland dishes to avoid discomfort.

This would be followed by sweet desserts and / or fresh fruits such as mangoes, durian, jackfruit, papaya, grapes or melon.

TIDBITS

These can be hors d'oeuvres, accompaniments, side dishes, and / or snacks. They include spring rolls, satay, puffed rice cakes with herbed topping. They represent the playful and creative nature of the Thais.

Philosophy and Tips for Authentic Thai Cooking continued

A simple kind of titbit is fun to make. You need shallots, ginger, lemon or lime, lemon grass, roasted peanuts and red phrik khi nu chillies. Peeled shallots and ginger should be cut into small fingertip sizes. Diced lime and slices of lemon grass should be cut to the same size. Roasted peanut should be left in halves. Chillies should be thinly sliced.

Combinations of such ingredients should be wrapped in fresh lettuce leaves and laced with a sweet-salty sauce made from fish sauce, sugar, dried prawns and lime juice.

SOUPS

Soups are enjoyed concurrently with other dishes such as rice, not independently.

A good meal for an average person may consist simply of a soup and rice. Traditional Thai soups are unique because they embody more flavours and textures than can be found in other types of food.

SOUP STOCKS

Soups generally need good stock. Add to boiling water crushed peppercorns, salt, garlic, shallots, coriander roots, and the meats or cuts of one's choice. After prolonged boiling and simmering, you have the basic stock of common Thai soups. Additional galanga, lemon grass, kaffir lime leaves, crushed fresh chillies, fish sauce and lime juice create the basic stock for a Tom Yam.

DIPS

Dips entail some complexity. They can be the major dish of a meal with accompaniments of vegetables and some meats. When dips are made thinly, they can be used as salad designs. A particular and simple dip is made from chillies, garlic, dried prawns, lime juice, fish sauce, sugar and prawn paste.

Mixing crushed fresh chillies with fish sauce and a dash of lime juice makes a general accompanying sauce for any Thai dish. Adding some crushed garlic and a tiny amount of roasted or raw prawn paste transforms it into an all-purpose dip (nam phrik).

Some pulverised dried prawn and julienned egg-plant with sugar makes this dip more complete. Serve it with steamed rice, an omelette and some vegetables.

SALADS

A harmony of tastes and herbal flavours are essential. Major tastes are sour, sweet and salty. Spiciness comes in different degrees according to meat textures and occasions.

SALAD DRESSINGS

Salad dressings have similar base ingredients. Add fish sauce, lime juice and sugar to enhance saltiness, sourness and sweetness. Crushed chillies, garlic and shallots add spiciness and herbal fragrance. Lemon grass and galanga can be added for additional flavour. Employ this mix with any boiled, grilled or fried meat. Lettuce leaves, sliced cucumber, cut spring onions and coriander leaves help top off a salad dressing.

CURRIES

Most non-Thai curries consist of powdered or ground dried spices, whereas the major ingredients of Thai curry are fresh herbs. A simple Thai curry paste consists of dried chillies, shallots and prawn paste. More complex curries include garlic, galanga, coriander roots, lemon grass, kaffir lime peel and peppercorns.

To make a quick curry, fry curry or chilli paste in heated oil or thick coconut milk. Stir and fry until the paste is well cooked and add meats of one's choice. Season with fish sauce or sugar to taste. Add water or thin coconut milk to make curry go a longer way. Add sliced eggplant with a garnish of basil and kaffir lime leaves. Make your own curry paste by blending fresh (preferably dried) chillies, garlic, shallots, galanga, lemon grass, coriander roots, ground pepper, kaffir lime peels and prawn paste.

SINGLE DISH MEALS

Complete meals in themselves, they include rice and noodle dishes such as Khao Phat and Phat Thai.

Heat the cooking oil, fry in a mixture of crushed chillies, minced garlic, ground pepper and chopped chicken meat. When nearly cooked, add vegetables such as cut beans or eggplants.

Season with fish sauce and garnish with kaffir lime leaves, basil or balsom leaves. Cooked rice or fresh noodles added to the frying would make this a substantial meal.

GENERAL FARE

A sweet and sour dish, a fluffy omelette, and a stir-fried dish help make a meal more complete.

DESSERTS

No good meal is complete without a Thai dessert. Uniformly sweet, they are particularly welcome after a strongly spiced and herbed meal

Dom Kha Gai (Chicken and Coconut Soup)

INGREDIENTS SERVES 4

300g chicken breast
500ml thick coconut cream
1ltr chicken stock
2 knobs ginger
2 stalks lemongrass
4 x eschalots
1 knob galangal
5 x kaffir lime leaves
4 x small red chilli
1 x tablespoon palm sugar
100g oyster mushrooms
10 x cherry tomatoes
30ml lime juice
60ml fish sauce
1 x tablesoon oyster sauce
10g coriander leaves
10g fried eschalots

EQUIPMENT

Wok or frypan
Chopping Board
Chef's Knife
Wooden Spoon
Soup or Rice Bowl
Plate



Dom Kha Gai (Chicken and Coconut Soup)

Dom Kha Gai (Chicken and Coconut Soup) continued

METHOD

1. Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them completely
2. Slice chicken breast
3. Slice ginger
4. Slice lower half of lemongrass in 2 cm angled pieces
5. Roughly slice eschalots
6. Slice galangal
7. Halve small red chilli length ways
8. Roughly tear up oyster mushrooms
9. Halve cherry tomatoes
10. Juice limes to get 30ml
11. Pick coriander leaves for garnish
12. Place stock, coconut cream into wok or pan on high heat
13. Add lemongrass, ginger, galangal, eschalots, chilli and lime leaf
14. Season with fish sauce, oyster sauce and sugar (should taste creamy, slightly salty)
15. Stir in chicken, cherry tomatoes and mushrooms and simmer for 3-5 minutes
16. Add lime juice
17. Place in bowl, garnish with coriander and fried eschalots

Thai soups such as this are becoming very popular because they are quick and very easy to make.

Typically in Thai meals soups are eaten as part of a main meal and will complement the other dishes served, however we like to serve the soup as a starter because it stimulates the appetite.

This is a mild soup, not spicy as say, *tom yam goong* (hot and sour prawn)

CHEFS TIPS

Instead of chicken, you could substitute blue-eyed cod, mackerel or prawns

Use a neutral oil when cooking like peanut or canola oil rather than olive oil

Chilli and Lime Squid Hoods with Glass Noodles and Coriander

INGREDIENTS GREAT STARTER FOR 4

8 x cleaned squid hoods
1 x long red chilli
2 x limes
2 x teaspoon lime zest
1 x tablespoon lime Juice
1 x packet vermicelli noodles
1 x green onion
2 x teaspoon vegetable oil
1 x teaspoon fish sauce
¾ cup coriander leaves
1 x teaspoon cracked black pepper
2 x teaspoon sea salt

EQUIPMENT

BBQ, char grill or griddle iron
Butter knife
Mortar and pestle or small food processor
Mixing Bowls
Wooden spoon
Pastry Brush
Tongs

METHOD

1. Thoroughly wash hands with soap, rinse and dry **completely**
2. Cut open squid and score inside flesh with butter knife in cross pattern
3. Place salt, chilli, pepper and lime zest in mortar and pestle and grind until paste forms
4. Place noodles in bowl of hot water for 5 minutes or until softened
5. Drain and refresh
6. Chop green onions
7. Place lime juice, vegetable oil and fish sauce in a bowl and mix to combine
8. Heat BBQ or grill over high heat
9. Lightly brush squid with vegetable oil and sprinkle with a little of the salt mixture
10. Cook squid for 1-2 minutes or until curled
11. Place in bowl with noodles, coriander, and dressing and toss to combine

Serve in small bowls and top with sprinkle of salt mixture



Chilli and Lime Squid Hoods with Glass Noodles and Coriander

Ma Hor

INGREDIENTS SERVES 10

200g pork fillets
200g chicken breast
200g medium green prawns
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup (250g) palm sugar
¼ cup fish sauce
1 cup (250g) deep fried shallots
100g peanuts
¼ pineapple
10 segments mandarin
4 bunch coriander
1 x long red chilli
oil for frying

Paste

4 x coriander roots
5 cloves garlic
15 x white peppercorns
pinch of salt

EQUIPMENT

Chef's Knife
Chopping Board
Mortar and Pestle
Roasting Tray
Wok or Frypan
Spatula or wooden spoon

Ma Hor continued

METHOD

1. Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them completely
2. Wash and pick leaves off one bunch of coriander, enough for a handful – keep the root!
3. Cut roots off other 3 coriander bunches, scrap and wash thoroughly
4. Peel garlic
5. Put coriander root, garlic, salt and white peppercorns into a mortar and pestle and pound to a fine paste.
6. Roughly grind or dice peanuts, place on a tray and dry-roast. Keep an eye on them as they'll burn easily!
7. Peel prawns and mince
8. Mince pork and chicken. It is imperative that you use a different or thoroughly cleaned chopping board surface and knife for each of these three ingredients, otherwise you will probably make yourself and/or your guests sick due to cross contamination
9. In a very hot wok or fry pan, add a little oil and fry off chicken, pork and prawn in separate batches until all have a golden brown colour, remove from wok and drain off excess oil.
10. Reheat wok and add a little oil, fry off paste until it becomes fragrant and golden in colour.
11. Add palm sugar and fish sauce to paste and turn down to a simmer until palm sugar melts down. You may need to break up sugar first before adding if it is in large pieces
12. Add minced prawn, chicken and pork to sugar and simmer for a further 10 minutes until mixture thickens, making sure you stir constantly.
13. Add roasted peanuts in mortar and pestle and add to mix with deep fried shallots. Stir through and taste. It should taste salty and sweet.
14. Allow mixture to cool to a point where you can handle it and roll it into bite size balls.
15. While you are waiting peel pineapple, remove core and cut into slices crossways
16. Peel and segment mandarins, gently taking out the seeds
17. De-seed long red chilli and cut lengthways and shred
18. Serve ma hor on top of pineapple and mandarin segments, garnished with a leaf of coriander and a thread of chilli

The dish's Thai name whimsically means "galloping horses". It is perfect for a hors d'oeuvre because of its wonderful interplay between the sweet, nutty and salty relish, the sweet and sour pineapple and the juicy mandarin. Ma hor stimulates and teases the palate, in readiness for the meal to follow.

Stir-Fried Pumpkin Egg Tofu and Okra

INGREDIENTS

1 x egg
300g pumpkin
3g thai chilli chopped
2g minced garlic
7g large chilli sliced
30g spring onions
35g okra
17g baby sweet corn
15g sugar snaps
5g picked coriander
1g white pepper
4g green shallot batons
8g ginger
65g tofu
200ml chicken stock
15ml oyster sauce
10ml fish sauce
8g white sugar

EQUIPMENT

Paring / Vegetable Knife
Table Spoon
Steamer
Cooling Tray
Mixing Bowls
Wok
Ladle

Stir-Fried Pumpkin Egg Tofu and Okra continued

METHOD

1. Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them completely
2. Cut the skin of the pumpkin off, scoop out the seeds
3. Cut the pumpkin into small chunks, and then place them in the steamer for thirteen minutes
4. Take them out and allow to cool
5. Combine spring onions, pumpkin, garlic, small Thai chilli, and large lengths of deseeded chilli in a bowl
6. Heat the wok up, add some oil and shallow fry the tofu until crispy
7. Heat the wok up so it's hot and add the oil, crack the egg into the wok letting it fry a bit then add the other ingredients
8. Toss the wok then add a ladle and a half of chicken stock
9. Place the lid on the wok and let it steam a bit
10. Meanwhile in another bowl you should have the ginger, okra, sweet corn, sugar snaps, and green shallot batons. Add those to the wok and stir fry until cooked
11. Add the seasonings and make sure the sauce is thick when serving
12. Garnish with coriander and white pepper

Green Papaya Salad

INGREDIENTS SERVES 2

3 x cloves garlic
4-6 x birds eye chilli's (scuds)
1 x heaped tablespoon roasted peanuts
2 x tablespoons (40g) dried prawns (prawn)
4 x cherry tomatoes
2 x snake beans
1 cup (250g) shredded green papaya
4 x tablespoon palm sugar
2 x limes
1 x tablespoon tamarind water
1 -2 tablespoons fish sauce
pinch of salt
cucumber
cabbage
2 x slices lime – optional

EQUIPMENT

Mortar and Pestle
Juicer
Baking Tray
Peeler
Chopping Board
Chef's Slotted Spoon
Large Mixing Bowl x 3
Small bowl for palm sugar
Chef's Knife
Small ramekin for dried prawns



Green Papaya Salad

Green Papaya Salad continued

METHOD

1. Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them completely
2. Cut snake beans 1cm lengths
3. Slice 2 pieces of lime and cut into quarters. This is an optional extra in the salad as it gives more punch
4. Grate papaya (chef will detail this step)
5. Juice remaining limes
6. Dry roast peanuts on tray in 180°C oven until golden - **NB: Be careful not to burn them! You'll smell it when they are ready**
7. Pound garlic with chillis and salt in a mortar and pestle
8. Add peanuts and dried prawns and pound into coarse paste
9. If using lime pieces in salad add now, then add cherry tomatoes and beans to the mortar
10. Gently mash together
11. Add green papaya and bruise
12. Season with palm sugar, lime juice, tamarind water
13. Add fish sauce
14. Eat with cabbage wedges, cucumber slices and snake beans NB: The end result should taste hot, salty, sweet and sour

Thai Beef Salad

INGREDIENTS SERVES 4

400g rump steak
olive oil for brushing
salt and pepper

Dressing

1 tablespoon fish sauce
¼ cup lime juice (about 3 limes)
¼ cup brown sugar
1 x garlic clove

Salad

2 x long red chillies
½ cup coriander leaves
½ cup mint leaves
½ cup basil leaves
1 x lebanese cucumber
1 punnet cherry tomatoes
2 cups bean sprouts
1 x red onion
1 tablespoon sesame seeds

EQUIPMENT

BBQ
Mixing bowls
Pastry Brush
Chopping Board
Chef's Knife
Vegetable Knife
Wooden spoon
Tongs



Thai Beef Salad

Thai Beef Salad **continued**

METHOD

1. Thoroughly wash hands with soap, rinse and dry **completely**
2. Peel and crush garlic
3. De-seed chilli (this will take out a lot of the heat) and slice
4. Pick coriander, mint and basil leaves
5. Slice lebanese cucumber
6. Halve cherry tomatoes and thinly slice red onion
7. Heat BBQ over high heat
8. Brush the steak with oil and season with salt and pepper
9. Cook the steak for 3-4 minutes each side
10. Lightly toast sesame seeds (this will only take a few seconds)
11. Remove from heat and allow to rest
12. Thinly slice steak across the grain
13. To make the dressing, place the fish sauce, lime juice, brown sugar and garlic in a bowl and stir until the sugar is dissolved
14. Place the chillies, coriander, mint, basil cucumber, tomatoes, bean sprouts, onion, sesame seeds dressing and steak in a large bowl and toss to coat
15. Divide onto plates to serve, or get an iceberg lettuce and serve sang choi bau style!

CHEF'S TIPS WITH MEAT

Always cut meat **against** the grain and so the juices won't run out easily

Allow the meat to rest after you bring it out of the oven as it will continue to cook for a few minutes. Resting the meat ensures that it will be tender, and the juices won't run out when it is served or sliced

As a general rule meat is cooked when the internal temperature is 65°C.

Chicken internal temperature should be 84°C

Thai Crispy Whole Fish with Three Flavoured Sauce

INGREDIENTS SERVES 2

Whole Fish

700g whole fish (preferably snapper)
1/2 cup holy basil leaves - 20g weight
2 x kaffir lime leaves
1 large red chilli
50g jasmine rice
oil for deep frying
lime wedges to serve

Three Flavoured Sauce

1 x coriander root
2.5cm (1 inch) fresh tumeric root or
1 tsp ground tumeric
2 x red birds eye chilli
3 x large red chillis
3 x small eschalots
1 x teaspoon dried prawn paste
1 x tablespoon krachai (wild ginger / pickled rhizome)
200g palm sugar
3 x tablespoons dried tamarind pulp
2 x tablespoons fish sauce
100g fresh pineapple
oil for frying

EQUIPMENT

Whole Fish

Chopping Board
Chef's Knife
Frypan / Wok
Absorbent Paper
Rice Cooker
Fish Turner
Kitchen Shears
Spider for taking fish out of deep fryer, or you can use tongs



Thai Crispy Whole Fish with Three Flavoured Sauce

Thai Crispy Whole Fish with Three Flavoured Sauce continued

Three Flavoured Sauce

Chopping Board
Chef's Knife
Mortar and Pestle
Strainer
Frypan / Wok
Tablespoon
Grater
Masher
Peeler
Roasting tray
Alfoil

METHOD

Three Flavoured Sauce

1. Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them completely
2. Scrape and thoroughly clean the coriander root
3. Peel fresh tumeric root
4. De-seed large red chillis
5. Peel small eschalots
6. Wrap dried prawn paste in alfoil and roast on low heat (120-140°C) for about 15minutes (check to make sure it doesn't burn)
7. Shave palm sugar
8. Mix three tablespoons dried tamarind pulp with ½ cup (125ml) hot water
9. Mash and strain to obtain juice
10. Peel and dice fresh pineapple
11. Pound the coriander root, turmeric, chillies, eschallots, prawn paste and wild ginger in a mortar and pestle until a uniform paste is achieved
12. Heat a little oil in a pan and fry the paste until crisp and fragrant
13. Add the palm sugar and a tablespoon of water to help dissolve the sugar
14. Keep cooking until the sugar caramelises slightly, then add the tamarind, fish sauce and pineapple and simmer for about 5 minutes to allow the pineapple to soften
15. Keep warm while you finish the fish

Thai Crispy Whole Fish

with Three Flavoured Sauce continued

Whole Fish

1. Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them completely
2. Heat the oil in a wok or deep frypan
3. Put rice in cooker and set accordingly. 50g of rice raw will make 150g serve (1:3)
4. Finely slice kaffir lime leaves
5. Remove seeds and finely julienne large red chilli
6. Scale the fish if you haven't got the fish monger to do it
7. Cut the fins off with a good pair of kitchen shears
8. Score the fish on both sides in a criss-cross pattern. Cut to the bone, but be careful not to go through
9. Deep-fry until crisp, then remove
10. Drain on absorbent paper, then transfer to serving plate
11. Fry the basil leaves in the oil until crisp and drain
12. Cut limes into wedges
13. Pour the sauce over the fish and garnish with the crisp basil, lime leaves and chilli
14. Serve with steamed jasmine rice and fresh lime wedges

This is another typical or popular Thai dish that has many variations or adaptations.

Essentially it combines three opposing flavours sweet, sour and hot yet allows each to remain distinct and separate.

Best served with seafood that has been grilled or fried but is also suitable for pork or chicken.

CHEFS TIPS 1

You could use a blender to chop up and combine all the ingredients for the sauce, but it might not be as therapeutic as a good bash on the mortar and pestle!

Be sure to add the turmeric as it makes the sauce more 'green' rather than dull

CHEFS TIPS 2

Add a touch of salt to the ingredients in the mortar and pestle, as this brings out the flavour, and the coarse texture helps in the grinding process

The dried tamarind pulp will last ages if kept in a cool, dark, dry place

Marinate the whole fish in fish sauce for a few minutes to get a great crunchy effect on the surface of the fish when you cook it

Steamed Snapper with Pickled Garlic Lime and Mint

INGREDIENTS SERVES 2

1 x snapper weighing around 700g
3 x bulbs of pickled garlic
2 x tablespoons pickled garlic brine
1 x bulb of fresh garlic
3 x coriander root
3 x large dried red chillies
2 x red fresh chillies
4 x tablespoons limejuice
1½ tablespoons light soy
1 bunch mustard green (or other Chinese vegetable)
1 bunch shallots
5 x oyster mushrooms
a few sprigs of mint

EQUIPMENT

Knife for scaling
Chefs knife
Steamer
Chopping Board
Mortar and Pestle
Chef's Spoon or
wooden spoon

METHOD

1. Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them completely
2. Chop the mustard green and mushrooms, *pick* mint
3. Remove the green tops of the shallots and finely slice at a 45° angle
4. Peel the shallots and slice finely at a 45° angle and set aside
5. Roughly mix and layer upon a dish
6. Scale, clean and wash the fish, and *score* both of its sides with three slashes
7. Place fish on top of the vegies in the dish
8. Sprinkle with a little soy, place in the steamer and steam over a high heat for 20 minutes. If you don't have a steamer, wrap fish, vegies and soy in alfoil and place on tray in 200° oven for about 10mins for each 1cm of width of the fish. If its not quite cooked when you open the alfoil pack, just leave open and roast until the eye is white and top side flesh is crisp
9. Meanwhile, chop the pickled garlic and peel and dice the fresh garlic
10. Finely slice the large red chillies
11. Chop coriander root
12. Add garlic, chillies and coriander root in the mortar and pestle and pound until a paste forms
13. Place paste over the fish after it has come out of the steamer
14. Next, spoon the pickled garlic brine and the limejuice over the fish
15. Garnish with broken roasted dried chillies, mint leaves and finely sliced shallot
16. Serve immediately

Thai Squid Salad with Mint, Coriander, Cucumber and a Red Chilli Dressing

INGREDIENTS SERVES 2

Thai Squid Salad

2 medium squid tubes (cleaned)
½ bunch mint
½ bunch coriander
1 lebanese cucumber
1 eschallot or
¼ red onion
salt and pepper
olive oil

Dressing (*Nam Dim*)

1 clove garlic
½ red chilli
25g sugar (palm sugar if you can get it)
1 teaspoon fish sauce
2 limes
root of coriander

EQUIPMENT

Wok or frypan with a lid
Paring Knife
Strainer
Chefs Knife
Chopping Board
Mixing Bowl
Mortar and Pestle
Tongs
Juicer



Thai Squid Salad with Mint, Coriander, Cucumber and Red Chilli Dressing

Thai Squid Salad with Mint, Coriander, Cucumber and a Red Chilli Dressing *continued*

METHOD

1. Thoroughly wash hands with soap, rinse and dry **completely**
2. *Pick* leaves off mint and coriander – **keep the coriander root**, wash, drain and set aside
3. Cut cucumber into 2cm long *batons* (*always with the grain*)
4. Slice ecshallots or onion finely and combine in a bowl with cucumber, mint and coriander
5. Flatten squid tube and slice open along the edge one side of squid tube lengthways to make a 'sheet', then *score* and cut into thin strips
6. *Season* with salt and pepper and a little olive oil
7. Peel garlic, and add to coriander root, rough cut red chilli and sugar in a mortar and pestle and pound into a paste
8. Juice limes and retain strained juice
9. Add fish sauce and lime juice to the mortar and pestle
10. Dressing should be a balance of salty, sweet and sour
11. *Sear* squid quickly on hot wok or really hot frypan with lid on – this should take about 3 minutes
12. Combine squid with salad and enjoy!

CHEF'S TIPS

You don't have to take out the seeds of the chilli, but they add a lot of heat to the dish

Generally, the smaller the chilli, the hotter it is

The hottest part of the chilli is usually identified as the seeds, but it is actually the bit that attaches the seeds to the chilli that is the hottest part (the pith)

The mortar is the bowl, the pestle is the round handle bit

Pictorial Glossary of Grocery Items for Thai Cooking



Palm Sugar

Try using the lighter variety as opposed to the darker Indonesian sugar



Dried Prawns

Optional and more suited for the adventurous



Tamarind

Something you probably won't use much in your cooking, so try to buy it in the smallest quantity you can. It will come either in a jar ready-made paste or in a solid block from which you add water. It is the tamarind that adds the sour element to your dish.



Fried Onions/Schallots

Crisp fried onions add a fantastic dimension to any Thai dish. To avoid the hassle and mess of deep frying them yourself, buying them this way is the way to go. I find it better to buy them in smaller amounts to avoid them getting stale. They add great flavour and texture to both salads and curries, even stir fries. Thais have even been seen using deep fried onions on some desserts as well.

Kara Brand Coconut Cream

We recommend it as the best all-rounder that is found in most Asian Supermarkets



Pictorial Glossary of Grocery Items for Thai Cooking continued



Coconut Cream

There are many varieties of coconut cream on the market. We find that the Ayam brand or Chef's Choice are the way to go. Try and steer away from the 'lite' cream/ milk alternatives – they just taste like water so you might as well not use coconut cream at all.



Fish Sauce

Most people would agree when we say that this stuff smells and tastes horrible. On the other hand, it is a key to Thai cookery, adding a salty element to the dish. Thais will use this fish sauce as salt in their dishes to season and flavour.

Warning – overuse can result in disaster so be sparing. Remember you can always add more if you have to.



Rice Flour

Rice flour is foreign to most Westerners. It is very similar to corn flour with high starch properties that are great for either thickening sauces, making dumplings or even pancakes



Mung Beans

Mung beans are a very diverse pulse and have many uses whether it be as an accompaniment in a curry or a binding agent in a fish sauce or lightly toasted and sprinkled over the dish (eg mango and sticky rice) to give a little crunch

Glossary of Some Common Asian Vegetables and Groceries



Bamboo Shoot (Nor Mai)

Crunchy in texture and with a subtle, refreshing taste, these are the edible young shoots of certain type of bamboo. The shoots of the bamboo are cut when they have grown about 15 cm (6 inches) above the ground. Fresh bamboo shoots are hard to get and, if not already prepared, must be peeled then parboiled to remove toxic hydrocyanic acid. Boil whole or in chunks for 30 minutes or until they no longer taste bitter. Canned and bottled are the ones used most often. The canned variety needs to be boiled for only 10 minutes and may be used immediately in soups or curries.

Basil and Holy Basil

Hindus believe that basil is sacred and they like to plant it in religious sanctuaries. The variety of basil they use is called holy basil and it has a spicy flavour. This is more difficult to find in the West than sweet basil, but pepper or finely chopped chilli can be added to the sweet variety to compensate. Both types of basil are used a lot in Thai cooking.

Beancurd

This is a soy bean extract to which a setting agent has been added. Soft beancurd is white, and is used extensively in Chinese dishes. It is available in most oriental shops, and is usually sold in pieces 7.5 cm square. Hard or dry beancurd is made by compressing soft beancurd. Beancurd is available in many other forms – fried, fermented, etc.



Bean Sprout (Thuá Ngok)

The sprouts of the soya or mung bean are crunchy and tender. They can be grown at home, and they are easy to find in most supermarkets. The canned variety is not a very good substitute but beansprout can be replaced by other fresh vegetables, finely sliced, if necessary.



Bergamot (Makroud)

Also known as kaffir lime, this plant is found everywhere in Thailand and people often grow it at home. The leaves have a delicate flavour, slightly lemony, which goes equally well with curries and seafood dishes. The fruit has a bumpy dark green rind with a concentration of aromatic oils and the aroma of lemon. Sometimes the juice of this fruit is used in Thai dishes instead of lime, or vice versa. The skin is also used in many Thai dishes, especially curries, and can be replaced by grated lime skin if necessary.



Black Fungus (Cloud ear, Hed Hoo Noo)

This tree fungus has a little flavour of its own, but is valued for its crunchy texture. It is most commonly available in its dried form, which looks like wrinkled black paper. Before use, soak in warm water for 15-30 minutes, until the fungus swells to about five times its size. They should then be rinsed several times to remove any sand.

Glossary of Some Common Asian Vegetables and Groceries continued

Celery

Thai celery is much smaller than the variety found in the West. It is also greener, thinner-stemmed and leafier, with a stronger celery flavour. However, either type can be used equally well for Thai soups, sautés and salads. Young celery leaves make an attractive garnish which enhances the flavour of the food at the same time.



Cherry Eggplant (Ma Kheua Phuang)

Grows in clusters and, when yet unripe, look like large peas.

Cardamom

The queen of spices, cardamom has been used since ancient times. Produced mostly in India and Sri Lanka, it also grows in south-eastern Thailand near Cambodia. The aromatic pods can be green, white or black and they all contain a number of small seeds. The pods and seeds are used in different types of sweet or savoury Thai dishes, especially in curries. Powdered cardamom is readily available but it is better to grind your own freshly if possible.

Chillies

The Thai add generous amounts of chillies to most of their dishes. No one region is known as the home of fiery food, as each province has its own "hot" dishes.

Many different varieties of chillies are used in Thailand but the most common is 7.5-10cm long and can be red, green or yellow when fresh. Dried, it is red. Another popular chilli in Thai cooking is tiny, green and extremely fiery. The seeds are the hottest part of the chilli so if you want to keep the flavour, with out the heat, slit open the chillies and discard the seeds. Dried chillies should be soaked in hot water for 10 minutes before grinding.

The Thai use chillies in almost every conceivable way – fresh, dried, whole, chopped, crushed or sliced into rings. Just a few words of caution, always wash your hands carefully after handling chillies and do not touch your eyes or mouth, or they will suffer from a burning sensation.

Chilli Paste

Can be bought in bottles from Asian stores. A particularly popular one in Thai cooking, especially for seafood dishes, is burnt mild chilli paste.



Chinese Broccoli (Pak Kha Nar)

Has smooth round stems sprouting large dark green leaves and small, white flowers. The juicy stems trimmed of most of their leaves, is the piece of plant which is most commonly eaten. Gai Larn has the similar flavour to western broccoli, but without the characteristic large flower heads.



Chinese Dried Mushrooms (Hed Hom)

Also called Chinese dried black mushrooms. These dried, whole mushrooms have a distinctive woody, smoky taste which is intensified by the drying process and they are rarely eaten fresh. They should always be soaked in warm water for 30 minutes before being added to other ingredients. The stems are seldom eaten, as they are quite tough. They are sold in most oriental food stores around the world

Glossary of Some Common Asian Vegetables and Groceries *continued*



Chinese Flowering Cabbage (Pak Khwang Tung)

Slimmer than bok choy and has a smooth green leaves and pale green stems with clusters of tiny yellow flowers on the tips of the inner shoots. The leaves and flowers cook quickly and have light, sweet mustard flavor; the stems are crunchy and juicy.



Chinese White Cabbage

Also known as Chinese Chard, has fleshy white stems and leaf ribs and green flat leaves. It has a slightly mustardy taste. Separate the leaves, wash well and drain. The white stems can be sliced thinly and eaten raw. A smaller type is called baby bok choy or Shanghai bok choy.

Cinnamon

In southern Asia, there are many varieties of cinnamon, the dried, aromatic bark of a member of the laurel family. In Thailand the "Batavia" variety is commonly used to give a pleasant aroma to beef and chicken dishes.

Cloves

In Thai cuisine, cloves are added to curries and they also go very well with tomatoes, salty vegetables and ham. In Thailand, cloves have traditionally been chewed with betel leaves.

Coconut Milk

The milk itself is the liquid wrung from the grated and pressed coconut meat and then combined with water. In Thai cooking it is used with curries and stews and it is often combined with curry pastes for sauces. The milk is used as a popular cooling beverage and a key ingredient in puddings and candies. Be sure to shake the tin well before opening to use.

Coriander

The leaves and seeds are used in many cuisines throughout the world, but Thai cooking makes use of the roots as well. The round, beige seeds are added to curries and vegetables. The roots are crushed with garlic to flavour meat and are often added to soups, especially beef soups. The leaves are used extensively as a garnish.

Cumin

Only the seeds are used, dried and ground. In Thai cuisine, cumin is used in sauces and on grilled meats. Cumin can be purchased already ground, but the whole seeds keep their flavour better and they are easy to grind at home.



Daikon (Hua Chai Tau)

Much used in Japanese and Chinese cooking. It has a similar taste and texture to ordinary radish and is grated and added to stewed dishes or mixed with finely chopped chillies as a relish.

Glossary of Some Common Asian Vegetables and Groceries continued

Galangal (Kha)

Both greater and lesser galangal are related to ginger. In Thailand greater galangal is most commonly used; its aroma is subtler than that of lesser galangal and its inside is milky white. You often find it in curries and soups. It is used fresh in Asia, but elsewhere it may have to be purchased dried. In this case, soak the root in hot water for 1 hour before use and remove it before serving. Powdered galangal is also available.



Garlic Bulb (Kra Tiem Thon)

This type of garlic is preferred for pickling with honey has bulbs with just one clove. These garlic rounds are not a separate variety of garlic but a natural phenomenon where a garlic bulb does not divide into many cloves. In the sorting of pickled garlic, 20 to 30 kilograms yields only 1 to 2 kilograms of garlic rounds, and therefore they are expensive.



Garlic (Kra Tiem)

The Thai garlic head is made up of smaller cloves than the Western varieties.

Garlic flavour is strongest when the cloves are squeezed and their juice extracted, slightly less strong when the cloves are grated or finely chopped, even less strong when the clove are merely sliced, and mildest when whole unbroken cloves are used. In addition, the longer garlic is cooked, the milder it becomes.

Garlic contains significant amount of vitamin C, calcium and protein. It is also rich in potassium, phosphorus, iron and zinc. Medicinally, it is believed that garlic can reduce blood pressure and cleanse the blood of excess glucose. It is also said to alleviate flu, sore throats and bronchial congestion.



Ginger

The aromatic rhizome of the ginger plant is an important ingredient of Thai main dishes and desserts. It must be peeled before it can be chopped, grated or crushed. Fresh ginger is preferable, but powdered ginger can be substituted if necessary.

Lemongrass

This herb is close to being the 'signature' ingredient of Thai cookery. Lemongrass is available in fresh as well as dried form. Dried Lemongrass is used for herbal teas, and only the fresh for cooking. Fresh lemongrass is sold in stalks that can be 60cm (2 ft) long – it looks like a very long, thin spring onion.

Most recipes use only the bottom few inches of the stem. Lemongrass pieces are removed after the dish is cooked. In recipes that call for lemongrass to be finely chopped or pounded into a paste, it becomes an integral aspect of the dish, and isn't removed.

Fresh lemongrass can be kept, loosely wrapped, in the bottom part of your refrigerator for up to one week. Please note that lemon is not a substitute for the unique flavours of lemongrass.



Lime Leaf

You'll find lime leaves floating in soups or finely shredded. The dried leaves must be soaked in cold water 20 minutes before use. Substitute 1 tablespoon lime juice.

Glossary of Some Common Asian Vegetables and Groceries continued



Mint

Leaves of the spearmint variety are often used in Thai salads, fish dishes and soups. Sweet basil leaves can be used as a substitute if necessary.

Napa Cabbage (Pad Khad Kow)

Napa Cabbage also known as Celery Cabbage and Chinese Cabbage, has a long shape and closely packed broad, pale green leaves with wide white stems. It has a delicate mustard-like flavour. This vegetable always used in Thai stir-fried vegetable, and Kim Chi.

Rice, Thai or Jasmine

This fragrant long-grain rice from Thailand is prized for its aromatic and nutty flavour. Widely available in supermarkets, it is much favoured by Thai cooks and chefs. The taste of jasmine is not quite perceptible, but you sense that the rice is pleasingly different. And there is a difference, however subtle.

Rice Noodles

Don't be intimidated by all the foreign writing on these packages of clear rice noodles. For pad thai you'll need the wider noodles, which look like dry linguine. Rice noodles should be soaked in cold water, then quickly boiled or stir fried



Straw Mushrooms (Hed Fang)

Named for their growing environment – straw – and are cultivated throughout Asia. They have globe-shaped caps, are stemless and have a musty flavour. They are available in cans but need to be drained and rinsed before use

Tamarind

This sweet-and-sour fruit comes from a fuzzy light brown pod. The pulp (with seeds) is sold in a flat square as tamarind paste. It must be mixed with water and strained before using.

Thai Eggplant (Ma Kheua)

Thai Eggplant is eaten with Nam Prik or Chili Paste. There are a number of types ranging in size from that of ping-pong ball down to that of a marble. One small type is Ma-Kheua Pro.



Water Chestnuts (Haeo)

These white-fleshed roots of a variety of water grass are prized for their semi-sweet taste and crisp texture, which is retained when cooked. They are used throughout China and Southeast Asia in both savoury and sweet dishes. Available canned and sometimes fresh; cut off the woody base, peel away papery skin, and cover in water to stop discolouring.



Winged Bean (Thua Phu)

Bears a pod which in cross section looks like a rectangle that has a fringe-like extension at each corner, the 'wings' of the bean.



Yard Long Beans (Thua Fax Yao)

They have pod up to 60cm long. These are eaten both fresh and cooked and are at their best when young and slender. Mostly used in Thai Papaya Salad or Som Tum

Rice



Coconut Rice

INGREDIENTS SERVES 8

2 cups (500ml) jasmine rice
2 cups coconut cream
1 cup water
2 x tablespoon white sugar or palm sugar
2 x pandanus leaves
1 x packet dried deep fried onions / shallots
pinch of salt

EQUIPMENT

Large Pot with lid
Wooden Spoon
Mixing Bowl
Colander / Strainer

METHOD

1. Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them completely
2. Rinse rice and soak in plenty of water for at least 2 hours
3. Drain rice and put into heavy base pan
4. In mixing bowl, mix coconut cream with water
5. Add salt and sugar stir until dissolved
6. Add pandanus leaves
7. Pour mixture over rice and bring slowly to boil
8. Stir to prevent cream separating
9. When it has just come to boil cover and turn down to simmer
10. After 15 mins check rice is not burning
11. If cooked remove from heat
12. If rice is not cooked stir and leave on heat for another minute or two, and allow rice to cool
13. Sprinkle with dried shallots and serve



Coconut Rice



Jasmine Rice

Jasmine Rice (absorption method)

INGREDIENTS

Jasmine Rice (unwashed) 3 parts

Water 4 parts

EQUIPMENT

Pot with lid

Wooden spoon

METHOD

1. Place the jasmine rice and water into a suitably sized saucepan and bring to a rapid boil
2. Reduce heat to the lowest possible setting, cover with a lid and let cook for 10 minutes
3. Remove from the heat keeping the lid firmly on and let rest for at least 10 minutes
4. Loosen the rice grains with the tongs of a fork or a rice spoon

Many flavour variations can be achieved by the addition of kaffir lime leaves, ginger, chilli etc.

Saffron Rice

INGREDIENTS

2 cups jasmine rice unwashed
400ml water
1 pinch ground tumeric
1 pinch saffron threads
½ stick cinnamon
1 sprig curry leaf
sea salt

EQUIPMENT

Heavy based pot with tight fitting lid

METHOD

1. Wash rice, place into pan and strain off water
2. Measure water in with rice until it comes up to the first knuckle of the middle finger and add spices
3. Bring rice rapidly to the boil, then turn low and keep a tight fitting lid on for about 15 minutes until rice is steamed and tender



Saffron Rice



Desserts



Coconut and Lychee Tapioca

INGREDIENTS SERVES 4

150g dried tapioca pearls
2 litres water
1 cup (250ml) coconut cream
½ cup (125ml) sugar syrup (1:1 sugar and water boiled to make a syrup)
1x teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon sea salt
100g young coconut flesh
100g lychees
1 x fresh mango

EQUIPMENT

Medium / Large Pot
Wooden Spoon
Strainer
Mixing Bowl and Glass Bowl Muslin or cheesecloth
Grater
Glass or glass dish to serve dessert in

METHOD

1. Make your sugar syrup (equal parts sugar and water, boiled to make a syrup)
2. Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them completely
3. Finely slice young coconut flesh
4. Peel and roughly chop lychee flesh (tinned if fresh not available)
5. Cut fresh mango into large pieces to serve (any fresh tropical fruit is good if mango out of season)
6. Bring the water to a rapid boil and *rain in* (pour in a slow, steady stream) the tapioca, stirring with the whisk so that the pearls do not stick to the bottom
7. *Simmer* until the pearls become transparent with just a tiny dot of white left in the middle. You want to just slightly undercook the tapioca pearls as they will continue to cook once you take them out of the water. Getting this right is important as this dish relies on the firm texture of the tapioca
8. Pour into a strainer and rinse in cold water to prevent the pearls from sticking to each other
9. Add cream, sugar syrup, vanilla and salt together
10. Place the tapioca in a mixing bowl and work in liquid so tapioca is all separated and quite wet
11. *Fold* in young coconut and lychees
12. Serve in a glass with fresh mango pieces on the side

Coconut and Lychee Tapioca *continued*

Coconut Milk

1. Crack the coconut kernel
2. Set the coconut half over the 'rabbit' grater
3. Grate the flesh. (At home, use a normal grater)
4. Add about 1 cup (250ml) hot water to the flesh
5. Allow the grated flesh to *steep* in the water for a little while
6. Place small handfuls of the flesh in some muslin or cheesecloth
7. Squeeze the milk into a glass or ceramic bowl
8. Allow the coconut milk to settle, the 'coconut cream' will rise to the top; the rest is 'coconut milk'

CHEFS TIPS

Our chefs use Kara brand coconut cream and recommend it as the best all-rounder that is found in most Asian Supermarkets

If mangoes are out of season, you can substitute any fresh tropical fruit, or fresh stone fruit like peaches

The art to using a mortar and pestle is to push the ingredients from the inside straight to the curve, so everything turns over itself and the ingredients are pushed together, rather than mashed

When using the mortar and pestle it should sing, rather than clink and clunk!

Tapioca pearls have been used in Thai desserts since 1350 (AYUTHYA) when commercial letters record ships arriving with sugar and tapioca from the south. During this period monks and others have been known to eat tapioca pudding.

Tapioca derives from the Palmata variety of Cassava. The root is grated, washed thoroughly again, served through mesh and finally results in pearls slightly larger than the ordinary sago pearls. These are then heated and dried.



Sticky White Rice with Mangoes and Coconut Sauce

Sticky White Rice with Mangoes and Coconut Sauce

INGREDIENTS SERVES 8

2 cups (500g) white sticky rice (also known as glutinous rice)
2 cups coconut cream
2 cup caster sugar (superfine)
2 teaspoon salt
3 mangoes

EQUIPMENT

Bamboo Steamer
Wooden Spoon
Mixing Bowl

METHOD

1. Soak rice overnight
2. Next day drain and steam until tender (about 20 minutes)
3. Make sure rice is not piled too high in centre, so that it cooks evenly
4. Taste some from the thickest part of the pile. It should be soft and tender
5. Meanwhile stir coconut cream with sugar and salt until dissolved
6. When rice is cooked remove from steamer and pour coconut over rice
7. Incorporate thoroughly
8. Cover and set aside for 15 minutes
9. Peel and cut mango into bite sized pieces
10. Arrange on plate with rice and serve

CHEF'S TIP

If Mangoes are out of season, you can use lychees. Other alternatives you can get from the Asian supermarket or fruit shop include longons or rabutan

Vattalappan

INGREDIENTS 2 PORTIONS

150g palm sugar, dark (jaggery)
125mls coconut cream
2 whole eggs
1 pinch ground cardamom
12 cashews – unsalted

EQUIPMENT

Saucepan
Mixing Bowl
Whisk
Wooden spoon
Deep baking dish or saucepan
2 ramekins
Aluminium foil

METHOD

1. Grate palm sugar
2. Halve and *dry roast* cashews in small saucepan, then remove
3. In same small saucepan, dissolve palm sugar in coconut cream
4. In a mixing bowl whisk the eggs, mix all ingredients together, except for cashews
5. Place 6 cashews each into ramekins and then pour over mix
6. Cook covered in a water bath for 25mins at 175°C

The Vattalappan should be firm to touch and not overcooked as you will get bubbles in the mixture. Bubbles in the mixture will make it look unpalatable and if cooked too far the oil will come out of the coconut cream and the mix will split.

N.B. The Cooking method is identical to a crème caramel

CHEF'S TIPS

When whisking the eggs don't whisk for too long or there will be bubbles

Ensure the water in the water bath is blood temperature (38°C) at the start or the mix will take too long too cook. Cover water bath well with aluminium foil

Never overcook

Glossary of Terms

al dente	to boil pasta to the point that it is cooked, but still firm literally 'to the tooth'
bain marie	to cook or melt something off direct heat by placing in a bowl above boiling water
baton	to cut an item into 5mm square, 5cm lengths
blanch	to briefly plunge vegetables in boiling water
caramelized	(for onions, leeks etc) to cook on low heat for a long time. The item will lose moisture and volume, turning into a light brown colour
chop	to coarsely cut into small pieces
compound chocolate	a less expensive chocolate replacement made from a combination of cocoa, vegetable fat, and sweeteners
convex	to have a gentle curve up and outwards, as opposed to being flat or depressed (concave)
coulis	a sauce made from cooked fruit and sugar
crème fraiche	slightly soured cream with bacterial culture, but is less sour, and thicker, than sour cream. French is best for this
crimp	to press to sides together to form a water tight seal
crouton	small piece of sautéed or rebaked bread , often cubed and seasoned
dariole	French term meaning a small, cylindrical mold. It also refers to the dessert that is baked in the mold
de-beard	to remove the tendon that attaches a mollusk to a rock. The best way is to grab the exposed tip firmly, twist and pull up against the side of the shell
de-glaze	to lift meat sediment from the bottom of the pan by adding liquid, bringing to the boil and stirring to blend flavours
dice	to cut into fine, small cubes about 5mm square
drizzle	to lightly pour a liquid over a dish in a zig-zag and/or circular fashion
dry fry or dry roast	to lightly fry in a pan (preferably teflon coated) or oven without any liquid
emulsify	thicken to a creamy consistency
flambé	to add alcohol to hot pan and ignite. Burning off alcohol is essential for better flavour
floured	lightly sprinkle the prep surface with flour to avoid sticking
fold	to gently incorporate an ingredient or mix to another by tumbling over each other, usually in a mixing bowl
garnish	ornament or decorate food
grease	to lightly cover a surface so that the ingredient or mix doesn't stick while cooking
julienne	to cut an item into small matchstick sized pieces
marinate	to immerse an ingredient in a liquid to tenderize prior to cooking

Glossary of Terms **continued**

oxidise	exposed fruit will go brown very quickly, which will detract from the lifted aromas and fresh flavours
pancetta	Italian type of dry cured meat
panna cotta	an Italian phrase, literally translated means 'cooked cream'
pick	to remove leaves of a vegetable from root
pin-boned	removing all bones from fillet, using specialized fish tweezers, not your partner's cosmetic ones, or your pliers from the shed!
poach	to cook at a temperature less than boiling to avoid damage to delicate foods
puree	a pulp made by forcing cooked food through a strainer
quenelle	small egg shaped size, formed by using 2 tablespoons
ragout	French term for combination of ingredients to form a wet dish or sauce
reduce	as water evaporates, the remaining flavours are concentrated in the smaller volume of liquid
refresh	briefly dipping veggies in ice cold water to stop the cooking process and bring out the colour
sauté	to cook in oil or butter to soften without colour
seal	to use high heat for a short time to cauterize (seal) the exterior surface
season	add salt and pepper to desired taste
score	to lightly cut surface of an ingredient to form ridge or pocket
sift	by passing an ingredient or mix through a fine mesh (sifter) solids are removed to give a uniform, smooth texture
simmer	there should be continuous movement of water in the pot, but just below a slow rolling boil
slow boil	boiling liquid that has only slight surface movement
slurry	a thick suspension of solids in liquid, usually by mixing powdered item with liquid to enable a better mix or combination
strain	to pass a liquid through a fine mesh to block solids
sweat	to cook slowly on a low heat without letting the ingredient colour
top and tail	to cut the top and end off so you get a neat square item
translucent	to be see through, without colour
vinaigrette	blend of vinegar or similar acid base with oil, used to flavour salads or served warm as a dressing. The best ratio for vinaigrette is three parts oil, one part vinegar.
zest	to take the outer layer of skin off fruit. This layer has lots of flavour and nutrients from the essential oils. The next layer is white and is called the pith, and is usually avoided as it can be quite bitter

Weight Conversion Table

Metric		Imperial	
teaspoon	5ml	teaspoon	1/6oz
tablespoon	20ml	tablespoon	2/3oz
cup	250ml	cup	8oz
	30g		1oz
	50g		1 2/3oz
	200g		7oz
	250g		8oz
	400g		14oz
	500g		16oz
	600g		21oz
	650g		23oz
	700g		25oz
	750g		26oz
	800g		28oz
	1kg		35oz
	100ml		3 fl oz
	120ml		4 fl oz
	150ml		5 fl oz
	300ml		10 fl oz
	800ml		26 fl oz
	850ml		28 fl oz
	900ml		1 qt
	1L		35 fl oz

Temperature Conversion Table

Celsius	F/heit	Gas Mark	Description
110	225	1/4	Very cool
130	250	1/2	---
140	275	1	cool
150	300	2	---
170	325	3	very moderate
180	350	4	moderate
190	375	5	---
200	400	6	moderately hot
220	425	7	hot
230	450	8	---
240	475	9	very hot