

SALADS

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Thai Salads

How to Eat a Thai Salad

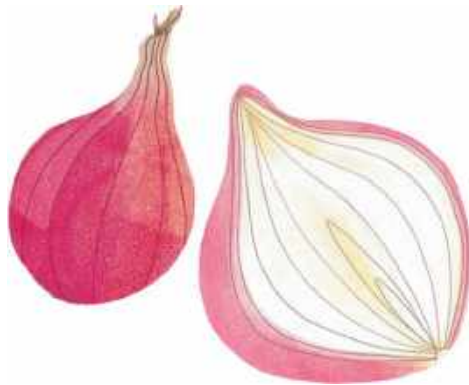
Salads in Thai cuisine are treated very differently than are salads in the West. First, they are not a first course. Salads are served alongside a multi-dish Thai meal, and they act as the bright, tart, fresh element of the meal that helps balance richer dishes.

Salads are also not meant to be eaten on their own. You do not sit with a bowl of Thai salad and eat it for lunch at your desk. It is always served with rice, sticky rice, or even rice porridge, depending on the salad. The flavors of Thai salads are strong, spicy, and tart

and are meant to be accompanied by more neutral carbs. The exception to this are some noodle salads, including the Mama noodle salad ([this page](#)), which can be eaten alone.

Thai Salad Dressing 101

As you browse these salad recipes, you will quickly realize that the dressings are all very similar to each other. Lime juice, fish sauce, chilies, and sugar are the core ingredients of Thai salad dressing. We don't use vinegars or oils. So this means that once you learn how to make a basic dressing, you can make many types of Thai salads simply by changing up the meat, veggies, and herbs, and adjusting the dressing slightly as needed to better match your mix of ingredients.



Types of Thai Salads

There is no one word in Thai that means salad. But we do have a few types of dishes that would be classified as a salad in the English sense of the word, meaning that ingredients are tossed together with a dressing.

yum | ยำ: This is the most basic, and most generic, kind of salad. A *yum* can be made of any ingredients, though most of the time it is protein-centric. The dressing is made of at least the basic four: lime juice, fish sauce, fresh chilies, and sugar, but more ingredients can be added, such as Thai chili paste or even coconut milk.

TUM | ตำ: *Tum* means to pound with a mortar and pestle, which is how this type of salad is made. Pounding a salad might sound bizarre, but it's only the dressing that's actually pounded, and other ingredients are more gently crushed or simply tossed. Our famous green papaya salad is made in this manner.

LAAB | ลาบ: This northeastern specialty is much more specific than a *yum*. To be a *laab*, it has to contain toasted rice powder, mint, fish sauce, lime juice, and roasted chili flakes. The main ingredient is traditionally ground or finely chopped meats, though nowadays people have gotten very creative and make *laab* from just about anything. *Nam tok* is a similar type of salad, but the meat is grilled and sliced rather than ground.

PLA | ปล่า: Probably the least common of all the salads. It started out as our version of ceviche, where proteins such as shrimp and beef are cooked with the acid of lime juice. Nowadays, people have stopped this practice because of the risk of food poisoning, so most of the time that you see a *pla*, it is very much like a *yum*, but with a lot of lemongrass and mint, and often Thai chili paste.

Beef Laab

Laab Neua | ลาบเนื้อ

SERVES 4

COOKING TIME: 20 minutes First of all, it is *laab*, not *laRb*. Now that that's out of the way, *laab* is the epitome of *Isaan*, or northeastern Thai, food. Spicy, salty, sour, and loaded with fresh herbs, this rustic dish doesn't make for pretty eating, as the flavors will have you unabashedly using your hands to stuff your mouth with sticky rice. If you don't eat beef, no worries; as I always say, you can *laab* anything, and even some of the herbs are optional. There are a few ingredients without which it is no longer a *laab*, though, so make sure you have toasted rice powder, lime juice, chili flakes, and mint.

3 tablespoons (30 g) uncooked jasmine or glutinous rice

1 makrut lime leaf (optional)

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound (340 g) ground beef

2 tablespoons (30 ml) fish sauce

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup (35 g) julienned shallots

1 stalk lemongrass, bottom 5 to 6 inches (12.5 to 15 cm) only, thinly sliced

2½ to 3 tablespoons (37 to 45 ml) lime juice

1 to 2 teaspoons (5 to 10 ml) roasted chili flakes, store-bought or homemade ([this page](#)) 2 green onions, chopped

10 sprigs cilantro, or 6 to 7 leaves sawtooth coriander, chopped

1 cup (8 g) mint leaves, torn if large, plus small ones for garnish

FOR SERVING

Fresh veggies, such as sliced English cucumber and romaine lettuce leaves

Sticky rice, but jasmine rice will do in a pinch

Make toasted rice powder by placing the rice and makrut lime leaf in a small dry skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the rice is dark brown and the lime leaf is crisp. It might get a bit smoky, so make sure the kitchen is well ventilated. Pour onto a plate to cool slightly, then grind both the rice and the lime leaf in a coffee grinder or mortar and pestle until it is mostly a powder, with a few larger pieces for texture.

Place a large pot over high heat and add the ground beef and fish sauce (no oil needed). Stir constantly, breaking up any chunks, until the beef is fully cooked. It may look like a large pot is overkill for this amount of beef, but a smaller pot would trap too much liquid and make the mixture too soupy. You could use a skillet, but it's a lot easier to stir and break up the beef in a pot.

Remove the pot from the heat and add the shallots, lemongrass, lime juice, and chili flakes. Let the mixture cool for a few minutes before stirring in the toasted rice powder, green onions, cilantro, and mint (this prevents the fresh herbs from wilting in the heat and the toasted rice powder from absorbing too much liquid too soon). Mix well. Taste and adjust the seasoning with more fish sauce or lime juice as needed. The flavor should lead with the tartness of the lime and be plenty spicy.

Transfer to a serving plate and garnish with mint leaves. Serve with fresh veggies and sticky rice or jasmine rice. If you have lettuce leaves, you can make lettuce wraps.

Transforming Leftover Laab

I often find myself with a little bit of *laab* left over—not really enough for another full meal, and not ideal to eat on its own because all the herbs are wilted and the toasted rice has absorbed all the dressing. Over the years I have used it up in many delicious ways: in an omelet, on top of avocado toast, or—my current favorite—tossed with rice and topped with a fried egg. How would you transform *your* leftover *laab*?





Warm Mama Noodle Salad

Yum Mama | ยำมาม่า

SERVES 4 AS AN APPETIZER, OR 2 AS A MAIN

COOKING TIME: 20 minutes This is a warm noodle salad that is substantial enough to be a whole meal. Mama is Thailand's favorite brand of instant noodles, so much so that the word "mama" has come to simply mean instant noodles. We love it so much, we commonly use it as an ingredient, and even some noodle soup vendors offer mama as one of the noodle options. As much as I'd like to say you can substitute another brand, you really can't. Thai instant noodles have a unique flavor and texture that are key to the identity of this dish, so you really need them for the full effect.

1 to 2 Thai chilies, minced (optional)

1½ tablespoons (18 g) finely chopped palm sugar, packed

3 tablespoons (45 ml) lime juice, divided

½ pound (225 g) ground pork or ground dark chicken meat

2 teaspoons (10 ml) fish sauce

1 cup (85 g) diced cabbage

2 (2 ounce/55 g) packages pork-or chicken-flavored Mama instant noodles (see [note](#)) ⅓ cup (35 g) thinly julienned red onion

¾ cup (100 g) halved cherry tomatoes

1 stalk celery, sliced, plus a handful of celery leaves

8 to 10 sprigs cilantro, chopped

Bring a pot of water to a boil to make the noodles.

Make the dressing by combining the chilies, sugar, and 2 tablespoons (30 ml) lime juice in a large mixing bowl. Stir until most of the sugar is dissolved.

Place a 10-inch (25 cm) skillet on high heat, and add the ground pork and fish sauce. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring to break up any chunks. Once the pork is cooked, add the cabbage and the seasoning from the packets that came with the noodles. Stir for another minute, just to cook the cabbage down slightly. Pour the pork and cabbage into the bowl with the dressing.

Break the noodle blocks into quarters and cook in boiling water, stirring occasionally, just until they are fully loosened from the block shape, about 2 minutes. Drain the noodles very well, shaking off as much liquid as possible, and add them to the pork mixture.

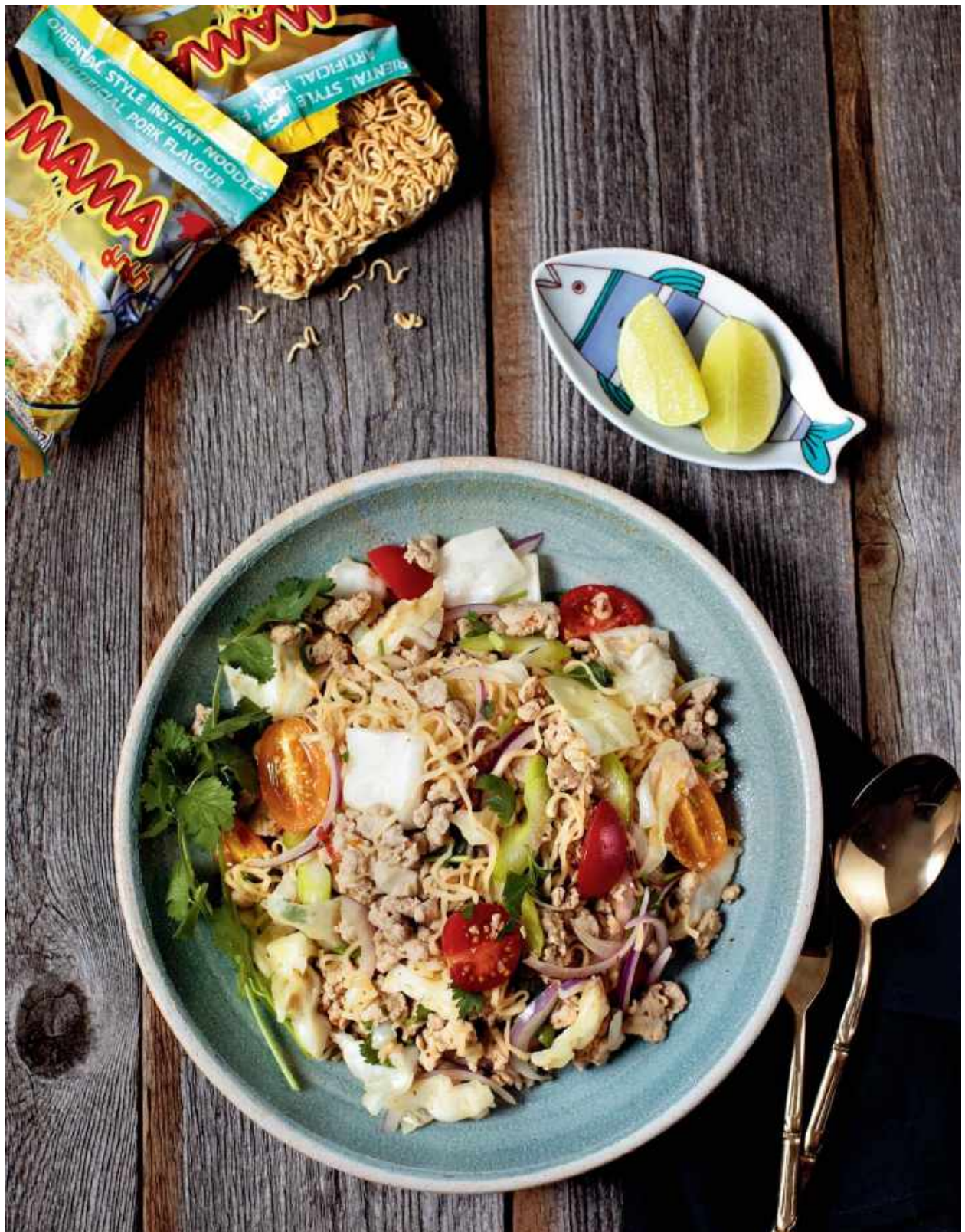
Add the onions, tomatoes, and celery stalks and leaves and toss well, then taste and adjust the seasoning with more lime juice as needed. Top with the cilantro and serve warm.

Do-ahead: Make the dressing and cook up to the point where the pork and cabbage are done, and keep both components in the fridge up to 1 day in advance. When ready to serve, warm the pork mixture slightly before proceeding.

Notes: The noodles come with a small packet of chili powder, but to make this dish extra spicy, you can add the fresh chilies.

You can find Mama brand at most Asian grocery stores, and even at some non-Asian stores. Pork or chicken are good neutral flavors for this dish, but you can experiment with the tom yum or beef flavors as well. Make sure you're buying the classic wheat noodles, as some Mama

flavors come with rice or glass noodles, so check the label for the type of noodles used.





Thai Tuna Salad

Yum Pla Tuna | ยำปลาทูน่า

SERVES 4 AS AN APPETIZER, OR 2 AS A MAIN

COOKING TIME: 5 minutes Throw away any ideas you have of a tuna salad, as this salad is nothing like that. No mayo, no mush. This salad is light, bright, and bursting with fresh Thai herbs. Eating it with plain rice like any other Thai salad is great, but my favorite way to eat *yum pla tuna* is either with rice porridge ([this page](#)) or as a bite-sized lettuce wrap, with a whole cashew in every bite.

DRESSING

- 1 to 2 Thai chilies, minced
- 1½ tablespoons (22 ml) lime juice
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) fish sauce
- 1 tablespoon (12 g) finely chopped palm sugar, packed
- 2 teaspoons (10 ml) neutral oil (omit if the tuna is packed in oil)

SALAD

- 1 can tuna, drained (4 ounces/115 g drained weight)
- 1 stalk lemongrass, bottom 4 inches (10 cm) only, thinly sliced
- 1-inch piece (12 g) ginger, finely julienned, plus extra for garnish
- 3 to 4 makrut lime leaves, finely julienned (optional)

3 tablespoons (20 g) finely julienned shallots

6 to 7 sprigs cilantro, chopped

1 teaspoon (5 ml) fish sauce (if needed)

¼ cup (35 g) roasted cashews

FOR SERVING

Jasmine rice or plain rice porridge ([this page](#)) Butter or romaine lettuce leaves (optional)

In a small mixing bowl, make the dressing by combining the chilies, lime juice, fish sauce, sugar, and oil; stir until most of the sugar is dissolved. If there are stubborn chunks of sugar, mash them with the back of a spoon.

Add the tuna to the dressing, then add the lemongrass, ginger, makrut lime leaves, shallots, and cilantro and mix well. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed; depending on how salty the tuna is, you may need to add more fish sauce.

Plate and top with roasted cashews and extra julienned ginger. You can eat it with jasmine rice or plain congee, or use lettuce leaves to make bite-sized wraps.

Do-ahead: Make the dressing up to 1 day in advance and keep in the fridge. You can chop and combine all the salad ingredients in advance, then toss with the dressing just before serving.

Dressing It Up

This simple dish cleans up nicely as an hors d'oeuvre for a fancy meal. Use Belgian endive or the inner leaves of romaine lettuce as a “boat” and put a spoonful of the tuna salad in it, topped with chopped roasted cashews. To make it a bit more substantial, add a little bundle of Vietnamese rice vermicelli to each piece. It's also fantastic

as a filling for cucumber cups, and a dot of mayo at the bottom of each cup would not be out of place if you wanted it to be a little creamy.





Vegan Soft Tofu & Herb Salad

Yum Taohu Yen | ยำเต้าหู้เย็น

SERVES 4

COOKING TIME: 5 minutes You'll be hard-pressed to find Thai salads that are vegan, because most of them are centered on animal protein, and the dressing *always* contains fish sauce. So when I was asked to demo a Thai salad recipe at a vegan food show, I needed to come up with something nontraditional. Inspired by the Japanese chilled tofu dish *hiyayakko*, I came up with a Thai spin. Cold soft tofu topped with a Thai herb salad is one of the most refreshing things you can eat in the summer. I love adding three or four types of herbs for complexity, but if you only have one or two of those listed, it'll still be great. I'm breaking one of the rules of Thai salads and choosing not to add any chilies to this, because I really want to maximize the cold effect. If you serve this with jasmine rice, like most Thai salads, the contrast of hot and cold makes it even more spectacular, but it's great on its own as well.

2 tablespoons (30 ml) soy sauce (see [note](#))

2 tablespoons (30 ml) lime juice

1½ tablespoons (18 g) finely chopped palm sugar, packed

½ cup (65 g) small-diced English cucumber

¼ cup (30 g) small-diced red bell pepper

2 tablespoons (16 g) finely diced shallots

⅓ cup (80 ml) chopped herbs (cilantro, mint, green onions, or lemongrass, or a combination) 1 teaspoon (5 ml) toasted black or white sesame seeds (optional)

1 (10.5 ounce/300 g) package soft tofu

Jasmine rice, for serving (optional)

Make the dressing by combining the soy sauce, lime juice, and sugar in a small bowl; stir until the sugar is mostly dissolved. If there are stubborn sugar chunks, let them sit for a minute to soften, then mash them down with the back of a spoon.

Add the cucumber, bell peppers, shallots, chopped herbs, and sesame seeds; stir to mix.

Unmold the tofu onto a serving dish with some depth to hold the sauce; most of the time the tofu pops out if you turn the container upside down and squeeze. But if it won't come out, run a knife around the edges and try again. For a more elegant presentation, trim the edges of the tofu to make it neat. You can leave it whole or cut it into 4 to 6 pieces for easy serving.

Spoon the salad on top of and around the tofu, letting the sauce run over. Serve with jasmine rice, if desired.

Do-ahead: Cut the vegetables and make the dressing up to 1 day in advance, but do not combine them until serving.

Note: If you eat fish, try the recipe using fish sauce instead of soy sauce, for a more authentic Thai salad flavor.

Don't Make the Tofu Cry

It's important not to unmold the tofu too long before you are ready to serve it, otherwise it will "cry." Soft tofu is not a stable gel, and if you let it sit out "naked," you will soon see water pooling around the tofu.

This is water that was in the tofu slowly leaking out. This happens even faster if you cut the tofu, creating more surface area. This is why, when you store leftover tofu, you want to keep it in water—so that it retains its moisture.





Chinese Sausage Salad

Yum Goonchiang | ยำกุนเชียง

SERVES 4

COOKING TIME: 15 minutes This is one of my favorite things to eat with *kao tom*, or plain rice porridge (see [this page](#)). Think oatmeal, but it's rice, with no seasoning at all. We love it for breakfast, or as a comforting, homey meal. The porridge is plain and soft, so it is usually paired with a strongly flavored dish that has lots of textures, which is exactly what this salad is. The Chinese sausages are chewy, sweet, and salty, while the dressing is tart and spicy, and the crunchy cucumber gives some freshness, so there is a little bit of everything going on here.

SALAD

5 ounces (150 g) Chinese sausage, sliced ¼-inch (6 mm) thick on a diagonal (see [note](#)) 3.5 ounces (100 g) sliced English cucumber, about 1 cup (250 ml)

½ stalk celery, plus a handful of leaves (optional; add more cucumber if not using) 2 tablespoons (15 g) finely julienned shallots

7 to 8 sprigs cilantro, chopped

Jasmine rice or plain rice porridge ([this page](#)) for serving **Dressing**

1 to 2 Thai chilies, minced

2 tablespoons (30 ml) lime juice

1½ tablespoons (22 ml) fish sauce, divided

1 teaspoon (10 ml) granulated sugar

Place the Chinese sausage pieces in a 10-inch (25 cm) skillet in a single layer. Add enough water to come three-quarters of the way up the sausages, then turn the heat to high and bring the water to a boil. Let the sausages cook until the water evaporates, flipping them halfway through. Meanwhile, line a plate with a couple of layers of paper towel.

Once the water has almost all evaporated, turn the heat down to medium, and once it dries up completely, allow the sausages to fry in the rendered fat until the underside is browned—this happens very quickly, within 1 minute or so, because of the sugar in the sausages, so watch them carefully. Turn the sausages over and let the second side brown for 30 seconds to 1 minute, then remove from the heat. Drain the sausages on the paper towel and let cool slightly.

Make the dressing by combining the chilies, lime juice, half of the fish sauce, and sugar in a small bowl; stir until the sugar is mostly dissolved.

To the dressing, add the sausages, cucumber, celery, shallots, and cilantro; toss to mix. Give it a taste, and add more fish sauce as needed; how much fish sauce you need will depend on the saltiness of the sausage. Serve with jasmine rice or plain rice porridge. This doesn't look like a lot of food, but it's an intensely flavored dish and you won't need much of it.

Do-ahead: The dressing can be made 1 day in advance and kept in the fridge. Vegetables and sausages can also be prechopped.

Note: It's important to choose a good brand of sausage. I like to go for an all-pork one with an ingredient list that doesn't include too many additives. Some brands are too salty, so if you find that to be the case with yours, cut down on the fish sauce. Also, even though they may look like pepperoni sticks, do not eat Chinese sausages raw! They have to be fully cooked first.

Water-Frying

The cooking technique that we commonly use for Chinese sausage is quite brilliant. We call it water-frying, and while it's a two-step process, it all happens in one pan. First, the sausages are boiled in water, which cooks, hydrates, and softens them, and renders out some of the fat. Then we let the water dry up, allowing the rendered fat to now fry and brown the sausages. For some dishes, like fried rice, you can just pan-sear the sausages, but the boiling, as I say, hydrates and softens them, which makes them better for when they are the bulk of the dish, as with this salad.





Shrimp Salad with Lemongrass & Mint

Pla Goong | ปลากุ้ง

SERVES 4

COOKING TIME: 10 minutes Originally, the word *pla* referred to salads made with proteins that are cooked by the acid of lime juice, much like a ceviche. Nowadays, people prefer to cook the protein with heat, but they still keep the abundance of thinly sliced lemongrass and mint that's characteristic of a *pla*. Most Thai people blanch the shrimp in water, but I prefer to sear it, to maximize the flavor from browning. I've given you the option to add sour mango should you have some—it's a trick I learned from Unchai, my go-to Thai restaurant in Vancouver, and the extra fruitiness really elevates the dish.

12 ounces (340 g) medium to large shrimp, peeled and deveined, thawed if frozen
2 tablespoons (30 ml) neutral oil

1½ tablespoons (22 ml) Thai chili paste, store-bought or homemade ([this page](#))
2 tablespoons (30 ml) lime juice

1½ tablespoons (22 ml) fish sauce

½ to 1 teaspoon (2 to 5 ml) granulated sugar (see [note](#))

1 to 2 Thai chilies, minced

½ cup (65 g) julienned mango, preferably sour (optional)

¼ cup (25 g) julienned shallots

½ cup (7 g) mint leaves, torn if large, plus extra for garnish

1 stalk lemongrass, bottom half only, thinly sliced

2 to 3 makrut lime leaves, finely julienned (optional)

Jasmine rice, for serving

Dry the shrimp thoroughly with paper towel; it's important to do this to minimize any oil splattering and maximize browning.

Place a large skillet over high heat and add the oil; wait until it's very hot before proceeding. Use tongs to lay the shrimp in the pan in one layer, and sear without moving them until browned on the underside and the shrimp are about two-thirds cooked. Once browned, they should release easily from the pan. Flip and cook on the other side just until they are done. Place the shrimp in a bowl to cool while you make the dressing.

Make the dressing by combining the Thai chili paste, lime juice, fish sauce, ½ teaspoon (2 ml) sugar, and chilies in a small mixing bowl; stir until the chili paste and sugar have fully dissolved.

Use tongs to transfer the shrimp into the dressing, leaving behind any collected juices for now, and toss to coat. Add the mango, shallots, mint, lemongrass, and makrut lime leaves. Toss gently until combined, then taste and add more sugar as needed. Also, if the dressing can stand to be slightly diluted, add some of the reserved shrimp juice; this juice adds good flavor, but if you add a lot it could dilute the dressing too much.

Plate and garnish with more mint leaves, if desired. Serve with jasmine rice.

Note: *The amount of sugar you need depends on how sweet your chili paste and mango are, so start out with ½ teaspoon (2 ml) and add more as needed.*





Leftover Anything Laab

Laab Kong Leua | ลาบของเหลือ

SERVES 1 TO 2

COOKING TIME: 20 minutes I have often said you can *laab* anything. And in “anything” I include bits of leftover meats and vegetables. Tart, spicy, and fresh, this treatment is guaranteed to “fix” any dry Thanksgiving turkey, or the ends of roast beef. I’ve even *laab*-ed roasted squash and cut-up pieces of omelet. *Laab* is usually served with sticky rice, but you can serve it with jasmine rice, wrap it in lettuce, or serve it with fresh cucumber. Note: I have provided a small base recipe here because it’s meant for using up bits and bobs in the fridge; scale up to whatever quantity of leftovers you have.

1 tablespoon (15 ml) uncooked jasmine or Thai glutinous rice

5 ounces (150 g) leftover meat and/or vegetables

1 tablespoon (15 ml) fish sauce

1 tablespoon (15 ml) lime juice

Pinch of granulated sugar

Roasted chili flakes, store-bought or homemade ([this page](#)), to taste 3 tablespoons (22 g) finely julienned shallots

A big handful of mint and any other fresh herbs (see [note](#))

FOR SERVING

English cucumber, sliced

Sticky rice or jasmine rice

Romaine or butter lettuce, if making lettuce wraps

Make the toasted rice powder by placing the rice in a small dry skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the rice is dark brown. It might get a bit smoky, so make sure the kitchen is well ventilated. Pour onto a plate to cool slightly, then grind into a powder with a mortar and pestle or a coffee grinder, leaving some pieces a bit larger for texture.

Thinly slice, chop, or shred your leftovers into small pieces; you can decide how best to process the item depending on what it is. For poultry, I like to shred it by hand; beef, I thinly slice; and veggies, I coarsely chop. The key here is small pieces.

Heat the leftovers up slightly so they are warm or room temperature; you can do this in the microwave or give them a quick sauté in the skillet.

Make the dressing by combining the fish sauce, lime juice, sugar, chili flakes, and shallots in a mixing bowl; stir until the sugar is mostly dissolved.

Add the leftovers, toasted rice powder, and fresh herbs to the dressing; toss until well combined. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed.

Serve with cucumber and sticky rice or jasmine rice, or with lettuce leaves if making wraps.

Note: *In addition to the mint, other good options are cilantro, green onions, and dill, but feel free to experiment with other herbs you have on hand.*

Taste and Adjust

Writing a recipe for leftovers can be only so specific because the main ingredient is unknown. I always tell people to taste and adjust

no matter what, but it's especially important to do that here. This recipe is a basic formula that works with most simply seasoned foods without any sauces, like roast chicken, pork chops, or roasted veggies. If your leftovers come to the table already with strong seasoning, especially if they're quite salty, start with half the amount of fish sauce and lime juice, and taste and adjust from there.





Vegetarian Pounded Corn & Cucumber Salad

Tum Tang Kaopoad Mungsawirat | ตำแตงข้าวโพดมังสวิรัต

SERVES 4

COOKING TIME: 20 minutes **SPECIAL TOOL:** Mortar and pestle (see [note](#))
Green papaya salad, or *som tum*, is Thailand's most famous salad, but it's just one of many types of *tum*, or pounded salads. Corn is my favorite non-papaya ingredient in a *tum* because the sweetness of the corn matches perfectly with the tart and spicy dressing. A *tum* usually contains fish sauce and dried shrimp, but I've made this one vegetarian, and it is just as fantastic. If you eat eggs, try it with the salted duck eggs, which add pops of creamy saltiness that I absolutely love.

1 large 8-inch (20 cm) ear of corn (about 8 ounces/225 g kernels, thawed if frozen) 2 cloves (10 g) garlic

1 to 2 Thai chilies, to taste

1½ tablespoons (18 g) finely chopped palm sugar, packed

¼ cup (35 g) unsalted roasted peanuts, divided

1 medium (125 g) tomato, cut in bite-sized wedges

2½ tablespoons (37 ml) lime juice, rinds reserved (see [note](#)) 2 tablespoons (30 ml) soy sauce

1 heaping cup (150 g) julienned cucumber

1 cooked salted duck egg, cut into wedges (optional, see [sidebar](#)) **Bring a large pot of water to a boil**, then add the corn and cook for 6 to 7 minutes. Allow it to cool enough to handle, then slice off the kernels with a knife, keeping them in large pieces as much as possible.

IF USING A MORTAR AND PESTLE

In a large salad mortar and pestle, pound the garlic and chilies into a fine paste. Add the palm sugar and pound until it's dissolved into a thick paste.

Add about half of the peanuts and pound a few times to crush them a bit. Then add the tomatoes and crush gently to release some of their juices.

Add the lime juice and soy sauce, throwing in the rind of the juiced limes as well, if you wish. Use a large spoon to stir until it's all well mixed and the sugar has completely dissolved into the dressing. At this point, if you are using a small mortar and pestle, transfer the salad to a mixing bowl. Otherwise finish mixing in the mortar.

Add the corn and cucumber and toss gently to mix, then transfer to a serving plate. Top with the remaining roasted peanuts, and serve with wedges of salted duck eggs, if desired.

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A MORTAR AND PESTLE

Make the dressing by adding the palm sugar to a small bowl. Add the lime juice and soy sauce, stirring to mostly dissolve the sugar. Don't worry about a few stubborn chunks; they'll have dissolved by the time you need the dressing. Finely grate the garlic and mince the chilies and stir them into the dressing.

Chop the peanuts coarsely and add half of them to a large mixing bowl, then add the tomatoes and crush them gently with a wooden spoon to release some of their juices. Stir in the corn and cucumber.

If the dressing still has some undissolved sugar, use a spoon to push down on any remaining chunks and they should crush pretty easily. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss everything together.

Plate, top with the remaining roasted peanuts, and serve with wedges of salted duck eggs, if desired.

***Notes:** After juicing the limes, reserve the rinds and cut them into a few wedges. We like to add the rind to the salad for the extra aroma that comes from the skin; it is not meant to be eaten.*

Traditionally, we use a special mortar and pestle for pounded salads (see [this page](#) for more info), but I have provided alternate methods if you have only a small one or none at all. If you don't have a mortar and pestle, follow the method as specified.

Don't Peel the Eggs!

Make sure you buy cooked salted duck eggs so you don't have to boil them yourself. Also, don't peel them! Salted duck egg shells are so brittle, it would be incredibly tedious to peel the eggs. Just cut the eggs in half right through the shell, then use a thin spoon to scoop out each half, as with an avocado. You can then cut each half into wedges. You can find salted duck eggs at most Asian grocery stores in the section where all the other eggs are sold.





Pounded Cabbage Slaw

Tum Galum Plee | ตำกะหล่ำปลี

SERVES 4

COOKING TIME: 5 minutes **SPECIAL TOOL:** Mortar and pestle (see [note](#)) In the early '80s, my parents spent some time in the United States, and back then, Thai ingredients were not nearly as available as they are now. One of the first substitutions my mom made in her cooking was to use cabbage instead of green papaya for *som tum*, our famous green papaya salad. She was so surprised by how well it worked that decades later she remembered to tell me about it when I left Thailand. I wasn't in a rush to try it, because I can get green papaya here in Vancouver, but when I finally did, I was surprised too. It's like coleslaw, but better! I immediately thought this should replace all slaws in pulled-pork sandwiches and tacos. Light, crunchy, tart, and spicy, this salad can be served with anything rich and meaty, especially barbecue.

2 cloves (10 g) garlic

1 to 3 Thai chilies, to taste

2 tablespoons (24 g) finely chopped palm sugar, packed

¼ cup (35 g) unsalted roasted peanuts, divided

1 medium (125 g) tomato, cut in bite-sized wedges

2 tablespoons (30 ml) fish sauce

2 tablespoons (30 ml) lime juice, rinds reserved (see [note](#) on [this page](#)) 1
tablespoon (15 ml) tamarind paste, store-bought or homemade ([this](#))

[page](#)), or ½ tablespoon (7 ml) lime juice 2 cups (170 g) shredded red or green cabbage

¾ cup (65 g) julienned carrot

IF USING A MORTAR AND PESTLE

In a large mortar and pestle, pound the garlic and chilies into a fine paste, then add the palm sugar and pound until it's dissolved into a thick paste.

Add about half of the peanuts and pound a few times to crush them a bit. Then add the tomatoes and crush them gently to release some of their juices.

Add the fish sauce, lime juice, and tamarind paste, throwing in the rind of the juiced limes as well, if you wish. Use a large spoon to stir until the sugar has dissolved into the dressing. At this point, if you are using a small mortar and pestle, transfer the dressing to a large mixing bowl; otherwise you can finish the salad in the mortar.

If you're using a mixing bowl, add the cabbage and carrots and toss, using a spoon, to mix well.

If you're using the salad mortar, add the cabbage and carrots, then use the pestle to pound the salad gently three or four times. Use a large spoon to flip the salad from bottom to top. Repeat the pound-and-flip process a few times until everything is thoroughly mixed. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed.

Transfer to a serving bowl, then top with the remaining peanuts.

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A MORTAR AND PESTLE

Make the dressing by adding the palm sugar to a small bowl. Add the fish sauce, lime juice, and tamarind paste and stir to mostly dissolve the sugar. Don't worry about a few stubborn chunks; they'll have dissolved by the time you need the dressing. Finely grate the garlic and mince the chilies; stir into the dressing.

Chop the peanuts coarsely and add half of them to a large mixing bowl, then add the tomatoes and crush them gently with a wooden spoon to release some of their juices. Stir in the cabbage and carrots.

If the dressing still has some undissolved sugar, use a spoon to push down on any remaining chunks; they should crush pretty easily. Pour the dressing over the cabbage and toss everything together.

Plate the salad, then top with the remaining peanuts.

Do-ahead: Make the salad without the cabbage and carrots, and keep in the fridge for up to 1 day. Mix everything before serving.

Traditionally, we use a special mortar and pestle for pounded salads (see [this page](#) for more info), but I have provided alternate methods if you have only a small one or none at all. If you don't have a mortar and pestle, follow the method as specified.



The Pound-and-Flip Technique

The Pound and Flip

The idea of pounding a salad might seem a bit strange. But most of the heavy pounding happens at the beginning, to make a paste out of the garlic, chilies, and sugar. Once the delicate ingredients go in, you need to be a bit gentler. The final step of pounding and flipping allows flavors to meld quickly as ingredients are gently mixed and brought together. Scan the QR code for a video showing this technique.



