

SIMPLE SWEETS

Kong Waan | ຂອງຫວាន

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Desserts in Thailand

Thai desserts are not well known outside Thailand, but we are definitely sweets people. Go to any weekend market in Thailand and you'll see endless types of dessert for sale. However, our sweets are more commonly eaten as snacks, rather than as an after-meal indulgence.

Like Western desserts, many Thai sweets are quite time-consuming to make and require special skills, which is probably why most restaurants offer such a small selection. But there are many desserts that could not be easier to make, and I have included them here.

What Are Thai Desserts Like?

If you're not familiar with Southeast Asian sweets, they will look very different from what you're used to. Instead of wheat flour, we use rice flour, glutinous rice flour or tapioca starch, among other things. Instead of dairy, we use coconut milk for fat, liquid, and creaminess. Instead of brown and granulated sugar, we use palm and granulated. Instead of chocolate and berries, we add beans, squashes, and bananas.

Oven use is rare for traditional Thai sweets, so most of our desserts are steamed or stirred on the stove. We have a lot of puddings and dessert soups, and a lot of items that are dense and chewy, much like mochi and boba. Many of our desserts are whole ingredients, like fruits, squashes, rice, and beans, that are simply cooked in syrup, though not quite candied so that we can really enjoy the taste of the ingredient.



Steamed Kabocha Squash Coconut Custard

Faktong Sangkaya | ฟักทองสังขยา

SERVES 6

COOKING TIME: 45 minutes for ramekins, 70 minutes for a big dish, plus cooling time

SPECIAL TOOLS: Six 4-ounce (120 ml) ramekins or a 3-cup (750 ml) heatproof dish for steaming (see [note](#))

If you love a good creamy squash, and you love custard, this is the perfect dessert for you. In Thailand, there are two versions of this dessert. The original version is made by pouring the custard into a whole hollowed-out squash, which is then steamed and sliced into wedges. I've shared this recipe on my YouTube channel, but some people have trouble with it because the varying sizes of the squash and the imprecise nature of steaming make it difficult to determine how long it needs to cook. So I want to share the easier, "reversed" version, where the squash pieces are steamed in the custard. And since we don't have to worry about cutting it into pieces that can hold their own, I'm also making the custard a little softer and richer, the way I prefer it.

4.5 ounces (130 g) finely chopped palm sugar, packed

1½ cups (310 ml) coconut milk (see [note](#))

¼ + ⅛ teaspoon (1.5 ml) table salt

½ pandan leaf, tied into a knot (optional; see [sidebar](#))

9 ounces (250 g) kabocha squash (see [note](#))

3 large eggs + 3 egg yolks

Preheat the steamer over low heat, keeping the water at a very gentle simmer.

Place the sugar in a small pot, then add the coconut milk, salt, and pandan leaf. Turn the heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is mostly dissolved. Push on the pandan leaf as you cook to help bruise it and release more aroma. After the sugar starts to soften, use a spatula to press down on any big chunks to help it dissolve more quickly; you do not want this mixture to boil and reduce, you just want to dissolve the sugar while maintaining the liquid volume. Once the sugar has dissolved, remove the pot from the heat and let the mixture cool while you prep the squash.

To prep the squash, cut it in half vertically with a big chef's knife. Using a spoon, scrape out all the seeds, then peel the squash with a vegetable peeler; if you're having trouble getting to some of the skin in the grooves, leave it for now. Cut the squash into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch (6 mm) thick wedges, then use a knife to trim off any remaining skin. Slice each wedge crosswise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch (6 mm) thick pieces, erring on the side of too thin rather than too thick. Place the squash in the dish you're using to steam, or divide it evenly among the ramekins.

Steam the squash over simmering water for 7 to 8 minutes, until a fork easily pierces through but it's not mushy.

While the squash steams, make the custard by whisking together the eggs and yolks in a mixing bowl, using a circular motion and without lifting the whisk, so you don't whip too much air into it. Remove the pandan leaf from the coconut milk mixture and discard, then gradually pour the mixture into the eggs as you whisk. Strain the custard through a fine-mesh sieve into a spouted container, such as a liquid measuring cup. Toward the end, if you see some lumps of egg whites caught in the sieve, try to push them through, but don't obsess over stubborn bits.

Once the squash is done steaming, remove the dish or ramekins from the steamer, turn the heat down to the lowest setting, and wait until the water is steaming but not simmering—a few bubbles here and there is fine, but there shouldn't be constant bubbling. It helps to use the smallest burner on your stove.

Give the strained custard a quick stir and pour it over the squash, leaving at least $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) headroom to allow for a bit of puffing. Steam the custard for 15 minutes if using ramekins, and 40 to 50 minutes if using a large dish. This timing is a rough estimate, because steaming temperatures are not precise and will vary from stove to stove. Keep an eye on the heat to make sure the water doesn't boil or even simmer, as heat too high will cause the custard to puff up and the texture will not be smooth, though if it does happen, don't panic, it will still be fine to eat.

To check doneness, press down gently on the center of the custard; it should feel firm. If it is not cooked yet, some liquid will flow to the top when pressed. Or you can use an instant-read thermometer to check that the custard has reached 175°F (80°C).

Let the custard cool to room temperature or chill before serving. If possible, let it sit for a few hours or up to overnight to allow the flavors to mingle. If keeping overnight, wrap it well and refrigerate.

Do-ahead: *It's best to make this 1 day in advance to allow the flavors to mingle. It will last for up to 1 week in the fridge.*

Notes: *You can make individual servings in ramekins or use one big heatproof dish; a small casserole or a glass food storage container will work.*

If you want a richer and creamier custard, don't shake or stir the coconut milk before using; that way, you can use the fattier part of the coconut milk, which rises to the top as the milk sits.

The weight called for is for the squash already prepped as per the instructions.

Pandan Knots

When we simmer pandan leaves in liquid, we tie them into a simple knot. Not only does this shorten the long, unwieldy leaves into a manageable size that fits neatly in the pot, but it bruises the leaves and helps release the flavor. If working with a very long leaf, you will want to fold it in half, or even thirds, before tying the knot. You can make multiple knots if needed.





Banana Coconut Sundae

Itim Raad Sauce Gluay Hom | ໄອຕິມຮາດຊອສົກລ້ວຍທອນ

SERVES 4

COOKING TIME: 5 minutes

I love this recipe so much I put it on the menu of the Thai restaurant where I used to be a chef, and everyone who tried it loved it. It's a mashup of bananas Foster, which I learned to make in culinary school, and one of my favorite Thai street snacks, *gluay ping*, which is grilled bananas with a to-die-for coconut palm sugar caramel sauce. I love the idea of a dessert that's made à la minute, so your guests can watch it being made, and you don't have to do any work in advance! The chopped peanuts are an ode to Thai ice cream carts, which have various toppings you can choose from, but the peanuts are always added, like the cherry on a sundae.

2 tablespoons (30 ml) unsalted butter

3 tablespoons (35 g) finely chopped palm sugar, packed

½ cup (125 ml) coconut milk

¼ teaspoon (0.5 ml) table salt

2 tablespoons (30 ml) coconut-flavored rum (optional)

2 slightly underripe bananas, cut in $\frac{1}{3}$ -inch (8 mm) thick slices on a sharp diagonal

Vanilla or coconut ice cream

Roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped

Melt the butter in a 12-inch (30 cm) skillet over medium heat, then add the palm sugar and cook, stirring occasionally, until it melts and caramelizes into a deeper brown, caramel color.

Once the sugar has darkened to the desired color, immediately add the coconut milk; the sugar will seize up and bubble aggressively. When the bubbling subsides, add the salt and rum. Stir over medium heat until the sugar is completely dissolved and the sauce has thickened slightly.

Place the bananas in the pan in one layer. Cook just until heated through, about 30 seconds, flipping the pieces halfway through or basting the tops with the sauce.

Remove the pan from the heat and let cool for a few minutes, until warm but no longer hot. If you do decide to make this dessert in advance, heat it up just until it's warm before serving.

To serve, place a few pieces of banana around some ice cream in a small bowl and drizzle the sauce overtop. Sprinkle with chopped roasted peanuts.

Using Sweet Plantains or Thai Bananas

The challenge with using regular bananas is that there is only a small window of perfect ripeness. Too green and it's starchy, too ripe and it'll turn to mush very quickly in the pan. Of course, if you can get ahold of the short, chubby Thai *namwa* bananas, those would be perfect, but there is another terrific option that is more forgiving: sweet plantain. Choose ripe plantains with mostly black skin. They do require a longer cooking time, so you'll want to first sear the slices in the butter on both sides until browned, then remove them from the pan and make the sauce. Return the plantains to the pan once the sauce is done. If using *namwa* bananas, choose ones that are yellow, or yellow with a little bit of green, and sear them first, as with the plantains.







Pineapple & Coconut on Ice

Subparod Nam Gati | សំបែកដុំការកាតិ

SERVES 4

COOKING TIME: 10 minutes, plus optional chilling time

One of the simplest ways Thai people make desserts is to simmer fruits, beans, or squash in syrup or sweetened coconut milk. I've always loved these types of desserts because nature has essentially made half of it for us, and we're just adding a bit of sweetness to enhance what's already there. This combination of pineapple and coconut is not done in Thailand, though, and I really don't know why not, because it's a match made in heaven. (Piña colada, anyone?) Light, refreshing, and marvelously low effort, it's the perfect way to end a big, filling meal on a hot summer night.

1 cup (250 ml) water

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup (160 ml) coconut milk

6 tablespoons (90 ml) granulated sugar

Small pinch of salt

1 pandan leaf, tied into a knot (optional; see sidebar, [this page](#))

12 ounces (340 g) fresh pineapple, cut in $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch (1.2 cm) thick bite-sized pieces

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (10 g) canned young coconut meat (see [note](#))

Crushed or cubed ice, for serving

Combine the water, coconut milk, sugar, salt, and pandan leaf in a small pot and bring to a boil over high heat.

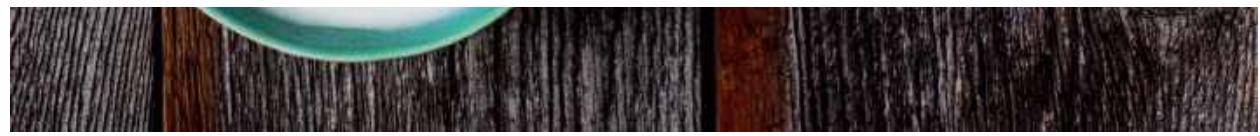
Add the pineapple and return the mixture to a boil, then turn the heat down to medium and simmer for about 3 minutes, until the pineapple looks darker in color and is heated through.

Add the young coconut meat, cook for 1 more minute, then turn off the heat. Taste and add more sugar as needed. Remove and discard the pandan leaf, then cool completely, and if you have time, chill in the fridge before serving. If you will not be able to chill it before serving, I recommend making the broth a little sweeter and creamier, as more of the ice will melt and therefore dilute the syrup.

To serve, ladle into small bowls, add lots of ice and stir well before eating.

Note: *You can omit the young coconut, or substitute other canned Thai fruits, such as lychee or rambutan.*





Mango Coconut Tapioca Pudding

Pudding Sakoo Mamuang Sohd | ឫុគិំសាកុម៖ម៉ោងសេដ

SERVES 4 TO 6

COOKING TIME: 30 minutes

I wanted to create a mango-coconut dessert that's faster to make than mango and sticky rice. One day, after seeing the tapioca-mango dessert cups that are always sold at my local Chinese supermarket, I got this idea. Tiny tapioca pearls are folded into a silky coconut cream and topped with fresh, juicy mango. It's the same flavor combination as mango and sticky rice, yet a vastly different eating experience. Tapioca pearls lose their soft chewy texture after many hours in the fridge, so this isn't something you want to make too far ahead, but they're so quick that you can prep the coconut cream in advance and cook the pearls while people are digesting dinner!

1 cup (250 ml) coconut milk

1 pandan leaf, tied into a knot (optional; see sidebar, [this page](#) and see [note](#) below)

5 to 7 tablespoons (62 to 75 g) finely chopped palm or granulated sugar (see [note](#))

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon (1 ml) table salt

2 tablespoons (15 g) rice flour

2 tablespoons (30 ml) water

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (85 g) small tapioca pearls (see [note](#))

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (10 g) julienned young coconut meat, fresh or canned

2 to 3 sweet ripe mangoes, cut in $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch (1.2 cm) cubes

Bring at least 6 cups (1.5 L) water to a full boil over high heat to cook the tapioca pearls. Make the coconut cream by placing the coconut milk and pandan leaf in a small pot and bringing the milk to a boil over medium heat. Add the sugar and salt; stir until dissolved.

Dissolve the rice flour in the water, then pour it into the coconut milk while you stir with a rubber spatula. Keep stirring constantly until the coconut milk returns to a boil and the mixture has thickened. Remove the coconut cream from the heat, discard the pandan leaf, and let cool.

Sprinkle the tapioca pearls into the boiling water and stir until the water returns to a boil. Then stop stirring and let them boil for 12 to 13 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare a small bowl of cold water to check doneness.

Check the doneness of the pearls by putting a small amount into the cold water. The pearls are done when any white centers remaining in the pearls look no larger than a tiny dot.

Drain the pearls through a metal fine-mesh sieve and run cold water through them until completely cool. Shake off excess water and transfer to a mixing bowl. If you're not ready to serve, you can leave them at room temperature, covered, for up to 4 hours. For the best texture, it's better to not refrigerate them.

To assemble, stir the coconut cream (it can be warm, room temperature, or cold) and the young coconut meat into the pearls, mixing well. You can taste the pudding with a piece of mango and add more sugar and/or salt as needed, depending on the sweetness and tartness of the mangoes.

Spoon into a small serving bowl and top with a generous helping of mango pieces. Serve within 30 minutes of mixing. The tapioca pearls will continue to absorb moisture from the cream as they sit, so the longer they sit, the less soft

and creamy the texture will be. If you have any leftovers, you can store them in the fridge, but the texture will not be as good the next day.

Do-ahead: You can make the coconut cream in advance and either keep it at room temperature for up to 8 hours or refrigerate it for up to 3 days. Tapioca pearls can be cooked up to 4 hours in advance and left at room temperature.

Notes: If not using pandan leaf, use palm sugar instead of granulated sugar for added flavor.

If the mango is very sweet, use less sugar, and vice versa. Also, if you're serving right after assembly, use less sugar, as the sugar will not have had time to absorb into the pearls and the dish will taste sweeter than if it had.

Make sure you use the tiny tapioca pearls that are no larger than 1/16 inch (2 mm) in diameter; they're available in white or a mix of pink, green, and white.

The Number One Rule for Working with Tapioca

“My tapioca pearls turned into mush in the water!” This has been the cry of far too many people, and I know exactly what has happened when they tell me this. They add the tapioca to room temperature water and bring it to a boil, like you would do with rice. This is understandable, since tapioca pearls kind of remind you of rice, right? So I need to stress the number one rule when working with tapioca pearls: do not add them to anything other than fully boiling liquid. This makes sense once you understand what tapioca pearls actually are: simply tapioca starch that has been clumped together into tiny balls, similar to the way old cornstarch can get clumpy in the bag. So, if you put them in not-hot-enough water, they will just dissolve. But when they go into boiling water, the outside instantly

gels up, creating a shell that holds the inside together while it cooks through.





Black Beans & Sticky Rice

Kao Niew Tua Dum | ข้าวเหนียวถั่วดำ

SERVES 6

COOKING TIME: 35 minutes, plus optional 3 hours of rice soaking

It's rice and beans, but for dessert! Thai people love beans for dessert, and *only* in dessert. That's right, we don't eat beans in savory foods, so you can imagine it took me a while to appreciate Mexican food! But if bean desserts are new to you, you owe it to yourself to try one, and this simple dish is a great place to start. The flavor and texture combination of chewy sticky rice, creamy black beans, and silky coconut milk is fantastically comforting. Traditionally, the beans are cooked from dried and the rice is macerated in coconut syrup (see [sidebar](#)), but I have come up with a shortcut method that uses plain sticky rice and canned black beans, and it works so well, you couldn't even tell this was a "cheat."

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (150 g) Thai white glutinous rice

$1\frac{3}{4}$ cups (435 ml) coconut milk

$1\frac{1}{4}$ cups (310 ml) water

4.4 ounces (120 g) palm sugar (see [note](#))

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2 ml) table salt

1 pandan leaf, tied into a knot (optional; see sidebar, [this page](#))

1 (14 ounce/398 ml) can black beans, rinsed and drained

Cook the sticky rice using any of the methods described on [this page](#) (I prefer the soak-and-steam method, for a chewier texture).

While the rice is cooking, make the beans. Place the coconut milk, water, sugar, salt, and pandan leaf in a pot. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, using a wooden spoon to occasionally break the sugar into smaller pieces, to help it dissolve.

Once the sugar has dissolved, add the black beans and simmer gently for about 3 minutes to allow them to heat through and absorb some of the sweetness from the broth. Remove the pot from the heat. Remove and discard the pandan leaf.

To assemble, reheat the beans (if they cooled) until they start to steam but are not boiling. If the rice has cooled down, also reheat it until hot—the microwave is fine for this task. Distribute the rice among the serving bowls, then use a slotted spoon to distribute the beans over the rice. Ladle the broth over the beans, starting with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) per bowl, then you can top each bowl off with any remaining broth. Let the rice sit in the broth for 10 to 15 minutes before serving, to allow the rice to absorb the sweetness from the broth.

Do-ahead: The beans and the rice can be made up to a few days in advance and kept separately in the fridge.

Note: If the sugar comes in pucks, you do not have to chop it.

Reducing Redundancy

Technically, the sticky rice for Black Beans & Sticky Rice should be macerated in a coconut syrup, a process that takes about 40 minutes, to create a sweet, plump rice that we use in various desserts, including mango and sticky rice. When you buy this dessert in Thailand, the beans and the rice are sold separately, and you would only put them together when serving so that the rice wouldn't over-swell. I saw the opportunity to simplify by using plain

sticky rice and allowing it to sit in the coconut broth for 10 to 15 minutes before serving, to mimic the macerating step. I had to make extra broth to allow for this, but it turned out so well, I don't foresee myself doing it the long way ever again!



Coconut Jelly Duo

Woon Gati Maprao On | ວຸນກະທິນະພົວງວອນ

SERVES 6 TO 8

COOKING TIME: 20 minutes, plus at least 2 hours of chilling

SPECIAL TOOL: Jelly mold(s) of your choice (see [note](#))

Agar jelly desserts, or *woon*, were my first viral recipes on YouTube—to my complete surprise, because for a Thai person, they are the most basic of sweets, like Jell-O to North Americans. When I was a kid, my mom would often come home with an assortment of *woon* from the market for me—colorful, sweet, refreshing, and a different mix of flavors every time, so it was always an exciting discovery. They are *the* treat that represents the joy of food for me as a child. Although there are hundreds of *woon* flavors these days, this coconut flavor is the most classic, the original.

COCONUT MILK LAYER

1 cup (250 ml) coconut milk

1 cup (250 ml) coconut water (see [note](#))

1½ teaspoons (7 ml) agar agar powder (see [note](#))

½ pandan leaf, tied into a knot (optional; see sidebar, [this page](#))

5 tablespoons (62 g) granulated sugar

Pinch of salt

COCONUT WATER LAYER

2 cups (500 ml) coconut water
1½ teaspoons (7 ml) agar agar powder
½ pandan leaf, tied into a knot (optional)
3 tablespoons (37 g) granulated sugar
½ cup (90 g) diced young coconut meat, canned (optional)

Think about which layer needs to be poured into the mold(s) first, as you will need to make that mixture first. This will depend on which color you want to be the top *and* on whether you're unmolding upside down for serving.

FOR THE COCONUT MILK LAYER

Combine the coconut milk, coconut water, and agar agar powder in a small pot; stir to mix. Add the pandan leaf and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring constantly, as the powder will settle to the bottom at first. Once the mixture comes to a full boil, boil for about 15 seconds, then turn off the heat. Do not walk away, as it can boil over.

Check that the agar agar powder has completely dissolved by scooping some liquid up into a metal spoon, then pouring it back into the pot—there should be no tiny grains stuck to the spoon, and the liquid should look completely clear, with no specks floating around.

Remove and discard the pandan leaf, add the sugar and salt, and stir to dissolve. If this is the first layer, fill the mold(s) about halfway. Scoop any bubbles from the surface with a spoon and leave to set at room temperature while you make the next layer. If this is the second layer, make sure the surface of the first layer has set enough (it doesn't have to be completely set) before *gently* pouring this second layer overtop. Also make sure the liquid is very hot, to ensure that the two layers stick together.

FOR THE COCONUT WATER LAYER

In a small pot, stir together the coconut water and agar agar powder.

Add the pandan leaf and bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly, as the powder will settle to the bottom at first. Once the mixture comes to a full boil, boil for about 15 seconds, then turn off the heat. Do not walk away, as it can boil over.

Check that the agar agar powder has completely dissolved by scooping some liquid up into a metal spoon, then pouring it back into the pot—there should be no tiny grains stuck to the spoon, and the liquid should look completely clear, with no specks floating around.

Remove and discard the pandan leaf, then add the sugar and stir to dissolve. Add the coconut meat, then pour into your mold(s). If this is the first layer, fill the mold(s) up about halfway. Scoop any bubbles from the surface with a spoon and leave to set at room temperature while you make the next layer. If this is the second layer, make sure the surface of the first layer has set enough (it doesn't have to be completely set) before *gently* pouring this second layer overtop. Also make sure the liquid is very hot, to ensure that the two layers stick together.

CHILLING & SERVING

Let the assembled jelly cool until it solidifies, which happens once it reaches room temperature, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Cut or unmold the jelly within 30 minutes of serving, because once it's taken out of the mold, water will gradually seep out, which is not ideal, but a small amount of water loss won't affect the taste.

To unmold, if you're using a flexible mold, you should be able to plop it out with a little pushing or bending of the mold. If you're using a small hard mold, you can insert a skewer or a small flat utensil along the edge and nudge it out; all you need is a little air gap on the side and it will release. If you're using a big, solid mold (for instance, a casserole dish), I recommend cutting and serving from the mold like you would with brownies, as it's a bit tricky to get a big jelly out of a hard mold without it breaking.

Do-ahead: The jelly can be made up to a few days in advance, but do not unmold or cut it until close to serving time.

Notes: You can make this dessert in one big dish, then cut and serve, or use small individual molds. If you want to unmold the jelly whole for serving, I recommend using a flexible silicone mold for easy removal; otherwise, use small individual molds—the jelly can be easily nudged out.

Choose 100% coconut water, preferably a brand that tastes quite sweet but without any added sugar. If you can get it fresh out of a young coconut, even better.

Make sure you are buying pure agar agar powder with no sugar or anything else added. Also make sure it is powder, not flakes, which will measure differently. The powder is available at some Asian grocery stores and at health food stores, as well as online.

Agar Agar vs. Gelatin

Agar agar is made from a type of seaweed and comes in various forms, but powder is the easiest to use. It can set liquid into a gel like gelatin can, but that's pretty much where the similarities end. Agar agar sets at room temperature, whereas gelatin needs to be chilled, making agar agar much faster to work with when creating multiple layers. Agar jelly can also be left out at room temperature without melting. Gelatin is bouncy, jiggly, and melts just from the warmth of your mouth, whereas agar jelly is firm and crumbles when you eat it, and yes, you actually have to chew it! The two also require different ratios of liquid to powder. In other words, you cannot substitute gelatin in this recipe without majorly modifying the methods. If you want to use gelatin because you cannot find agar agar, I would follow a layered gelatin recipe for instructions and ratios.





Thai Street-Style Sundae

Itim Kanom Pung | ໄອດິມຂນມັງ

When I was a kid, there was an uncle who rode around our neighborhood on a scooter with an ice cream tank attached to it. When I heard his bell, it was a mad rush to catch him before he was gone. His light-yet-satisfying ice cream was, and still is, the best I've ever had, and if you brought your own bowl, he always gave you extra. It was such a highlight of my childhood. Part of what made the ice cream so delightful was the way it was served. You had two options: in a bowl or in a fluffy bun that was like a small hot dog bun. And then there were several toppings to choose from, which was the especially fun part. It's hard to find these old-school ice cream carts today, but it's not hard to recreate your own Thai sundae bar. For me, the sticky rice and the peanuts are an absolute must, and when I go for the bun option, my favorite part is letting the bun soak up the melted ice cream. I haven't given amounts for the ingredients, as you can put as much as you want of everything.

Hot dog buns or other fluffy white buns (see [note](#))

Coconut ice cream (see [note](#)), or another flavor (I like Thai tea, matcha, coffee, Earl Grey tea, or black sesame)

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS

Sweet Sticky Rice (highly recommended; recipe follows)

Roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped

Canned pineapple in syrup, drained and chopped

Canned attap palm seeds, rinsed (see sidebar)
Jarred nata de coco, drained (see sidebar)
Canned sweet jackfruit, drained and sliced against the grain
Cooked corn kernels
Candied Sweet Potatoes (recipe follows)
Sweetened condensed milk, for drizzling

If using sticky rice, place a small amount in the bottom of a bowl or on the bun bottom, then top with the ice cream and your choice of toppings. Finish it with a light drizzle of condensed milk, if you like.

To eat the bun version, you can bite into it like you would a hot dog, but eat quickly, as it will be messy once it starts dripping! If you want to enjoy it more gracefully, use a knife and fork, but the key is to get some bread with every bite of ice cream.

Notes: Small fluffy dinner rolls, slider rolls, or brioche buns work well. You can also use a thick-sliced sandwich bread and shape it like a taco shell. If using a hot dog bun, trimming the ends or cutting them in half makes a more reasonable size for an after-meal dessert.

If you want to make your own authentic Thai coconut ice cream or no-churn Thai tea ice cream, see the recipes on my website, QR codes below.



Coconut Ice Cream Recipe



No-Churn Thai Tea Ice Cream

Attap Palm Seeds and Nata de Coco

These two jelly-like treats are popular in desserts in Southeast Asia, and are as delicious as they are interesting. Attap palm seeds are oval, translucent seeds with a satisfying chewy texture that cannot be described and must be experienced firsthand. They come in a syrup that is very thick due to the starch from the seeds, so I like to rinse it off before eating. Nata de coco are little cubes packed in syrup with a unique chewiness unlike anything else. They come in glass jars and are sometimes flavored, though I recommend getting the plain ones. The gel is formed naturally as a byproduct of the fermentation of coconut water. Cool, right?

Sweet Sticky Rice

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 8 SUNDAES

COOKING TIME: 25 minutes, plus 40 minutes of macerating and optional 3 hours of soaking

1 cup (200 g) white glutinous rice

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup (160 ml) coconut milk

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup (65 g) granulated sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2 ml) table salt

Steam the rice using any of the methods on [this page](#).

While the rice is cooking, make the coconut syrup by combining the coconut milk, sugar, and salt in a small pot over medium heat, stirring occasionally, just until the sugar has dissolved. If the coconut milk is done before the rice, keep it covered so it stays warm.

Transfer the cooked sticky rice to a bowl and immediately pour the syrup overtop, then stir to mix well. Cover the bowl and let the rice sit and absorb the liquid for at least 40 minutes, folding well halfway through to distribute the syrup. Keep covered at room temperature until ready to serve. The sticky rice will last up to 4 hours at room temperature. Leftovers can be refrigerated for up to 3 days, though the texture will become progressively less chewy. Reheat in the microwave, covered with a moist paper towel, until steaming hot and soft.

Candied Sweet Potatoes

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 8 SUNDAES

COOKING TIME: 15 minutes

5 ounces (150 g) yellow-or purple-flesh sweet potato, $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch (6 mm) diced (see [note](#))

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (150 g) granulated sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (185 ml) water

Pinch of table salt

Place all the ingredients in a small pot and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Once simmering, turn the heat down to low and cook gently for about 10 minutes, until the potatoes are cooked through. Remove from the heat and drain. The potatoes will keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

Note: I don't recommend using orange yams, as they are too moist for this recipe and don't have a good texture when candied. You want one with a drier, starchier flesh.



