

APPETIZERS

Ahaan Riek Nam Yoi | อาหารเรียกน้ำย่อย

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Dishes Not Served With Rice

I have said many times that Thai people eat everything with rice. Well, there are some exceptions, such as the recipes in this chapter. These dishes might be considered “appetizers” in the West, but because we do not eat in courses, they are served in various ways. In Thailand, these dishes are considered any of the following:

SNACKS | KONG KIN LEN | ของกินเล่น The Salad Rolls ([this page](#)) are the perfect example of a *kong kin len*, something we eat when we’re hungry between lunch and dinner. Many of these are sold by street vendors or at supermarkets where people can grab-and-go after work or school.

DRINKING FOOD | GUB GLAM | กับแกล้ม These are the salty, fried, and munchy things that go great with beer, such as the Fish Sauce Wings ([this page](#)) and the Laab Bites ([this page](#)). And, yes, in Thailand our beverage of choice is usually a light beer or something ice-cold, not wine.

APPETIZERS | AHAAN RIEK NAM YOI | อาหารเรียกน้ำย่อย Foods that are served before the main dishes arrive. Wait, didn't I just say Thai people don't eat in courses? Yes. But at get-togethers in restaurants, these are the dishes early guests enjoy while they wait for everyone else. And with traffic in Thailand...the wait can be long!

DIP PLATTERS | KREUANG JIM | เครื่องจิ่ม I know I said that these are dishes that are not served with rice, but actually in Thailand dip platters are served with rice as part of the main meal! I've included one dip platter recipe, the Coconut Tuna Dip ([this page](#)), because it is mild and makes a great stand-alone appetizer. Most of our other dips are spicy, strong, and definitely need some rice to tame them.



Fish Sauce Wings

Peek Gai Tod Nam Pla | ປຶກໄກທອດນໍາປລາ

SERVES 4

COOKING TIME: 20 minutes, plus 20 to 30 minutes of marinating This method is hands-down my favorite way to cook wings at home. These wings look far too simple to be anything special, but the amount of flavor they deliver will surprise you as you find yourself going back for more. The secret is in the salty umami of the fish sauce, so it's important to use good-quality fish sauce here. By using only wing flats, as is usually done in Thailand, I can shallow-fry and still have the crispy golden-brown skin you'd find in deep-fried wings. You can also throw them on the grill or deep-fry them, and several of my YouTube viewers have reported great success with air-frying, though I've never personally tried it. These are the perfect food to go with a summer beer, and to make it a meal, a side of sticky rice is all you need.

2 pounds (1 kg) chicken wing flats (see [note](#))

3 tablespoons (45 ml) fish sauce

Freshly ground white or black pepper, to taste

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (50 g) rice flour or cornstarch (omit if grilling), plus more as needed

Oil for frying (optional)

Sticky rice ([this page](#)), for serving (optional) **Put the wings in a large zip-top bag** or a casserole dish large enough to hold them in one layer. Add the fish sauce and toss well. Let the wings marinate for 20 to

30 minutes, flipping the bag over (or the wings themselves, if in a dish) halfway through.

Use tongs to remove the wings from the marinade and place them on a paper towel–lined baking sheet in one layer. Pat the tops of the wings dry with more paper towel.

Sprinkle the pepper all over the wings and press it onto the skin to stick.

If shallow-or deep-frying, sift the rice flour through a fine-mesh sieve evenly but thinly over the wings, then flip the wings and repeat on the other side. Put the wings into the sieve and toss a few times to remove excess flour; you want the wings to be entirely coated with a thin layer of flour. If grilling, you do not have to flour them.

To shallow-fry, place a 12-inch (30 cm) skillet over medium-high heat and add $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) of oil. Once the oil is hot, add the wings in one layer, thick-skin side down. The oil should sizzle excitedly as you put the wings down; if it doesn't, wait for the oil to get hotter. You should be able to put exactly 1 pound (450 g) wing flats in a 12-inch (30 cm) skillet. Cover with a mesh splatter guard (the oil tends to jump during shallow-frying) and fry without moving them until golden brown on the underside, about 4 minutes. Then flip and fry the other side just until cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes more. Repeat with the second batch.

To deep-fry, heat at least 1 inch (2.5 cm) of oil in a pot to 375°F (190°C) and fry the wings for 4 to 5 minutes, until golden brown and cooked through. Do this in batches and don't crowd the pot.

To grill, preheat the grill on high heat, then place the wings thick-skin side down and grill with the lid open until the skin is golden brown. Move them around as needed to get even browning. Flip and cook on the other side until the wings are cooked through; it should take a total of 8 to 10 minutes.

Serve the wings on their own or with a side of sticky rice and a cold fizzy beverage.

Do-ahead: The wings can be marinated 1 day in advance, but drain off excess marinade after 30 minutes.

Note: Using flats gives you the option to shallow-fry and still get crispy skin, but you will need a splatter guard, as oil tends to jump during shallow-frying. If you want to use drumettes, I recommend deep-frying, grilling, or air-frying them.





Laab Bites

Laab Tod | ລາບທອດ

SERVES 6 AS AN APPETIZER, OR 4 AS A MAIN

COOKING TIME: 35 minutes if deep-frying or pan-frying; 45 minutes if baking
Laab is a northeastern ground meat salad, but a modern rendition now exists that turns the spicy, sour, and toasty flavors into fried meatballs. Brilliant, I know! If frying doesn't sound quick and easy to you, I have included options for baking and pan-frying. You might be surprised when trying these for the first time, because they are sour, to keep the spirit of the original salad that inspired them. But the acid cuts the grease, which makes these very hard to stop eating. To make it a meal, add a side of sticky rice and a pounded Thai salad, such as the Vegetarian Pounded Corn & Cucumber Salad ([this page](#)).

3 tablespoons (45 ml) uncooked Thai glutinous rice or jasmine rice
1 makrut lime leaf (optional)
1 pound (450 g) lean ground pork
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (30 g) minced shallots
3 tablespoons (24 g) all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons (12 g) finely chopped lemongrass, from bottom half only
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2 ml) roasted chili flakes, store-bought or homemade ([this page](#)), or to taste
3 tablespoons (45 ml) lime juice
2 tablespoons (30 ml) fish sauce
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (6 g) finely julienned mint leaves (see [note](#))

Oil for frying (optional)

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Mint leaves

Butter or romaine lettuce leaves

Roasted peanuts

Sticky rice ([this page](#)) If baking, preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

Make the 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 with a mortar and pestle or a coffee grinder until it's mostly a fine powder, but still with some larger bits for texture.

Make the meatballs by combining the pork, shallots, flour, toasted rice powder, lemongrass, chili flakes, lime juice, and fish sauce in a mixing bowl; mix with your hands until well blended. Add the mint and mix just until combined.

Form the mixture into meatballs. If deep-frying or baking, make 1½-inch (4 cm) balls—about 1 rounded tablespoon (15 ml)—and pack them tightly. If you want to pan-fry, make patties about 2 inches (5 cm) in diameter and ½ inch (1.2 cm) thick.

To deep-fry, heat 1½ inches (4 cm) of frying oil in a medium pot or wok and heat it to 350°F (180°C). Add the meatballs one at a time. Depending on how big your pot is, you may need to fry in two or three batches. Cook the meatballs for 4 to 5 minutes, until well browned on the outside and cooked through on the inside. You want these quite dark, not a golden brown, to ensure a crispy exterior. Scoop them out and drain on paper towel.

To bake, arrange the meatballs on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and bake for about 20 minutes, until cooked through and browned. If you want, you can brown them further under the broiler: transfer the cooked meatballs onto a fresh baking sheet and place them under the broiler, about 5 inches (12.5 cm) from the element or flame. Broil on high for about 3 minutes, until browned to your liking.

To pan-fry, heat the largest skillet you have over medium heat and add enough oil to thoroughly coat the bottom. Once hot, add as many patties as will fit, and cook without moving them for 2 to 3 minutes per side, until they are well browned. Remove from the pan and rest them on a paper towel-lined plate.

Serve the meatballs either on their own, or with a side of crisp lettuce and mint leaves, for a little bite-sized lettuce wrap. To make it a meal, serve alongside some Thai sticky rice.

Do-ahead: *The mixture can be made 1 day in advance, but add the mint right before cooking.*

Note: *If the mint leaves are large, cut them lengthwise so you don't get long pieces.*

To Fry, to Bake, or to Pan-Fry?

In Thailand, deep-frying at home is quite common because most homes have outdoor kitchens, so we can fry without the house smelling like a fast-food joint afterward! For this recipe, pan-frying is absolutely fine, but I generally prefer deep-frying because it gives the meatballs the crispiest exterior, and I find it much less finicky than having to monitor and flip each piece individually. But for maximum convenience, baking is great because you can do it all in one batch, though you compromise on the crispiness of the exterior. So if you have time, the extra broiling step really helps. And yes, you can air-fry these.



Eggs & Herb Salad

Yum Kai Tom | ຍົມໄກຕົມ

SERVES 4

COOKING TIME: 25 minutes A fresh, citrusy, and spicy herb salad brings humble boiled eggs to life. You wouldn't guess by how beautiful these are, but this is one of those "desperate dishes" my grandma likes to make when she can't think of anything else. Because, like most people, we always have eggs, and all other ingredients in this recipe are the most basic staples of a Thai kitchen. So when all else fails, we can always make a *yum kai tom*. We usually serve this with rice as part of a Thai meal, but it works well as a plated appetizer, and also goes incredibly well with plain rice porridge ([this page](#)) for breakfast.

5 large eggs

1 heaping tablespoon (10 g) dried shrimp (see [note](#))

1 to 2 Thai chilies

2 teaspoons (10 ml) finely chopped palm sugar, packed

2 tablespoons (30 ml) lime juice

1 tablespoon (15 ml) fish sauce

2 tablespoons (15 g) finely chopped shallots

2 inches (5 cm) lemongrass from bottom half, thinly sliced, plus extra for plating
3 sprigs cilantro, chopped (see [note](#))

1 small green onion, chopped

Jasmine rice, for serving (optional)

Bring a pot of water to a full boil, then slowly lower the eggs into the water and boil for 8 minutes. Cool the eggs in a large bowl of cold water, then peel and set aside. You want the yolks to be set but still moist.

Grind the dried shrimp in a clean coffee grinder until fine and fluffy. Alternatively, soak them in hot water for a few minutes to soften, then finely chop or pound with a mortar and pestle until shredded. (If using bonito flakes, crumble the flakes with your fingers to break them down a bit further.) Set aside.

For the dressing, pound the chilies into a paste with a mortar and pestle, then add the palm sugar and pound to dissolve it into a thick paste. Add the lime juice and fish sauce, and swirl with the pestle until the sugar is completely dissolved. Stir in the shallots, lemongrass, and half of the dried shrimp.

Sprinkle some sliced lemongrass on the serving plate to prevent the eggs from sliding around. Then cut the eggs in half lengthwise and place them on the plate cut side up.

When ready to serve, mix the cilantro and green onions into the dressing, then top each egg with some of this mixture. Finish with a sprinkle of the remaining dried shrimp.

Serve as an appetizer or with jasmine rice.

Do-ahead: Boil the eggs up to 2 days in advance.

Notes: If you are allergic to shrimp, substitute 3 tablespoons (45 ml) Japanese bonito flakes.

Don't sweat it if you don't have all the herbs, but I'd say it's important to have at least two types. Mint and dill would work well too.

Duck or Chicken?

Chicken eggs are great in this dish, but we often use duck eggs, which are much more commonly consumed in Thailand than in the West. In dishes where medium-cooked eggs are the goal, duck eggs are preferred because they have yolks that can be cooked to the perfect gooey-but-not-runny stage, which chicken eggs never really achieve. If you want to try it, look for duck eggs at larger Asian supermarkets or farmers—markets.





Coconut Tuna Dip

Lohn Pla Tuna | ຫລນປລາທຸນ່າ

SERVES 4 TO 6

COOKING TIME: 10 minutes I am passionate about *lohn* because it's such a hidden gem of Thai cuisine and I think more people need to know about it. It's a type of dip made from simmering some type of protein with coconut milk, seasoned to be a little bit of everything: salty, sweet, and tart, with just a hint of spiciness. Unlike our other dips, which tend to be fiercely spicy, *lohn* is creamy and mild, making it the first kind of dip I could enjoy as a kid. People make *lohn* with all kinds of finely chopped or ground meat, and it works surprisingly well with canned tuna too, which is so convenient! We typically serve *lohn* and other dips with veggies and rice as part of a meal, but it works great as an appetizer as well.

$\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (125 to 185 ml) coconut milk

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup (25 g) finely julienned shallots

1 can tuna in water, drained (4 ounces/115 g drained weight)

2 to 3 Thai chilies, cut in large chunks on a diagonal, plus extra for garnish
3-inch piece (15 g) lemongrass, from bottom half, thinly sliced

2 teaspoons (10 ml) fish sauce

2 teaspoons (10 ml) tamarind paste, store-bought or homemade ([this page](#))
1 teaspoon (5 ml) finely chopped palm sugar

3 to 4 sprigs cilantro, chopped, plus extra for garnish

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Plain rice crackers

Dipping veggies

Crispy pork rind

Jasmine rice

Place $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) coconut milk and shallots in a small pot and bring to a boil over medium heat. Let it boil for a few minutes, until reduced by about half.

Add the tuna, chilies, lemongrass, fish sauce, tamarind paste, and sugar; stir to mix well, breaking up any chunks of tuna. Turn the heat down to low and simmer for about 2 minutes, until the flavors are combined.

If the dip is too thick, add more coconut milk so there is some pooling liquid, but the mixture should still have a dip-like consistency. Taste and adjust the seasoning with more fish sauce, tamarind paste, or sugar as needed, then remove from the heat.

Just before serving, stir in the chopped cilantro and pour into a bowl. Garnish with more cilantro, chilies, and a splash of coconut milk, if desired. Serve with rice crackers, dipping veggies, and crispy pork rind. Or serve with jasmine rice as part of a meal.

Do-ahead: The dip can be made in advance and keeps in the fridge for at least 1 week.





Pork & Peanut Dip with Rice Crackers

Kao Tung Na Tung | ข้าวต้มหน้าต้ม

SERVES 4 TO 6

COOKING TIME: 20 minutes I absolutely adored this dip when I lived in Thailand, but we didn't have it often because it's traditionally served with homemade deep-fried rice crackers—not something one whips up at home, and rice crackers weren't sold at the store. So it was always a real treat whenever I got to eat it at a restaurant. The dip itself couldn't be easier, though, so when I noticed rice crackers for sale at just about any store in Canada, I wondered if they would work even though they look quite different from those in Thailand. Well, it turns out, they work *perfectly* and I was only sad that I didn't think to try them earlier! The flavor of this dip is so uniquely Thai—the salty-sweet-spicy combo, the creamy coconut milk, and the toasty peanuts...it never fails to bring me home.

- 1 (5 g) guajillo chili or equivalent weight of another chili
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (50 g) roasted peanuts
- 8 sprigs cilantro
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon (1 ml) white peppercorns
- 4 cloves (20 g) garlic
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) neutral oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) coconut milk, divided
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound (225 g) ground pork
2 tablespoons (30 ml) tamarind paste, store-bought or homemade ([this page](#)) $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (18 g) finely chopped palm sugar, packed
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (22 ml) fish sauce
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (30 g) thinly sliced shallots
Plain rice crackers, for serving

Grind the chili in a coffee grinder into a powder.

Grind the peanuts in a small food processor or with a mortar and pestle until mealy, but don't turn them into peanut butter. If using a mortar and pestle, remove the peanuts from the mortar and set aside.

Cut the cilantro sprigs in half, separating the parts with leaves from the stems alone. Chop both parts but keep them separated.

Grind the peppercorns into a powder with a mortar and pestle. Add the garlic and then the cilantro stems and pound into a fine paste. Add the ground dried chili and pound to mix.

Heat a medium pot over medium heat, then add the oil and the garlic-chili paste and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes, until aromatic. Deglaze with half of the coconut milk, scraping the bottom of the pot if anything is stuck.

Add the ground pork and stir to break it up; it's important there are no big chunks, for the right dip consistency. Cook until no longer pink. Add the remaining coconut milk, peanuts, tamarind paste, sugar, and fish sauce; simmer for a few minutes, until reduced to a thick, dippable consistency.

Stir in the shallots and turn off the heat. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed; it should have a good balance of salty and sweet, with just a hint of acidity to keep it bright.

When ready to serve, stir in the cilantro leaves. Serve with plain rice crackers.

Do-ahead: *The dip can be made in advance; it will keep in the fridge for at least 1 week.*

No Pork? No Problem.

In Thailand, this dip is often made with a combination of ground pork and ground shrimp. No, they don't sell ground shrimp at the store, but you can grind your own by finely chopping it (a Chinese cleaver is great for this). You can also use ground chicken or turkey, but I would suggest using dark meat, so that it will not be too lean. For a vegan version, use crumbled extra-firm or pressed tofu, and sub soy sauce for fish sauce. I would not use ground beef, as it has a strong taste that would mess with the flavor profile of this dish.





Tomato Coconut Salsa

Yum Makeua Ted | ຍຸມເມະເຫຼວເທສ

SERVES 4 TO 6

COOKING TIME: 25 minutes I created this recipe several years ago when I needed to bring snacks to a potluck, and being who I am, I felt the need to make it at least a little bit Thai. So I got the idea to make a Thai version of chips and salsa, which simply meant that I would make a Thai salad, or a *yum*, with diced tomatoes (see [this page](#) for more on *yum*). I decided to go with a more elaborate *yum* by adding coconut milk, Thai chili paste, toasted coconut, and peanuts to make it richer, and so that it wouldn't just taste like a pico de gallo with fish sauce... not that that would be bad. It turned out to be a hit, which meant that it warranted sharing. It's a delightful change from the usual chips and salsa, and you can even serve it over fish or chicken for dinner!

2 tomatoes (about 9 ounces/250 g)

3 tablespoons (45 ml) coconut milk

2 Thai chilies, minced

2 to 3 tablespoons (30 to 45 ml) lime juice

1 tablespoon (15 ml) Thai chili paste, store-bought or homemade ([this page](#)) 1 tablespoon (15 ml) fish sauce

½ teaspoon (2 ml) granulated sugar

2 tablespoons (12 g) unsweetened dried shredded coconut

¼ cup (35 g) roasted peanuts (optional, see [note](#))

2 tablespoons (15 g) small-diced shallots

3 to 4 sprigs cilantro, chopped

Plain rice crackers or tortilla chips, for serving

Dice the tomatoes into about $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch (6 mm) pieces, then place in a strainer set over a bowl to remove excess liquid; let drain for at least 15 minutes. Do not discard the liquid.

Make the dressing by boiling the coconut milk in a small pot over medium-high heat for a few minutes, until it's thick; you should be able to run your spatula through it and leave a trail that doesn't go away. Remove from the heat and add the chilies, 2 tablespoons (30 ml) lime juice, chili paste, fish sauce, and sugar; stir to mix.

Toast the shredded coconut by putting it in a dry skillet and stirring it over medium-high heat until it's a deep golden brown; this takes just a few minutes, so stir constantly—do not walk away. You can make it darker for a toastier flavor. Remove from the pan and add to a small mixing bowl.

Grind the peanuts until mealy, using either a food processor or a mortar and pestle; there should not be any big chunks, but don't turn them into peanut butter. Add the peanuts to the coconut, then add the drained tomatoes and shallots.

Pour the dressing over and mix well. The mixture may look a bit thick right now, but the tomatoes will soon release some liquid. Taste and adjust the seasoning with more lime juice as needed.

When ready to serve, if the salsa still looks too thick, add in some of the reserved tomato liquid. Stir in the chopped cilantro, and serve with tortilla chips or rice crackers, or use as a sauce to serve with fish or chicken.

Do-ahead: Make the dip up to 1 day in advance, adding cilantro just before serving.

Note: The peanuts can be omitted if you want a lighter dip. Or, if you're allergic to peanuts, you can substitute cashews.





Salad Rolls with Spicy Garlicky Dip

Salad Rolls | ສລັດໂຮລ

MAKES 28 PIECES

COOKING TIME: 30 minutes I generally don't like eating raw vegetables, but the first time I tried these salad rolls in Thailand, I could not stop eating them. It's all in the creamy, garlicky, spicy dip that is nothing like any salad roll dipping sauce you've ever had, not to mention the unique wrapping technique that produces cute little bouquets of greens. These are a new style of snacks that became popular among Thailand's many grab-and-go food vendors, and my mom used to bring them home after work for a healthy snack. I haven't seen them served at any Thai restaurants overseas, nor sold at touristy spots in Thailand, so it's a real hidden gem of the locals. It's a lot easier to understand how the rolling works by seeing it in action in the video accessed via the QR code below.

SPICY GARLICKY DIP

1 clove (5 g) garlic

$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 Thai chili

$\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8}$ teaspoons (1.5 ml) table salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 ml) mayonnaise

$1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (22 ml) sweetened condensed milk

$1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (22 ml) lime juice

SALAD ROLLS

7 sheets of 8-inch (20 cm) round Vietnamese rice paper

4 to 5 cups (70 to 90 g) baby salad greens

14 (3-inch/8 cm long) strips of protein of your choice (see [note](#)) 1
cucumber, cut in 3-inch (8 cm) sticks

1 carrot, thinly julienned (I use a julienne peeler)

Any other veggies or herbs you like (bell peppers, avocado, beets,
sprouts, cilantro, mint, Thai basil) **FOR THE DIPPING SAUCE**

Using a mortar and pestle, pound the garlic, chili, and salt into a fine paste. Add the mayo, condensed milk, and lime juice; stir until combined. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed. The sauce will keep in the fridge for at least 1 week.

FOR THE SALAD ROLLS

Cut a rice paper circle in half with scissors. Prepare a large bowl of hot tap water (as hot as you can stand dipping your hands in).

Dip a piece of halved rice paper in the water for 8 to 10 seconds, then put it on a clean work surface, the flat edge facing either to the left or right. Let it sit for another 10 to 15 seconds, until it has absorbed all the water around it and the sheet has softened. Fold about 1 inch (2.5 cm) of the rounded side toward the center, so that you now have two straight sides.

In your hand, stack about 4 leaves of baby salad greens, with the stems facing the same direction. Lay the salad stack on the rice paper, about 2 inches (5 cm) above the edge closest to you, making sure the tops of the leaves are sticking out about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1.2 cm) over the left side of the rice paper. Repeat with another stack of greens, placing it on the right side of the paper in the same way.

Place the protein and all the other vegetables on top of the greens, centering them horizontally so that they will cut evenly when you cut the salad

rolls in half.

Pick up the edge closest to you, fold it over the filling, and roll it away from you, keeping the salad roll as tight as you can. You will end up with a salad roll with two open ends. Cut the roll into two pieces and place each piece, cut side down, on a serving plate. Repeat with the remaining rice paper circles, greens, protein, and vegetables.

Serve the salad rolls at room temperature with the dipping sauce. If not serving right away, keep them well wrapped with plastic wrap or in an airtight container, to prevent drying.

Do-ahead: *The dip can be made up to a few days in advance. The salad rolls can be made a few hours in advance and kept well wrapped with plastic wrap or in an airtight container at room temp.*

Note: *For the protein, my favorites are ham, roast chicken, shrimp, imitation crab, and firm or pressed tofu (especially the marinated kind). Anything that you like in a sandwich will work here. Cut them into sticks about 3 inches (8 cm) long, and about the thickness of a thick-cut french fry.*



Salad Roll Wrapping

Too Lazy to Wrap?

Serving a lot of people and don't want to spend time wrapping? I am with you 100%. You can make your guests do the work by setting out the ingredients and a couple of bowls of hot water for a "make

your own salad rolls” party. Or you can do even less work and serve the sauce as a dip for a veggie platter—the best part is the sauce, anyway!



Flaky Roti with Yellow Curry Dip

Roti Jim Gaeng Garee | โรตีจิมแกงกะหรี่

SERVES 6

COOKING TIME: 25 minutes In Thailand, curry is most commonly served with rice, but sometimes certain curries are served with roti. And when Thai people say “roti,” we’re talking about the flakey, crispy, chewy, fried flatbread that are also referred to as roti canai or roti paratha, depending on where you are. Yellow curry chicken is one of those curries that is sometimes paired with roti, but instead of making a whole curry, you can just make the sauce and serve it as a dip. My trouble here was trying to get the chicken flavor into the dip without having to use any chicken. Turns out, chicken bouillon cube was the perfect solution. The tomatoes are my own addition, as I think it’s satisfying to have a little pop of acidity in each bite.

1 cup (250 ml) coconut milk, divided

1 tablespoon (15 ml) yellow curry paste, store-bought or homemade ([this page](#))
¼ cup (30 g) finely minced onion

⅛ to ¼ teaspoon (0.5 to 1 ml) chicken bouillon cube, paste, or powder
(see [note](#)) 1 tablespoon (12 g) finely chopped palm sugar, packed

¼ cup (50 g) diced fresh tomatoes

1 to 2 teaspoons (5 to 10 ml) fish sauce

1 tablespoon (15 ml) neutral oil

1 package frozen roti paratha (see [note](#))

Into a small pot, pour about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup(60 ml) coconut milk and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the curry paste and onions, stirring to mix. Once the mixture starts to thicken, turn the heat down to medium and keep stirring until the curry is very thick and the onions are very soft.

Add the remaining coconut milk, 1/8 teaspoon (0.5 ml) bouillon, and sugar, and bring to a boil, then turn the heat down to low and simmer for 5 minutes.

Stir in the tomatoes and turn off the heat. Taste and add the fish sauce to taste, or if you want a stronger chicken flavor, and there's room for more salt, you can add a touch more bouillon.

When ready to serve, cook the roti. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat, add the oil, and, once the pan is hot, place a frozen roti in the pan. Fry until nicely browned, 2 to 3 minutes, then flip and cook the other side until browned. Rest the cooked roti on a piece of paper towel. If you want, you can fluff the roti by placing your hands on either side of the paper towel and “clapping” to scrunch and separate the layers. Rotate the roti ninety degrees and fluff it one more time. (This doesn't work quite as well with frozen Chinese pancakes.) Repeat with the remaining roti.

To serve, tear the roti into big, shaggy chunks if you want to serve it finger-food style, or leave them whole, for people to tear themselves. Serve while the roti is still hot, along with the warm curry dip.

Do-ahead: *The curry dip can be made in advance and refrigerated for up to 1 week.*

Notes: *In Thailand, Knorr is the most popular brand of bouillon cubes, and that's the brand I use for this. You can use another brand, but start with just 1/8 teaspoon (0.5 ml), then taste and adjust from there.*

If you cannot find roti paratha, you can use frozen Chinese scallion pancakes, but if there is a version without scallions available, that would be preferable.

Repurposing Leftover Curry

If you make a coconut-based curry and you've eaten it all except for just that little bit of sauce that's left, save it and use it as a dip for roti, for a near-instant appetizer. You don't need a lot, even just $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 ml) sauce will be enough for two people. Any curry sauce will work, but most commonly we serve green, *massaman*, or yellow curry with roti. Depending on the curry, you may need to reduce the sauce a bit so it'll be thick enough to cling to the roti.



