



## How to Use This Book

I have given you more than just recipes in this book: I've also provided useful information that will help you immensely when navigating recipes if Thai cuisine is unfamiliar to you. With these extra tidbits, you'll feel much more equipped to make cooking Thai food a part of your regular repertoire.

**SIDEBARS:** For most recipes, I've provided additional information in a sidebar that gives cultural context to the dish, suggests a modification, or explains an unusual step. As regular viewers of my YouTube show know, I believe it's important not only to have the how-to but also to understand the dishes you're cooking in a deeper way. You'll be a much better cook in the long term.

**INGREDIENTS DICTIONARY:** If you are new to Thai cuisine and are unfamiliar with our ingredients, I've provided a Thai ingredient dictionary of a sort ([this page](#)). I've kept it brief so that you can quickly get just what you need, but if you want a more detailed study, watch the videos on the "Thai Ingredients 101" playlist on my YouTube channel.

**EQUIPMENT DICTIONARY:** You can certainly cook Thai food with the pots and pans you've got at home, but there are a few items that will help make it much easier. Consult the equipment section ([this page](#)) for an overview, and you can also check out my website, where I post a comprehensive list of all the equipment I use on the show.

**HOW TO COMPOSE A THAI MEAL:** Thai home cooking is always served family style, with every meal consisting of multiple dishes that complement each other. While you certainly can make just one dish for a meal, if you want

to do it Thai style, I've provided guidance for composing a proper Thai meal ([this page](#)), to maximize your enjoyment.

**RECIPES TO MAKE IN BULK:** As with any cuisine, Thai cooking has staple sauces, condiments, and other base ingredients that are used across multiple recipes. You can certainly buy these items, such as curry pastes, but for those who are DIY-minded, I've provided recipes for them ([this page](#)), so you can make them in bulk and/or in advance.

**TIPS FOR EFFICIENT COOKING:** Having simple recipes is helpful, but actually being efficient in the kitchen takes cooking to the next level. This doesn't mean you have to chop faster, though that always helps, but it does mean you need to do a bit of planning before you execute. "No wasted movement, no idle moment" is what I'm always striving for when I cook, so I share some pro tips on how you can make everything in the kitchen go a little smoother and a little faster ([this page](#)).

**COOKING TIME:** In the recipes, this is the time that it should take you to execute the instructions; it doesn't include prep time. But even the lengthiest ingredient list should take no more than 20–30 minutes to prepare.

**A NOTE REGARDING THE ROMANIZATION OF THAI WORDS:** I have provided Thai recipe and ingredient names written out phonetically in English letters throughout the book. I have tried to make this as phonetically close to the Thai pronunciation as possible, but for most words it is impossible to make it 100% accurate because there are many sounds in the Thai language that don't exist in English.

In some cases, I've decided to use the most commonly recognizable spelling rather than one that is phonetically closer, for example *pad thai*, which is actually pronounced *pud-tai*. For a few words, the most accurate spelling happens to resemble a...shall we say "not nice"...word in English, so I have chosen a different spelling there.

This is why some dishes here may be spelled differently from how your local restaurant or another cookbook spells them; people choose

whatever spelling they think works best. *Pad kra pao*, *pad gaprao*, and *pad kapow* are all different spellings I have seen referring to the same dish.

I have to note that there *is* an official guide to romanizing Thai words, but this is a complex set of rules that is not very helpful in conveying how words actually sound and is often overly complicated, so I have chosen not to follow it. This is why you see silent h's added to words like *khao soi* and *pad thai* for seemingly no reason, and why Thailand's main airport is called "Suvarnabhumi" but is actually pronounced *su-wun-na-poom!*

## The Basic Thai Pantry

The only real hurdle to making Thai cooking a weeknight breeze is gathering the basic pantry ingredients. Thankfully, many of our ingredients last a long time in the pantry, fridge, or freezer, so once you've made your first trip to the grocery store, you'll be well equipped for the next little while.

### The Salty

In Western cuisines, granulated salt is added to essentially every dish. In Thai cuisine, however, salt on its own is rarely used in savory cooking because we like to use a variety of sauces that give not only saltiness but also flavor.

**FERMENTED SHRIMP PASTE | GAPI | ດັບປາ** This salty, purplish-gray paste made from fermented small shrimp (or sometimes krill) is the epitome of funky and is used all over Southeast Asia. It's one of those things that tastes better than it smells. It has lovers and haters. I am a proud lover of shrimp paste! You may have eaten shrimp paste without knowing it, because most Thai curry pastes contain it in small amounts. You can buy Thai shrimp paste in a plastic tub, or the Malaysian type in a plastic-wrapped brick called *belacan*. Where shrimp paste is used in small