

sauce	already calls for soy sauce, you could use two different types of soy sauce.
White pepper	Black pepper in equal amounts.

Thai Cooking Equipment

MORTAR & PESTLE, STONE | KROK HIN | คอกหิน Mortar and pestles are our blender, food processor, and spice grinder all in one, and every Thai home has one because we make a lot of herb pastes in Thai cooking. It's more work to use, but they are superior to machines in that they can grind anything, wet or dry, no matter how small the amount, and without ever having to add extra liquid. If you don't have one yet but want one, I recommend getting a granite mortar and pestle that is at least 6 inches (15 cm) in external diameter, which is a good all-purpose size. If you want to make curry pastes in it, get an 8-inch (20 cm) one. For the record, I have 4-inch (10 cm), 6-inch (15 cm), and 8-inch (20 cm) stone mortars, and one clay salad mortar (see below).

MORTAR & PESTLE, SALAD | KROK SOM TUM | คอกลั่นต้ม Most Thai homes have a larger light-duty mortar made from clay or wood that comes with a wooden pestle. These are made specifically for pounded salads, such as the famous green papaya salad, or *som tum*. They're generally less useful than the granite one, so there's no need to own one of these unless you plan on having Thai pounded salads on the regular.

STEAMER | SEUNG | ชาม When I came to Canada, I was surprised to learn that many people here do not own a steamer, a core piece of cookware in Thai homes. The steamer is the reason whole fish are part of everyday Thai home cooking. Steaming also cooks things very quickly compared

with baking, takes less time for preheating, and doesn't leave any greasy mess to clean, like frying does.

You can get a multilayered steamer from any large Asian grocery stores that sell cookware, and I recommend getting one that is 14 inches (35 cm) in diameter, if you have the storage space. Yes, it's big, but you want to be able to fit a dinner plate into the steamer, with plenty of room to get it in and out.

If you don't have the storage space, you can get a steamer rack or trivet for a few dollars and put it at the bottom of a stockpot or a wok, as long as you have a lid for it. It's harder to get things in and out of a stockpot, so make sure you have steamer tongs too.

Bamboo steamers can be great, and you can put those in a wok or on top of a pot of the same diameter. The only downside is that they are often too shallow or small to steam a large dish or a whole fish.

WOK | GATA | 釜 Arguably the most useful piece of cookware in the kitchen. You can use it to stir-fry, sear, boil, steam, deep-fry...you name it, it can be done in a wok. When I was growing up, we had pots for simmering and boiling, and one wok for everything else. We didn't own any flat skillets until we started dabbling in Western cooking.

If you have a gas stove, a carbon steel wok is your best choice. If well seasoned and maintained, it will be stick-resistant. It can also develop the smoky "wok flavor" after repeated use and can withstand very high heat, which is useful for stir-frying. It won't get as nonsticky as Teflon, though, so you still need to make sure the pan is hot and oiled before adding stick-prone foods. Round-bottomed woks are recommended only if you have the kind of stove designed to accommodate and stabilize the rounded bottom, or if you have a wok ring.

If you have a glass top or electric stove, you might consider a sturdy, flat-bottomed nonstick wok instead (Korean-made ones are my go-to). Carbon steel woks can warp over time and then lose full contact with the electric element, and you won't be able to get good heat transfer. I have a video on my website that talks about the pros and cons of various types of woks, and also one on how to take care of your carbon steel wok.



Which Kind of Wok Should You Buy?



Stone mortar and pestle



Salad mortar and pestle



Multitiered steamer



Steamer rack inside a stock pot



Bamboo steamer



Carbon steel wok

Composing a Well-Balanced Thai Meal