



Thai Food

By David Thompson

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Renowned chef David Thompson first went to Thailand by mistake: a holiday plan had to be changed at the last minute, and he ended up in Bangkok, where he was seduced by the people, culture, and cuisine. Since that fateful trip some 20 years ago, Thailand has become David's second home. Working alongside cooks who perfected their craft in the Thai royal palaces, he began to document the traditional recipes and culinary techniques that have been handed down from generation to generation.

The result is THAI FOOD, the most comprehensive account of this ancient and exotic cuisine ever published in English. David writes about Thailand and its food with an easy erudition, encouraging readers to cook and experiment, while simultaneously fostering a respect for the food and its stewardship through the ages. Although all the classic, well-loved recipes are here, this magnum opus features hundreds of lesser-known but equally authentic and delicious Thai dishes that will inspire cooks to go beyond green curry chicken and Thai fish cakes. David's passion and conviction are infectious; complemented by Earl Carter's superb photography, THAI FOOD captures all aspects of the dynamic Thai culture and cuisine.

- Ten years in the making, this groundbreaking work is one of the cookbook publishing events of the decade.
- The author's London restaurant, *naam*, received a Michelin star in 2002, making it the first Thai restaurant to receive such an honor.
- Photographed at David's restaurants in Sydney and London, and on location in Thailand, Earl Carter's superb images capture both the essence of Thai food and its rich cultural milieu.

Awards 2003 James Beard Award Winner

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Reviews

“Stands out, dauntingly massive, brilliantly magisterial, and, at the same time, bustling with charm, observations, life.”

—*Saveur*

“[S]et a new standard for Asian cookbooks.”—*Saveur* (Top 100 Home Cook Edition)

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Thai Food By David Thompson Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"Thai cooking is a paradox," writes Australian restaurateur David Thompson in his comprehensive and thus aptly named *Thai Food*. "It uses robustly flavored ingredients--garlic, shrimp paste, chilies, lemongrass--and yet when they are melded during cooking they arrive at a sophisticated and often subtle elegance." Pursuing this transformation in depth, his book presents hundreds of recipes that celebrate the Thai meal while exploring its historical and cultural context. Readers will delight in the wide selection of authentic dishes like Duck and Spring Onion Soup, Grilled Beef Salad, and Green Chicken Curry with Baby Corn, and relish Thompson's vast appreciation of his subject. Though the recipes are straightforward and workable once ingredients are assembled and techniques understood, those new to Thai cooking may want a less rigorous introduction to the subject. However, anyone with an appetite to explore it on Thompson's terms will benefit immensely.

Beginning with an exploration of Thailand's history and culture, the book then presents an extended section on rice, the centerpiece of the Thai meal. The "cookbook" follows, with a systematic introduction to the Thai kitchen, ingredients, and equipment. The chapter "Food Outside the Meal" is devoted to Thai snacks and vendor food, such as Stir-Fried Crisp Fish with Holy Basil. Noodle dishes include an exemplary pad thai, and sweet dishes like Grilled Bananas with Coconut Cream and Turmeric are also offered.

Readers should know that the recipes, published primarily for an Australian audience, give ingredients in a mix of metric and American measurements and/or with nonmetric equivalents, and that nomenclature is also sometimes foreign ("minced" for "ground" meat, for example). With photos throughout, the book sets a standard for Thai cookbooks to come while helping many cooks achieve the true, richly exotic cuisine. --
Arthur Boehm

From Publishers Weekly

This collection of Thai cooking lore, history and recipes can be as daunting as it is comprehensive. A description of the country, its various socioeconomic groups (called *muang*) and its culinary history is lengthy and perhaps a little too in-depth. While Thompson's enthusiasm for his subject is palpable, readers may be anxious to get to the actual recipes, but the first one does not appear for nearly 200 pages, after an essay on Thai superstitions and a glossary of ingredients such as *bai yor*, a tobacco-like plant, and dried lily stalks. The recipes are thorough and authentic, and while they call for many items that may be hard to find, Thompson good-naturedly provides alternatives to most of them. Thailand's signature strong flavors are in evidence in dishes such as Bream Simmered with Pickled Garlic Syrup and a Salad of Pork, Young Ginger and Squid. Recipes are divided sensibly into soups, curries, salads and the like, but one chapter simply titled "Menus" contains various dishes that work together to form a traditional Thai meal (menus such as one that includes Prawn and Lemongrass Relish; Egg Mousse with Pineapple, Corn and Salted Duck Eggs; and Deep-Fried Bean Curd with Crab, Pork and Spring Onions are intriguing). A chapter on snacks and street foods offers additional tasty choices such as Rice Cakes with Chili, Prawn and Pork Sauce and Egg Nets, lacy crêpe-like wrappers created by drizzling beaten egg into a hot wok that are stuffed with a pork and shrimp mixture. The dessert chapter also provides instructions for creating Smoked Water, flavored using a special candle with a wick on both ends.

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From Library Journal

Thompson, an Australian chef with two Thai restaurants in Sydney, opened Nahm in London last year;

shortly thereafter, it became the first Thai restaurant ever to receive a Michelin star. Somehow, he also found the time to write this huge, exhaustively researched book, focusing especially on Thai cuisine of the late 19th century, when, he believes, Thai cooking "reached an apex." Although he explores regional and peasant cooking as well, the only recorded recipes of the time are from the upper classes and those associated with the Siamese court, and Thompson has translated and adapted many of those recipes. The first section of the book provides detailed cultural and social history and a guide to the regions and regional cuisines of Thailand. Then a detailed glossary of ingredients and a guide to techniques introduce the hundreds of recipes. These are grouped into chapters on relishes, soups, curries, salads, and sides, followed by one of menus with recipes. Chapters like "Food Outside the Meal"-snacks or street foods and desserts-complete the book. Su-Mei Yu's *Cracking the Coconut* is an excellent introduction to Thai home cooking, but Thompson's culinary history/cookbook is unique and will be an important purchase for any Asian cookery collection. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rebecca Morales:

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