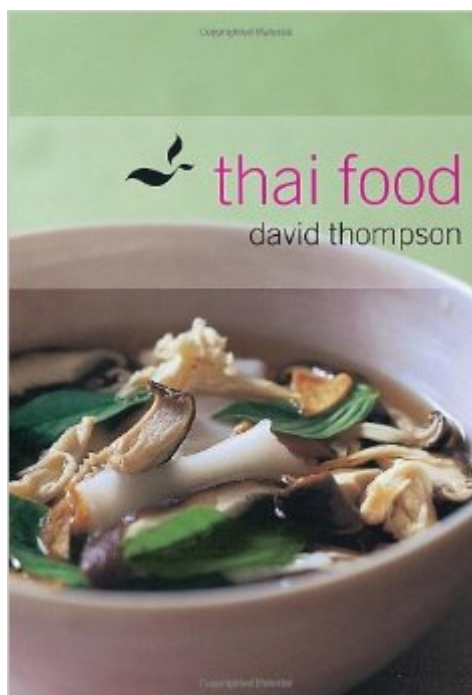


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Thai Food



Synopsis

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, nahm, 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 2003 IACP Award Winner Reviews "Stands out, dauntingly massive, brilliantly magisterial, and, at the same time, bustling with charm, observations, life." • Saveur "Set a new standard for Asian cookbooks." • Saveur (Top 100 Home Cook Edition)

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Customer Reviews

"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

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 crepe-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. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

David Thompson is very thorough, and seems to have a vast knowledge of Thai cuisine. This book though has far too many brief recipes without enough context or explanation. Too bad, because he writes about food much more clearly than poor Andy Ricker's re-write man. This book needed an editor.

This book is an encyclopedic treatise on Thai cookery. It is daunting. Not easily approachable for the impatient. There is no instant gratification to be found within these pages. What you will get: Amazing insight into the culture and history of Thailand and how it has informed the cuisine. The reason why Thai food has evolved as it has with amazing insight into the wherewithal of the techniques involved. This book will teach you how to cook Thai food as the Thai would have you do it. An excellent source of education with which to truly learn what it means to cook in the way of the Thai people.

I've spent a fair amount of time in Thailand, and eating is one of the great delights there. David Thompson's book offers a wealth of information on how to prepare everything I've run across and then some. A lot of books I've looked at have omitted ingredients that are difficult to find in the U.S., but without them, the food is missing the essence of what one gets in a true Thai meal. Thompson provides what I believe are the recipes one might actually enjoy without toning down the flavors or limiting the ingredients to the mundane. The one criticism I have for the book is it's hard to find recipes sometimes as he only provides an English translation of the names in most cases. For instance, if you look for something that sounds like "pla sam lot", you won't find it. You have to look under "fish" and find "in three flavored sauce". Pla sam lot I believe, translates to "fish in five

flavored sauce", but what I made with his recipe was wonderful none the less, and similar to what I have eaten in Thailand. I would recommend this book to anyone who has a serious interest in Thai cooking and eating, who is not interested in a lot of pretty pictures, and who won't be overwhelmed by the size of the volume. If you're just getting started or don't know what to expect a dish to look like without a picture, it might be a bit daunting.

David Thompson has a thorough and complete understanding of Thai flavors, Techniques and Cooking. This is a big book and with good reason. Thai Cuisine is sometimes bizarrely intricate and at others remarkably simple amalgamation of contrasting flavors. He really gets the Cuisine in a way most writers miss. This book is well researched and beautifully presented. I have spent many years traveling in Thailand. I find the regional cuisines are really well represented in his work. Read this book and use it if you want to cook real Thai food. You will be given a broad insight into the techniques and a fundamental knowledge of Thai flavors. Most importantly when you make the dishes they taste like Thailand! I have shared this book with Friends amateurs and Pro chefs alike and we all think it to be one of the best. I have many Thai cook books and this remains the best. I also recommend his book about Thai Street Food.

Since I bought this book, I can tell what Thai restaurants have skimmed or cut corners on, or if they are really honest and fresh with their spices and herbs. After trying a few simple recipes, and adjusting them for my level of heat and sweetness, I can make anything! This book is impressive, historical, and eye opening. You can really learn about the Thai culture through what time and effort they put into their food. One thing you need is a close proximity to a good Asian market or you may be frustrated with the ingredients you need and don't have. Be sure to get a mortar and pestle before you invest in this book. I was up at 7:30 in the morning pounding curries for the first month I owned this book. Good luck!

David Thompson is clearly a scholar and has done amazing things for Thai food. This book is great perhaps at an intellectual level but I didn't find it much useful for the everyday homecook American looking to make some tasty Thai food. Better go with Andy Ricker's awesome PokPok's book. That's what I did and now I make many amazing Thai creations.

This is the must-have second or third Thai cookbook you should own. It is massive and would be overwhelming as an introduction. But when you want a book that has almost everything Thai - this is

the one. The extensive introduction gives an excellent background on what you are eating and where it comes from. This book meets my usual criteria for a good ethnic cook book: 1) It is written for the western reader. Ingredients are identified by English names. Ingredients are possible to obtain - or reasonable substitutes suggested. 2) The writer has extensive in-country experience. Thompson is Australian but spent years in Thailand. 3) I am leery of books written by professional cooks - which are often full of difficult restaurant recipes - good only when you have a staff to help. This book is written for the home cook. I have cooked a number of recipes from this book so far - without issues. I should add that Thompson makes all his curry pastes from scratch. The modern Thai cook does not do that - they buy from the tubs of fresh curry paste available at any market. Unless you have loads of time and a very good Asian store nearby - you should too. Thai curry paste in a number of different styles is available in many Asian markets - and - although more dear. Take the recipe - and figure out which one he is making - and dip it out of the container. (Full disclosure - I do a lot of ethnic cooking and not much phases me except too long ingredient lists and excessive preparation.)

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