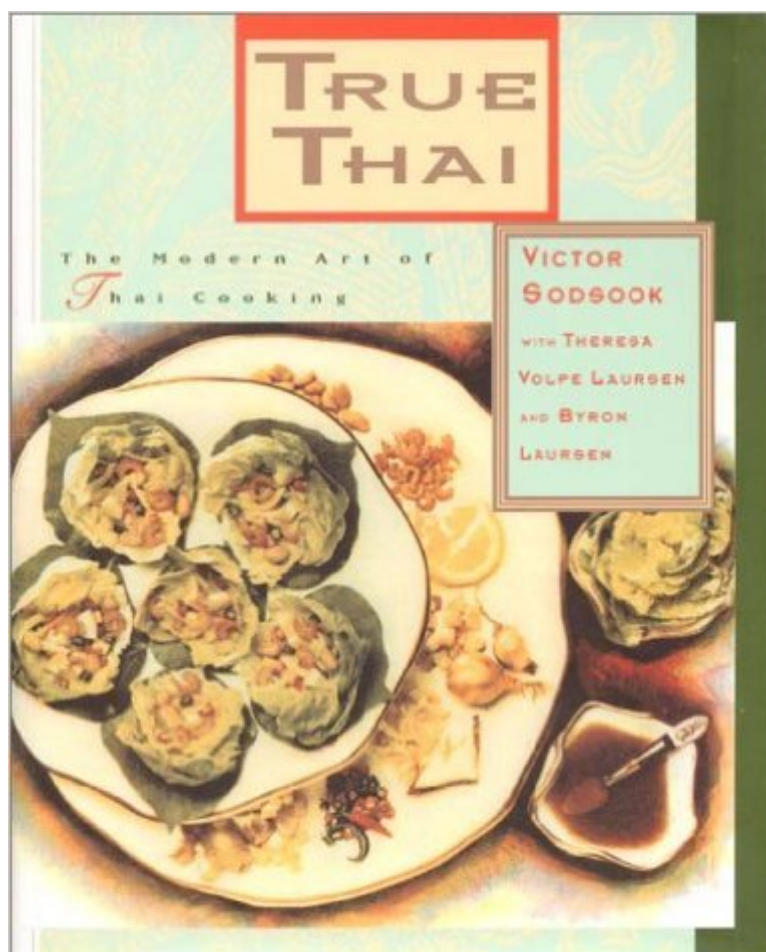


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True Thai: The Modern Art Of Thai Cooking



Synopsis

True Thai is one of those rare and important cookbooks where cuisine and culture meet. Food lovers will come away with layers of understanding, discovering the soul of a country where cuisine is a sacred art. True Thai takes us from the jostling Bangkok streets and canals to countryside rice paddles and mango groves, from distant mountain villages to Thailand's stately Royal Palace, delivering True Thai taste in every sense of the word. Victor Sodsook, a native Thai, chef/owner of Los Angeles's celebrated Siamese Princess restaurant, has written the authoritative Thai cookbook that American cooks have been waiting for. True Thai satisfies an increasing public interest in the seductive flavors of Thai cuisine, and a decreasing emphasis on high-fat, high-calorie red meats, eggs, and oils. The lively, easy-to-follow recipes are tailor-made for today's adventurous, aware cook. Most of the tools and ingredients used in True Thai are probably already in your kitchen. And its wide-ranging glossary of ingredients will help you select the most flavorful spices and freshest produce, as well as the best brands of key Thai ingredients like coconut milk and fish sauce. Among True Thai's 250 recipes, you'll find the many Thai dishes that have already won over Americans, such as Crispy Sweet Rice Noodles (mee krob) and soothing, aromatic Chicken-Coconut Soup with Siamese Ginger and Lemon Grass (tom kha kai). Everything is here, from the deliciously spiced barbecued chickens found in Thai provinces to the elaborate and time honored cuisines served to Thailand's royal family, such as King Rama V's Fried Rice. Since Thailand teems with both fresh- and saltwater fish and shellfish, you'll find an abundance of healthful, provocative seafood dishes, such as Ayuthaya Haw Mok Talay, a scrumptious mousse of curried fish, shrimp, and crab, redolent with chili and coconut milk, grilled and served in fragrant banana leaves. Surprisingly light preparations for meat include Fiery Grilled Beef Salad, a classic of Bangkok cafe cuisine, and mu kratiem phrik Thai, a simple stir-fry of pork medallions sizzling with garlic and black pepper. The Thai Vegetarian Cooking chapter is really a whole book unto itself, encompassing its own blend of curry pastes, soups, appetizers, entrees, and one-dish meals—all completely free of animal or fish products. The Thai Salads chapter showcases such recipes as Coconut, Lemon, and Ginger Salad or Grilled Lobster Salad with Green Mango that demonstrate the great variety and sensuousness of this branch of Thai cooking. Drinks and desserts include such ethereal treats as Rose-Petal Sorbet and the refreshingly herbaceous Lemon Grass Tea, wonderful either hot or cold. There's also a chapter that shows how to marry these newfound Thai tastes with classic American cooking, through such improvisations as Bangkok Burgers with Marinated, Grilled Onions and Spicy Thai Ketchup. True Thai is more than a cookbook; it is a collection of grace notes exemplifying Thai cuisine's dedication to pleasing the senses. There's even a chapter on preparing Thai-style table

decorations, many of them as edible as they are lovely. True Thai's 250 recipes, each with helpful and fascinating notes, present Thai cuisine with simplicity and elegance. True Thai is the most authentic, authoritative, and accessible Thai cookbook ever printed in English.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is it - the real thing. If you are choosing among Thai cookbooks, why not buy one written by a man who is both Thai and an excellent chef in his own U.S. restaurant? The author provides details that an outsider to Thai culture might never be privy to - the specific way a Thai cook fluffs his or her rice before serving; intricacies of street vendors' cooking - which in Thailand, far from our hotdogs and pretzels, is an art unto itself; the specific condiments favored for each dish. On the other hand, unlike cookbooks I bought in Thailand, this book has been written with the equipment and availability of Thai ingredients of the Western cook in mind. The author understands both cultures and provides a wonderful education in his heritage in a manner you can easily reproduce at home (provided you have a wok, and access to fairly common ingredients such as fish sauce, coconut milk, cilantro, etc). When the authentic ingredient may be hard to come by, he provides substitutions, i.e. lime peel slices for Kaffir lime leaves. Having travelled and eaten all over Thailand, I was disappointed, after my return, whenever I tried Thai recipes from my other cookbooks. TRUE THAI has enabled me to replicate those amazing dishes with the layers of flavor unique to that beautiful land. Making homemade curry pastes as he describes - red, green, Jungle, Massaman - is labor-intensive, but very worth it. The chapter on vegetarian cuisine is a cookbook in itself. Recipes we have loved so far include: Phat Thai, Tom Kha Kai, shrimp-fried rice, pork-fried rice, beef with

broccoflower, Massaman curry with potatoes and pineapple, and banana fritters with coconut and sesame. There also are chapters on garnishes, menu-planning, and "cooking with a Thai accent" - things like Panang Pizza. There is a useful appendix listing mail-order sources, and I plan to hunt down some tamarind concentrate and Thai coffee powder. If you want to cook real Thai, get this book. It's also just fascinating reading.

I have a small library of asian cookbooks, including several Thai cookbooks, but this is by far the best cookbook for Thai cooking that I have come across. I cannot help but to recommend it to all of my friends who (1) like Thai food, and (2) like to cook. The recipes tend to be on the spicy side, which is almost unheard of. So many Thai cookbooks try to water the spice down, temper the curry paste, only add a splash of lime or a leaf or two of Makrut leaves. Not this book. This book gives you great, rich flavor. Some of the recipes are VERY spicy, but none of the recipes, not even the very hot ones, are without the delicious complexity of flavor that is present in Thai cooking. The flavors are always full of a wonderful mix of different tastes from the region. Wonderful use of lime, herbs, chilis, lemongrass, coconut, and more. The book has one drawback. I will probably not use the little cheap cans of Thai curry paste again. The recipes for the curry pastes in the book are so delicious and flavorful that the overly salty curry cans are just not worth the facility they provide [well, almost not worth the facility ;-)].

I lived in Thailand during the 1980's before Thai cooking became popular across the United States. During that time, there were very few cook books that could come close to the real flavor of Thai cuisine. I learned how to cook Thai food while watching over the shoulder of my dear house maid. She taught me how to make all of the everyday dishes that Thai people love but seldom find on the menus of restaurants. Thanks be to Victor Sodsuk for putting in a chapter on street food. Now all the food that I long for and remember while living in Thailand can be enjoyed everyday. I just recently taught a class on Thai cooking at a local community college and this book was the one that I referred to the most. The recipes are excellent!

This book gives you all the basics for making a great Thai dinner from scratch. From recommending the type of utensils and wok to use, to the recipes for making your own sauces and pastes to use in the recipes (he also allows the use of store-bought equivalents), this cookbook wows everyone I cook for. If you love Thai food, get it. My favorite cookbook. I recommend the Chicken with Cashews & Chili-Tamarind Paste. It's simply amazing.

As I wandered through reviews of other cookbooks I did not know I wondered if I could believe the reviewer's comments. So as a check, I searched out my favorite cookbook-True Thai. I have read and used it at length for years, learning something new about the food and culture every time. It is a treat to cook with, the depth of flavors is beautiful and the recipes clearly authentic. In a way I was disappointed to see it so aptly reviewed, my secret is out. You see, none of the folks I know have this cookbook. However, upon reflection, the reviews take the appropriate approach; anyone who appreciates great Thai cuisine and beautiful unassuming commentary will fall in love with this cookbook.

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