

Jars of fish sauce

Fish Sauce: ^{OR}

Boiled Anchovy Packet

in 1-2 cups water, reduced down to ~1/2 cup; used 2.5T

Asian Noodle Soup 2/13/09

B+

Noodles - cook right before serving & pull into small pieces

DISH OF THE YEAR

asian noodle soup

Forget *gnudi* (last year's "It" dish)—this year, we couldn't get enough ramen, udon, soba, and *pho*. Asian noodle soups, with tons more flavor than your average bowl of chicken noodle, are warming up restaurant-goers across the country. From **MAI PHAM** of Lemon Grass restaurant in Sacramento, here's an incredible Thai-curry version to slurp at home.

photography by Antonis Achilleos

Spicy Curry Noodle Soup with Chicken and Sweet Potato

6 SERVINGS

added 2 sliced jalapenos

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil *peanut*
- 3 tablespoons chopped shallots *(or onion)*
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped *minced on grater ~4*
- 2 tablespoons minced lemongrass* (from bottom 4 inches of about 3 stalks, tough outer leaves discarded) *(jar)*
- 2 ~~tablespoons~~ *1T minced onion water* minced peeled fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons Thai yellow curry paste*
- 2 tablespoons curry powder

- 1 teaspoon hot chili paste (such as sambal oelek)* *- keeping teaspoon at bottom of hot chili oil*
- 2 coconut milk,* divided

- 5 cups low-salt chicken broth
- 2½ tablespoons fish sauce (such as nam pla or nuoc nam)* *see wrap*
- 2 teaspoons sugar

- 3 cups snow peas, trimmed *3-4C*
- 2 cups ½-inch cubes peeled red-skinned sweet potato (yam; from about 1 large)

in end, added more curry paste

0.5 lb noodles

- 1 pound dried rice vermicelli noodles or rice stick noodles*

1.5 lbs breast ^{or thighs, thinly sliced} pound skinless boneless chicken

- ½ cup thinly sliced red onion *garnish*
- ¼ cup thinly sliced green onions
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 3 red Thai bird chiles or 2 red jalapeño chiles, thinly sliced with seeds
- 1 lime, cut into 6 wedges

Heat oil in heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add next 4 ingredients; stir until fragrant, about 1 minute. Reduce heat to medium-low. Stir in curry paste, curry powder, and chili paste. Add ½ cup coconut milk (scooped from thick liquid at top of can). Stir until thick and fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add remaining coconut milk, broth, fish sauce, and sugar; bring broth to boil. Keep warm.

do ahead Can be made 1 day ahead. Refrigerate until cold, then cover and keep chilled.

Cook snow peas in large pot of boiling salted water until bright green, about 20 seconds. Using strainer, remove peas from pot (rinse under cold water to cool). Place peas in medium bowl. Bring water in same pot back to boil. Add sweet potato and cook until tender, about 7 minutes. Using strainer, remove sweet potato from

added sliced shishito mushrooms

pot and rinse under cold water to cool. Place in small bowl. Bring water in same pot back to boil and cook noodles until just tender but still firm to bite, about 6 minutes. Drain; rinse under cold water to cool. Transfer to microwave-safe bowl. **do ahead** Can be made 1 hour ahead. Let stand at room temperature.

Bring broth to simmer. Add chicken; simmer until chicken is cooked through, about 10 minutes. Add sweet potato; stir to heat through, about 1 minute. Heat noodles in microwave in 30-second intervals to rewarm. Cut noodles with scissors if too long. Divide noodles among bowls. Divide snow peas and hot soup among bowls. Scatter red onion, green onions, cilantro, and chiles over soup. Garnish with lime wedges and serve.

*Available at some supermarkets, at specialty foods stores and Asian markets, and online from adrianascaravan.com. ■

Mat Pham is the author of Pleasures of the Vietnamese Table.

Snow Peas - de-thread

Cut snow peas in thirds, after cooling. Then allow to come to room temp.

Sweet Potato - to room temp



Thai Yellow Curry Paste ~

Recipe by Rosa @ Rosa's Yummy Yums

<http://rosas-yummy-yums.blogspot.com/2007/02/thai-yellow-curry-paste.html>

Makes 1 medium bowl or enough for two curries.

Ingredients:

- 3 Tsp Cumin powder
- 1 Tsp Coriander powder
- 4 3 Fresh yellow (or red) chillies, chopped
- 1/4 Tsp Flaked red chillies
- 1/2 Tsp Ground cinnamon
- 1 Tsp Turmeric/curcuma powder
- 1 Tsp Paprika powder
- 1/2 Tsp Ground cloves
- 2 Tbs Fresh coriander root, chopped
- 2 Tbs Fresh lemon grass, chopped
- 2 Tbs Shallots, chopped
- 4 Tbs Garlic, chopped
- 2 Tbs Fresh galangal, chopped (or fresh ginger)
- 4 Kaffir lime leaves, thinly shredded and chopped (or 1 1/2 teaspoon lime rind)

*Grind until only
Red pepper pieces +
pepper seeds are
unique*

*each bowl
so 2x*

1 1/2 Tsp Shrimp paste/Kapi (see info) *

- 1 Tsp Palm sugar (see info)
- 1 Tsp Fish sauce
- 2 Tsp Peanut oil

A pinch of salt to use when grinding (it helps)

Method:

1. With the help of a mortar and pestle, pound the ingredients in batches of two (transfer every batch into a clean bowl) until a smooth paste is formed, about 10 minutes per batch.
2. At the end, add the shrimp paste, palm sugar, fish sauce and peanut oil. Pound

*each bowl (so 2x total)
with ginger + 1/2 tsp galangal
2 dried shredded leaves
1/2 tsp lime rind
each bowl - so 2x.
generous 1/2 tsp chopped
anchovies*

*generous 1/2 tsp palm sugar
1/2 tsp fish sauce
1 tsp peanut oil*

until well blended, about 2 minutes.

You can also blend or process this paste in a mixer, but the mortar and pestle way will give better results (more authentic). Important tips and methods can be found here (see below).

This paste keeps up to a few months in the refrigerator.

* If you eat only Kosher food, then I recommend you to replace the 1 1/2 teaspoons shrimp paste by 1/3 teaspoon brown sugar, 2/3 teaspoon anchovy paste and 1/2 teaspoon crumbled chicken stock powder.

Making a Curry Paste from Scratch

by Kasma Loha-unchit

from <http://www.thaifoodandtravel.com/features/cpaste.html>

Paste Making

There are few gastronomic delights more satisfying than curries made from freshly ground pastes. The flavors of a good, homemade paste surpass even the very best pastes imported from the kitchens of Bangkok. Moreover, paste making is a fun activity and a deeply stimulating experience. The aromas of all the spices and herbs are released as they are pounded in the stone mortar, and the olfactory nerves are rewarded with unexpected pleasures.

One of my students regained her sense of smell – which she had lost following an accident – as her nose was stimulated by the aromas from the herbs used in paste making. Others have found the process of pounding and grinding to be therapeutic in itself, regarding it as a safe way to release pent-up tension and suppressed aggression. One of these students, who had traveled extensively in Thailand, swore that the Thai people she met were as gentle as they were because they spent so much time pounding and chopping and cooking in the kitchen. She stayed with families in rural areas and awoke each morning to the sound of the rhythmic pounding of the mortar and pestle coming from the kitchen. It seemed to her that their aggressions were directed and transformed into something useful and creative, rather than harmful and destructive.

Pounding up a storm in the kitchen certainly can relieve frustration, anger and depression as well as produce a great meal and the resulting feeling of accomplishment. The sharing of the meal restores a sense of harmony and connectedness with others. Energy is transformed from negative to positive, and everyone gains.