



Culinary Institute
of America

Thai Cuisine



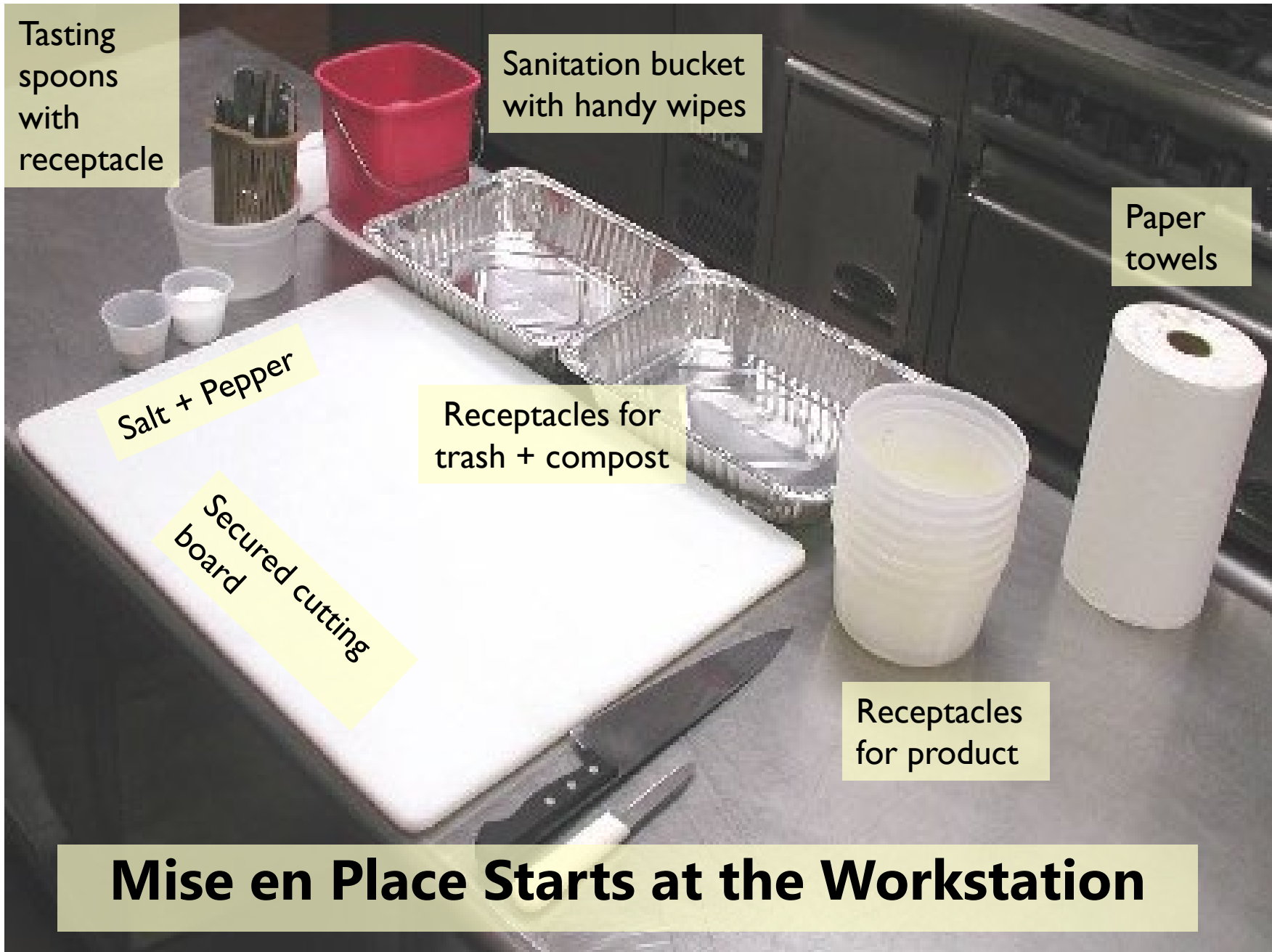
Learning Objectives

- Understand the basic characteristics of Thai cuisine.
- Distinguish the culinary traditions of different regions of Thailand.
- Recognize the primary flavor profile of Thai cuisine.
- Identify the key herbs, spices, and ingredients used in Thai cuisine.
- Recognize popular Thai dishes.
- Prepare a variety of Thai dishes following standardized recipes.

Mise en Place

- French term for “everything in its place”
- A clean, organized workstation
- Recipe mise en place (MEP)
- Reading through the **entire** recipe
- Prep time vs. service
- Physically ready to cook
- Mentally prepared to cook – proper state of mind!





Tasting spoons with receptacle

Sanitation bucket with handy wipes

Paper towels

Salt + Pepper

Receptacles for trash + compost

Secured cutting board

Receptacles for product

Mise en Place Starts at the Workstation

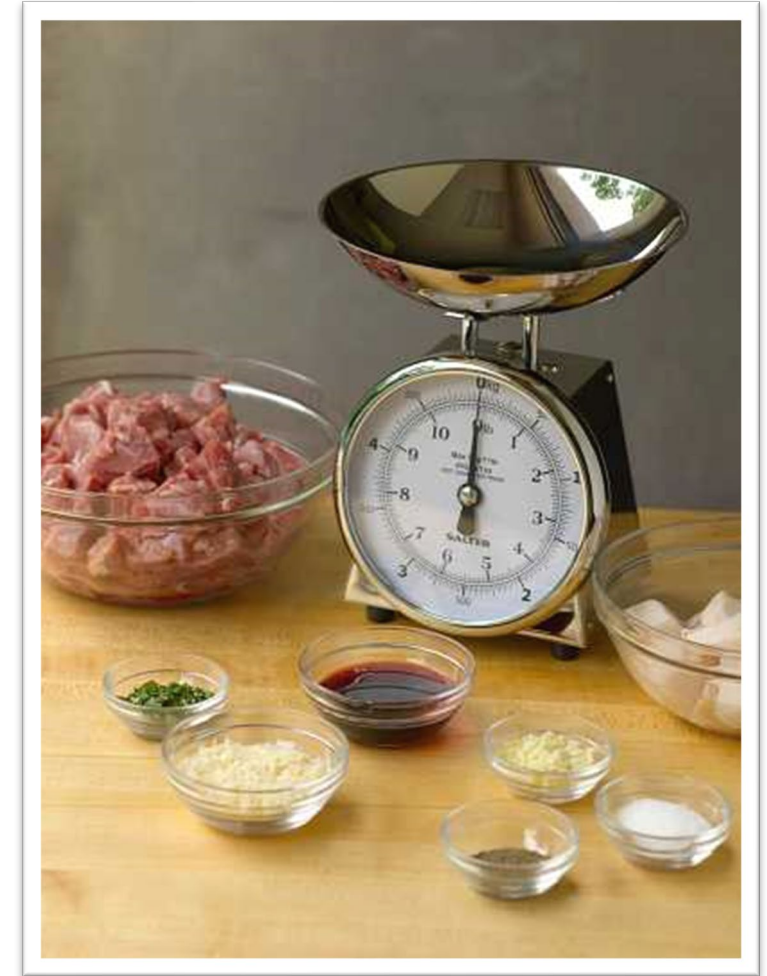
Mise en Place



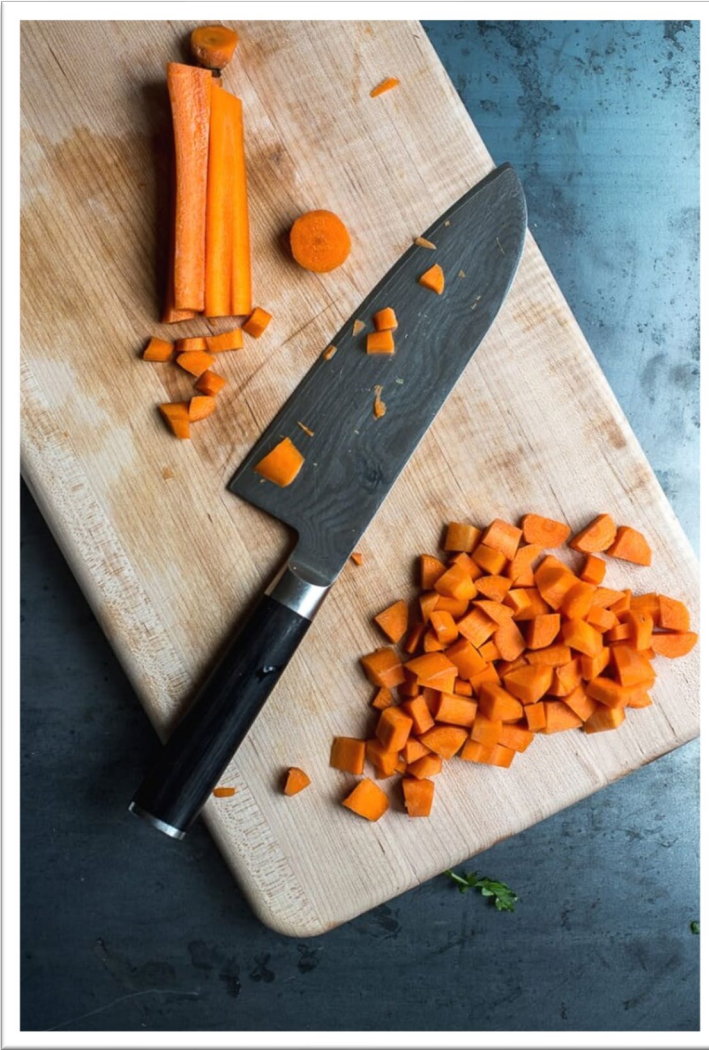
- Set table, cutting board to correct height
- Use bain-maries with hot water for tools
- Cutting board on sheet pan for messy jobs
- Have a written daily plan - start with the **end** in mind
- Use standardized recipes
- Consolidate tasks (have one person cut all the onions, garlic, etc.)
- Use timers and thermometers
- Use the right equipment for the job

Recipe Mise en Place

- Read entire recipe before starting
- Understand all terms - ask questions!
- Check yield, temperature, cooking times
- Gather ingredients needed
- Complete necessary pre-steps
- Accurately measure/ weigh ingredients
- Follow steps in order
- Time cooking periods accurately
- Remember: recipes are only guidelines!



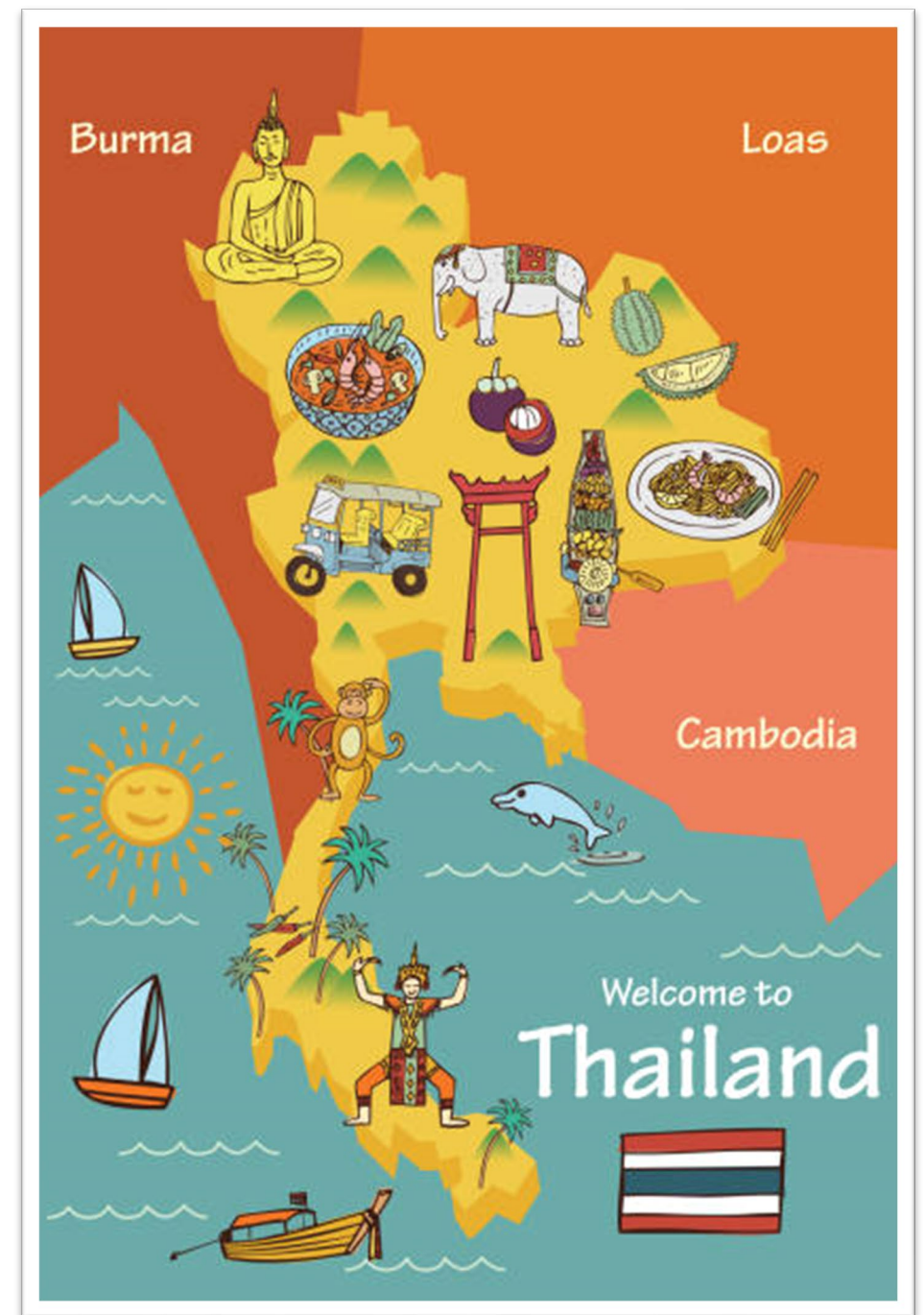
Knife Safety



- Always use a sharp knife!
- Hold the knife firmly in your hand and cut away from your body
- Always use a cutting board
- Always place knives on flat surfaces away from the edge of the table with the blade facing away from you
- Keep knives in clear sight, never covered
- Do not grab blindly for a knife
- Pass a knife using the handle, never the blade
- Carry knives with the point down

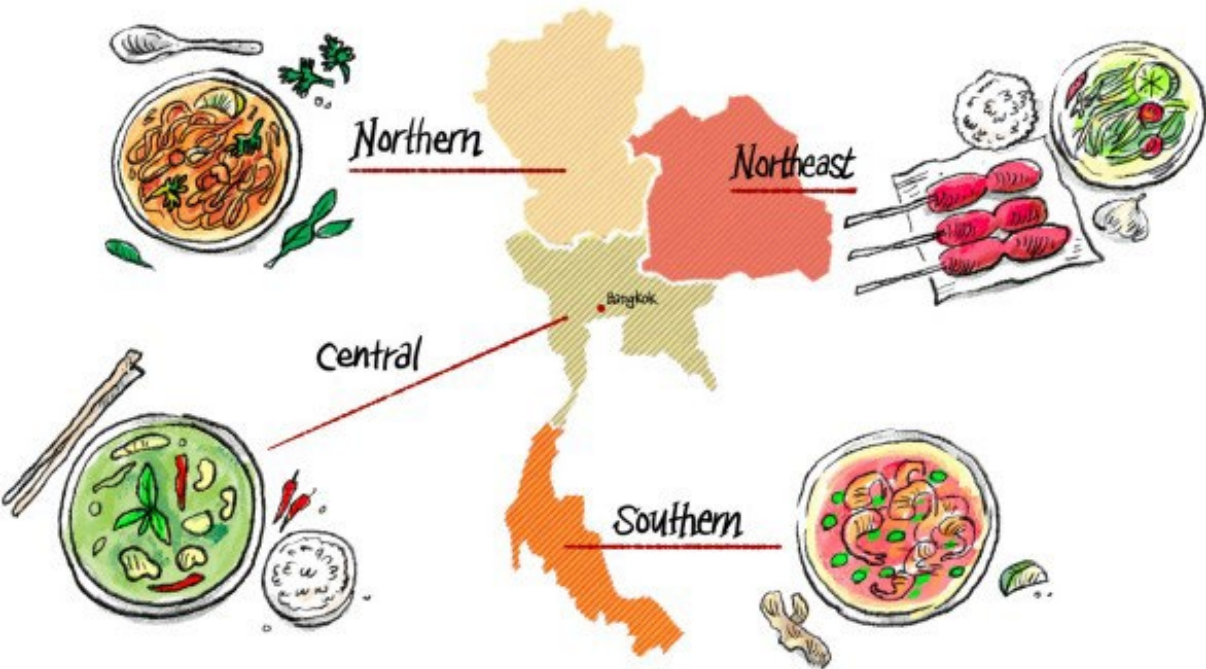
Thai Cuisine

- Lightly-prepared dishes with aromatics and spicy heat
- Layered, intense flavors that stimulate taste buds
- Fresh acidic flavor profile from lime juice, lemongrass, lime leaves
- Fish sauce instead of soy sauce
- Coconut milk
- Rice noodles
- Not many wheat-based products



Thai Cuisine

Thailand's Regional Cuisines



- Regional variations correlate to neighboring countries, climate, geography
- **Northern:** cool valleys/ forested mountains; shares dishes with Burma, Laos, Yunnan China
- **Northeast:** arid plateau; influenced by Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam
- **Central:** flat, wet, rice-growing plains; coconut milk
- **Southern:** bordered by seas; curries, chiles, spices; elements of India, Malaysia, Indonesia

Flavor Profile

Thai cooking has **four primary flavors**, carefully balanced to achieve the complex Thai taste profiles:

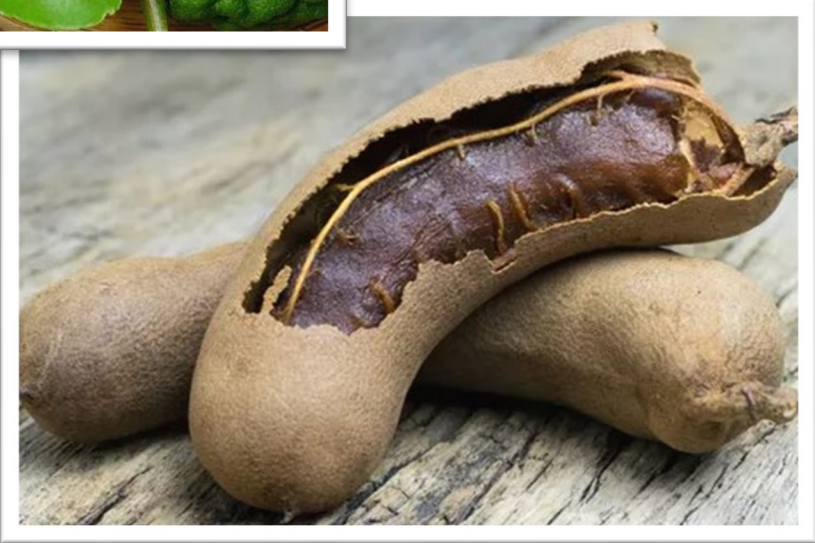
- **Sweet:** palm sugar, coconut milk, fruit provide a subtle yet impactful contrast to other bold flavors
- **Sour:** lime, tamarind, unripe fruit add a tangy brightness and depth-- a refreshing contrast to the richness of other ingredients
- **Salty:** fish sauce and soy sauce enhance the umami flavor-- essential for balancing sweetness and acidity
- **Spicy:** Thai chilies add excitement and intensity

Key Ingredients

- **Thai Bird's Eye Chili:** fruity taste, mellow, lasting heat (50k-100k Scoville); fully red when ripe, each color has different taste profile
- **Galangal:** peppery, spicy rhizome with a zesty bite and hint of pine; more flavorful when fresh
- **Cilantro:** tart, light citrus taste; leaves, stems, and roots
- **Lemongrass:** lemon flavor, hints of ginger; use the main inner yellow stalk, minced very fine



Key Ingredients



- **Makrut Lime Leaves:** aromatic herb with a bright, fresh, citrus flavor; add to soups, curries, stir-fry
- **Fish/ Shrimp Paste:** savory and salty, with strong concentrated fish/ shrimp taste; a little bit goes a long way!
- **Tamarind:** musky, sweet + sour flavor; available as fresh pods, paste, or liquid concentrate; add to soups, marinades, sweets

Noodles

- **Egg:** (*bah mee*) yellow, rich, flat; made from eggs, flour, water, salt
- **Glass:** (*woon sen*) mild, slippery, transparent; made from ground mung beans
- **Rice:** soft and tender; made from rice flour, water
 - Wide (*sen yai*)
 - Thin linguini-sized (*sen lek*)
 - Curly ramen (*mama*)
 - Very thin vermicelli (*sen mee*)



Rice

- Basmati
- Jasmin
- Long and short-grain
- Broken rice
- Black “forbidden” rice
- Sticky rice (glutinous rice)
- Sushi rice (short grain)
- Used to make rice noodles, papers, starch



Cooking Techniques

- **Stir-frying:** in a wok
- **Deep-frying**
- **Pan-frying**
- **Grilling:** charcoal fired
- **Steaming:** often wrapped in banana/ bamboo leaves
- **Simmering:** soups



Rice Noodle Stir-fry (*Pad Thai*)

- Thailand's national dish, commonly served as a street food
- **Proteins:** tofu, chicken, shrimp
- **Tangy sweet flavors:** tamarind juice, fish sauce, dried shrimp, garlic, shallots, palm sugar
- **Condiments:** red chili pepper, lime, roasted peanuts, bean sprouts, garlic chives, fresh vegetables



Crispy Fried Noodles (*Mee Krop*)



- Deep-fried rice vermicelli noodles with a sweet and sour sauce
- Fried tofu, fried shrimp, pork
- Sauced with lemon or lime juice, fish sauce, tomato paste, lime leaves, chiles, sugar
- Citrusy, sour notes from the peel of the *som sa* fruit
- Garnished with scallions, bean sprouts, cilantro, chilis, fried egg strips

Basil Stir Fry (*Pad Kra Pao*)

- Stir-fried minced pork, chicken, or seafood
- Sweet and salty sauce: sugar, soy, fish and oyster sauces
- Flavor combination of Thai holy basil, chile, garlic
- Serve with white rice, chile fish sauce (*Prik nam pla*), fried egg



Thai Curry



- **Curry paste:** (Green, red, yellow, massaman) lemongrass, galangal, shallot, garlic, makrut lime rind, shrimp paste
- **Fish sauce:** fermented, salted juice from small fish
- **Coconut milk:** milky liquid from the flesh, not the juice in the center
- **Citrus:** lime juice, lime leaves, lemongrass
- **Herbs:** basil, cilantro, mint
- **Aromatics:** Garlic, galangal, chiles
- **Palm sugar**

Hot and Sour Soup (*Tom Yam*)

- **Clear or creamy broth:** infused with fresh herbs and aromatic ingredients
- **Hot and sour flavors:** fish sauce, lime juice, lime leaves, bird's eye chiles, galangal, lemongrass
- **Protein:** chicken, pork, beef, fish, shrimp, or a seafood mix
- **Garnish:** coriander, cilantro
- Served over rice





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Any Questions?