



Pad Thai - This Pad Thai recipe is how you actually find it in Bangkok and comes from testing hundreds of different variations from food carts all over the city. Pad Thai is the ultimate street food. While "street food" may sound bad, food cart cooks are in such a competitive situation, with such limited space, ingredients and tools they need to specialize in a dish or two just to stay in business. The best of these cooks have cooked the same dish day-after-day, year-after-year, constantly perfecting it.

Great Pad Thai is dry and light bodied, with a fresh, complex, balanced flavor. I've never actually seen the red, oily pad thai in Thailand that is common in many western Thai restaurants.



The ingredients listed below can be somewhat intimidating but many are optional. If you would like to make authentic Pad Thai, just like in Thailand, use all the ingredients.

Pad Thai is another perfect vegetarian dish, just omit shrimp and substitute soy sauce for fish sauce. Add more tofu if you like.

2-3 Servings

1/2

lime

1		egg	
4	teaspoons	fish sauce	
3	cloves	garlic, minced	
1/2	teaspoon	ground dried chili pepper	
		ground pepper	
1		shallot, minced	
2	tablespoon	sugar	
2	tablespoon	tamarind	
1/2	package	Thai rice noodles	
2	tablespoon	vegetable oil	
1/2-1/4	lb	shrimp	Optional
1/2		banana flower	Optional
1/3	cup	tofu - extra firm	Optional
1-1/2	cup	Chinese chives - green	Optional
2	tablespoons	peanuts	Optional
1-1/3	cup	bean sprouts	Optional
1	tablespoon	preserved turnip	Optional

Tips and substitutions

By far, the trickiest part is the soaked noodles. Noodles should be somewhat flexible and solid, not completely expanded and soft. When in doubt, under-soak. You can always add more water in the pan, but you can't take it out.

Shrimp can be substituted or omitted.

In this recipe, pre-ground pepper, particularly pre-ground white pepper is better than fresh ground pepper. For kids, omit the ground dried chili pepper.

Tamarind adds some flavor and acidity, but you can substitute white vinegar.

The type of extra firm tofu called for this recipe can be found at most oriental groceries in a plastic bag, not in water. Some might be brown from soy sauce, but some white ones are also available. Pick whatever you like.

If you decided to include banana flower, cut lengthwise into sections (like orange sections). Rub any open cut with lime or lemon juice to prevent it from turning dark.

The original **Pad Thai** recipe calls for crushed roasted peanuts. Many people in Thailand avoid eating peanuts because of its link to cancer.

Soak the dry noodles in lukewarm water while preparing the other ingredients, for 5-10 minutes. Julienne tofu and cut into 1 inch long matchsticks. When cut, the extra firm tofu should have a mozzarella cheese consistency. Cut up Chinese chives into 1 inch long pieces. Set aside a few fresh chives for a garnish. Rinse the bean sprouts and save half for serving fresh. Mince shallot and garlic together.

Use a wok. If you do not have a wok, any big pot will do. Heat it up on high heat and pour oil in the wok. Fry the peanuts until toasted and remove them from the wok. Add shallot, garlic and tofu and stir them until they start to brown. The noodles should be flexible but not expanded at this point. Drain the noodles and add to the wok. Stir quickly to keep things from sticking. Add tamarind, sugar, fish sauce, chili pepper and preserved turnip. Stir. The heat should remain high. If your wok is not hot enough, you will see a lot of juice in the wok at this point. Turn up the heat, if it is the case. Make room for the egg by pushing all noodles to the side of the wok. Crack the egg onto the wok and scramble it until it is almost all cooked. Fold the egg into the noodles. Add shrimp and stir. Add bean sprouts, chives. Stir a few more times. The noodles should be soft and very tangled.

Pour onto the serving plate and sprinkle with peanuts. Serve hot with the banana flower slice and a wedge of lime on the side and raw Chinese chives and raw bean sprouts on top.

As always, in Thailand, condiments such as sugar, chili pepper, vinegar and fish sauce are available at your

table for your personal taste. Some people add more pepper or sugar at this point.