



# Simple Thai Food: Classic Recipes from the Thai Home Kitchen

By Leela Punyaratabandhu

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**Simple Thai Food: Classic Recipes from the Thai Home Kitchen** By Leela Punyaratabandhu

**Thai takeout meets authentic, regional flavors in this collection of 100 recipes for easy, economical, and accessible Thai classics--from the rising star behind the blog *She Simmers*.**

Who can say no to a delicious plate of Pad Thai with Shrimp; a fresh, tangy Green Papaya Salad; golden Fried Spring Rolls; or a rich, savory Pork Toast with Cucumber Relish? Thai food is not only one of the most vibrant, wonderfully varied cuisines in the world, it also happens to be one of the tastiest, and a favorite among American eaters.

The good news is, with the right ingredients and a few basic tools and techniques, authentic Thai food is easily within reach of home cooks. Take it from Leela Punyaratabandhu, a Bangkok native and author of the popular Thai cooking blog *She Simmers*. In her much-anticipated debut cookbook, Leela shares her favorite recipes for classic Thai fare, including beloved family recipes, popular street food specialties, and iconic dishes from Thai restaurant menus around the world.

All of Leela's recipes have been tested and tweaked to ensure that even the busiest cook can prepare them at home. With chapters on key ingredients and tools, base recipes, one-plate meals, classic rice accompaniments, and even Thai sweets, *Simple Thai Food* is a complete primer for anyone who wants to give Thai cooking a try. By the end of the book, you'll be whipping up tom yam soup and duck red curry that will put your local takeout joint to shame. But perhaps more importantly, you'll discover an exciting new world of Thai flavors and dishes—including Stir-Fried Chicken with Chile Jam, Leaf-Wrapped Salad Bites, and Crispy Wings with Three-Flavored Sauce—that will open your eyes to all the wonderful possibilities that real Thai cooking has to offer.

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### Editorial Review

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Many ethnic cuisines seem forbidding to the home chef because exotic ingredients aren't readily available and because of the required painstaking (and time-consuming) preparations. Relax in the hands of newbie author and experienced food-blogger Punyaratabandhu, who streamlines her way to the table with popular dishes like satay, pad thai, curries, and congees, among others. Not content with simplifying instructions, she also identifies which foodstuffs can accept substitutes and which can't (like lemongrass and galangal). Even better, there's an appended list of online ordering sources for those nonmetro dwellers. The more than 100 recipes fall into one of four categories: noshes and nibbles, rice accompaniments, one-plate or bowl meals, and sweets, each with a colorful preface. With her instructions (and assurances), readers just might try oxtail soup, rice congee with pork dumplings and eggs, herb-baked cashews, and pumpkin custard. Many of the basic recipes that inform Thai cooking are gathered at the back, from steamed glutinous rice (aka sticky rice) to all types of curry paste. This is a new appreciation for a quiet cuisine. --Barbara Jacobs

#### Review

"Thai has long been underrepresented in my pantry, my refrigerator and on my cookbook shelves because I never felt I had enough support to cook much beyond a beef curry made with canned coconut milk and a commercial red curry paste. Punyaratabandhu's practical and calming tone -- plus her delicious-sounding recipes -- make me want to do much more Thai cooking." - **The Chicago Tribune**

"I have generally found "Quick," "Easy," and "Simple" to be disingenuous labels when it comes to Thai cookbooks [...] But Punyaratabandhu seems to pull it off, coming up with recipes that are weeknight-doable yet electric with ingredients you can just about find if you try hard [...]. Shortcuts or not, they're desperately delicious." - **National Public Radio**

"... blogger Leela Punyaratabandhu ([shesimmers.com](#)) has a way of marrying convenience with high flavor ...." - **GOOD READS OF 2014, National Public Radio**

"Punyaratabandhu [...] does simplify the complexity of Thai cuisine. [...] To write this book, she travelled back to Bangkok where she visited friends and family and interviewed street vendors and other cooks so she could best capture the flavours of her home country in a way that a North American could get." - **The Globe and Mail**

"... Punyaratabandhu's [...] a masterful hand-holder: If you love Thai food but the ingredients and preparation have you cowed, this is the book to get ..." - **THE 20 BEST COOKBOOKS OF 2014, The Globe and Mail**

"... The work developed into this, her first cookbook, and it shows a confidence and care absent in many books by more seasoned authors. [...] "Simple Thai Food" is what it says: unusually simple, and still really Thai. It's written with grace, dedication, and humor, and there's nothing like it on the market. [...] In other words, if you want a single Thai book, this is it." - **The Boston Globe**

"... Written by the popular [shesimmers.com](#) blogger, this is the best home Thai book currently available ..." - **TOP 10 COOKBOOKS OF 2014, The Boston Globe**

"Simple Thai Food [...] takes a measured approach to traditional Thai cuisine; it is neither dogmatic nor full of shortcuts. [...] Punyaratabandhu writes most of these recipes as she would prepare them for Thai guests [...]. Yet in her extensive and detailed headnotes, she includes helpful hints for preparation, shopping tips, and, most importantly, good ideas for substitutes. In this way, readers are given a wealth of options, none more (or less) delicious than the last ..." - *THE YEAR IN COOKBOOKS: OUR FAVORITE READS OF 2014*, **Serious Eats**

**Best Book of 2014, NPR**

**Best Cookbook of 2014, The Globe and Mail**

**Best Cookbooks of 2014—Serious Eats**

"*Simple Thai Food* is just what folks need: a simple, easy-to-follow cookbook on a delicious cuisine (and one of my favorites!) that most people aren't used to making at home. With clear, friendly instructions and valuable tips and techniques, Leela unlocks the flavors and seasonings of real Thai cooking—spicy salads, coconut-rich soups, blazing bowls of curry, and the fiery, flavorful condiments that go alongside. Thanks to Leela, I'm excited to create these authentic Thai dishes in my own kitchen!"

—David Lebovitz, author of *My Paris Kitchen*

"In this compendium of favorite Thai dishes, Leela has managed to make the recipes accessible and straightforward for a home cook, and to keep them very true to what a modern Thai cook (in Thailand as well as in the West) would recognize as 'authentic.' She does offer substitutions when ingredients are more difficult to find, but they never skew far from what a Thai mom would use in her own kitchen. Leela even sneaks in a few dishes that you might not find in your local Thai restaurant, but will probably become your favorites!"

—Andy Ricker, chef/owner of the Pok Pok restaurants and author of *Pok Pok*

"Leela has crafted an authoritative, opinionated, and thoroughly down-to-earth collection of traditional Thai recipes, written especially for cooks who weren't lucky enough to be born in Thailand. All the basics are here, beautifully organized, from curry paste to coconut milk and beyond."

—David Tanis, author of *One Good Dish*

"*Simple Thai Food* is a beautiful snapshot of Leela's effort to stay connected to her Bangkok roots through food, and a wonderfully practical guide for those of us who want to create authentic Thai flavors at home."

—James Oseland, editor-in-chief of *Saveur* and author of *Cradle of Flavor*

"Leela re-creates her beloved taste memories, and then invites us in—offering tools, inspiration, and fresh context in equal measure. You will want these recipes for so many reasons—the craft, joy, deliciousness, backstory—and you will want (and come close to experiencing) Leela herself at your table, imparting her fine intelligence and warmth."

—Mollie Katzen, author of *The Moosewood Cookbook* and *The Heart of the Plate*

#### About the Author

Leela Punyaratabandhu grew up in a traditional Thai home in the heart of Bangkok where cooking was taken very seriously. She created the cooking blog *She Simmers*, which in 2012 was voted "Best Regional Cuisine" blog by *Saveur*. Her writing has appeared in CNN Travel, a website on Asian travel destinations by CNN International, and the award-winning food website *Serious Eats*, among others. Leela divides her time between Chicago and Bangkok.

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