

Pad Thai

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 45 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Chef's Notes

The amounts in this recipe are just a very loose guide. You may want to add more fish sauce, tamarind or bean sprouts...whatever suits your fancy. You may even want to add more sauce to the Pad Thai; it's all up to you. Once you make it a few times, you'll know what your preferences are.

Serving chili powder, limes, peanuts and sugar on the side is how it's done in Thailand. You can also serve extra fish sauce and hot sauce, so guests can add what they like.

With this dish, the best advice we can give is to have everything ready before you start cooking. Then get your wok nice and hot and away you go.

Most recipes do not add chicken stock, but it is the way we learned to do it in Thailand (I even have the cute pink apron to prove it...ha ha). It's just a fool proof way of cooking the noodles. If you add the sauce right away, there is greater potential for sticking. Another bit of advice...don't add the green onions and bean sprouts until you are ready to sit down and eat. Pad Thai is at its best when it's made and eaten immediately.

Soaking the Noodles:

Many recipes say to soak the noodles in warm or even hot water. I have found soaking them in cold water is a foolproof way to never over soak them. You can even soak them overnight if they are placed in cold water.

If you are in a panic though...you can soak them for about 10 to 15 minutes in warm water. Just make sure to take them out once they are pliable, otherwise they will become mushy. Any leftover noodles will keep for quite a few days in the refrigerator.

Making the Sauce:

Thai chili powder is simply ground Thai chilies. It adds a nice bit of heat to the sauce. If you cannot find Thai chili powder, you could use Sriracha sauce or a pinch or two of cayenne. Just don't substitute with the American version of chili sauce, as it contains extra flavorings, such as black pepper and oregano.

We use about 4 tablespoons of sauce per batch, but really it's up to you how much you use. The sauce can be made a few days in advance and refrigerated. Try to remember to bring it to room temperature before you use it.

Pickled Radish/Turnip:

Thai pickled radish is not the same as Chinese pickled radish. It is optional in this

recipe, but it adds a nice texture.

Dried Shrimp:

A mortar and pestle works really well for breaking up the dried shrimp. A food processor or chef's knife aren't recommended, but they will work. Just be sure to chop them really well, as the dried shrimp can be quite hard.

Cooking the Pad Thai:

Before you start cooking, it's important that all of your ingredients are at room temperature.

Peanut oil is used, due to its mild flavor and high smoke point (over 450°F).

If using chicken, add it to the wok before you add the tofu. Let it cook for 2 or 3 minutes and then add the tofu (if using) and proceed with the recipe.

Cook only 1-2 portions at a time, just like they do in Thailand. Smaller portions are key to the success of this recipe.

The wok:

A quality, well-seasoned wok is essential for the success of your Pad Thai. If food sticks when you normally cook with it, the Pad Thai will stick even worse. The wok we used was a heavy cast-iron wok, which is considered to be a "Western Style" cast-iron wok. The advantage to this wok is that it retains the heat really well. However, that can sometimes be a disadvantage, because it stays so hot you have to be more careful, since you cannot adjust the heat so quickly. That is why I turn off the wok after the prawns are cooked.

Soaking the Noodles

To prepare the dry noodles, soak them in cold water, pushing them down so they are completely covered. Let soak for about an hour or until pliable.

Step 1: Soaking the Noodles

- 454 g flat rice noodles

Making the Sauce

First, roughly chop the palm sugar, and then place into a pot, along with the fish sauce, tamarind pulp, soy sauce and Thai chili powder. Bring to a simmer over low heat. Once the sugar has fully melted, turn off the heat and set the sauce aside.

Step 2: Making the Sauce

- 6 tbsp palm sugar
- 6 tbsp fish sauce
- 6 tbsp tamarind pulp
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1/4 tsp Thai chili powder (or 1/2 tsp. Sriracha sauce)

Preparing the Rest of the Mise en Place

Preheat your oven to 350° degrees Fahrenheit. Roast the peanuts for approximately 8 to 10 minutes, or until golden; set aside to cool.

Squeeze out the excess water from the tofu and cut it into bite-size pieces. Cut the green onions into 2" -inch pieces. Mince the pickled radish and set aside. Grind the dried shrimp in a mortar and pestle (or finely chop). Clean and de-vein the shrimp.

Set yourself up to cook the first batch. Get the bean sprouts, crack one of the eggs and measure out half of the chicken stock.

Pulse the peanuts in a food processor a few times, until roughly chopped. Set some of the peanuts aside for garnish and place the rest into a separate bowl to be used in the pad Thai.

Roll the lime, applying some pressure to help release the juices. Halve the lime width-wise and slice each piece into 4 pieces.

Step 3: Preparing the Rest of the Mise en Place

- 1/3 cup unsalted, raw peanuts
- 175 g extra-firm tofu
- 1 bunch green onions
- 5 to 6 cloves fresh garlic
- 2 to 4 tsp pickled radish (aka pickled turnips)
- 1 tsp dried shrimp
- 16 small, fresh shrimp
- 2 to 4 cups fresh bean sprouts
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup chicken stock (plus approx. 2 tbsp)
- 1 fresh lime
- Thai chili powder (for garnish)
- sugar (for garnish)

Cooking the Pad Thai

Before you start cooking, drain the rice noodles. Line up your ingredients in order of use, remembering to add only half of everything because Pad Thai must be cooked in smaller batches.

Heat a wok over high heat. When the wok starts to smoke, add the peanut oil. Begin by cooking the tofu until it just starts to turn golden. Next, add the garlic and cook for a few seconds. Then add about 2 handfuls of the noodles and toss for about 30 seconds to coat them in the oil.

Add about three quarters of the stock. Once the stock reduces down, test a noodle to see if it's cooked. Add more stock if the noodles are still a bit too firm. Move the noodles aside and drizzle the side of the wok with a bit more oil. Add the egg and let set for about 10 seconds. Scramble it slightly then fold it into the noodles.

Move the noodles aside once again, add a touch more oil, and then add the prawns. Let them cook for a minute or so, flipping them over so they cook on both sides. Once they look cooked on the outside, stir everything together. Immediately turn off the heat and add about 4 tablespoons of the sauce.

Sprinkle with some of the dried shrimp, pickled radish, a few peanuts and toss. Just before serving, add the green onions, a few handfuls of bean sprouts and fold everything together.

To finish, garnish with some of the peanuts and a squeeze of fresh lime. You can also add some fresh cilantro if you like. Serve.

Step 4: Cooking the Pad Thai

- 6 tbsp peanut oil
- 4 tsp peanut oil (during cooking)
- 1 bunch fresh cilantro (optional)

The Second Batch

Before you cook the second batch, measure out the rest of the oil, crack another egg and have your chicken stock ready. Rinse out the wok with warm water and wipe it clean with some paper towel. Follow the same order as before. Serve immediately once cooked.

Step 5: The Second Batch