

Thai Chili Paste | Nam Prik Pao

Swick

Makes 6004799503160661/18014398509481984 cups | Active Time: 20 minutes | Total Time: 30 minutes

Chef's Notes

While this paste is most often used to make Tom Yum Soup, it also happens to be delicious with plain rice. It can even be thinned down a bit and used as a dip or dressing.

This sauce is so flavourful, you may even want to make a double or triple batch.

If you do not have a mortar and pestle a food processor could be used, but just know that you will not get the same smooth paste-like consistency that you would if using a mortar and pestle.

Step 1: Making the Chil Paste

- 1/2 cup minced shallots (approx 3 shallots)
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tbsp cashew nuts
- 1 tbsp Chili Powder*
- 1 tbsp palm or cane sugar (or sweetener of choice)
- 1 tbsp miso or tamarind paste
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tbsp soy sauce (preferably Thai)**

*This is the Chili Powder recipe that was used in this recipe, which adds nice flavor to the paste, without adding a tremendous amount of heat. If using another chili powder, the final paste may be quite a bit spicier — so keep that in mind when adding it to dishes. Also note that whole dried chiles can also be used instead of chili powder.

**Traditionally half dark and half light soy sauce is used, but honestly, any good soy sauce or tamari will work just fine.

To cook the paste, heat a wok, or non-stick fry pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, add the onions and cook for about a minute or so. Then add the garlic and cook for another minute, or until the onions and garlic are nicely browned and aromatic.

Since this particular recipe was made without oil, you will need to keep an eye on the onions and garlic so that they don't burn. If needed, add a touch of water during cooking. Alternatively, a tablespoon or so of oil can be added at the beginning to fry the onions and garlic. Once done, turn of the heat and set aside.

Next, using a mortar and pestle, crush the cashews, sesame seeds, chili powder and sugar into a paste-like consistency. Then add the miso (or tamarind) paste, lime juice and soy sauce continue to mix the ingredients together. Once a paste as formed, add the onion and garlic mixture. Continue to crush and mix the ingredients together until you reach a somewhat smooth paste.

Lastly, return the paste mixture to the fry pan and cook over medium heat, for a few minutes, or until the paste takes on a rich dark red/orange color. Again, be careful not to burn the mixture. That being said, the oils from the nuts and seeds will help to keep the paste moist as it cooks.

Once done, either use immediately, or refrigerate for later. This paste will last for several days in the refrigerator or several months in the freezer.