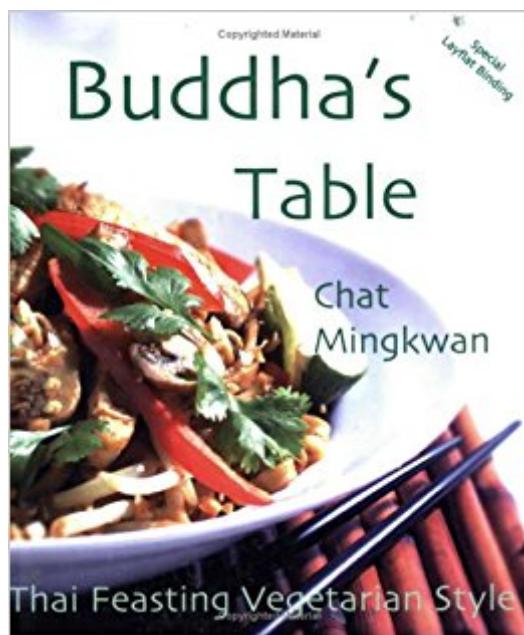


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Buddha's Table: Thai Feasting Vegetarian Style



Synopsis

For centuries, Thai vegetarian chefs have modified their meals to include only plant-based ingredients. This collection represents the most successful Thai recipes in terms of taste and execution for the home cook, adjusted to please healthy Western vegetarian tastes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Here is a great collection of Thai recipes in terms of taste and execution for the home cook, adjusted to please Western vegetarian tastes. Enjoy salads, soups, stir-fries and curries, beautifully illustrated with full-color photographs. The author regularly appears as a guest chef at major culinary schools.

Chat Mingkwan grew up in Bangkok, Thailand. He has apprenticed in provincial French cuisine at La Cagouille in Rayon, France, traveled extensively in Southeast Asia, and worked in restaurants in the San Francisco area. Currently, Chat runs Unusual Touch, a business specializing in catering, food consulting and restaurant design, Thai cooking classes, and culinary expeditions to Thailand.

I'm both vegetarian and a huge fan of Thai food, so I've been looking for a cookbook on this topic. This is a winner. The soups are varied enough that I feel I am really learning what combinations of flavors work, which is allowing me to branch out into my own creations.

Everything I've made from this book is absolutely delicious and tastes just the way I think it should taste. I live in a rural area where there are NO Thai restaurants. If I want to eat Thai, I've got to make it for myself. And I've been doing so several times a week since receiving this book. I can't say enough good things about it. If you're keen to cook Thai food, BUY THIS BOOK!

If I could only keep one vegetarian cookbook, Buddha's Table would be it. Although I had never heard of many of the ingredients, I was surprised to find all of them in a local whole foods market. It was very easy to prepare and the result were exotic. My husband, who is a meat eater, said it is the best food he has ever eaten. My son and his girlfriend were so excited they left with left over ingredients and the cook book, so I had to buy two more books (one for my daughter).

Love this book! The directions are easy to follow, and the products easy to find at an Asian market. The only problem is i can't seem to find how to control the heat of a dish very well. I'm figuring less Thai chilies, but it doesn't tell you that while you're creating the recipe. The first green curry i made was too hot to stand. Other than that, nicely put together.

I did not expect so much from this book and was worried I would never be able to find all the ingredients listed here, but boy was I wrong. I was able to find most of the ingredients at 99 ranch (Chinese market) and the book also lists colorful pictures and descriptions of the major ingredients listed in the recipes. I just made Phad Thai & Red Curry from scratch using this book and they were absolutely amazing. I'm a novice at cooking but these dishes were in some ways even better than some of the Thai restaurants I've been to, not just because it's less oily and less salty but very tasty! I can't wait to try rest of the recipes to add to my home cooked vegetarian meals. Definitely recommend it.

For some reason, I thought this book would be bigger (physically). I was kind of surprised how thin / compact it is. But, for its size, it does seem to pack a pretty good compendium of information inside its covers. It lists the various ingredients endemic to Thai cooking, and pretty quickly gets down to the business of how to put them together into wonderful sounding dishes. I haven't tried them yet, but have no doubt that they will be fabulous. I love Thai food. It's tasty, pretty and relatively healthy (however, I've yet to find a truly low-fat Thai cookbook; if you're looking for that, this probably isn't it as it still seems to use various vegetable oils for cooking / frying). I also recently got The Vegetarian Table: Thailand, which I think is a pretty excellent reference as well. I also think it's

perhaps slightly more polished than Buddha's table, as its pages are in color and it provides a far larger selection of color photos showing the finished products of the recipes. Still, Buddha's table is a good entry in its own right and the two might make good shelf companions.

I've made 3 recipes from this book, and all of them were edible, although the Tom Kha required some alterations before I was willing to serve it. I think the problem here is that the author is not himself a vegetarian (according to the intro) and therefore is not familiar with typical substitutions. The Tom Kha recipe omitted the usual fish sauce--just omitted it without any replacements. Could we use a konbu soupbase for a fishy flavor? Maybe some of that fermented bean paste? Something was missing. I'll have to attempt my own substitutions. The Pad Thai recipe also just omitted the fish sauce without replacements. It had a pretty good flavor though. My husband thought it was great. The author seems to use mushrooms in place of meat in most recipes. I like mushrooms, but if you don't, be warned. I am familiar with good Thai flavor--there was a little hole-in-the-wall Thai restaurant near where I used to live. The walls of the restaurant were decorated with framed magazine articles naming that restaurant as the most authentic Thai restaurant in the western United States. The food was excellent. The recipes in this cookbook are just close enough to remind me of that Thai restaurant, but far enough to make me really miss good Thai food. The first time I opened this book, it made a cracking sound and now the pages are falling out; inferior binding, but the other books I own in this series are not falling apart.

Before buying this cookbook, I had tried making Thai dishes from various internet sources and the cookbook Real Vegetarian Thai - but they never turned out like those in the restaurants. Buddha's Table changed all that. So far I've made Tofu Pra Ram, Tom Kha soup, Yellow Curry, and Pad See-ew noodles, and they've all turned out exactly like the dishes I order. Chat Mingkwan lets you in on the secret ingredients to get just the right taste. I found out that my curries never tasted quite right because I was missing coconut cream (in addition to coconut milk) in my sauce! And my peanut sauce turned out perfect by following his recipe exactly. It's definitely worth the extra trouble to find all of his ingredients to get a really authentic taste. I disagree with a previous reviewer with regard to the fish sauce in the Tom Kha - Chat includes light soy sauce in his recipe, which he describes in his notes on ingredients at the beginning of the book as the ideal replacement for fish sauce in vegetarian cooking.

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