

## CLASSIC THAI FLAVOURS

There are four principles to Thai cookery – hot, sweet, sour and salty. Get the balance of these flavours right and you can create authentic Thai dishes at home.

### HOT FLAVOURS

- Chillies provide a lot of heat – the hottest is the small red bird's eye chilli.
- Galangal (see right). Substitute with root ginger if you can't find it.
- Fresh coriander (see below right).

### SWEET FLAVOURS

- Palm sugar is a mid-brown sugar. You can use soft dark brown sugar instead.
- Thai basil has a sweet, strong aniseed flavour and looks similar to regular basil.

### SOUR FLAVOURS

- Tamarind is a sticky, dark brown pulp which comes from a tree pod (see right).
- Lime juice gives a sharp sour flavour.
- Fragrant kaffir lime leaves impart a pungent lime flavour to dishes.
- Lemongrass gives a fresh citrusy flavour to Thai food (see below, far right).

### SALTY FLAVOURS

- Thai fish sauce (nam pla) is a seasoning. It has a strong salty taste.
- Shrimp paste has a pungent aroma and intense flavour, so use sparingly.

## THAI INGREDIENTS

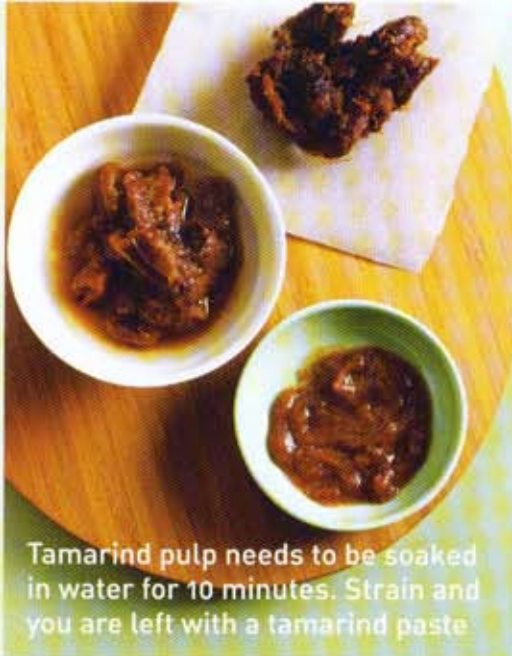
- Coconut milk adds richness to dishes.
- Rice noodles are made from rice flour, and are usually soaked before using.
- Pea aubergines are a Thai ingredient. Substitute with regular aubergines.
- Dried shrimps are ground and added to stir-fries or soaked and used whole.

## ESSENTIAL THAI COOKING TIPS

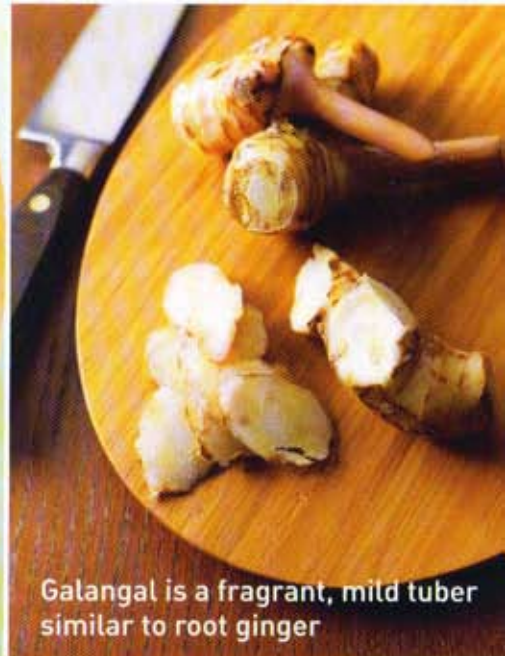
- Remember the four Thai cookery principles and adjust the heat, sourness, saltiness and sweetness to taste.
- Curry pastes form the basis of most Thai dishes, except soups and stir-fries.
- Thai curries are very quick to prepare, usually taking about 30 minutes.
- When making a curry, don't shake the can of coconut milk – open it, spoon off the thick cream on top of the milk and cook it with the curry paste. When you have a thick paste, add the milk – this should stop the milk curdling.

## WHERE TO BUY

Most large supermarkets will stock everything you need for Thai recipes, but for some fresh ingredients, you will need to go to Thai or south-east Asian food shops or buy from [wingyipstore.co.uk](http://wingyipstore.co.uk).



Tamarind pulp needs to be soaked in water for 10 minutes. Strain and you are left with a tamarind paste



Galangal is a fragrant, mild tuber similar to root ginger

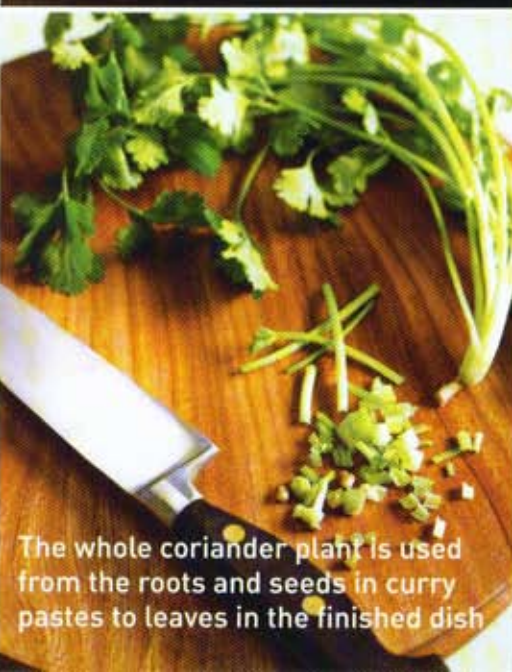


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## HOME-MADE THAI GREEN CURRY PASTE

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 1 CURRY TO SERVE 4

Dry-fry 1 teaspoon cumin seeds and 2 teaspoons coriander seeds in a small non-stick frying pan until aromatic. Transfer to a food processor along with 1 teaspoon each shrimp paste and salt, 4 garlic cloves, chopped, 5cm piece fresh galangal, chopped, 1 tablespoon palm sugar, 1 lemongrass stalk, outer layer discarded and finely chopped, 5 medium green chillies, deseeded and chopped, a bunch of fresh coriander, roots and stalks washed and chopped (reserve the leaves for the curry), and whizz together to a paste. Make double the quantity, and chill the rest for up to 1 week, or freeze it for up to 2 months.



The whole coriander plant is used from the roots and seeds in curry pastes to leaves in the finished dish



Remove the tough outer layer from lemongrass before finely slicing