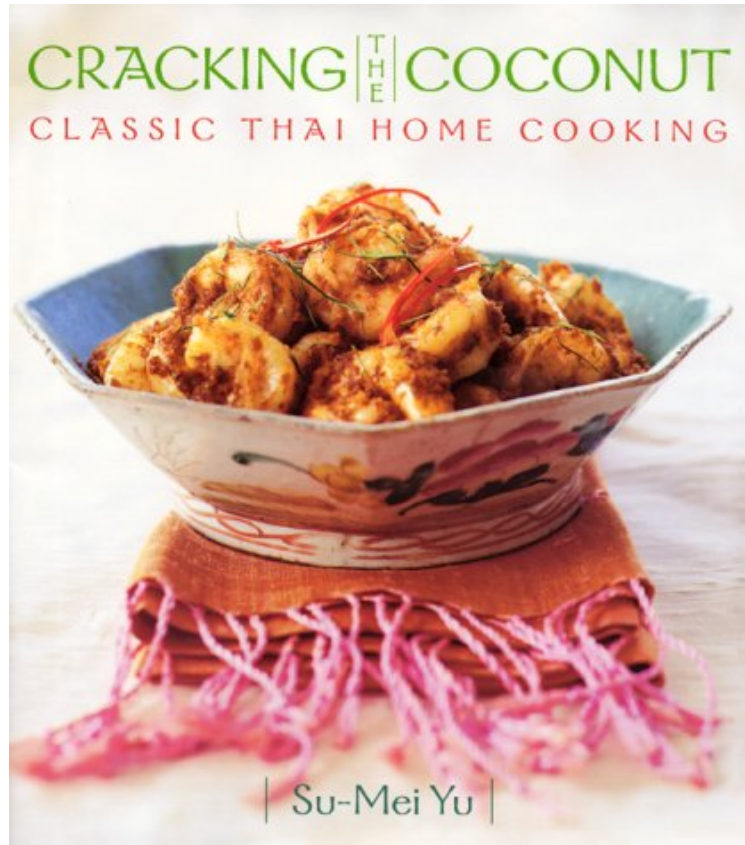


(Library ebook) Cracking the Coconut: Classic Thai Home Cooking

Cracking the Coconut: Classic Thai Home Cooking

Su-mei Yu

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Su-mei Yu : Cracking the Coconut: Classic Thai Home Cooking before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cracking the Coconut: Classic Thai Home Cooking:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Khao SuayBy Greg RichterThai cookbooks abound, but this is the best one on my shelf. It's the one I reach for consistently and the one that has the best, most usable everyday instructions. I've cooked professionally, and trained in Thailand, and still love this book for it's clear, concise directions and delicious recipes. It's straightforward and accessible for beginners, and chock full of recipes that work for us old hands. I've not had a single recipe failure out of this book, and just adore the presentation and the openness of the writing. Many thanks for such a wonderful book! Khop khun krab!3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Cracking the CoconutBy Daryl B. GolembI recently had the fantastic opportunity to attend a cooking class held by Su-Mei at her restaurant in San Diego. Cracking the Coconut shares her culture, her wisdom, and her home style recipes for the average cook. Check out her Asian Grilling and Elements of Life cookbooks to further this journey.14 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Cracking Thai Food - This book does it!By K. L. GallaherThis is a wonderful book on a number of levels. The author has cooked in the US for many years and so does not require impossible ingredients or use foods with strange names without explaining.The recipes are relatively

simple - they do not have 37 ingredients. The recipes appear authentic - she goes back to Thailand every year and has friends and relatives there. Every recipe has extensive stories and background to go with it. The graphics are subtle and wonderful. Too bad the designer Ralph Fowler gets only a mention. But do not be mistaken this is not just another pretty/useless coffee table cookbook. This is a cookbook to sit down and read cover to cover, but also one to use extensively in the kitchen. No previous experience required.

For centuries Thai cooking has been among the world's most highly regarded cuisines and also among the most mysterious. For the first time the tastes, techniques, and traditions of Thai home cooking have been gathered into one extraordinary book: *Cracking the Coconut* by renowned Thai chef, teacher, and writer Su-Mei Yu. More than a simple recipe book, this is a masterful work about the art and history of Thai cooking and the people who have shaped it. But, most important, it's about preparing, eating, and thoroughly enjoying the food of Thailand. By taking readers step by step through shopping, preparing, and serving, *Cracking the Coconut* dispels the notion that Thai cooking is difficult. With Su-Mei's engaging narrative and easy-to-follow recipes, Thai cooking is suddenly accessible to everyone. The wonder of Thai food begins with exquisite contrasts in flavors and textures. Su-Mei carefully explains each ingredient and its importance. Rice is the soul of Thai cooking; coconut is its heart; salt, garlic, cilantro, and peppercorns are its spirit; chile water is the crown jewel; and chiles (prik) and fish sauce (nam pla) are the high notes and accents in the final dish. Su-Mei shows you how, through the simple acts of mincing, pounding, and grinding, spices release their wonderfully fragrant oils and scents as they evolve into pastes. These spice pastes are what adds the intensity and depth of flavor so unique to Thai cooking. And of course, there are very detailed instructions for cracking a coconut. You'll be able to create such evocatively titled dishes as Crying Tiger, Galloping Horse, and A Thief's Salad, which taste as intriguing as they sound. More familiar dishes such as sat with peanut sauce, mee krob, cucumber salad, and padd Thai will easily become family favorites. *Cracking the Coconut* allows cooks of all levels to re-create the beauty and elegance of Thai home cooking in their own kitchens. From silky Steamed Fish Custard in Banana Pouches and Spicy Green Papaya Salad to zesty sauces and accompaniments to desserts that rival those of any cuisine, *Cracking the Coconut* will take you on a culinary journey never before possible.

.com Americans love Thai food. Among the best cookbooks exploring this rich, tantalizing cuisine is chef-restaurateur Su-Mei Yu's *Cracking the Coconut*. Insisting that there can be no true Thai cooking without homemade "core" preparations (such as various chili pastes), Yu includes precise, accessible recipes for these and other essential ingredients while outlining fundamental techniques in vivid detail. Readers learn the proper hand motions for cracking a coconut, how to wrap ingredients in banana leaves, and how to work a mortar and pestle, the central Thai-kitchen implement. The book's 175 recipes are divided between chapters devoted to essential ingredients or dishes. The chapter on Thai curry ("the signature dish") explores the basics of preparing this exciting fare and includes such delicious recipes as Red Curry with Roasted Pork and Green Banana and Sweet Green Curry with Meatballs. A chapter called "The Secret of Thai Salads" offers recipes for a small repertoire of essential dressings and such tempting recipes as Apricot, Shrimp, and Pork Salad and a salad-feast called, simply, Lamb and Roast Duck. Yu provides cultural notes and cooking lore throughout the book, often drawing from her recipe-hunting travels abroad. It's hard to imagine a better start for anyone wishing to "cook Thai" than this fully illustrated book, which perfectly balances recipes and instruction to make it an innovative standout. --Arthur Boehm
From Publishers Weekly
Owner of San Diego's Saffron Restaurant, Yu takes her Thai cooking seriously: she expects readers to pound curry pastes by hand in a mortar and pestle (a process that takes about 30 minutes) and don't even think about using canned coconut milk unless absolutely necessary. In compensation for all this work, Yu provides flawless and authentic recipes full of the fresh flavors of Thailand, such as Grilled Mackerel Salad with pickled garlic, coconut and peanuts and Beef and Pumpkin Stew with kabocha squash and cilantro. Recipes are organized loosely according to main ingredients, and in one chapter simply because they represent "The Thai Philosophy of Food," which consists of juxtaposing contrasting tastes. A chapter on fiery curries includes Red Curry with Roasted Pork and Green Banana and Sour-Orange Curry with Tender Vegetables. Aside from the work of grinding the curry paste, these can be assembled relatively quickly. Another chapter focuses on "The Big Four Seasonings," or salt, garlic, coriander root and peppercorns, and provides a recipe for a paste of the four that can be used in everything from fish batter and deep-frying batter to meatloaf. Noodle dishes are both hot (several types of Pad Thai) and cold (Cool Noodles with Jungle-Style Sauce). Thai salads are original and refreshing: Pomelo and Shrimp Salad and Banana Blossoms with Chicken Salad. Yu also writes beautifully of her own experiences cooking and eating in Thailand. For Thai novices and for those who are seeking to delve more deeply into this sophisticated and often surprising cuisine, this book is a must-have. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
For fans of Southeast Asian cuisine, here are two excellent cookbooks. An immigrant from Vietnam to the United States, My Tran has developed her own simplified versions of favorite childhood dishes, many of which now appear in *The Vietnamese Cookbook*. Her excellent introduction to one of Southeast Asia's most colorful cuisines provides more than 100 recipes for such tempting treats as Spring Rolls and Lemon Rice mixed in with a few pinches of personal recollections and some outstanding color photographs. Novice

cooks will especially appreciate the clear, easy-to-understand layout of each recipe, which takes the intimidation out of preparing these dishes. My Tran's book will serve as a good complement to other, more classic Vietnamese cookbooks, such as Nicole Routhier's *The Foods of Vietnam* (Stewart, Tabori Chang, 1989), and is recommended for most public libraries. Rather than simplifying or adapting recipes for American tastes and markets, chef and restaurant owner Su-Mei Yu instead serves up a cookbook that pays homage to the cuisine of her homeland while offering detailed instructions on preparing Thai dishes in the old manner. *Cracking the Coconut* covers everything from the equipment and ingredients needed to traditional preparation methods such as the use of a mortar and pestle. The text not only gives readers 175 delicious recipes but also provides a fascinating look at the history of Thai cooking as well as a few glimpses at the people and forces that have helped shape it. For the most part, the author forgoes the traditional cookbook arrangement by type of dish (i.e., appetizers, salads, desserts, etc.) and instead devotes chapters to a specific ingredient such as rice or a signature dish such as Thai salads. A sumptuous feast for both serious and armchair cooks, this lavishly detailed cookbook is highly recommended for all public libraries. DJohn Charles, Scottsdale P.L., AZ Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.