THAILAND / WILL AND FRIENDS

GAENG TAI PLA

Gaeng tai pla is a Southern Thai curry of fermented fish stomach, lemongrass, tamarind, shallot and coconut cream. It is eaten over rice noodles with raw vegetables.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	20 min	25 min	45 min	Medium	Hot

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CURRY

300 ml coconut cream

300 ml coconut milk

3 tbsp Southern Thai tai pla curry paste (or Southern Thai yellow curry paste)

100 g fermented fish stomach (tai pla), with some of its liquid

3 lemongrass stalks, finely sliced

4 shallots, finely sliced

2 tbsp tamarind paste

1 tbsp white sugar

TO SERVE

300 g fresh rice noodles (khanom jin)

Raw vegetables such as long beans, cucumber, okra and herbs

METHOD

MAKE THE CURRY BASE

1. Bring the coconut cream and coconut milk to a gentle boil in a pot over medium heat.
2. Stir in the curry paste and the fermented fish stomach. Break the fish up with the back of a spoon.

ADD THE AROMATICS

3. Add the lemongrass and shallots. Cook for a few minutes so the lemongrass starts to soften and release its flavour.
4. Add the tamarind and white sugar.

SIMMER

5. Simmer gently for about 15 minutes. Keep the heat moderate: the fish is already cooked and the coconut cream can split if it boils hard.

6 Taste and adjust with a little more sugar or tamarind.

TO SERVE

7 Serve over rice noodles with raw vegetables on the side.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Fermented fish stomach (tai pla) is sold in jars in Thai and Southeast Asian shops. You can make it yourself with about 20 percent salt and oily fish, left to ferment for a week.

White sugar keeps the curry light. Palm sugar will make it heavier and darker.

Tamarind paste and fish stomach are both salty, so taste before adding any fish sauce.

Will and Palm cook gaeng tai pla, a Southern Thai curry of fermented fish stomach. They first ate it at Muang Nakhon, a restaurant in the south famous for its noodles, where it came without vegetables.The curry is coconut cream and coconut milk brought to the boil, then curry paste, fermented fish stomach, lemongrass and tamarind. Palm uses white sugar…