THAILAND / EXTREME FOOD ADVENTURES IN THAILAND

TOM YUAT MAKAM

Tom yuat makam is a Southern Thai soup of salted fish simmered in coconut milk with shallot and shrimp paste, finished with young tamarind leaves. It is a childhood dish for chef Palm.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	15 min	25 min	40 min	Easy	Mild

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE SOUP

- 60 g salted fish, cut into small pieces, head kept
- 500 ml second-press coconut milk (or 250 ml coconut milk diluted with 250 ml water)
- 4 shallots, bashed
- 1 tsp shrimp paste
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tbsp palm sugar, grated
- 1 pinch salt
- 40 g young tamarind leaves
- 100 ml thick first-press coconut cream

METHOD

START THE SOUP

1. Put the thin coconut milk in a pot and bring to a gentle boil.
2. Add the salted fish, including the head, and the bashed shallots. Simmer for 10 minutes, until the fish has softened and flavoured the broth.

SEASON

3. Stir in the shrimp paste, brown sugar and palm sugar. Go easy on the salt, as the fish is already salty. Taste and adjust.

FINISH

4. Add the tamarind leaves and cook for 1 to 2 minutes.
5. Stir in the thick coconut cream at the end and heat through without boiling hard.
6. Serve in bowls with rice.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Use thin coconut milk first and add the thick cream last. Thick milk added early splits the soup.

Salted fish varies a lot in strength. Cut it small and soak it for a few minutes if it tastes too intense.

Young tamarind leaves are hard to find outside Thailand. Without them the soup is still good as a salted fish and coconut soup. Palm adds no lime, as it changes the balance.

Palm has waited years for Will to visit his home in Southern Thailand. For the first time Will cooks there, with Palm making a soup from his childhood: tom yuat makam, salted fish in coconut soup with tamarind leaf.Palm explains that the tamarind leaves come up after the summer. Will points out the second press of coconut milk: if you...