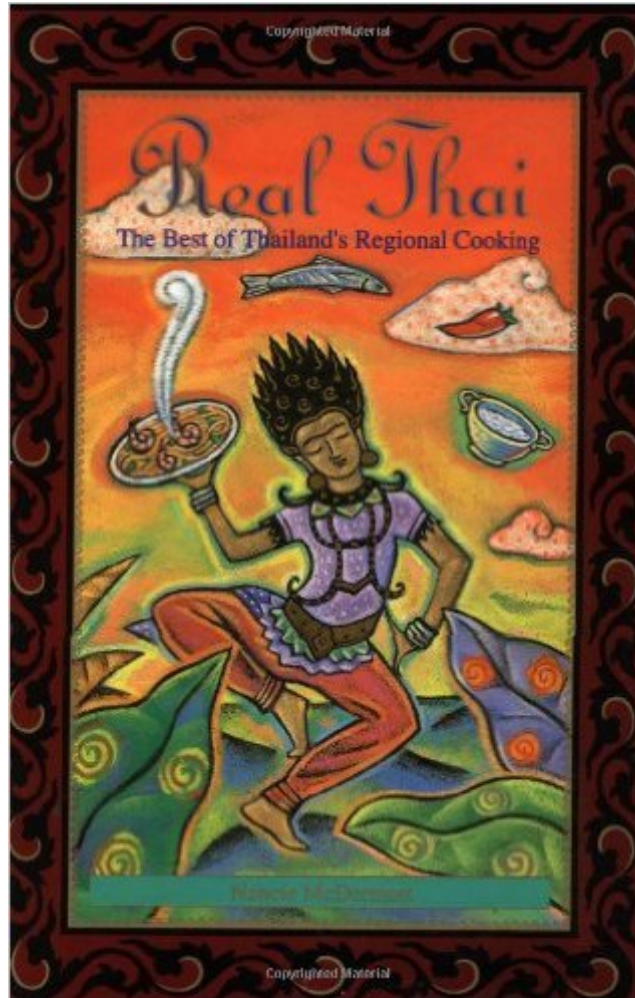


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# Real Thai: The Best Of Thailand's Regional Cooking



## Synopsis

Nancie McDermott, widely regarded as the American expert on Thai cooking, offers a clear, straightforward approach to dishes that many Westerners have tasted only in restaurants. In *Real Thai*, she demystifies once and for all every aspect of this flavorful, healthy cuisine. Organized geographically by region, over 100 tempting, easy-to-follow recipes explore not only dishes that may be familiar to Americans, such as Chicken Coconut Soup and Pork Satay, but also lesser-known local specialties such as Crab Cakes with Cilantro Paste, Fish with Yellow Curry Steamed in Banana Leaves, Sticky Rice with Mangoes, and Son-in-Law Eggs. Including advice on basic utensils and techniques, a glossary of ingredients, a list of shopping sources, and a section of suggested menus, this is the definitive guide for novice and expert alike to the diverse flavors of a regional Asian cuisine that is rapidly becoming an international favorite.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The second Thai cookbook I bought the first was *The Original Thai Cookbook* by Brennan. This book just didn't do anything for me. I attempted to make Pad Thai dish that turned out inedible. Anyways, I bought *Real Thai* in 1994 while on a daytrip to Mendocino, CA. Boy, was I rewarded many, many times over. This cookbook firmly established my reputation as being a great cook. I kept telling everyone it's because of this cookbook. My husband raves about my cooking and just about tell everyone about it. The recipes are very forgiving and flexible. Many times, I didn't have all of the ingredients and yet it still came out delicious. McDermott has such a finely honed and refined taste that her combination of seasoning is so vibrant and yet balanced. And very Thai authentic.

You don't sense that it's lacking or overpowered by one seasoning over the other. Just about every recipe works. Yellow curry chicken, basil chicken, spinach soup, the noodles with broccoli to name a few is absolutely delicious. Her curry paste recipes are delicious which if you have the time is worth the labor. I try hard not to submit to my compulsion to collect cookbooks so after 13 years I finally honed it down to - Hazan's Essential of Italian cooking, Kennedy's Essentials of Mexican cuisine, Roden's The New Book of Middle Eastern Food, Bach's The Classic Cuisine of Vietnam, Jaffrey's indian cooking and of course McDermott's Real Thai. The rest of my cookbooks I chucked it out, donated to Goodwill and gave away to my family and friends. My book is splattered with stains and pages are falling apart. You will not regret buying this book if you are into Thai cooking. Another book I found good is Simply Thai Cooking. With these two on hand, you'll establish yourself as a bonafide Thai cuisine chef.

Like the author, I was also a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand (though it appears from her introduction to the book that she preceded me there by about 15 years). Anyway, I was thrilled to learn of this book soon after I returned to the U.S. in the early 1990's. My sister had discovered it soon after she had visited me in Thailand, and had found the recipes to authentically replicate many of the dishes she remembered from her first-hand Thai experience. I was skeptical when my sister initially told me of the book, but was pleasantly surprised from the moment that I began to read through it -- so pleased, in fact, that my sister gave me her copy right there on the spot, and then went out the next day to replace her own copy. What so pleased me was the genuine authenticity of the recipes captured in the book (rather than the "westernized" or "fusion" versions that are contained in so many recipe books, and on far too many a restaurant menu these days). Many of these other books are really glorified "coffee table" books, whereas McDermott has compiled here a practical working guidebook that addresses the entire breadth of Thai cuisine. The recipes contained in her book masterfully and faithfully reproduce the exact dishes that you might find in a restaurant (large or small) or in a typical Thai home, and they are generally quite easy to replicate. As a byproduct of being more authentic, the versions that she has captured in this book also have the added benefit of tasting better than many of the dishes that you are likely to encounter at many Thai restaurants here in the U.S. If you want a book to cook from (and not just to display), this is the one.

We've been using this book as our Thai cooking bible now for eight years, from LA to Baltimore. We became so addicted we even bought a kaiffer lime tree (sadly, had to leave in LA.) We love the

tome kai gia, the clay pot shrimp with bean thread noodles, crab fried rice and use the dipping sauce for beef to marinate pork ribs. Once you master the flavors, the recipes are easy to adapt to your taste. We add ginger to the dipping sauce, and cut down on the coconut milk in the tome kai gai. However you do it, it's an amazing cook book. You will need to find a Thai grocery store in your area, though.

I picked this book up on a whim and have not stopped reading it and cooking from it for two weeks. The recipes are incredibly easy and straightforward, but definitely as good as anything you can get in any thai restaurant I've eaten in (and I've eaten in them from San Francisco to Atlanta). I've always wanted to be able to make Larb, yum nam tok and just about everything else that is in this book, and every recipe I've tried has been wonderful. I agree with some of the other reviewers: you can add more chili. Though it has no pictures, I find the simple, friendly text very soothing late night reading and I have already read this book several times more than my fancier cookbooks. I recommend it to novices and experts.

This was the first Thai cookbook I purchased when I first discovered how easy Thai was to make at home about 4 years ago. The recipes prove that you can get restaurant quality food in your home kitchen. My husband and I usually use this book two times or more a week and have never been disappointed. He doesn't like to cook that much so we are especially pleased with the simplicity of most recipes. Our favorites include our restaurant standards Pad Thai, Chicken Curry and Swimming Rama. We have also found some great new dishes through this book such as the Garlic Shrimp, and the Burmese-Style Pork Curry with Fresh Ginger. Cooking out of this book has let us explore wonderful new dishes. Also, by all means add more chilis. The hotter the better.

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