

PAPAYA SALAD

BY JUSTIN PICHETRUNGSI

SERVES: 4

TOTAL TIME: 15 MIN

- 6 red Thai chiles
- 6 garlic cloves, lightly crushed
- 2 dried árbol chiles, lightly roasted
- Kosher salt
- 5 tablespoons Thai fish sauce, plus more to taste
- 2 tablespoons Thai palm sugar, plus more to taste
- 2 medium limes, halved, plus more juice to taste
- 1 Roma tomato, sliced
- 5 green bean pieces (3-inch)
- 4 kumquats, sliced
- 4 cups shredded green papaya (from 1 large green papaya) (see Note)
- ¼ cup roasted unsalted peanuts
- 1 tablespoon dried shrimp
- ⅓ apple, very thinly sliced

1. In a large mortar, combine the Thai chiles with the garlic, árbol chiles, and a generous pinch of salt. Using a pestle, gently pound and grind the mixture until moisture begins to form in the mortar, about 1 minute. Add the 5 tablespoons of fish sauce and 2 tablespoons of sugar. Squeeze about 3 tablespoons of lime juice from the lime halves and then add the juice and limes to the mortar. Stir in the green beans, kumquats, and 2 to 3 slices of the tomato. Let the mixture macerate for 5 minutes.
2. Add the shredded papaya, peanuts, and dried shrimp to the mortar and, using the pestle in one hand and a metal spoon in the other, lightly pound and mix the salad, scraping down the side of the mortar as you pound, until the mixture is a little juicy with a mixture of textures. Taste the salad and adjust the seasoning with salt, fish sauce, sugar, and lime juice. Transfer the salad to a bowl or platter and garnish with the apple and remaining tomato slices. Serve.

SERVE WITH

Steamed sticky rice and grilled chicken.

NOTE

Before it ripens and becomes sweet, papaya has a mild, cucumber-like taste and refreshing crunch. In this recipe, it picks up the tangy, pungent flavors while being lightly pounded in a mortar with a pestle. You can find green (unripe) papaya at most Asian markets. To shred the papaya, hold the peeled papaya in one hand and, using a chef's knife, make vertical cuts in the fruit, rotating occasionally. Holding the knife at a slight angle and working away from you, carefully shave off the shreds. The shreds should be approximately 3 inches long and ⅛-to-¼-inch wide. Imperfections in size will lend texture to the salad.

NAM PRIK NOOM

BY JUSTIN PICHETRUNGSI

MAKES: 2 CUPS

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN | TOTAL TIME: 1 HR

- 1 banana leaf
- 3 tablespoons fermented shrimp paste (Kapi)
- 1 small Chinese eggplant
- 4 shallots, peeled
- 5 Serrano peppers, stemmed
- 5 jalapeño peppers, stemmed
- 10 garlic cloves, peeled
- Kosher salt
- Juice of 1 lime, plus more to taste
- 3 tablespoons fish sauce, plus more to taste
- Sugar
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- ¼ cup finely chopped scallions
- Crudités, for serving

1. Light a grill or preheat a cast-iron grill pan over low until hot, about 15 minutes. Arrange the banana leaf on a work surface and spread the fermented shrimp paste in the center. Fold the sides of banana leaf over the shrimp paste, like a parcel, and then secure it with toothpicks.
2. Grill the eggplant and shallots over low heat, turning occasionally, until charred on the outside but tender within, about 30 minutes. Meanwhile, if using a grill, thread the Serrano peppers, jalapeño peppers, and garlic onto bamboo skewers that were soaked in water. Grill the peppers, garlic, and banana leaf packet over low heat, turning occasionally, until the peppers and garlic are lightly charred and softened, 8 to 12 minutes.
3. Let all of the ingredients cool slightly, then peel and chop the eggplant, shallots, and peppers. Measure out ½ cup of the chopped eggplant and reserve the rest for another use.
4. In a very large mortar, using a pestle, lightly pound the peppers and garlic with a pinch of salt until crushed. Add the eggplant, shallots, and shrimp paste; discard the banana leaf. Pound the mixture until it resembles a chunky but soft babaganoush. Using the pestle, stir in the lime juice and fish sauce. Taste the dip and, if too spicy, gradually add pinches of sugar to balance the heat. Add more lime juice and fish sauce to taste. Stir in the cilantro and scallions. Serve with crudités.

LAAP MOO WITH THAI CHILE CONFIT

BY JUSTIN PICHETRINGSI

SERVES: 4

TOTAL TIME: 25 MIN, PLUS 1 DAY PICKLING

CHILE CONFIT

- 2 red Thai chiles
- ¼ cup fish sauce
- ¼ cup vegetable oil

LAAP MOO

- 3 tablespoons water, plus more if needed
- ½ pound lean ground pork
- 1 cup lightly packed mint leaves, plus more for garnish
- ¼ cup thinly sliced scallion, plus more for garnish
- ¼ cup lightly packed cilantro leaves, plus more for garnish
- ¼ cup lightly packed torn culantro or saw tooth coriander, plus more for garnish
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced shallots
- 1 ½ tablespoons fish sauce, plus more to taste
- 1 ½ teaspoons red Thai chili powder, plus more for garnish
- 1 red Thai chile, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon toasted sticky rice powder, plus more for garnish (see Note)

Juice of 1 lime, plus more to taste

Cabbage leaves, cut into 2-to-3-inch pieces, and other crudités, for serving

Steamed sticky rice, for serving

1. Make the confit: In a small bowl, cover the Thai chiles with the fish sauce and refrigerate for 1 to 2 days, until pickled. Drain the chiles and transfer them to a very small saucepan. Add the vegetable oil and cook over very low heat until tender, 10 to 15 minutes.
2. Make the laap moo: In a large saucepan, heat the water over medium-high until just starting to simmer. Add the pork and cook, breaking up the meat with a spoon, until cooked through but not browned, about 3 minutes; add tablespoons of water if the pork starts to brown. Stir in the mint, scallion, cilantro, culantro, shallots, fish sauce, chili powder, Thai chile, toasted sticky rice powder, and the juice of 1 lime.
3. Remove from the heat and let the ambient heat gently wilt the herbs. Add more lime juice and fish sauce to taste. Transfer to shallow bowls or a serving bowl and garnish with thinly sliced scallion, cilantro leaves, torn culantro, toasted sticky rice powder, chili powder, and the chile confit. Serve with the cabbage pieces, crudités, and sticky rice.

NOTE

To make toasted sticky rice powder, toast raw sticky rice in a nonstick skillet, tossing, until lightly golden. Transfer to a blender and process until it resembles salt crystals. It should have some texture and shouldn't be a fine dust.