

DINING WITH CHEF WRIGHT

October 23, 2014

Crispy Thai Shrimp Cakes With Cucumber and Peanuts

1 lb medium shrimp, shells and tail removed
1/4 lb long beans or green beans, thinly sliced
1/4 cup unsweetened coconut milk (Shaken Well)
2 Tbl cilantro
1 lemongrass stalk, tender white inner bulb minced
1 red Thai chile chopped
1 Tbl Asian fish sauce
1 tea salt
2 Tbl vegetable oil

Dressing
2 Tbl Asian Fish Sauce
2 Tbl rice vinegar
2 Tbl fresh lime juice
1 Tbl sugar
1 garlic clove minced

In a saucepan of boiling water, cook the beans until bright green, about 2 mins. Drain and pat dry with towel

In food processor, combine the shrimp with the coconut milk, cilantro, lemongrass, chile, fish sauce and salt. Pulse to a chunky consistency. Scrape the mixture into a bowl and stir in the green beans. Form into sixteen 1/4 cup patties

In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil. Add the shrimp cakes and cook over moderately high heat until browned on the bottom, about 2 mins. Flip and cook over moderate heat until the cakes are browned on the other side and just cooked through about 3 mins.

Sprinkle the cucumber peanut salad over the shrimp cakes and drizzle with dressing.

Cucumber Peanut Salad

1 cucumber diced
2 Tbl chopped roasted peanuts
2 Tbl chopped cilantro
2 Tbl chopped mint

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and toss. Add salt if needed

Thai Cucumber Salad

1/4 cup fresh lime juice
 1 1/2 Tbl fish sauce
 1 1/2 Tbl sugar
 1 1/2 Tbl minced seeded
 jalapeño chili (about 1 large)
 2 garlic cloves, minced
 1 1/2 seedless cucumbers
 3/4 cup sliced red onion
 3 Tbl chopped fresh mint
 3 Tbl coarsely chopped lightly
 salted roasted peanuts

Whisk first 5 ingredients in medium bowl.

Place cucumbers, onion, and mint in large bowl. Add dressing and toss to coat.

Season salad to taste with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with peanuts and serve.

Chicken Pad Thai

2/3 cup plain vegetable oil
 4 ounces 2-3 millimeters
 wide dried rice noodles,
 following the instructions
 on how to prepare dried
 rice noodles for Pad Thai
 1 1/3 cup prepared Pad
 Thai sauce
 4 large cloves garlic, peeled
 and finely chopped
 2 medium shallot (18g),
 peeled and finely chopped
 1/2 cup finely-chopped
 preserved radishes
 3/4 cup extra firm tofu
 1 1/2 lb sliced boneless,
 skinless chicken
 4 large eggs, cracked and
 mixed in the bowl
 6-7 stalks of Chinese
 chives
 2 cups bean sprouts

Garnishes

Sugar, dried red pepper
 flakes, fish sauce, and fresh
 limes
 Chopped dry-roasted
 peanuts
 Extra bean sprouts, soaked
 in acidulated water (to
 keep them fresh and
 crunchy)
 Chinese chive stalks

Noodles

To prepare dried noodles for Pad Thai, simply soak them in room temperature water until the noodles are pliable yet firm. When you bite off a piece, it should be chewable yet feel unpleasant to eat. For medium-wide noodles, 20-30 minutes of soaking in room temperature water should suffice.

You know the noodles are ready when they're soft enough for you to twirl them around your fingers without breaking the strands. Then drain the noodles well and set them aside.

Pad Thai Sauce

360g fish sauce
 452g palm sugar, finely
 chopped
 120g brown sugar
 300g tamarind pulp

Put everything in a medium pot placed over medium heat. Stir constantly until the sugars have dissolved. This should take less than a minute. You don't want to reduce or thicken the sauce; it's already very concentrated and further reduction will result in a much lower yield than intended which leads to over-seasoned Pad Thai.

To keep the sauce from being overly reduced, chop your palm sugar very finely and do not use high heat.

Once the sugar is dissolved, remove the sauce from heat; allow to cool.

Pad Thai

Set over medium-high a large nonstick wok. Add half of the vegetable oil to the pan when it's hot. Add the chicken and cook over high heat, stirring occasionally, until browned and cooked about 5 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a bowl.

Add more oil to the wok and immediately add the noodles to the hot oil, followed by the sauce stir constantly. Keep the noodles moving all the time.

After about 30-40 seconds, with the tips of your spatulas, you should be able to feel that the noodles have softened up considerably. At this point, push them to one side and add the remaining vegetable oil to the empty side of the pan.

Add the garlic, shallots, preserved radishes, tofu, and chicken keep the noodles moving so they don't burn and cook until everything is heated through. Once every thing is starting to brown make a well in the middle so you can add the eggs. Add the eggs and scramble with the tip of a spatula; let them cook undisturbed on one side before flipping and breaking them into smaller pieces, keeping an eye on the other members of the pan the whole time, especially the noodles.

By the time the eggs are cooked the noodles are soft and chewy and the sauce has been entirely absorbed into the noodles. Turn off the heat immediately.

Add two handfuls of chive-bean sprout mixture to the pan and give it all a quick but gentle stir. We want to wilt the bean sprouts and chives. Your Pad Thai is now done. Let it cool for 8-10 minutes in the pan.

Top with 2-3 tablespoons of chopped peanuts per serving and chive stalks on the side.

Season to taste with extra fish sauce, lime juice, sugar, and dried red pepper flakes as necessary.

Thai Coconut Sticky Rice and Banana

Sauce

2 Cups unsweetened coconut milk

1 1/2 Tbl sugar

1 1/2 tea salt

Rice

2 1/2 cups raw thai sticky rice

1 Cup unsweetened coconut milk

1/2 cup sugar

1 Tbl salt

2 Tbl toasted sesame seeds

Roasted Bananas

4 ripe, firm bananas

2 Tbl Vanilla

1/2 cup cane sugar

In a medium saucepan, combine the coconut milk with the sugar and salt. Bring to a simmer and cook over moderate heat until thickened slightly, about 10 minutes. Transfer the mixture to a sauceboat and let cool to room temperature, about 1 hour.

In a large, microwave-safe bowl, cover the sticky rice with water; let soak for 1 hour.

Drain the rice and return it to the bowl. Add 2 1/4 cups of water and cover the bowl with plastic wrap. Microwave the rice on high power for 5 minutes. Pull back the plastic wrap and stir the rice. Replace the plastic wrap and microwave the rice for another 5 minutes.

Pull back the plastic wrap to stir the rice a second time. Replace the plastic wrap and microwave until the rice is just tender, about 3 minutes longer. Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

In a small saucepan, combine the coconut milk with the sugar and salt and bring to a simmer.

Pour the hot coconut milk over the rice, folding until just combined.

Spoon the rice into bowls. Top with the banana and sesame seeds and serve, with sauce.

Roasted Bananas

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Cut the bananas in half both vertically and horizontally so that each banana is in 4 pieces

Have the tablespoon of vanilla extract in a bowl and lightly brush each piece with a little of it, before rolling each piece in the 1/2 cup of cane sugar to coat it

Place each piece on a cooking sheet lined with parchment paper. Once all the pieces are coated and on the baking sheet, place the sheet in the oven and roast them for 15 minutes. Remove and set aside to cool completely.