



# Thai Cuisine

# A Regional Guide to Thai Cuisine



“**Thai**”; each region has its own specialties, steeped in tradition and passed down from generation to generation.

we’ll work through this enchanting land of **NORTHEAST**, and discover a trove of culinary treats along the way.



# North-Eastern Thailand/Isaan

**Isaan** is often what many would define as ‘real’ [Thailand](#). A historical region that borders both [Cambodia](#) and [Laos](#), Isaan has long been an agricultural hub and its people have their own identity, culture and even language



## Som Tam

Also known as papaya salad, som tam is enjoyed all over Thailand but nowhere more than in Isaan. For a simple dish prepared with a pestle and mortar, it has a complex and diverse flavour profile; sour limes, fiery chillies, sweet palm sugar, fish sauce and savoury flavours all combine to produce a dish that’s extremely spicy and delicious. Eaten with fish, crab or other meats, it’s a must try for anyone visiting [Thailand](#), regardless of whether it’s eaten in Isaan or not.



## Laab

is another spicy salad with its origins in the Isaan region. Rice is toasted and grounded to fine pieces, and served mixed with juicy minced meat, and flavoured with lime juice, chilli and fish sauce

**Laab means** “luck/ fortune” in Thai language

# Isaan Food Vocabulary



ข้าวเหนียว /kâao nǎo/  
Sticky Rice



ลาบ /lâap/  
Spicy and sour salad of  
minced pork or chicken



ไก่ย่าง /gài yâang/  
Grilled Chicken



ต้มแซบ /dtôm sêep/  
Spicy soup made with stewed  
meat (usually pork, chicken or  
beef), and generous amounts  
of lime juice and fresh herbs



ขนมจีน / kanôm-jin /  
Thai noodle



ส้มตำ /sôm dtam/  
Papaya Salad



น้ำตก /náam-dtòk/  
Identical to ลาบ /lâap/, except  
that the pork or beef is cut  
into thin strips rather than  
minced.



ปลาร้า / plaa-rá /  
pickled fish

# The Best Things to See and Do in Isaan



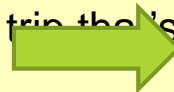
## Trek through Khao Yai National Park

With mile after mile of lush, green forest, calming rivers, inspiring waterfalls and wildlife, from elephants and tigers to porcupines and gibbons to spot



## Visit the awe-inspiring Phanom Rung

Under consideration to be a UNESCO World Heritage site, a trip to Isaan without visiting this temple complex is a trip that's incomplete.





## Join the Ubon Ratchathani Candle Festival

Huge, ornately-carved beeswax candles are paraded through the town on their way to the temples and are judged on their beauty and design.

They're intricately carved works of art depicting people or scenes from Buddhist mythology.



## Pha Taem National Park

A long cliff which covers 340 sq km along the Mekong River. From the top you get a bird's-eye view across the Mekong into Laos, and down below a trail passes prehistoric rock painting





## Red Lotus Sea in Kumphawapi

hop on a boat and watch something magical. As you approach the lake's center, you'll find yourself in a seemingly unending sea of hot pink flowers. The flowers are quite large, too, and some are as big as an open hand.



## Visit Sam Pan Bok

It is also called the Grand Canyon of Siam and it is true that the smaller rock formations can remind you of its American counterpart. It is small rocky desert with holes, probably 3000 holes with water inside



# Issan Music & Dance



## **Phin**

is a type of lute with a pear-shaped body, originating in the Isan region of Thailand





**Khene**  
A mouth organ whose pipes, which are usually made of bamboo



# Isaan Dancing



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## Papaya salad (Som tum)

### Ingredients

- 2 cups shredded green papaya
- 1/2 cup shredded carrot
- 1/2 cup sting bean (cut into 1' long)
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoons palm sugar
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 1/2 cup tomato (wedged)
- 1/3 cup dried shrimps
- 1/4 cup peanuts
- 10 green chilies
  
- 5 cloves fresh garlic

### Preparations

1. Use mortar and pestle to crush the chili and garlic, add shrimps, continue crushing.
2. Add sugar, continue beating with the pestle, then add the papaya, carrot, sting bean, fish sauce, lime juice, tomato, and peanuts. Continue beating until all ingredients mixed well.
3. Finally, season with sugar, fish sauce, or lime. The original taste this dish should be the balance taste between sweet, (pepper) hot, salty, and sour.
4. Serve with vegetables (e.g. cabbage, string bean, napa, etc.). Thai people love to eat Sticky Rice with Papaya Salad. In this case, sticky rice can be served together with finished Papaya Salad.



# Papaya Salad Recipe

ส้มตำ



# Laab



## Ingredients

- About 5 tablespoons of roasted [Thai sticky rice](#)
- 300 grams (1 pound) minced pork (minced chicken or minced beef will also work well)
- ½ - 1 tablespoon of chili flakes (prik bon)
- ⅛ tablespoon of sugar (just a pinch)
- ½ tablespoon of fish sauce
- 1 - 2 limes (I used the juice from about 1.5 limes)
- 3 - 4 small shallots (Thai shallots are only about the size of grapes, so if you have bigger shallots just use however much you want)
- A few leaves of [Culantro](#) - this is an herb also known as long coriander, it tastes a little like cilantro (if you can't find any cilantro, don't worry about it, it's not a must)
- 3 - 5 spring onions (green onions)
- About 20 leaves or so of fresh mint

1. Add 300 grams of minced pork to a small sized saucepan with a handle. Fry the pork, breaking it into small minced pieces, until it's fully cooked all the way through. For best flavor, leave all the oils that come out (but if you want to be healthier, you can also drain the pork oil, and add in a splash of water instead). Take the pork off the heat.
2. Leaving the pork in the same pot, add 1 heaping tablespoon of the toasted rice powder into the pork. Also toss in ½ - 1 tablespoon of chili flakes.
3. Add a pinch of sugar, ½ tablespoon of fish sauce, and squeeze in the juice from 1 - 2 limes (I used about 1 ½ full limes, but I like it quite sour).
4. Give the pork and the seasoning a quick stir.
5. Peel and slice the shallots, finely mince about 5 green onions and a few culantro leaves (if you have them), and just pluck about 20 or so mint leaves off the stem. Throw everything into the saucepan with the pork.
6. Give the laab moo a good mix, making sure all the spices and dressing coats the pork.
7. Taste test. See if it needs more fish sauce for saltiness, lime juice, or chili flakes. Get it the way you want it.
8. Dish it out onto a plate and garnish with more mint leaves, Thai sweet basil, and culantro.



# Thank you

