



**FRUIT  
VEGETABLES**  
*in Thailand*



## The treasure hunt

Thailand has an abundance of extraordinary fruits, vegetables and herbs in its land. Widely used in Thai cuisine, they give the country's food its very distinctive and unique character. There are no less than thirty main herbs and spices that form the basis of this spicy, exquisite and very healthy cuisine. Also, some people are not afraid to say that the Kingdom of Siam must be considered as the source of all gastronomy in Asia and the world, because not only does it have such a fertile land suitable for cultivation that all kinds of plants, vegetables, trees and fruit trees grow there in abundance, but the country is also bordered

by seas and oceans full of fish and shellfish. And all year round.

As a result, the Thai people have always had fish, seafood, fruit and vegetables available for consumption. The surplus is exported overseas. The ancestors of the Thai people already knew how to adapt and cook their food, making over 5,000 different dishes!

In the past, Thai cuisine consisted of two distinct types of dishes: royal and street food. Today, royal cuisine is no longer the preserve of the Thai royal family and its dignitaries, but is available to all Thai people.

Today, Thai food is recognised as one of the most tasty and refined in the world. The flavours, aromas, colours and extraordinary decorations of fruits and vegetables are enough to convince you. Thai cuisine, although similar in some respects to that of its Chinese, Indian and Burmese neighbours, stands out for its original flavours and ingredients: curry, mint, lemongrass, coriander and red basil. Spiced to excess for the Western palate and almost always accompanied by sauces or fish flavours («Nam pla»), it is increasingly popular internationally.



## A CUISINE AT THE CROSSROADS OF MANY ORIGINS



Thai cuisine, as it is now enjoyed around the world, is a marriage of influences from Asia and Europe through centuries of trade and diplomacy. Thais have always lived close to the land and water, and this is reflected in traditional Thai cuisine. The basic ingredients were rice, fish, vegetables and herbs. Little meat was used, no beef or buffalo, as these animals were used for field work.

The Thais grilled, baked and steamed their food until the Chinese introduced oil cooking techniques. Diplomats, traders and missionaries also contributed a great deal, but well after their arrival in the 16th century. It

was the Portuguese who introduced chilli into Thai cuisine. Currys and spices were introduced by the Indians. Over the years, Thai cooks have added their own ingenuity, replacing certain ingredients with those available locally and adapting recipes to suit Thai palates.

Thai cuisine includes the four regional variations and the highly refined «Court Cuisine», a legacy of the absolute monarchy, when only exceptional dishes were served at the King's table. The refinement of this culinary art lies in the perfection of the techniques used and the originality of the presentation of the dishes.

Each dish had to please the eye and the palate. The quality of the ingredients and the cooking techniques had to be impeccable, as did the presentation of the dishes, and a sense of creation was required. Nowadays, you can get an idea of what royal cuisine is like in some restaurants whose chefs were trained by former palace chefs. Just look for the keyword «Royal» or «Palace» in their titles.

**A** Thai meal is traditionally prepared together, and consists of several dishes, served at the same time, and eaten with steamed rice.

### SNACKS AND HORS D'OEUVRES

These snacks and hors d'oeuvres can be eaten alone or with other dishes. Favourites include stuffed dumplings, «Satay», crispy fried rice noodles served with a sweet and spicy sauce, and spring rolls.

### SALADS

The dressing for Thai salads, called «Yam», is sour, sweet, and salty. For meat, seafood, vegetables and fruit salads, the seasoning is prepared with fish sauce, lime juice, and a hint of sugar. The spiciness comes from the small chilli pepper, but the right seasoning is only achieved by using the right meats, vegetables, or fruits. Herbs such as wild mint, lemongrass, bergamot leaves

and cilantro are usually used as garnish.

### CHILLI SAUCE

Usually served with vegetables, meat or fish, it is actually used in all circumstances, as a main dish or as a seasoning for fried rice or chips, to enhance the taste.

This sauce is made with chillies, garlic, onion, and shrimp paste or dried or fermented fish, sour tamarind, dried shrimp, etc.

### SOUPS

Thai soups are generally very tasty. The meat or vegetable is cooked in a broth, or coconut cream base, topped up with stock flavoured with herbs and spices. The soup is served not at the beginning, but throughout the meal with the other dishes. It is a way to dampen the heat of the spicier dishes.

### A THAI MEAL



## CURRIES

The basis of all Thai curries is the curry paste which, unlike Indian curries, is made with fresh herbs and spices. The curry paste is first prepared with coconut cream and then the meat or vegetables are added. The main ingredients of most curries are shallots, galangal, coriander root, garlic, chilli and «Krachai» (small orange-brown roots). Canned curry paste is available in markets and grocery shops, but curries made from fresh paste are much better.

## COMPLETE DISHES

Fried rice or noodles are quick and complete dishes. You can improvise with different types of meat, vegetables and spices. To cook the rice, use less water so that it does not get soggy when it is fried. For the noodles, first separate them before putting them in the oil, then add the meat and the sauce. Finally, add the rice or noodles and cook them over a high heat, stirring frequently.

## THE DESSERTS

Perfect after a spicy dish, Thai desserts are low in sugar. So bananas or coconut cream fritters, and seasonal fruit in syrup with crushed ice are some easy favourites. Thais are also very fond of glazed or candied fruit; banana and breadfruit being the two favourites, either on their own or with coconut sauce.



## THE CULINARY HABITS OF THE THAI PEOPLE

When you walk around Thailand, you might think that people eat all the time. Well, they do! But they eat very little at each meal: a soup or some fruit, for example. You can find a lot of traditional food stalls on the street at low prices. Young Thais stop there every day to satisfy their stomachs. So, except for family reunions, meals are generally short.

Eating Thai is therefore a very special way of eating: eating little, but often.





## TRADITIONAL THAI DISHES

As in many non-Western countries, «breakfast» is not breakfast, at least not in the sense that it is understood in France: the same types of dishes are eaten as at lunch and dinner.

Of course, Thai food is very spicy (some ready-made dishes even advertise the amount of chilli their products contain) but it is also varied and tasty. Of course, the usual accompaniment is rice. You can't miss the wonderful and flavourful soups (such as Tom yam), the fried rice dishes («Khao phat»), the famous «Pad Thai», the very spicy dried fish, the omelettes, or the very spicy salads made with papaya («Som tam»).

But Thailand also has unsuspected delicacies, such as many exotic fruits: rambutan, mangosteen, longan, guava, green mango... Not to be missed: a famous regional dish made of glutinous rice, coconut, mango and sesame seeds («Khao niao mamuang»).

In Thailand, very few people are overweight. This may be due to the population's taste for fruit and vegetables, which make up most Thai dishes.

Thais often say that their food is the best in the world, followed by French food. Everyone preaches for his or her parish but there is a big difference between the two gastronomies: the secret of Thai cuisine is the mixture of multiple flavours. In France, we are very interested in the sublimation of a product or the combination of a few flavours.

**GASTRONOMY AT REGIONAL LEVEL**

Geographically, Thailand is a diverse country, and Thais generally divide it into four regions. The central region is a delta dominated by the Chao Phraya River, with fertile soil. Southern Thailand is a peninsula, with the Andaman Sea on one side and the Gulf of Thailand on the other.

The Northeast of Thailand is a vast plateau criss-crossed by the Mekong River. The north is mountainous and colder. Each region has its own ethnic groups, speaking their own dialect, and practising their own unique traditions.

As a result, a Thai meal can have many different styles and flavours. The curries and seafood of the south, the sticky rice and dried meats of the north, the Isaan cuisine of the northeast, and the sweet creations of the centre, with its Chinese influences.

CHINA



Geographically in the heart of the country, the central region is the most fertile. The Chao Phraya River provides a natural water supply, and many rice fields are cultivated in the centre. Besides rice, there are also many vegetables and fruits.

Chilli sauce or «Nam prik» is a typical dish served with seasonal greens such as cucumbers, «Makok» leaves, or «Cha-om». Chilli sauce is also used for «Yam» salads, which are sour, sweet and spicy at the same time.

In the central region, there are several kinds of traditional desserts, cooked in different ways. But whatever the techniques used, they all often share three basic ingredients: rice flour, coconut, and sugar. Central desserts are also made with fruit. They are eaten with syrup and crushed ice.

Central cuisine is actually quite simple, the secret being in the ingredients.

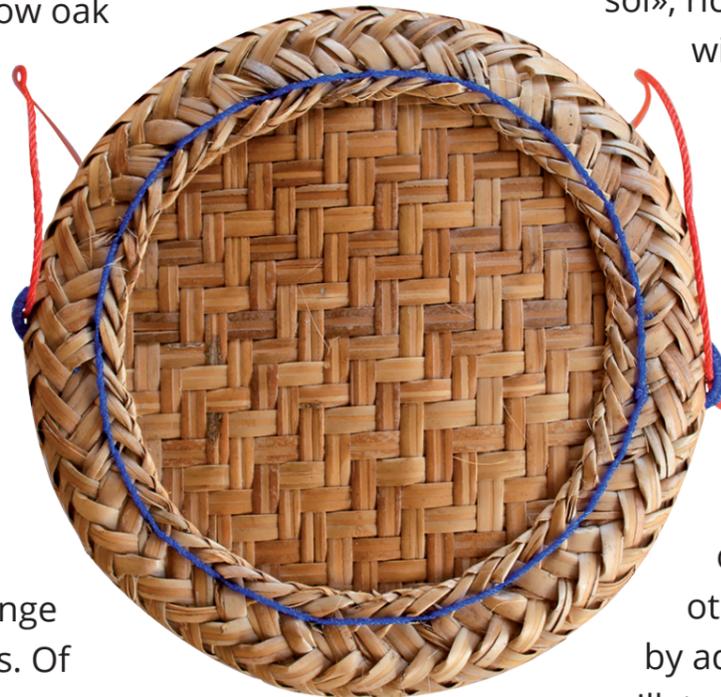
MALAYSIA

## NORTH

Traditionally, Northerners sit on woven straw mats and eat around a «Kantoke», a low oak table. On the tray-like table is a selection of starters including curries, sticky rice, various boiled vegetables, and fried fish with a wide range of spicy sauces. Of the northern sauces, «Nam prik noum» made from small chillies is probably the most popular. In addition, Northerners like to accompany their meals with a typical meat called «Moo yor» and «Naem» (spicy pork).

Northern cuisine is influenced by

the climate and neighbouring countries. Curries like «Gaeng hang lay» are cooked with creamy coconut milk. The



chilli sauce varieties show the importance of chillies in the cuisine. They are often accompanied by «Kaeb mou», fried pork skin.

Northerners prefer to eat glutinous rice (steamed rice) as the main component

of their dishes. A Chinese influence is reflected in the extensive use of noodles. The favourite noodle dish is «Khao soi», rice flour noodles with curry sauce.

Originally created by the Chinese living in the highlands, «Khao soi» differs from noodle dishes in other regions by adding coconut milk to the soup. Another popular noodle dish is called «Khanom jin nam ngeow», resulting directly from the influence of the Mons of southern Burma. Among the culinary cultures influencing the North, Burma seems to be the strongest, especially concerning curries



and chilli sauces such as «Nam phrik ong» (chilli sauce with tomato and minced pork).

## THE NORTH EAST

The Northeast or Isaan, the largest region in Thailand, is a plateau with arid soil and low rainfall. The climate in the region is a longer and hotter summer than in any other region. The topography and climate affect the culinary habits of the people.

All dishes are simple in terms of ingredients and method of preparation. Chilli is often an indispensable ingredient in all dishes. Mainly, Isaan cuisine is a mixture of chillies and sour tamarind, and «Makok» (red ant

eggs). The Northeast Thais, like those in the North, prefer sticky rice to steamed rice. Served in a sorrel vessel called «Kratip», rice and its «Kratip» are a cultural symbol of the region.

The people of the Northeast are known as experts in preserving fish, used in cooking and seasoning. Local specialities of fermented fish are «Pla ra», «Pla som», and «Pla daek».

The most famous dish is «**Som Tam**», a spicy salad made from green papaya, with garlic, tomatoes, green beans, lemon juice, and fish sauce.

Isaan sausage is also a well-known dish in the country. Other well-known dishes are «Sup normai», a spicy

bamboo salad, and «Kai yang», roasted chicken. Curries without coconut milk are also popular in the Northeast. The cuisine is said to be spicier and more pungent than in other regions.

## THE SOUTH

Southern cuisine is best known for its spiciness. The locals believe that living in a humid climate near the coast can make them sick. Thus, the «heat» of the dishes would prevent them from getting fever.

Connected to Malaysia, a Muslim country, the region is influenced by Islamic cuisine. There is a great use of saffron, whose particularity is to make dishes yellow like «Gaeng lueng» (a spicy coconut soup),



SOM TAM



«Khao mok kai», (rice with saffron covered with chicken), and even «Gaeng som» (tamarind soup).

The southern favourite is «Gaeng tai pla», a soup with curried fish guts, chillies and shrimp paste. Massaman» is also a well-known curry on the peninsula. Although Massa-man is made from basic ingredients (chilli, garlic, onion, galangal, coriander

root, kaffir lime, and shrimp paste), it also contains an Indian-influenced five spice powder. Locals also sometimes add roasted peanuts to the curry. Surrounded by the ocean, southerners have an abundance of seafood year-round. They simply use lobsters, fish, crabs, shrimp, squid, clams and mussels to make hearty dishes. In addition to grilling, or boiling, people season

seafood with herbs and spices.

The most famous dishes are «Goung ga-thi nor mai sod» (shrimp with bamboo roots in coconut soup), and «Goung pad sataew» (grilled shrimp with beans). The bitter taste of «sa-taew» is the other identifying feature of the cuisine from the South.

**THAI CUISINE AND ITS MEDICINAL PROPERTIES**

In addition to being one of the most popular and admired cuisines in the world, thanks to its unique flavours and aromas, Thai food is increasingly recognised for its therapeutic properties. Indeed, this cuisine borrows many herbs and spices that have a long tradition of use in medicine. It is no coincidence that the Thais have been using them for centuries, as they are well aware of their beneficial effects on the body, but also on the mind. The combination of these plants is considered an art in this country which requires not only time and patience, but also talent. The preparation of a single sauce can take hours of grinding and adjusting to achieve the right balance of different essences. It is both an art and a philosophy of life. By playing with the medicinal properties of each of its ingredients, Thai cuisine will restore your health. Judge for yourself!



<b>THE THAI BASIL</b>	It is an essential ingredient. It has a slightly aniseed flavour, but is more pungent than Mediterranean basil. It can be found in soups, salads, seafood, but also in sautéed dishes. Health benefits: it is known to have a sedative, antispasmodic effect on the digestive tract, diuretic and antimicrobial. Rich in antioxidants, it helps to fight against ageing.
<b>CORIANDER</b>	It is certainly the most widely used plant in Thai cuisine. It is used in many dishes, often as decoration, for its taste and fragrance, while its roots and seeds are used as ingredients or seasonings. It is said to have anxiolytic, carminative and even diuretic properties when fresh.
<b>GINGER</b>	The ginger used in Thai cooking is a tuber. Its colour varies from pale pink to golden beige, under a thin, dry white skin. Used fresh or in powder form, it gives off an invigorating scent, reminiscent of lemon. It relieves difficult digestion, stubborn coughs and nausea.
<b>GARLIC</b>	It is used in large quantities (like shallots or onions) and is eaten as is, or used as an ingredient. Its aroma and flavour are very concentrated. Rich in vitamins B and C, it is a good blood pressure regulator. It also has many medicinal properties (anti-emetic, anti-inflammatory, aphrodisiac...).

<b>LEMONGRASS</b>	With its approximately 20 cm long stems, it resembles a large spring onion or a small leek. It is only when cut that it gives off its characteristic lemon scent with a hint of ginger. It is an excellent diuretic!
<b>CASHEW NUTS</b>	They are used roasted and are a delight in Thai cuisine. They are used as an ingredient or garnish in curries and other salads and add a fresh, fragrant note. They are full of protein, fibre and potassium, not to mention vitamins!
<b>SPEARMINT</b>	It is used in salads and is often eaten as is. It is known for its digestive, carminative, antiseptic, tonic and stimulating properties.
<b>THAI CHILI</b>	It is only one of hundreds of varieties of chillies. It is small in size, but powerful in taste. For the more adventurous, in addition to vitamin C and beta-carotene, it is said to have a secret for weight control.
<b>THE GREEN LEMON</b>	It is found throughout Thai cuisine. Its flavour is finer and more refreshing than that of the yellow lemon. Health advantage: vitamin C is its strong point! Goodbye fatigue and infections!





# FRUITS

Hat Yai Market

With exceptional sunshine and rich soil, Thailand offers a wide range of tropical fruits, most of which you would probably never have had the chance to taste before. They are eaten fresh, in salads, in fruit juice or in a fruit shake. Some are even added to Thai cuisine to enhance the flavours. Above all, they are a real delight and their charm is likely to remain with you long after your stay.

Because of its hot and humid climate and its abundance of land, Thailand offers an unparalleled variety of fruits. These fruits have very different textures from those in Europe. In particular, they are much sweeter and incredibly fragrant. A stay in the Kingdom is the perfect opportunity to taste these fresh fruits, full of vitamins and not found in the West. Although some are seasonal, there is always a wide choice available.

## COCONUT

Available all year round, it is found throughout the country. It is used as a fruit, as a drink and of course, it can be found in all its forms in the composition of many dishes and pastries. It is an important product for the Thai economy (Koh Samui is the leading producer of coconut in the Kingdom). Shredded coconut can be used in its raw state in cakes, but it is mostly processed into coconut milk and coconut

cream (respectively «Ka-Thi» and «Hua Ka-Thi»).

Coconut milk and coconut cream have the property of calming the fire of chilli. Coconut and its by-products are used and abused in cooking, especially in Bangkok and the south of the country.



**MANGO**



One of the most popular fruits in Thailand, with many varieties. The mango is traditionally eaten ripe, with the sides of the fruit cut off to give 3 pieces (the two sides and the core). The pulp is eaten with a small spoon.

**FOR DESSERT**

For dessert, it can be served with glutinous rice and a topping of coconut milk. Mangoes are also eaten green (sour taste), and grated into salads. The yellow mango, ripe and sweet, is a must try. The Thai variety



is delicious, but not exportable worldwide. It should be eaten within 2-3 days of picking. Those found

in France are not comparable.



**THE ROSE APPLE**

Somewhat pear-shaped, its texture is somewhat fibrous. Some fruits are light green, others pink. The skin is translucent and is eaten with the fruit. The inside is white with some seeds to be removed. It is a sweet fruit with a lot of water, and a slightly bitter aftertaste, making it the ideal choice if you prefer a not too sweet fruit.

Another fruit not found in Europe and absolutely divine. The size of an orange and dark purple in colour, the thick skin of about 1 cm contains a white core divided into segments. The flesh is both silky and juicy and melts in the mouth. Certainly one of the finest fruits in the world. It is best eaten slightly chilled (put them in the fridge).

**MANGOSTEEN**

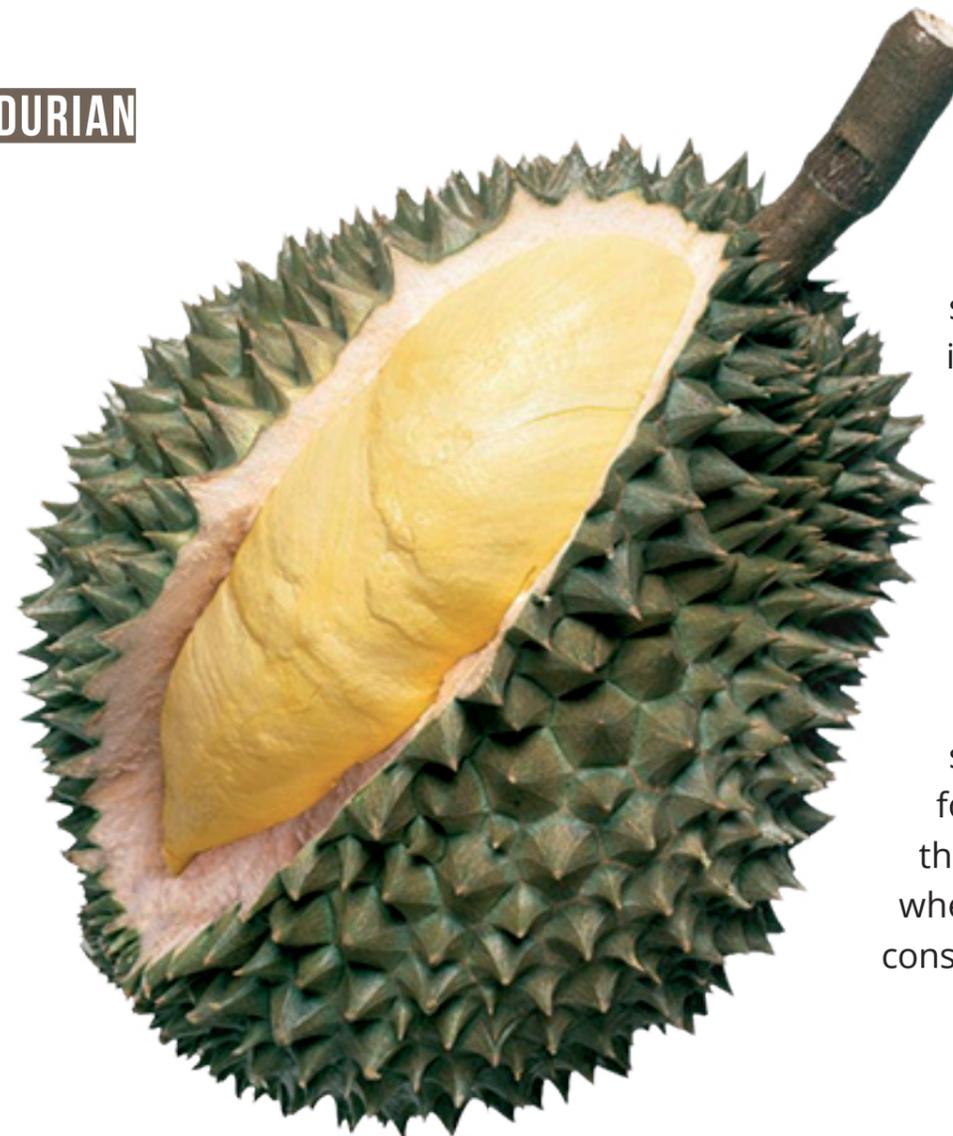




**RAMBOUTAN**

It has a distinctive appearance: the fruit is covered with green, rubbery hairs. Inside is a grey stone covered with a translucent white pulp, particularly delicious and with a unique, very sweet taste.

**DURIAN**



Durian is one of Thailand's most prized exotic fruits. This large egg-shaped fruit, green on the outside and white on the inside, covered with spines, can weigh up to 7 kg. The fruit itself is oblong in shape, covered with spines and over 40 cm long. It is best known for its distinctive taste and very strong smell.

Its smell and taste are described as cream cheese, onion sauce, garlic, pig excrement, old socks, sewage, vomit, stink bombs, rotten eggs... In fact, it is forbidden in airports. Despite all this, the fruit is extremely popular in Asia, where 1,500,000 tonnes are produced and consumed every year. Are you ready to try it?



**SALACCA**

Oval in shape, it has a peculiar and unfriendly appearance due to the multitude of spines covering its fragile skin. The flavour of the fruit is slightly sweet and reminiscent of a candy. It is easy, but a bit painful to peel with bare hands. This often prefer to put it in a colander and shake it to scrape off the bark.





### LYCHEE

Planted in abundance in the North, the lychee has many shapes. Small and round, with a smooth stone inside, the flesh is translucent white, juicy and sweet.



### GRAPES

A relatively new fruit in Thailand, grapes are fruity and crunchy. It is mostly served at festivals and can be found everywhere.

### PAPAYA



There are two varieties of papaya in Thailand, one with red flesh, and the other with yellow-orange flesh. The green papaya is grated and used as a basic ingredient in «Som Tam», one of the most popular salads in the country. The ripe fruit is eaten fresh with a few drops of lemon juice. Papaya is known to cure constipation.



### GUAVA

Guava is eaten ripe or still green, often with a mixture of salt and sugar (the basic mixture is salt, sugar, and chilli). It has a rather sour taste, and a high vitamin C content.



The fruit has a long pod that resembles a thin hard shell. Although it is often used as a seasoning in Thai cuisine, tamarind can be eaten raw. Simply crack the shell to reveal the chocolate-like flesh. Remove the slightly acidic vein that runs down one side of the fruit, then nibble on the thick, gooey flesh around the seeds inside. The taste is similar to dates, with a slightly sweet and sour tone.

Be careful not to overdo it: the pulp of the tamarind is known for its laxative effects. The fruit is used in the composition of certain medicines intended to facilitate transit during cancer treatments.



Also known as the 'sour apple', the santol is about the size of a grapefruit. Inside the thick rind, the fruit is divided into 4 or 5 segments of white pulp with a very citric sour juice. Its internal structure resembles that of the mangosteen, with 3 to 5 seeds, encased in an edible pulp. The pulp is transparent white, juicy and has a sweet, sour or even acidic taste.

### THAI GRAPEFRUIT

The Thai grapefruit can measure up to 20 cm in diameter, and easily weighs several kilograms. The fruit is rounded, either flattened or pear-shaped. The skin is yellow-green, grainy and thick. The fruit is reddish-purple in colour and quite sweet.





## PINEAPPLE

The pineapple is one of the best tropical fruits with its sweet and sour taste. Its particular shape, as well as the colour of the pulp and the peel, are very attractive. It contains a range of vitamins and calories as well as yeast which helps with the absorption of protein. It is for this last reason that many salads and appetizers include pineapple chunks. In some regions, the juice is much more popular than the fruit itself. In Thailand, the «Saparot» pineapple is usually eaten raw. It weighs about 1 kg, is colourful and tastes very good. It grows in gardens and is used to season meals. Smaller than the ones we find in France, which are imported from Africa or Brazil, they are not astringent, but sweet and fragrant.



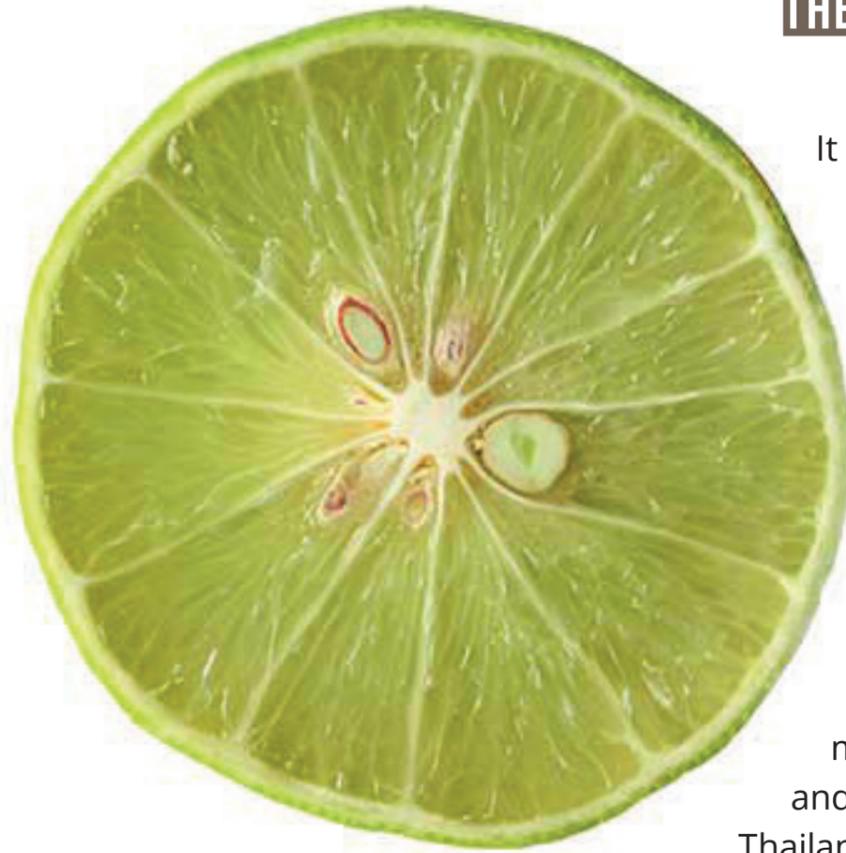
**DRAGON FRUIT**

This pink/reddish fruit is about 10 cm long and weighs about 350 grams. The texture of the flesh and the presence of small black seeds resemble those of the kiwi, but with a much sweeter taste. There are 3 different types of fruit from as many different species, all of which are edible and low in calories and have a thick skin with small leaves.

**JACK FRUIT**

It is one of the largest fruits in the world. It can be up to 40 cm long, 15 cm in diameter and weigh up to 30 kg or more! The skin of the fruit is not only thick but also covered with roughness. The golden yellow flesh is compartmentalised inside the fruit and embedded in multiple thin pale yellow membranes. The Jack Fruit is a compound fruit. It consists of a golden pulp enveloping a seed. The yellow pulp can be eaten raw, while the seed can be eaten boiled or roasted.





**THE LIME**

It is an important element in Thai cuisine, but also in the cuisines of the rest of South Asia. This fruit is used in many dishes. Limes are also used for their scent and acidity in perfumes, mosquito repellent and other products. In Thailand, this fruit grows throughout the country except in the far north.



**BANANA**

The 'Nam Wa' variety is probably the most popular of the 30 varieties that can be found in Thailand. This long fruit has a pale yellow colour when ripe. The leaf of the «Nam Wa» variety is used to wrap some typical dishes like «Plaa Khao Rat Sot Maklua» or «Ta Ko Sa Khu». Bananas are sold all year round.

**THE LONGAN OR DRAGON'S EYE**

The longan is a fruit about 2 cm in diameter with a thin, relatively brittle, reddish-brown to yellowish-brown skin covered with fine, regular protuberances, somewhat like the lychee, though much less pronounced. The flesh is translucent and sweet and contains a single dark brown pit. It is usually eaten fresh in the same way as the lychee.



**ORANGES**



Delicious as a drink («Naam Som») or as a fruit. Green in appearance on the outside, this variety found in Thailand is bursting with its extremely fresh and tasty orange liquid. A few fruits are enough to fill a bottle.



## WATERMELON

These large fruits are highly valued in Thailand and in all tropical countries for their refreshing qualities. The watermelon is also used in fruit carving because its size allows to produce spectacular works. They are available all year round. The flesh of the watermelon is usually red or yellow when ripe and contains many black seeds embedded in the flesh. It contains up to 93% water

and is therefore very thirst-quenching. Watermelon is especially known for being rich in antioxidants (lycopene). It also contains some vitamins (vitamin C, vitamin B1, vitamin B6 and vitamin A).



## CINNAMON APPLE

The cinnamon apple is as big as an apple. Underneath its hard scales is a white, tender, sweet and fragrant flesh that can be eaten as is. It is riddled with round, flattened seeds about 1 cm in diameter.



### THE SAPOTILLA

The fruit has a rough brown rind, about 2 mm thick, which is easily peeled. The flesh is slightly grainy like that of the pear, with oval, flattened seeds in the centre. The colour varies from reddish yellow to dark brown. It is juicy, sweet and very fragrant. Its flavour is compared to honey or apricots. The sapodilla is eaten raw, as is, or in fruit salads. It must be eaten when ripe, otherwise its high tannin content makes its flavour unpleasant. It can also be cooked into jam or poached. It is a rich source of fibre, cellulose, sugar and vitamins.



### CARAMBOLA

The fruit is a berry with a star-shaped cross-section. Depending on the variety, which is more or less acidic, it is used in juice or fruit salad, in jam or in sauces. The fruit has a special taste and is often used to decorate dishes and desserts.



# The seasons for fruits

**ALL YEAR ROUND :** Banana, Coconut, Goyave, Waterlemon and Papaya.

**JANUARY :** Jack Fruit, Pineapple

**FEBRUARY :** Jack Fruit

**MARCH :** Jack Fruit, Mango

**APRIL :** Jack Fruit, Durian, Pineapple, Mango, Litchee

**MAY :** Pineapple, Mango, Mangosteen, Ramboutan, Longan, Litchee, Durian

**JUNE :** Pineapple, Durian, Litchee, Longan, Mango, Mangosteen, Ramboutan

**JULY :** Durian, Longan, Mangosteen, Ramboutan

**AUGUST :** Durian, Longan, Mangosteen, Grapefruit, Ramboutan, Sapotilla

**SEPTEMBER :** Mangoustan, Grapefruit, Ramboutan, Sapotilla, Orange

**OCTOBER :** Orange, Sapotilla, Grapefruit

**NOVEMBER :** Orange, Sapotilla, Grapefruit

**DECEMBER :** Pineapple, Sapotilla



asian.estate

Find your dream in Asia

## Your First Network of Real Estate Consultants in Thailand

BANGKOK

KOH SAMUI & KOH PHANGAN

PHUKET

HUA HIN

PATTAYA

CHIANG MAI

[www.asian.estate](http://www.asian.estate)





# VEGETABLES

**W**hen you stroll through the local Thai markets, you can't help but be amazed at the diversity, quality and richness of the products on offer. A real firework display of colours, scents and freshness. When it comes to vegetables in particular, the Thais are full of foods with surprising shapes, particular tastes and atypical aromas that Westerners often discover for the first time. However, once cooked, raw or cooked, these vegetables offer an incomparable aroma, flavour and smoothness.

## CHINESE CABBAGE



The best known Chinese cabbage is elongated and light green in colour. Used in stir-fried dishes, raw or lightly cooked for salads and soups, this mild, crunchy vegetable is preserved in salt and vinegar as a condiment.



## BITTER CUCUMBER

The blistered skin gives it a truly patient look, but this does not prevent it from being eaten. Long and pale green, it contains oval, flat seeds surrounded by white flesh. Extremely bitter, its unusual taste is not appreciated by everyone. Thais eat it sautéed or steamed, in salads or in soups.

Its bitterness (even if it may repel some Westerners) is proof of its nutritional quality: it means that it is rich in anti-inflammatory and purifying cucurbitacin C. It is a diuretic vegetable that helps control blood pressure and stabilise blood sugar levels.

## EGGPLANT

There are many varieties of aubergines in the Kingdom, which are usually used in the preparation of different dishes.

## AUBERGINES POMMES (OR DWARF AUBERGINES)



These small round aubergines are pale green, yellow or white. It is a very popular vegetable among the Thais who use it in many culinary preparations. They are eaten raw or with the ubiquitous «chilli» sauce, or cooked in curries. They have little flavour, but when raw they have a very distinctive taste. They discolour quickly and tend to oxidise when cut.

## AUBERGINE PEAS

They are used in all curry preparations. These pea-sized berries, which grow in small clusters, have a bitter taste. They are most often used in very hot curries and also as a flavouring in some and also as a flavouring agent in some Thai dishes.



## THE PURPLE EGGPLANTS



The Asian purple aubergine is more tender and has fewer seeds than the large aubergine we know in Europe and the Mediterranean. When cooked, it has a sweet, tender flavour and creamy flesh. When cooking them, the Thais usually choose plump, tight skin with no bruises or scratches.

### LONG GREEN EGGPLANT

This elongated, pale green (but can also be purple or white) variety has a delicate texture. These aubergines are usually served grilled or sautéed with side vegetables or added to green curries.



### THE BITTER BEAN

From a tree that can grow up to 35 m high, this vegetable is very popular with the Thai people. This long, flat bean has bright green seeds at its heart, the size and shape of fleshy almonds, which have a rather foul odour, described by some as being similar to natural gas. However, these beans are best when combined with other strongly flavoured foods such as garlic, chilli or dried shrimp or added to green curry.



### THAI BEANS

Also known as «string beans» or «kilo beans», they can grow to lengths of 80-90 cm and vary in colour from yellow to green. Thais like to eat them raw with a «Nam Prik» sauce or tied in a loop (very nice effect) in a salad.



### JAGGED GREEN BEAN

Also called «star bean». It is an exotic variety with a less pronounced taste and different from the traditional green bean. The Thais cook it in salads,



**KARELA**

It resembles our gherkin, with a sinuous and wrinkled skin. It is also called «bitter gourd» or «balsamic pear». In Thailand, the leaves and tender shoots of the plant are also eaten. The taste is bitter.



The young bamboo shoots are harvested in winter when they are about 15 cm tall. When eaten fresh, they should be peeled and partially cooked in boiling water (about 30 minutes) so that the central part is cooked and they are tender. This ingredient is very popular in Thai cuisine (soups, curries, etc.) and can be purchased in general shops and markets.

**BAMBOO SHOOTS**



**GOMBO OR OKRA**



Probably originating from Africa, it contains a mucilaginous substance, useful for thickening soups and stews. Thais choose well-coloured okra that is less than 10 cm long so that it is not hard. Okra can be eaten raw or cooked and goes well with tomatoes, onions, peppers, curry, coriander, oregano, lemon and vinegar.

**NAM TAO**

This pale green vegetable, shaped like a gourd, is very common in Thailand. Thais eat it cooked, as an ingredient in many typical dishes. Its creamy flesh and fragrant taste are similar to that of the turnip.



### BLACK MUSHROOM

Also known as «cloud ear» or «gelatinous mushroom», it is most often found in dried form. Before using it, the Thais usually soak it in hot water for 30 minutes so that it becomes gelatinous. It is found in soups, fondues and certain typical dishes.



### STRAW MUSHROOM

A small, firm mushroom with a slight mouldy taste, it grows on rice straw. It is found in Pad Thai, rice and many other Thai dishes.



### SHIITAKE MUSHROOM

A saprophyte and wood-boring parasite, shii-take generally grows in Japan on the «Shii» tree (a species absent from European forests).

It has a strong woody and smoky aroma. The Thais commonly use it in soups or fondues. It is also called «the mushroom of longevity for its anti-cholesterol, anti-tumor, anti-stress...



**CUCUMBER**



It is a small vegetable, about 8 cm long, which is very crisp while it is green and white before it turns yellow. Raw, the Thais enjoy its flavour in salads, accompanied by the «nam phrik» sauce, or simply soaked in vinegar. Cooked, it flavours soups and various typical dishes.

**SOYBEAN SPROUTS**

They are found everywhere in Thai cuisine, whether in soups, curries, salads, pasta or rice... The Thais mainly use the small «green» sprouts, mung bean sprouts, and the large «yellow» sprouts, soybean sprouts. In any case, both sprouts are relatively delicate, with a crunchy texture, pleasant to the taste. They can be found fresh in any market in the country, as well as in supermarkets. Canned bean sprouts should be avoided as they are often flabby and tasteless.



**PAK CHOI**



This cabbage is similar to Swiss chard. Its whitish stems are juicy, crisp and mild tasting, ending in ribbed leaves. Thais add it to soups and rice or serve it as a side dish vegetable, prepared in the Chinese style. It is an excellent source of potassium and vitamins and is rich in calcium.

## BANANA FLOWER

It is in fact the tender heart of the unopened banana flower. It has been stripped of its purple petals. In Thai markets, it can be found fresh, but also canned or dried. However, fresh banana flowers tend to discolour quickly, especially when sliced or grated. Therefore, it should be soaked in lemon juice to avoid this. Banana flower is mainly used in Northern Thailand as a tasty soup. It is also served in salads, where its artichoke-like flavour is wonderful.



**FAK KHIAO**

Also called «white squash» or «Chinese melon», it is a green vegetable with an oblong shape. The ends are rounded, while the flesh is solid and white. In Thailand, it is used in soups and other dishes.



These beans are about the size of a bean. The bright green pods that house them are flat and wavy. The beans themselves have a distinctive smell and their nutty taste gives a unique flavour to regional Thai dishes. These vegetables are found everywhere in Thai cuisine, in salads, in stir-fries, in soups... where their crunchy texture is a delight.



**MANGE-TOUT PEAS**

**CHINESE RADISH**

This vegetable has certain therapeutic properties: it aids digestion, lowers temperature and improves blood circulation. Also known as «giant white radish» or «winter radish», this white root can grow up to 40 cm long, although the Thai variety is often much smaller. As it grows, daikon tends to be fibrous and should be avoided for consumption. Raw, its texture remains crisp and somewhat peppery. This rarely eat daikon in this way, although they do use it grated to tenderise seafood. Once cooked, this vegetable retains all its properties, keeping a somewhat sweet flavour.





**PHAK BONDE**

Also called «water spinach», this plant is a common and very popular food in South Asian dishes, especially in Thailand. Depending on the region, Thais cook it in different ways: raw, often with green papaya salad, or with cooked «nam phrik» sauce: the leaves are usually sautéed with chilli, garlic, ginger, and other spices to make up one of the Kingdom’s most famous dishes: «Morning Glory». Phak Bonde can also be served simply boiled, as a curry or as an ingredient in the famous Pad Tai.



**BUAP LIYAM**

This vegetable looks a bit like a cucumber or a courgette with ridges. Thais eat it raw (in salads), but most of the time they prefer to eat it cooked (in curry). It can also be found in dehydrated form. Its special flavour and texture, as well as the nutrients it contains, make it a food that deserves to be known.



**SPRING ONIONS**

Spring onions are annual plants, which the Thais harvest when they are still thin, before they have had time to grow into the characteristic broad shape of onions. They look like young leeks, but unlike leeks, their stems are hollow. As they have not yet formed a hard skin, these onions are not suitable for storage and should be eaten as fresh as possible. They are always sold in bunches, with their stems. Despite their name, spring onions are available almost all year round in Thailand. They can be found in soups and curries, among other things.



**THAI ASPARAGUS**

It resembles the wild asparagus found in our western countries. It is straight and upright, with a crunchy texture and a strong taste. The Thais love this vegetable and cook it in many ways: in salads, soups, sautéed, simmered, grilled, as an ingredient in Pad Tai, rice or curries...



**FAK THONG**

It is an Asian variety of winter squash of the Cucurbita maxima species. It weighs between 2 and 3 kg (but can be up to 8 kg) and has a hard, bumpy, dark green skin with some celadon or white grooves. The flesh is a deep yellow/orange colour and has a naturally sweet flavour, tasting like a combination of sweet potato and chestnut. This vegetable is highly valued by Thais for its strong, sweet and moist flavour, but also for its fluffy texture. Delicious in soup or curry, it is also used in traditional Thai desserts.



**TARO**

This tuber, which looks like a sweet potato, is very popular in Thailand. Locals use it as a side dish, but also for certain desserts. It is very popular with carvers.

Of course, in the typical Thai markets and supermarkets, in addition to these very exotic vegetables, you will also find all those from our Western countries, namely onions, tomatoes, broccoli,

cauliflower, cucumbers, potatoes, carrots, peppers, leeks, etc., all of which are recognisable, but not quite the same.



Muslim market in the far south of Thailand

# The seasons for vegetables

## TOUTE L'ANNÉE :

Buap Liyam, Bitter cucumber, Aubergine Apple, Purple Eggplant, Radis Chinois, Cucumber, Straw Mushroom, Shiitake mushroom, Black Mushroom, Spring Onion, Taro, Phak Bonde, Thai Bean, Chinese cabbage, Banana flower.

**JANUARY :** Mange-Tout Peas, Okra, Bitter bean, Fak Thong, Soybean sprouts

**FEBRUARY :** Mange-Tout Peas, Okra, Fak Thong, Soybean sprouts

**MARCH :** Mange-Tout Peas, Okra, Fak Thong

**APRIL :** Okra, Fak Thong

**MAY :** Bitter bean

**JUNE :** Bitter bean, Bamboo shoot, Soybean sprouts

**JULY :** Bitter bean, Bamboo shoot, Fak Thong, Soybean sprouts

**AUGUST :** Bitter bean, Bamboo shoot, Fak Thong

**SEPTEMBER :** Bitter bean, Fak Thong

**OCTOBER :** Bitter bean, Okra, Fak Thong, Soybean sprouts

**NOVEMBER :** Mange-Tout Peas, Okra, Bitter bean, Fak Thong, Soybean sprouts

**DÉCEMBER :** Mange-Tout Peas, Okra, Bitter bean