



"Tom Kha" Thai Coconut Lemongrass Soup

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 20 / **Cook Time** 20 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

slice: to cut into thin pieces using a sawing motion with your knife.

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

sauté: to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

simmer: to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

soak: to immerse a hard food for a certain amount of time in a liquid to soften it.

drain: to pour excess liquid from food into a container if reserving the liquid, or into the sink or trash if not saving it.

prep: to prepare ingredients for a dish before cooking; for example, washing, thawing, cutting, grating, measuring, squeezing, straining, or marinating them.

portion: to serve an amount of food for one person to eat at one time.

Equipment

- ☐ Pot or bowl for soaking noodles
- ☐ Colander or strainer
- ☐ Saucepan
- ☐ Cutting board
- ☐ Kid-safe knife
- ☐ Can opener
- ☐ Liquid measuring cup

- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Whisk
- ☐ Tongs
- ☐ Ladle

Ingredients

"Tom Kha" Thai Coconut Lemongrass Soup

- ☐ 8 to 10 oz dried Thai rice noodles, any width
- ☐ 4 C water to soak noodles
- ☐ Broth:
- ☐ 1 T vegetable oil **
- ☐ 2 shallots
- ☐ 1 to 2 inches fresh ginger root
- ☐ 2 fresh lemongrass stalks
- ☐ 1 13-oz can coconut milk
- ☐ 2 to 3 C vegetable stock OR 1 bouillon cube with 2 to 3 C water **
- ☐ 4 T soy sauce ** (for GLUTEN/SOY ALLERGY sub coconut aminos)**
- ☐ 1 tsp salt
- ☐ 1 tsp brown sugar, granulated sugar, or honey **
- ☐ 1 lime
- ☐ Toppings (SFC chefs choose at least 2 or all):
- ☐ 8 to 12 mushrooms (1 or 1/2 for each kid)
- ☐ 1 handful bean sprouts
- ☐ 1/2 15-oz can baby corn
- ☐ 1 handful fresh cilantro
- ☐ 1/2 C grape tomatoes
- ☐ sliced cucumbers

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Gluten/Soy: Check bouillon label for possible allergens and, if necessary, use water only. Substitute coconut aminos for soy sauce.

Sugar: For 1 tsp brown sugar, granulated sugar, or honey, substitute 1 tsp monk fruit sweetener blended with erythritol.

Instructions

"Tom Kha" Thai Coconut Lemongrass Soup

intro

We are making "Tom Kha" (Tohm Kah) soup today. "Tom" means "boiled," and "kha" is "galangal" (a root similar to ginger). The soup base traditionally consists of coconut milk, stock, galangal (ginger), lemongrass, and kaffir lime leaves. Ours will vary slightly, using ginger root instead of galangal, lime juice instead of leaves, and adding shallots, Thai rice noodles, and toppings of our choice.

soak + drain

Prepare the rice noodles first. Soak **8 to 10 ounces dried Thai rice noodles** in 4 cups of very hot water** for 5 to 15 minutes to soften (or follow package directions). Drain and set to the side.

chop + slice

Have your kids chop **2 shallots**. Also, slice **1 to 2 inches of ginger root** into 3 large slices and slice **2 lemongrass stalks** into pieces (both will be removed from the broth before serving).

scrumptious science

Fragrance and food go hand-in-hand. Your nose is a well-oiled machine that does most of the work in processing your olfactory sense (sense of smell). The olfactory sense refers to all the parts of your body that process smells. Your brain and nose do a lot of the work. When you smell something, your nose will communicate with the olfactory bulb, which is the part of your brain that processes smells. This process happens in a split second, making you feel an emotion or transporting you into a memory. This unique bodily function is why foods and their smells can make people feel happy, sad, or any range of emotions. My favorite is smelling cinnamon and being transported to baking pies with my aunts.

sauté + add

Sauté the shallots in a saucepan on your stovetop with a little vegetable oil to soften them. Then add the ginger and lemongrass and cook for another 3 minutes.

measure + pour

Have your kids measure and pour all of the broth ingredients into a large bowl: **1 can coconut milk, 2 to 3 cups vegetable stock OR 1 bouillon cube** plus **2 to 3 cups water, 4 tablespoons soy sauce, 1 teaspoon salt**, and **1 teaspoon brown sugar**. Whisk together.

simmer + prep + count

Add the coconut broth to the shallots, ginger, and lemongrass in your saucepan. While the broth simmers, have your kids prep whichever toppings you chose: **8 to 12 mushrooms, 1 handful bean sprouts, 1/2 can baby corn, 1 handful cilantro, 1/2 cup grape tomatoes**, and **sliced cucumbers**. Practice counting in Thai: 1 nùeng (noong), 2 sǎawng (sawng), 3 sǎam (sawm), 4 sìi (seee), 5 hâa (haah), 6 hòk (hoh), 7 jèt (dehd), 8 bpàaet (baad), 9 gâao (gow), 10 sǐp (seeb).

remove + portion

Remove the ginger and lemongrass from the broth. The soup should smell great by now! Portion the softened rice noodles into each bowl and then top with broth.

top + squeeze

Add the toppings to each bowl of soup and squeeze **the juice from a slice of lime** into each bowl right before serving. Enjoy and slurp away! It is considered polite to slurp noodles in Asia; it means you like the soup!

Featured Ingredient: Coconut!

Hi! I'm Coconut!

"Knock, Knock! Who's there? Coco. Coco Who? Coco Nut! You guessed it! I'm a Coconut! I'm kind of like the full moon because you can sort of see a face on my outer shell. See those indentations? They could be my eyes and nose! (Or maybe you see a really small, hairy bowling ball!) I may be a hard case to crack, but I'm tasty inside! Try me flaked or shredded, sweetened or unsweetened, in cookies, pies, cakes, salads, and shakes! Yum!"

History

Coconuts are native to tropical islands in the Pacific around Southeast Asia, but they were spread around the globe by explorers hundreds of years ago.

In Thailand, for about 400 years, pigtailed macaque monkeys have been trained to pick coconuts.

In the United States, you can write an address on the outside of a coconut, slap on the correct postage, and drop the whole thing in the mail. Amazing! Yes, coconuts are mailable as long as they are presented in a dry condition and not oozing fruit juice! Try it!

A coconut can survive months of floating in the ocean, and when it washes up on a beach, it can germinate

into a tree!

Globally, coconut oil was the leading oil until the 1960s, when soybean oil overtook it.

May 8 is "National Coconut Cream Pie Day" in the United States.

Anatomy & Etymology

Coconuts are related to olives, peaches, and plums. Coconuts are NOT nuts; they are big seeds!

The term "coconut" can refer to the whole coconut palm tree, the seed, or the fruit, which technically is a drupe, not a nut! A drupe refers to a fleshy fruit with a stony seed inside that's protected with thin skin or hard, stony covering. Examples are peaches, coconuts, and olives. The word "drupe" comes from "drupa," meaning overripe olive.

An average coconut palm produces about 30 coconuts a year, although it's possible for a tree to yield 75 to 100 annually.

A coconut will ripen in about a year; however, if you want to harvest it for the coconut water, it will be ready within six to seven months. If you shake a coconut and hear water sloshing around, it's not fully ripe, and there won't be as much meat.

The outer skin of the coconut covers a thick, fibrous husk, which can be used for making ropes, mats, brushes, sacks, caulking for boats, and stuffing for mattresses.

Coconut leaves have many uses, too, such as making brooms, weaving baskets or mats, or drying for thatch roofing.

Traditionally, the trunk of the coconut palm tree was used for its wood to build boats, bridges, houses, and huts.

The word "coconut" comes from the mid-16th-century Spanish and Portuguese word "coco," which can mean "bogyman" or "grinning face" after the three indentations on the coconut shell that resemble facial features.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

The coconut comes from the coconut palm tree. These trees prefer hot weather. Where in the world do you think they grow? Throughout the tropics and subtropical parts of Earth, in over 80 countries!

The three highest coconut-producing countries are the Philippines, Indonesia, and India.

The coconut palm tree can grow up to 98 feet tall!

Coconut milk is sweet and water-like but eventually dries out as the coconut ripens.

The coconut palm is sometimes referred to as the "Tree of Life" because it's useful from top to bottom.

Except for the roots, every part of the coconut tree is harvested in the tropical areas where coconut palms are common.

If buying a coconut whole, choose one that feels heavy for its size. Young coconuts will be full of coconut water and covered in a green, smooth shell with tender flesh. While older, mature coconuts have a more brown and fibrous outer shell with firmer and drier meat inside.

Coconuts are not easy to open! You have to forcefully crack them open to get to the edible goodness inside.

Coconut meat can be dried and shredded and used in salads, baked recipes, sprinkled over fruit, and enjoyed as a snack. It can also be eaten fresh and added to smoothies.

Coconut water is hydrating and can be enjoyed straight or poured over ice with other juices for a refreshing treat.

Nutrition

Electrolytes! Fresh coconut water is a source of electrolytes like potassium, sodium, and manganese. What do electrolytes do? They replenish the body by helping our muscles to move, our hearts to beat, and our brain cells to communicate with each other.

Coconuts are rich in a type of fat called lauric acid, which is known for being antiviral, antibacterial, and antifungal. These properties help prevent us from getting sick by protecting our immune system.

Coconut is very nutritious and has lots of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. It is classified as a "highly functional food" because it provides many health benefits beyond its nutritional content.

Pacific Islanders especially value coconut oil for its health and cosmetic benefits.