

Thailand in one bite!

mieng kham

Serves 4

- A Thai friend introduced me to this snack years ago while shopping at a local market. It didn't look that interesting - a little plastic bag filled with a whole bunch of different chopped things and some leaves stuffed in there as well. I had no clue how to go about eating it, so he showed me. Assembling a little bit of every ingredient onto the leaf and folding the leaf up so it looked like a little package.
 - Close your eyes and open your mouth!" he commanded, and popped it in. I started chewing and... WOW! Different tastes started to pop up at different times. It tasted like.....Thailand!
 - Why not try serving this to some friends when you get home, I'm sure it won't be long before they book a ticket to Thailand.
 - This little snack also has the 3 S's + the extra S too. Sweet = honey, sour = lime, salty = dried shrimp + spicy = birds eye chili.
 - A vegetarian version of this snack would be to leave out the shrimps and use salted roasted peanuts.
- WHAT TO USE**
- **12 wild pepper leaves**
 - **3 tbs Thai red onions, or western red onions - diced in small cubes**
 - **3 tbs ginger - diced into small cubes**
 - **3 tbs unsalted roasted peanuts**
 - **3 tbs lime - sliced in small cubes (if the skin is thin leave it on to get a little bit of bitterness as well)**
 - **3 tbs dried shrimp (you eat the shells and tails as well)**
 - **3 tbs roasted coconut meat**
 - **1 tbs birds eye chili - sliced in thin small rings**
 - **5 tbs runny honey - a mild type**
- Wild pepper leaves grow wild in South East Asia; they have a slight peppery taste and are available in good Asian shops now. I've never seen them marked with the English name though, so here's the phonetic pronunciation in Thai - BAI CHA PLU. This is not the same as Betle leaves (but many are confused about this) If the Asian shop doesn't have it, ask them if they can order it for you. You CAN substitute with large spinach leaves, but that's not nearly same-same. .
 - Roasted coconut flakes: This is a lot of work if you do it the "the real way" but you can cheat with good results. Just go to your regular supermarket, and buy coconut flakes for baking. Dry-fry in a pan over a low heat until it becomes light brown and the moisture is gone. You can also roast in an oven on low heat. If you put this in an airtight container it'll last almost a year! (If you don't live in a tropical country)
 - The "usual" sauce for this little snack is very complex and time consuming to make. I don't want you to give up on this little taste bomb because of that, so I have chosen to use an easy sauce: honey, which I feel, gives a lovely taste and gives the sweet element that's required for this snack.

tps = teaspoon - tbs = tablespoon (the one you eat with)



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