

# NOODLE DISHES

Although noodle dishes maintain a unique Khmer variation, some elements of noodle dishes were influenced by Chinese and Vietnamese cooking.

Rice and noodles are the main components of Cambodian diet. People eat rice and fish every day in Cambodia. Almost every meal includes a bowl of rice. In Australia, rice and fish are also popular. Bread is only for breakfast. People like steam rice, fried rice, or rice noodles. Sticky rice is used more in desserts with fruits like durian.

According to IR12, the variations of rice noodles show the influences from Chinese cuisine whereas curry dishes show the influences from Indian cuisine.

Fish are cooked fresh, or eaten dry or salted.

Cambodians like seasonings such as hot peppers, lemon grass, ginger and mint. Cambodians also use fish sauce. Fish sauce is used as a dipping sauce, is also used in soups, stir-fried cuisine

The main ingredient of many Khmer curries and desserts are coconut milk.

Cambodians like sweet desserts which are made from either fruit or rice. Now in Australia they eat less sweet to reduce the sugar level. Cambodians also drink tea and coffee with condensed milk which was introduced by the French

Cambodian food is influenced by Vietnamese and Thai food but it is not as spicy as Thai food.

Cambodian use forks and spoons and chopsticks.

Typically Cambodians have at least 3 or 4 separate dishes for every meal. Each dish has different taste, sweet, sour, salty or bitter.

Some of the Cambodian dishes are:

“amok” - people steam catfish with curry in banana leaf cups.

“Sngow chrouk mwun” - sour chicken soup with herbs.

‘Seang ktih’ - fermented soy bean dip served with fresh vegetables.

‘Samlor mchou kroeung sut ko’ – spiced beef in sour soup

“Sngow mureah” – soup with bitter melon stuffed with minced pork.

“Num sang khya lpeou” – pumpkin custard made with egg yolks, palm sugar and coconut milk.

“Num Chak” – Sticky rice and coconut grilled in Chak leaf.

## ***Ingredients***

### **Spices**

Chilli, tamarind is a common ingredient for sour dishes, and is a common soup base.

Star anise – a must-have when Cambodians have to caramelize meats such as pork in palm sugar.

Other essential spices in Khmer cooking are tumeric, galangal, ginger, lemon grass and kaffir lime. These spices are essential in Khmer stews and almost all curries.

Cambodians also use Kroeung – a spice paste in their cooking, it is an important aromatic paste. It is a spice blend -combines of ingredients such as cardamom, star anise, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and tumeric [ originally from India] , these are blended with native ingredients such as lemon grass, galangal, garlic, shallots, cilantro and kaffir lime leaves.

### **Vegetables**

Cambodians use vegetables such as winter melon, bitter melon, luffa and yardlong beans, squash in soups and stews. Whereas vegetables like mushrooms, cabbage, baby com, bamboo shoots, fresh ginger, Chinese broccoli, snow peas, bok choy are found in stir fry dishes. Banana blossoms are sliced and added to some noodle dishes like nom banh chok.

## **Fruits**

Some of the popular fruits are durian, mangosteen, sapodilla, pineapple, star apple, rose apple, coconut, jackfruit, papaya, watermelon, banana, mango, rambutans. Some ripe fruits such as water melon, pineapples can also be eaten with heavily salted fish and plain rice. Popular fruits for shakes are durian, mangoes and bananas.

## **Fish**

Fish is the common diet in the Khmer cuisine. Cambodians use dried salted fish, known as trei ngeat. It is eaten with plain rice porridge. Amok is a popular dish, Cambodians use catfish and steam it in a savory coconut based curry.

## **MEAT**

In Cambodian cuisine, beef and chicken are stewed, grilled or stir fried. Cambodians use pork to make sweet Khmer sausages known as twah ko. Rosted duck in Chinese bbq style is popular during festivals.

Some of the Khmer main dishes are sweet and sour soup with fish, it is popular in Cambodian kitchens [fish, pineapple, okra, celery, tamarind powder, tomatoes, Asian rhubarb, bean sprouts, and lemon grass

## **Herbs**

Following are some of the herbs used in the Khmer cuisine:

- perilla
- basil
- heartleaf [ *houltuynia cordata*]
- Chinese chives [ *allium tuberosum*]
- Coriander used as a garnish in many dishes. Eg. Beef noodle soup, congee