

THE LOTUS AND THE ARTICHOKE

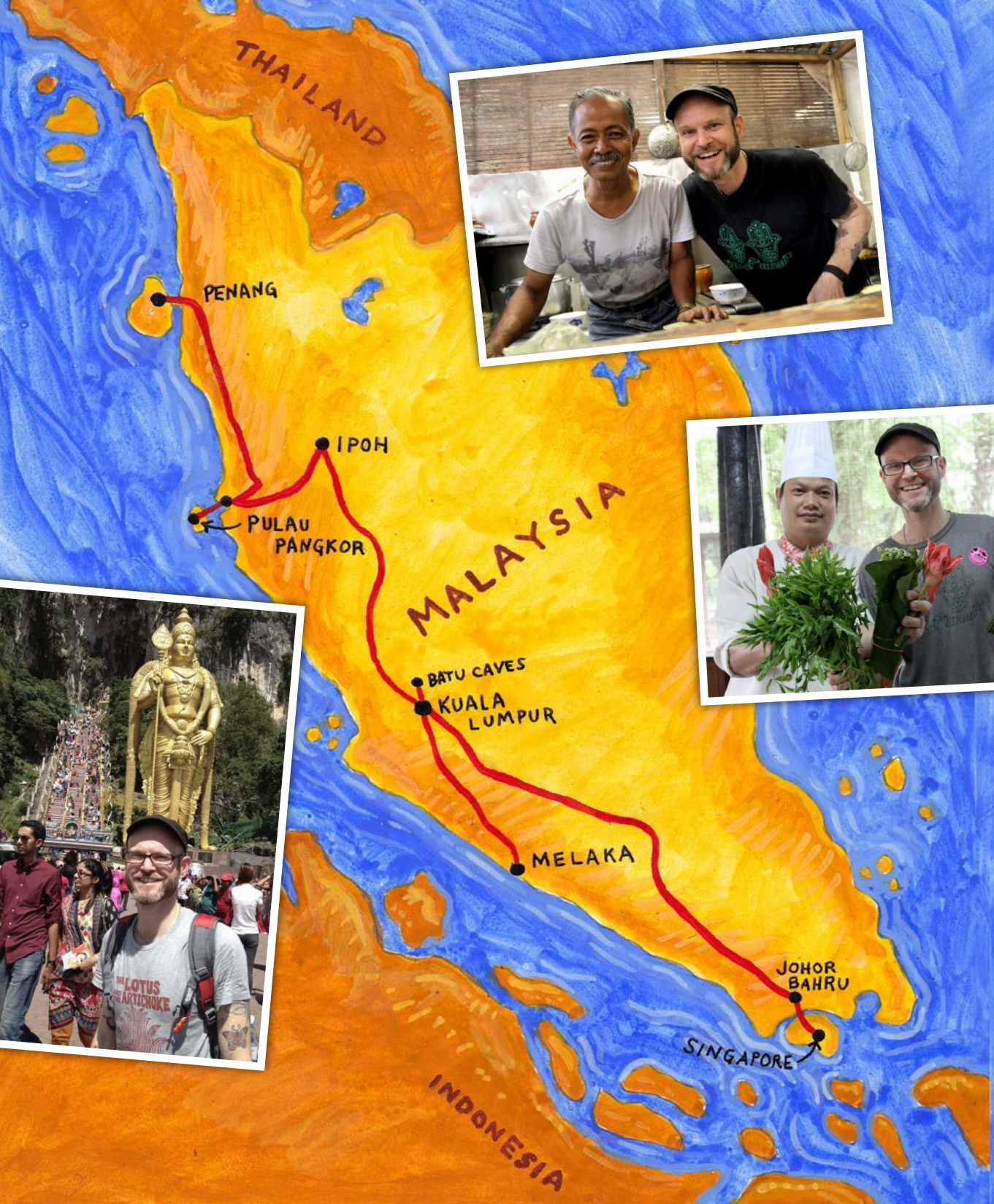
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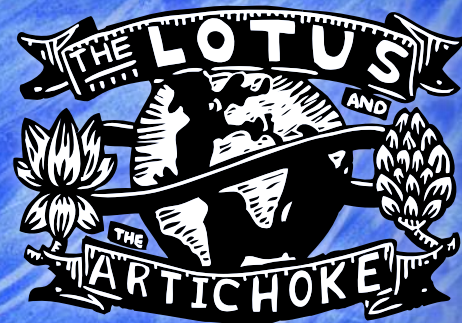


MALAYSIA

Justin P. Moore

A CULINARY
ADVENTURE
WITH OVER 70 VEGAN RECIPES





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About this Cookbook

In 1999, I was living in an artist studio loft in Philadelphia's Chinatown. I could see Penang, the new restaurant down the street, from my second floor windows. One cool evening, my curiosity steered me through the entrance. The names and descriptions of the dishes intrigued me. The atmosphere and presentation were even more impressive: Waiters dashed from a chaotic kitchen to crowded tables carrying oversized platters with steaming hot, gorgeous food splattered across fresh banana leaves. The colors, smells and sounds were powerful. The place was packed, loud, and electric.

That first Malaysian meal blew me away – Such intensely unique, yet mysteriously familiar flavors! I tasted hints of delightful cuisines I already knew: especially Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Indian. This was just months before my first trip to Asia, but I had fallen in love with Asian cooking long ago.

When I was fifteen, I decided to embrace a vegetarian way of life – for ethical, environmental, and health reasons. Within two years, I transitioned to vegan when the term was mostly unknown. I cooked often for family and friends, and got really into international cuisines, discovering new worlds of flavor, foods, and cooking methods. I dreamed of visiting these places, meeting the people, immersing myself in the cultures, learning new languages, and devouring delicious food together.

I grew up in a family that traveled a lot. My brothers and I spent six years in the Marshall Islands, with many trips to Micronesian and Polynesian islands in the Pacific. World cultures always fascinated me, and I was spellbound by the breathtaking photographs in National Geographic: bustling cities, colorful villages and towns, tribes in traditional dress, lush rainforests, imposing mountains, and magnificent animals from around our planet.

After high school, I completed a degree in Fine Arts, then worked in Boston and Philadelphia as an artist and designer. My hunger for travel grew. Weekend camping trips or city visits turned to cross-country motorcycle tours. Short travels to Europe became backpacking in Asia for weeks, and then months. I documented my adventures with stories, drawings, and photographs, as I had since I was a kid.

In 2001, full of dreams and ambition, I booked a one-way ticket and intensive German language course and moved to Berlin. I continued cooking, painting, printmaking, designing, photographing, and visiting at least one new country every year.

The Lotus and the Artichoke combines all of these passions. My first cookbook was a collection of vegan recipes, art, photography, and stories inspired by my travels to nearly 40 countries. Following the success of the first book, my partner Julia, our young son Kolja, and I traveled to Mexico, and then Sri Lanka, the subjects of my second and third cookbooks, also published in German and English.

In early 2016, we flew to Kuala Lumpur for a five week journey around Malaysia, Singapore, and Borneo – by bus, train, taxi, boat, and plane. We stayed in city hotels, simple guesthouses, island chalets, and even a jungle treehouse. As always, I found my way into the kitchens of homes and restaurants, cooked with locals, tried so many new dishes and snacks, and filled my journal with notes and pictures. Back in Germany, I spent the next months creating the recipes, artwork, and photography for this book. And here I share with you my inspiration, insights, and memories from the adventures.

Enjoy!

Justin P. Moore
October 2016
Berlin, Germany



Adventures in MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE & BORNEO

The flight landed in **Kuala Lumpur** and we took a taxi downtown into the city. The driver drove us as far as Chinatown, but couldn't find the address for our place. Confused, he told us to get out. We stumbled around for a few blocks before finding the Winsin hotel. We cleaned up and walked to India town for dinner. When considering destinations for this year's big trip, I was well aware that Malaysia had a significant Indian community and that vegan and vegetarian Indian food would never be far away. The waiter brought our crispy dosas, chutneys, and steaming curries to the table, and we dove in.

That evening we braved the Chinatown market for the first time, packed with fashion, electronics, toys, and bootleg goods from around the world, but mostly factories in neighboring countries. It reminded me of the backpacker ghetto of Khao San Road in Bangkok and crowded markets of Beijing – both charming and disturbing. We explored the city, had fresh juices, walked in the hot sun, and just took in everything. Malaysian food is also renowned for the Chinese influence and likewise large community. There were vegetarian Chinese restaurants and Chinese dishes on menus everywhere. We rode the subway deep beneath the metropolis and emerged at a slick shopping mall with a mind-boggling view of the Petronas Towers, with their trademark connecting bridge, just like on all the postcards.

The impressive Sri Maha Mariamman Hindu temple was near our hotel, so we slipped off our shoes and wandered in to soak in the vibe. It was just like being in South India, but the real taste was yet to come. The next day I took the train by myself out to the Batu Caves to witness the yearly Thaipusam festival. Loud music roared and tens of thousands of pilgrims clambered up the steep steps to the cave temple. Many were in trances and wearing elaborate costumes with ornaments and jewelry that pierced their flesh with hooks and skewers. There were hundreds of vendors offering all kind of snacks for the hungry and spiritual souvenirs for the devout.

Another day, we explored Brickfields, another Indian neighborhood that was every bit as authentic as the one near our hotel. On the map it looked like a 15 minute walk, but it took us almost 2 hours in the heat to get there in the concrete jungle of highways, canals, and bridges – but few pedestrian walkways. After our first mouth-watering Malaysian Banana Leaf meal with my blogger friends Molly and Luane, there was an immense downpour. We took a cab in the rain back to Chinatown.

In the morning, we packed up everything and went to the train station. We wanted to go north, but all the trains were booked out. "What about Singapore?" I asked. Before we knew it we were on a train going seven hours south instead, to the last stop, **Johor Bahru**. It took an hour to cross the border into **Singapore**. We took a bus to Indiatown. It was nearly midnight and the others were in bed, but I was wide awake and hungry. On the streets, I bumped into fellow backpacker Preetam, who'd met on the train. He was also on a late-night dinner mission. We found an all-night Indian restaurant and ordered up two Thali plates of the veg curries and drank chilled coconut water. I walked back to the Madras motel and fell into a deep sleep, despite the thundering Tamil pop tunes from the downstairs disco.

Singapore was a heaven of vegan options. The Indian food was spectacular, the Chinese food was some of the best I'd had since Shanghai, and the culinary fusion of international styles was phenomenal. During the day we explored the city and visited landmarks, weaving through crowds of schoolchildren and armies of holiday makers with selfie sticks. I shared lunch with a local pen pal, and then went for dinner with an old friend and former roommate from my Boston days. After hours of catching-up, nostalgic stories, and lots of laughter, I practically forgot the decade and country of the present.



We flew to **Penang**, to avoid the immigration circus going overland via Kuala Lumpur. Our cab drove us to **Georgetown**, but the evening traffic was at a standstill. Sixty minutes later, we made the last two blocks to the Cintra Heritage Home, straight out of the 19th century, but only a steps away from the action. The food in Penang was out of this world and the atmosphere charged with life and emotion. The Chinese restaurants were exceptional, the Indian places were also insanely great. The local street food and snacks were fun, too. Day after day, night after night, we ate our way through every plant-focused restaurant we could find. And there was always another one. We checked out Chinese palaces, and rode in a decked-out cycle rickshaw. We drank cold coconut juice, tried Malaysian iced drinks and desserts, and even had fantastic Japanese food. I met the owner of Sushi Kitchen, and she drove me to her friend's restaurant to meet the crew. They made a big meal just for me and we talked for hours.

In Penang I discovered steamed Otak-Otak, Popiah rolls, sensational Laksa noodle soup, and really began to explore Malaysian culinary fusion. The flavors were intense and complex: sweet and tangy, but also spicy and powerful. I took notes of all the new delights. We rode up Penang Hill in a funicular and enjoyed the view. After another day of fantastic Indian food, including the steaming Punjabi Sizzler platter and Indochinese Gobi 65, it was time to pack up. We had spent a week in Penang, but I could've stayed another two, just for the food.

The morning ferry took us close to the bus station. We got fresh fruit and snacks for the ride to Lamut, and then another small boat to the island of **Pulau Pangkor**. We arrived in the village of **Teluk Nipah**, which had a few places to stay near the beach. We checked into a cute wooden chalet from the family-run Ombak Inn and ventured out to the main street with a view of the coast and a string of sit-down cheap eateries and street food stalls. Over the next few days we returned over and over again to Restaurant No. 7, where I got to know the chef and owner, and got to go in the kitchen with him. He showed me how to make Sayur Campur, Kangkung Goreng, and other classics. We swam in the sea and played at a modest beach a short walk uphill toward the jungle and Buddhist rock temple, with an odd campground at the base, with tents and cabins of students on island adventure get-away trips.

It was the Chinese New Year holiday week. every evening the island became a carnival of Malaysian locals and primarily Asian tourists. We met a Dutch family and twice snuck our way into the pool of their fancier resort down the street from where we were staying. After swimming, we brought the kids to eat delicious rotis, grilled vegetable-stuffed flatbreads, and vegetable fried noodles and rice from our favorite beach restaurant. I swam from the beach to the tiny, uninhabited neighboring island. I rested in the shade, and then paddled back to the main island. I hadn't swam so much in the sea since Mexico, two years before, where surfing in strong currents got me in great shape. Living in the Marshall Islands as a kid taught me to appreciate and respect deep water and waves. It thrills me, yet sometimes scares me a little, to be so far out from shore.

After several days we were ready to move on. We took the ferry back to the mainland and then a local bus to **Ipoh**, a city with its own emerging cultural and culinary scenes. As in Penang, street art, street food, fine dining, night life and good times are on the rise. The city felt sleepy to me; perhaps everyone really was still just waking up from a week of Chinese New Year celebrations, but there was just an energy or inspiration that was absent.

We took an excursion to the Ling Sen Tong cave temple, which ended up being much more amusement park-like than spiritual. As lunch time grew near, and my stomach started rumbling, I found a sign outside of the old temple complex which promised "Vegetarian Restaurant!" I walked down the long, dusty corridor and came into a surreal dining room with low ceilings, small windows, and empty tables. Was it closed? Was it still a restaurant? A face emerged from the shadows, from what might have been a kitchen. A waiter? A cook? I greeted him and made the universal gestures for I'm Hungry and



Do You Have Food, first patting my belly, and then shoveling invisible bites into my mouth. He looked confused, but then his face lit up, and he fetched a wrinkled sheet of paper that must've been a menu. Except for the numbers, I couldn't make sense of it. And if the numbers were prices, they must've been for elaborate meals for entire tour groups or giant families. The charades were going nowhere fast, and I didn't want to risk ordering a five course meal for ten people, so we politely excused ourselves and found a ride back to town.

By contrast, the Chinese vegetarian restaurants downtown were more accessible and had decent food. The Indian restaurants were quite good. We enjoyed excellent Roti Canai breakfasts at the old school diner on the corner. Still, nothing I tried in Ipoh really blew me away as had happened almost every day in KL, Singapore, and Penang. When I feel these heavy comparisons and judgements setting in, and a place feels off, there are two things to do: Dedicate more time and focus there, or just move on, and appreciate the ride to something else.

I went to the train station to book the two hour journey for the following day. It was a circus inside! We'd made the same mistake again. Even for such a short trip, everything was booked out for days. I was baffled by how different the trains in Malaysia are from other parts of Asia – and from train travel in past decades. I'm used to last minute bookings and abundant tickets, and the possibility to just ride without a seat for an hour or two. The trains here were ultra-modern and the tickets very affordable, and understandably desirable. Combined with the holiday traffic of everyone going home, this led to chaos and confusion. In Sri Lanka and India I experienced that a lot of taxi drivers are willing to take you a few hours' drive for totally reasonable prices if they're charmed, curious, or just bored. But that just wasn't happening here this time. I had to find another solution: an early morning bus from the massive suburban bus terminal, which meant waking at the crack of dawn and a mini taxi journey.

The return to the cosmopolitan flash, fun, and hustle of KL was refreshing. We stayed in a small room at the Hotel 1915 on the same noisy side street of our beloved South Indian eatery, Sangeetha Veg Restaurant. This meant dosas and idlys for breakfast, an afternoon out and about, and Indian and Indochinese dishes for dinner, followed by fresh sweets. But we were just passing through this time. The following day we flew to **Borneo**, fulfilling another of my childhood travel dreams.

Like most people, I always imagine what places will be like before I arrive. With **Kuching**, things were so different than the picture in my head. In the age of the internet, it's simple and tempting to preview far-away places. This time, I'd intentionally only read about the place, and didn't look online to prepare myself. Kuching was an odd mix of Borneo tourism, old historic town feel, billowing incense temples, new shopping malls, and quaint folk museums with cosy parks and trails. I met Boy Skrang and Baxx Jordan, world-famous tattoo artists. I got a traditional Borneo hand-tapped tattoo on my leg, the design a mix of Iban and Polynesian elements, a tribute to my younger years. The Chinese vegetarian buffet lunches at Zhun San Yen were incredible, and many dishes there inspired recipes for this book. I also had some terrific noodle soups at Life Cafe just around the corner from the guesthouse.

I had hoped to travel to Miri, and from there to the famous, magnificent caves at Mulu National Park, or which I had seen in film documentaries and photos. But visiting the slightly-less famous Fairy Cave close to Kuching didn't require any 20 hour bus rides, jungle river boat rides, or multiple flights. It was a small compromise: The tunnels and hollows in the earth were indeed impressive, and a highlight of the whole trip to Malaysia. It was an adventure to climb and wind the subterranean paths with a headlamp. For most of the day we had the whole cave to ourselves. Water trickled down melodically from the ceiling and light from the heavens beamed in from the mouth of the cavern. One day I hope to return and explore Mulu and more famous caves of Borneo.



We rode a few hours north to the rainforest of **Permai**, and checked into a jungle treehouse high above the earth on wooden stilts. It was unquestionably one of the coolest places I've ever stayed. Down the trail was a dining pavilion where we ate made to order rice and noodle dishes under a thatched roof. The most memorable food was at the Sarawak cultural village. I met the chefs and they taught me how to make Kelabit Mango Salad and shared with me a cookbook of tribal cuisine. We explored the traditional villages, watched a concert, took lots of photos, and snacked on little fried cakes. Later, we hiked to the natural swimming pool and further up the trail to a private beach. There was a small cluster of eateries just outside the village. We drank fresh juices and ate more fried rice and noodles, the classic standby served street food style: spicy with lots of sauces to add as you like. After a few nights we got a ride back to the guesthouse in Kuching. I collected woven and wooden kitchen and dining items and some tribal art from the markets, and we had a comically unauthentic Middle Eastern meal at a Lebanese restaurant we tried out of curiosity. We recovered with more noodle soups and Chinese buffets in the neighborhood, and I hung out with Baxx and Boy Skrang some more.

We flew back to Kuala Lumpur, and took the bus from the airport south several hours to **Malacca**, to indulge in great food, fun conversation, and a week of hanging out with my travel pal Bram from NYC, whom I try to meet every year in a new place – preferably one with Indian food. He had suggested Malacca, having been there over a decade ago, anxious to see how it had developed. Our first dinner destination was, of course, the local Selvam restaurant, where Indian-Malaysian curries, rice, and chutneys were shoveled out of buckets on to fresh banana leaves right in front of our faces. We went for dinner almost every night, and each time they had new curries featuring all kinds of local vegetables, and dozens of dosas and other unforgettable South Indian eats to choose from.

Malacca had a decent selection of vegetarian restaurants, so we went to all of them, and then back to most again, too. We rode the corny, garishly decorated cycle rickshaws, which Kolja loved. We explored the waterfront, and hiked around hillside colonial Portuguese ruins. We ventured across and beyond the old town many times, to stroll aside the waterways, through the winding alleys, down dry, dusty lanes, and found world-class Malaysian and Chinese vegan restaurants. I met the cooks and their dishes: Spicy Tempeh Cubes, rich soups, as well as fresh and tangy Rojak fruit salad. At the crowded Man Yuan Fang family restaurant, I ate the best Chinese food since Singapore. Their Veg KFC, fried faux-chicken, was so good I ordered seconds, and took notes to recreate the recipe back home .

At the night market we ate snacks like fried bananas from the street vendors and watched the crowds. On the weekend, the old town was flooded with cars and motorcycles cruising the small streets and drag racing down the long, straightaways into the early hours. I cooked simple breakfasts and lunches in the shared kitchen of the inn, and we ate at the family table with other guests, or in the garden watching colorful birds in the mango trees overhead.

The final two days of the Malaysia journey we spent back in Kuala Lumpur. We got returned to Hotel 1915, and began the Indian food ritual again, getting smiles and handshakes every time we entered the restaurants. Bram flew back to India, where he planned to spend a few months. We ate more dosas in his honor. After some gift shopping, more market strolls, and a haircut at a cute barber shop in Chinatown, it was time to pack up. The five weeks had flown by, and I wished we had a few more.







Urap

traditional warm salad with coconut & spices

serves 3 to 4 / time 25 min

2 cups (220 g) cabbage finely chopped
1 medium (100 g) carrot chopped
1 cup (110 g) green beans chopped
1 cup (50 g) bean sprouts
2–3 Tbs water
3/4 cup (75 g) fresh coconut grated
or **1/2 cup (40 g) dried grated coconut + 3 Tbs hot water**
2 Tbs vegetable oil
1 small or large red chili finely chopped
1 shallot finely chopped
1 clove garlic finely chopped
2 Tbs lemon juice or lime juice
1 tsp tamarind paste (seedless)
1 Tbs coconut sugar or agave syrup
1 tsp chili powder or paprika ground
3/4 tsp sea salt

1. If using dried, grated **coconut**, combine well with hot **water** and soak 15 min.
2. Heat **oil** in a medium frying pan on medium heat. Add chopped **red chili**, **shallot**, and **garlic**. Fry 2–3 min, stirring constantly.
3. Add **coconut**, **lemon (or lime) juice**, **tamarind paste**, **coconut sugar (or syrup)**, **chili powder (or paprika)**, and **salt**. Mix well. Fry 3 min, stirring regularly. Remove from heat.
4. Heat 2 Tbs **water** in a large pot on medium heat. Add chopped **cabbage** and **carrots**. Cover and steam 5 min.
5. Add **green beans**, **bean sprouts**, and another 1 Tbs **water**, if needed. Stir. Cover and continue to steam just until vegetables soften but still have some crunch, about 3–4 min. Remove from heat.
6. Add **coconut** and **spices** to large pot with vegetables. Combine well. Cover until ready to serve.

Variation:

Nuts: Add 1/3 cup (45 g) roasted, crumbled peanuts or cashews. **Spice Kick:** Add 1/2 tsp each ground black pepper, coriander, and more paprika and/or chili powder.



Spicy Mushroom Noodle Soup

with crispy, crumbled tofu

serves 2 to 3 / time 45 min +

7 oz (200 g) firm tofu
4.5 oz (125 g) mee noodles (thin wheat noodles)
1 cup (100 g) mushrooms sliced or chopped
fresh coriander leaves chopped, for garnish
thai basil leaves chopped, for garnish
small handful enoki mushrooms for garnish
roasted onions for garnish

spice paste:

1 stalk lemongrass chopped
2 cloves garlic chopped
1 shallot or **spring onion** chopped
3/4 in (2 cm) galangal or **fresh ginger**
1 large red chili chopped *Optional*
3/4 in (2 cm) fresh turmeric
or **1/2 tsp turmeric powder**
2 tsp coconut sugar or **agave syrup**
3/4 tsp 5 Spice Powder (page 27)
1/2 tsp coriander ground
3 Tbs soy sauce (Shoyu)
1 Tbs rice vinegar
2 Tbs oil
1/2 tsp sea salt

soup stock:

2 dried shiitake mushrooms
2 carrots chopped
1 stalk celery chopped
or **1/2 small fennel bulb** chopped
2 bay leaves
5 cups (1200 ml) water

1. Bring **stock ingredients** to boil in large pot. Reduce heat to low. Simmer 30 min. Strain, discard solids.
2. Cut tofu in slabs, wrap in clean kitchen towel. Weight with heavy cutting boards to press out excess moisture. Let sit 15 min. Unwrap tofu and crumble into a bowl.
3. Blend **spice paste ingredients** in a small food processor until smooth. Use more oil if necessary.
4. Heat a medium frying pan on medium high heat. Stirring constantly, fry blended **spice paste** until it begins to darken and oil separates, 4–5 min. Reduce heat to low.
5. Remove 1/2 of fried **spice paste** and add to pot with (strained) **soup stock**. Stir well. Return stock to simmer on low heat.
6. Return pan with remaining spice paste to medium high heat. Add sliced **mushrooms** and crumbled **tofu**. Mix well. Frying, stirring regularly, until browned and crispy, 5–7 min. Remove from heat.
7. Add **noodles** to simmering soup stock. Cook on low, stirring occasionally, until noodles are soft, but not mushy, about 5 min.
8. Portion liquid and noodles into bowls. Top with fried **mushrooms** and **tofu**. Garnish with fresh **coriander** and **thai basil leaves**, **roasted onions**, and **enoki mushrooms**. Serve.



Nasi Lemak

Coconut Pandan Rice & Spicy Nuts

serves 4 / time 25 min

Coconut Pandan Rice:

2 cups (375 g) broken jasmine rice or basmati rice
1 2/3 cup (400 ml) water
1 2/3 cup (400 ml) coconut milk
1/2 tsp sea salt
1/2 tsp turmeric ground
2 pandan leaves or bay leaves
fried onions for garnish
1/2 small cucumber sliced
lime slices for garnish

1. Rinse and drain **rice** thoroughly.
2. Bring **water** and **coconut milk** to low boil in a medium pot with good lid. Stir in **rice, salt, turmeric,** and **pandan (or bay leaves)**. Return to simmer. Cover and steam until most liquid is absorbed, 12–15 min. Remove from heat. Stir a few times. Cover and let sit 10 min. Remove and discard leaves before serving.
3. Garnish with **fried onions, cucumber,** and **lime slices**.
4. Serve with Lemongrass Ginger Tofu (page 75), Sambal Belacan (page 50), and Spicy Nuts (below).

Spicy Nuts:

1/2 cup (50 g) peanuts
1/2 cup (50 g) cashews
1/2 tsp chili powder or paprika ground
2 tsp coconut sugar
1/4 tsp sea salt

1. Heat a medium frying pan on medium heat. Dry roast **peanuts** and **cashews**, stirring regularly, until light golden brown and dark spots begin to appear, 4–7 min. Do not burn.
2. Add **chili powder (or paprika), sugar** and **salt**. Mix well. Continue to cook another 2–3 min, stirring constantly, until sugar has melted and nuts are well coated. Remove from heat. Allow to cool.



Apam Balik

crispy, crunchy peanut-filled pancakes

makes 4 to 6 / time 30 min +

3/4 cup (100 g) peanuts crumbled or very coarsely ground

2 Tbs sugar

1/4 tsp sea salt

1/2 cup (60 g) flour (all purpose / type 550)

1/2 cup (50 g) rice flour

1/4 cup (45 g) sugar

1 Tbs corn starch

1 tsp baking powder

1/2 tsp sea salt

1 cup (240 ml) coconut milk

2 Tbs water

agave syrup or **palm syrup** *optional*

vegetable oil for frying pan

1. Crumble or coarsely grind **peanuts** and dry roast in a pan on medium heat until golden brown and dark spots appear, 4–5 min. Add **sugar** and **salt**. Mix well. Stirring constantly, roast until sugar melts and mix starts to stick together, 1–2 min. Remove from heat.
2. Combine **flour**, **rice flour**, **sugar**, **corn starch**, **baking powder**, and **salt** in a large mixing bowl. Whisk in **coconut milk** and **water** gradually. Mix until mostly smooth, but do not over mix. Cover and let batter sit 20–30 min.
3. Heat frying pan on medium high heat. Put a few drops of **oil** on pan and rub it around with a paper towel. Do this before each pancake. When a drop of water sizzles and dances on surface, pan is ready.
4. Pour about 1/4 to 1/3 cup (60–80 ml) batter in the center of the hot pan. Tilt and turn the pan to form a large, thin, circular pancake.
5. After bubbles appear on surface and underside is golden brown (about 2–3 min), use a spatula to carefully peel up the edges around the pancake and then flip it over. Cook the other side for 1–2 min, then flip it back over. Put 2–3 Tbs of the sugary **peanuts** on the pancake and roll up or fold over. Transfer to a plate. Repeat with other pancakes.
6. Serve plain, or drizzle pancakes with **agave syrup** or **palm syrup**.

Variations:

Creamy: Use peanut butter instead of roasted, crumbled peanuts. **Bananas:** Add sliced banana to filling. **Traditional:** Add 1–2 Tbs sweet corn kernels to each pancake filling.