



[\*Burma Superstar: Addictive Recipes from the Crossroads of Southeast Asia\*](#), by Desmond Tan and Kate Leahy.

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### **Our Summary:**

If you like the cuisines of India and China, Thailand and Vietnam, than you'll be an instant fan of the flavors and food that come out of [\*Burma Superstar\*](#). Burma, now the country of Myanmar, boasts bold flavors. Addictively savory and spicy, this cuisine is also salty and tart. Curries are more subtle, and salads are an amalgam of texture and flavor. This is a book to chew and digest, and savor over and again. It's an experiment in learning (and locating) new ingredients, and trusting that it's okay to eat things like tea leaves (and it is!). Between its covers

you'll find familiar ingredients seasoned or cooked in unexpected ways. You'll learn to appreciate new and exciting flavor profiles. And cooking these dishes? The popular San Francisco Bay area restaurant's recipes are streamlined for the home kitchen.

### **What you need to know:**

**Get it:** [\*Burma Superstar\*](#), copyright © 2017 by Desmond Tan and Kate Leahy. Published by Ten Speed Press, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC. March 28, 2017 Hardcover \$29.99 ([Amazon \\$19.49](#); [Kindle \\$15.99](#))

**See it:** 272 pages with color photographs throughout of finished dishes, though not all, and ingredients; also journalistic photos of Myanmar and working shots of the Burma Superstar kitchen. The table of contents is thorough but not in list form; a thorough index of both ingredient and recipe name is included.

**Make it:** Just over 80 recipes in a variety of chapters including Curries and Slow-Cooked Dishes; Stir-fries and Fast-Cooked Dishes; Noodles; Drinks, Rice and Basics, and more. A complete primer on the pantry and tools/techniques is also included, though no resources as to where to locate the most obscure of ingredients such as *laphet*.

### **Our Review:**

If you don't know where Burma is, you're not alone. Burma, now modern-day Myanmar, is regularly grouped with Southeast Asia. And, yet, it's different – at least in terms of its food. It is savory, occasionally salty, sometimes sour, and often funky with that rich umami complexity we've grown to love so much state-side. [\*Burma Superstar\*](#) features slow-cooked onions and garlic, ground chiles and turmeric, and shrimp paste as the building blocks of recipes. Tamarind water is just as important as lime juice to add acidity. Then wrap in the textural crunch of fried split peas, fried garlic, crushed peanuts, and toasted chickpea flour, and you've got a Burmese



meal. If the thought of that isn't daunting, then dive in. This is an exciting way to stretch your palate and grow your cooking repertoire.

The thing about [Burma Superstar](#) is that it really is an easy book to cook from once you've been able to source a few of the regular staples essential to the Burmese pantry. Things like tamarind pulp, and shrimp powder and shrimp paste. Galangal, similar to ginger only lighter in color with a floral, almost soapy smell, and good luck finding it – but it freezes well, will stump you, but it only appears in one dish in the book. The rest of the pantry hails from other ethnic cuisines, like Chinese or Indian and Thai. If you're familiar with a local ethnic grocer you may not have to fret at all. Except for *laphet*, fermented tea leaves. The easiest source is on [Amazon, here](#), and the page gives you a few options. Not cheap, but then again, if you're going to attempt an authentic Burmese experience, the investment may be worth it.

For an easy entry though, we've selected a few tempting and manageable dishes: *Coconut Chicken Curry* which is made from easy to find ingredients. It's also the base to *Nan Gyi Thoke*, chewy round rice noodles lightly coated in the savory chicken curry topped with a hard boiled egg. And then there's *Platha*, a buttery layered flatbread (think Asia's answer to the croissant). Only *Platha* doesn't require mixers or layering thin layers of dough over and over again. Everything comes together by hand. Served with the *Coconut Chicken Curry*, it's hard to beat.

Once you've made a few of the recipes in [Burma Superstar](#), it's hard to keep from wanting to try more. You'll settle on your next easiest recipe and discover that the odd ingredient wasn't *that* difficult to find. Soon enough you'll discover a range and depth of flavor you might not have known existed. That's when the Stir Fries, Salads and Noodle dishes all become possible. Even the Slow-Cooked Snacks and Sweets are tempting. You'll have learned something new, traveled to an exotic place in our world, and never left the site of your kitchen. That's [Burma Superstar](#).

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[Coconut Chicken Curry](#)

[Nan Gyi Thoke](#)

[Tea Leaf Salad](#)