



Reprinted with permission from [Pok Pok Noodles](#) by Andy Ricker with JJ Goode, copyright © 2019. Photography credit: Austin Bush © 2019. Published by Ten Speed Press, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

NOODLE SOUP WITH CHICKEN

Kuaytiaw Naam Kai

ก๋วยเตี๋ยวน้ำไก่

The name of this dish has long struck me as a good demonstration of the grammatical simplicity of the Thai language. I'm no linguist—a better description would be “remedial student”—but I do enjoy the fact that stringing together the words *noodle*, *water*, and *chicken* is enough to get you lunch, not to mention one of this caliber.

Kuaytiaw naam kai might be the simplest of all Thai noodle dishes. I reckon it's one of the most craveable, too. This is still true for me a good quarter century after my first encounter with the dish, as a backpacker in Bangkok roaming Sukhumvit Road for sustenance. The dish is what it sounds like: noodles in chicken broth made in the Thai style—that is, made with aromatics such as lemongrass and cilantro root and then dosed with fish sauce, herbs, and fried garlic before serving. That's the ballgame, really, other than some shredded chicken, a handful of bean sprouts, the ubiquitous *khruang phrung*, and, of course, the noodle of your choice.

When I was new to Thai food, the noodle soup was a great initiation, providing comfort and adventure in equal measure. Now it gives me just comfort, and perhaps gratitude that I was initiated.

Makes 1 bowl (1 serving); to make more, double or quadruple the ingredients, but make each bowl separately

THE BOWL

1 tbsp Thai fish sauce
3 g / 1 tsp granulated sugar
1 tsp Naam Man Krathiam Jiaw ([Fried Garlic in Garlic Oil](#), about half solids and half oil)
Generous pinch of finely ground Asian white pepper

THE DISH

2½ oz / 1 cup tightly packed semidried sen lek (thin, flat rice noodles), snipped into approximately 8-inch lengths
28 g / ½ cup bean sprouts
3 oz / ⅓ cup Neua Kai Chiik ([Shredded Poached Chicken](#)), at room temperature
1½ cups Naam Sup Kai (Chicken Stock), hot
2 g / 1 tbsp very roughly chopped Chinese celery (thin stems and leaves)
2 g / 1 tbsp very roughly chopped cilantro (thin stems and leaves)
4 g / 1 tbsp sliced (¼ inch) green onion
Suggested [khruang phrung](#)

Prep the Bowl

In a wide soup bowl, combine the fish sauce, sugar, fried garlic in garlic oil, and pepper.

Make the Dish

Fill a large, tall pot with enough water to submerge a long-handled noodle basket and bring to a boil over high heat. Put the noodles and bean sprouts in the basket and submerge the contents in the boiling water. Cook, stirring occasionally, with chopsticks, until the noodles are tender, about 1 minute.

Firmly shake the basket to drain well and dump the contents into the prepared bowl. Add the shredded poached chicken, then pour on the hot chicken stock and stir briefly but well. Sprinkle on the Chinese celery, cilantro, and green onion. Serve with the *khruang phrung* alongside.

FLAVOR PROFILE

Mild, umami-rich

SUGGESTED [KHUANG PHRUNG](#)

Phrik Naam Plaa (Fish Sauce–Soaked Chiles)
Phrik Naam Som (Vinegar–Soaked Chiles)
Phrik Pon Khua (Toasted-Chile Powder)
Sugar (preferably raw cane sugar)

SUGGESTED UTENSILS





Reprinted with permission from Pok Pok Noodle Co. All rights reserved. Photo by Austin Bush, 2019. Published by Eats & Dress Press in partnership with Pok Pok Noodle Co.