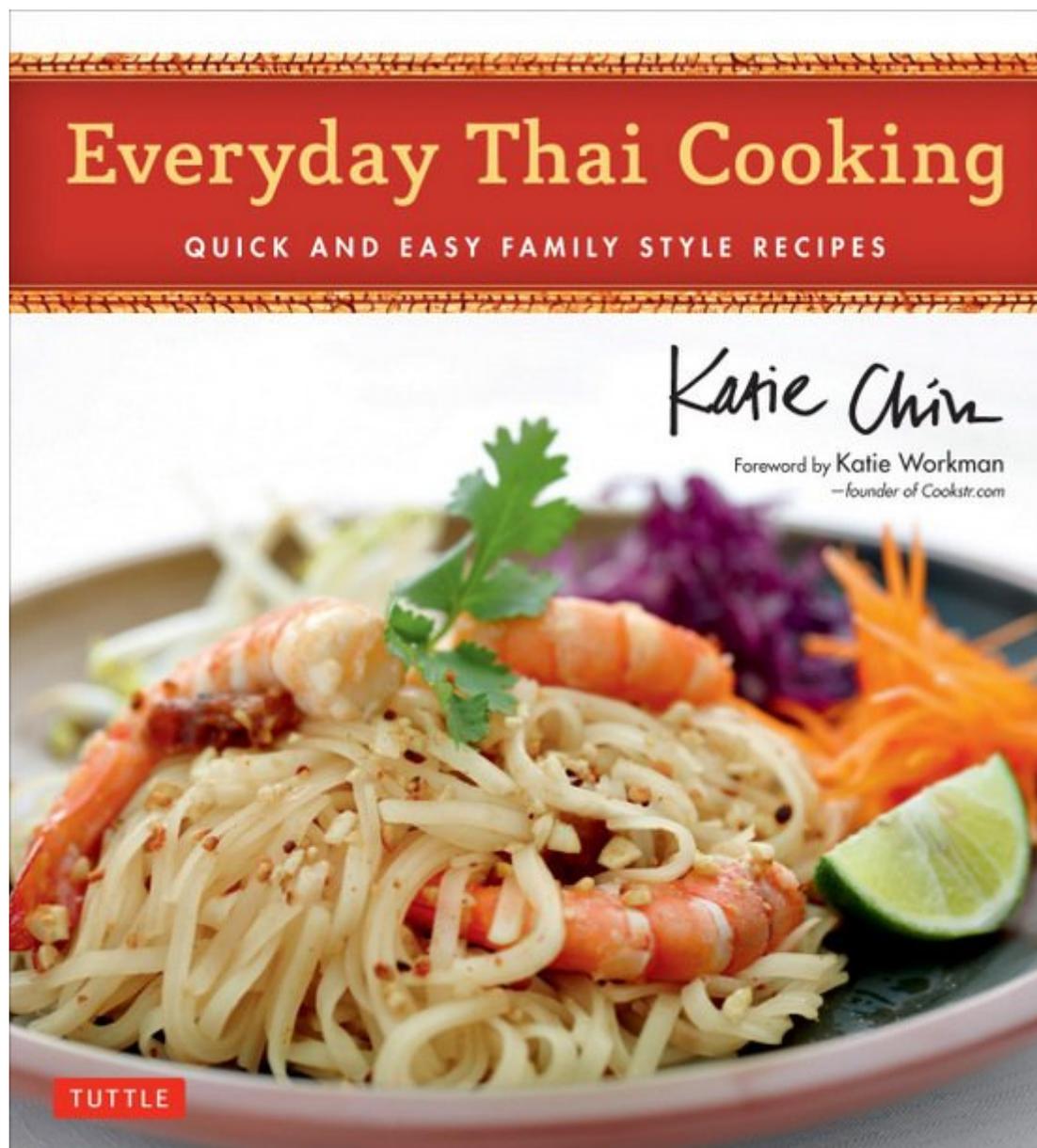


# Cook the Book: 'Everyday Thai Cooking'

KATE WILLIAMS



With its bold melange of sweet, sour, salty, and spicy flavors, Thai cooking can often seem intimidating to the newcomer. And with the profusion of Thai take-out in cities across the U.S. these days, it often seems easier to just order in when you've got a craving for pad see ew. But here's the thing—Thai cooking is actually pretty simple, and success has more to do with careful shopping than technical skill. A few key ingredients like fresh herbs, fish sauce, lime juice, and ginger are really all that stand between you and a homemade Thai dinner.

A new cookbook by writer, chef, and sometimes television host **Katie Chin** reveals how easy it is to bring Thai flavors into American home kitchens. *Everyday Thai Cooking* emphasizes simplicity; Chin suggests searching out authentic ingredients and making staple spice blends and stocks from scratch, but her recipes don't require it. Anything that would be hard to find in say, Kansas, has substitutes and steps that may add an hour to a dish's preparation are optional. That's not to say that her food tastes as though it has taken shortcuts. Even using store-bought stock in her

tom kah gai isn't a deal breaker—the soup is still brightly herbaceous, tangy, and rich with coconut milk. It's much, much better than takeout. Take the extra time to make the stock from scratch, and you'll be even more pleased.

The book is easy to follow, with step-by-step photographs for any direction that's remotely difficult (say, wrapping spring rolls), and presents a wide assortment of curries, soups, salads, and stir-fries. There is a heavy emphasis on protein—most recipes have some kind of meat or seafood in them, or else a block of tofu. It would have been nice to see more tofu-less vegetarian dishes. Still, Chin's recipes are solid, and it's refreshing to cook from an ethnic cookbook without feeling pressured to restock the kitchen with a whole new pantry and set of pans.

This week, we'll try a range of Thai dishes, beginning with fragrant **Pork Larb**. Then we'll sample the aforementioned **Tom Kah Gai**, and a peanut-y **Tofu and Spinach Stir-Fry**. Finishing out the week will be super-spicy "**Crying Tiger**" **Grilled Lamb** and a rich **Pineapple Duck Curry**.

## Win 'Everyday Thai Cooking'

Thanks to our friends at Tuttle Publishing, we have five (5) copies of Everyday Thai Cooking to give away this week. All you need to do for a chance to win is to tell us about **the easiest Thai recipe you can think of** in the comments section below.