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Paht Thai Noodles

kwaytiow paht Thai

If you love this dish as much as I do, you will be thrilled to see how easily you can make it in your home kitchen. Our daughter, Isabelle, has grown up calling paht Thai “pink noodles” since her favorite version at Indra Thai restaurant, in Glendale, California, includes just enough tomato paste to give it a delicious tinge of pink. The classic noodle-shop version calls for a daunting array of ingredients, from pickled white radish and garlic chives to tamarind liquid, dried shrimp, and crisp fried tofu. My family loves this simple and delicious homestyle paht Thai recipe we learned from Ms. Siriluk Williams, owner of Sukothai Restaurant in Fort Lauderdale, Florida – it’s easy to make and hard to resist. Cooking noodles in a wok or a skillet takes a little practice, but once you have prepared a few plates of paht Thai, you will know just what to do and how to do it. For the rice noodles, or kwaytiow, the traditional choice is a slender, flat noodle resembling linguine, but almost any long noodle will work here.

1/4 pound dried rice noodles, linguine or fettucine width
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon coarsely chopped garlic
8 to 10 medium shrimp (about 1/4 pound shrimp), peeled and deveined
1/4 pound boneless chicken or pork, cut in bite-sized pieces
3 tablespoons fish sauce
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoons dried red chili flakes or chili powder
About 1/4 cup water or chicken broth, to prevent noodles from sticking
1 egg, lightly beaten
3 green onions, coarsely chopped (about 1/3 cup)
2 cups fresh bean sprouts
1/4 cup coarsely chopped dry-roasted peanuts
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
2 lime wedges

To prepare the dried rice noodles, bring a large saucepan of water to a rolling boil, add the noodles, and remove from heat. Let the noodles steep 5 minutes, and then drain and rinse well in cold water. Transfer the drained rice noodles to a medium bowl and place it by the stove, along with a serving platter, a pair of long-handled tongs or a spatula, and a slotted spoon for tossing the noodles. Have all the remaining ingredients ready and handy.

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Paht Thai Noodles, (continued)

In a large, deep skillet or a wok, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil over medium heat until a bit of garlic sizzles at once. Add the garlic, toss well, and then add the shrimp and chicken. Cook about 2 minutes, tossing now and then, until shrimp and meat are cooked through.

Add the noodles and toss as they begin to soften, whiten, and curl in the hot pan. Add the fish sauce, soy sauce, sugar, and chili flakes and cook 1 to 2 minutes, tossing now and then. Add a splash or two of the water to prevent sticking.

When the noodles are tender, push them to one side and add the remaining tablespoon of oil. Add the egg, and once it is almost set, scramble it and push it aside. Add the green onions and 1 cup of the bean sprouts and cook about 1 minute, tossing once or twice, until shiny and beginning to wilt.

Sprinkle the peanuts and lime juice over the noodles and then toss to mix everything well. Mound the noodles on a serving platter, arrange the remaining cup of bean sprouts and the lime wedges on the side, and serve hot.

Serves 2 to 4