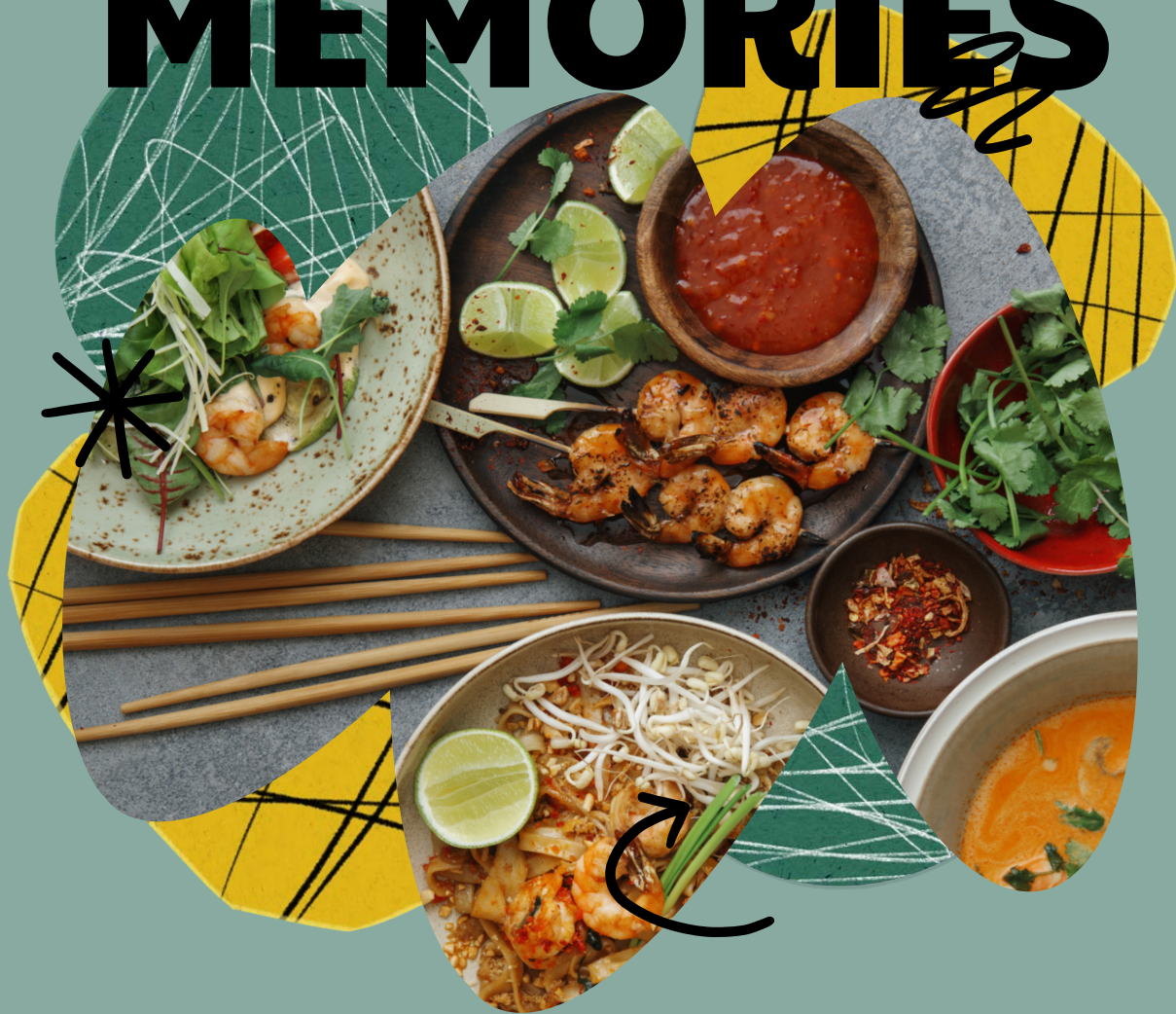


NOVEMBER 2023

FLAVORFUL IN THE MEKONG REGION MEMORIES



MEKONG TOURISM COORDINATING OFFICE
PART 1

6 COUNTRIES

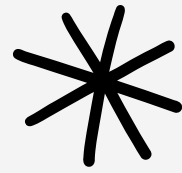
FLAVOURFUL RECIPES

1 RIVER



Mekong
Tourism
Coordinating
Office

INSIDE



02

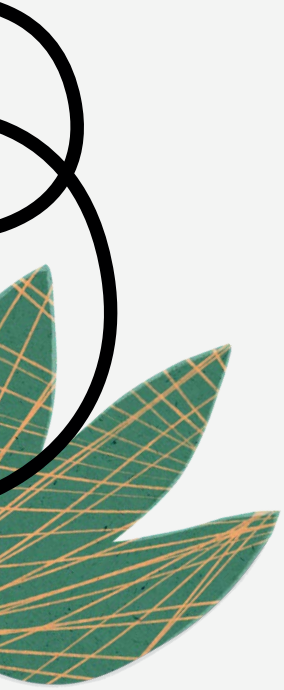
Cambodia

12

China

16

Myanmar



FLAVORS OF CAMBODIA



Chef Rotanak Ros from Chef Nak's Meang Nem Recipe & Q+A



“I believe Cambodia has so much more to offer, Khmer food definitely being one of them.

Food brings people together; for Cambodia, it can also influence the tourism industry, and make a real contribution to society. Cambodian cuisine deserves a place on the global stage,” according to Celebrity Chef, Chef Ros.

Ros Rotanak (Chef Nak) is Cambodia’s first female celebrity chef, with the mission to preserve and develop Cambodian cuisine and bring it to the global stage. Having appeared on multiple national and international media, as well as publishing her first book in 2019, she is passionate about preserving and celebrating Khmer culture through food.


We were able to have this interview with her to learn about her passion for the food.

Her take on the Meang Nem dish, which is sweet and sour, has a long history in Cambodia. This dish was prepared and served at the Royal Palace of Cambodia by the members of the royal family. Keep reading for Chef Ros’ version of this iconic dish.

Visit her restaurant in [Phnom Penh 080208 Cambodia](#), or at [ChefNak.com](#).

Q: Can you introduce yourself?


I've been on a culinary journey for about a decade, beginning with supporting the performing arts with the prestigious NGO Cambodian Living Arts and progressing to a strong dedication to maintaining and promoting Cambodian culinary traditions in Cambodia and on the global stage.



Q: Can you tell us about your journey to becoming a chef?

I learned to cook when I was 5 years old, when cooking was important since my mother was a vegetable vendor. She had to go to the market very early in the morning, which is when I learned to choose excellent veggies/ingredients from her, and I've always loved to cook since I was a child. However, I did not begin my cooking career until 2015 or 2016, when I began cooking for guests in my house, which was then known as Mahope Home Dining by the Mekong River.

We offered home dining experiences and cooking classes at our rented house until the pandemic struck in 2019. We lost all bookings, so we paused and began construction of our new culinary art center, where we can now host people for private luxury home dining, luxury homestays, and private cooking classes. You may find it on our website at www.chefnak.com.



Q: What was your favorite dish eating while growing up?


Growing up, my favorite cuisine was some type of dipping dish like Tek Kroeung, or other dishes like grilled beef with Prohok sauce, grilled fish with tamarind sauce, and so on. In general, I liked foods that paired well with dipping options and a variety of fresh and crisp veggies. It's an excellent showcase for Cambodian flavor, which contains sour, salty, sweet, umami, a hint of bitterness, and freshness.

Q: What is your favorite dish?

I still like eating the type of cuisine that I did growing up. However, I've found that our food is really diverse, and I've discovered many new dishes that I had never heard of or experienced when I was young. White Pearl Soup, for example, is a dish in my new cookbook, Princess Rasmi Sobbhana Norodom's Recipes. Although I cook for so many people, my other favorite food is something simple to prepare, such as clear chicken soup or porridge with dried fish.



Q: Can you explain your version of the Meang Nem recipe?



I believe this dish would be an exceptional representation of Cambodian cuisine. It offers a variety of flavors and is both fresh and nutritious. You can find the recipe in our latest cookbook, Saoy: Royal Cambodian Home Cuisine.

It was made and served at the royal palace by the royal family in the 1950s. Before she passed away in the 1970s, Princess Rasmi Sobbhana Norodom published a book with the recipe in it.

Chef Rotanak Ros'

MEANG NEM DISH



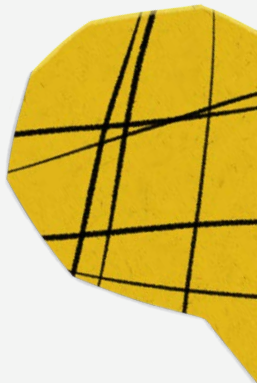
INGREDIENTS:

- 50 g/1.8 oz Dried shrimp
- 40 g/ ¼ cup Rice
- 100 g/3.5 oz Shredded coconut meat
- 20 g/0.7 oz Bitter orange zest
- 3 Chili peppers
- 50 g/1.8 oz Roasted peanuts
- 100 g/3.5 oz Pickled scallion heads
- 30 ml/2 tbsp Brine from pickled scallion heads
- 25 g/0.9 oz Galangal
- 30 g/1 oz Shallot
- 20 ml/4 tsp Bitter orange juice
- 50 ml/3 ½ tbsp Lime juice
- 30 ml/2 tbsp Fish sauce
- 50 g/2 ⅔ tbsp Palm sugar



INSTRUCTIONS:

- Roast the rice on medium heat until it turns a rich, deep golden brown. Once cool, finely grind it and set it aside.
- Finely slice the shallots lengthwise, and finely chop the spices, scallion heads, and bitter orange zest. Grind the roasted peanuts coarsely. Add the shredded coconut meat to low heat and stir for about 2-3 minutes, then set aside.
- For the dressing, combine the citrus juices, palm sugar, brine from the pickled scallion heads, and fish sauce.
- In another bowl, add the dried shrimp, shredded coconut meat, all the spices, and salad dressing.
- Stir everything together well, then add the rice powder and stir again. Top with the roasted peanuts.
- Serve and enjoy!



Q+A with Chef Mengly of PINAKPOU Restaurant Siem Reap



“Eating sometimes is not just a space, just a place, I think sometimes it is more like heart and the power of happiness from our family.”

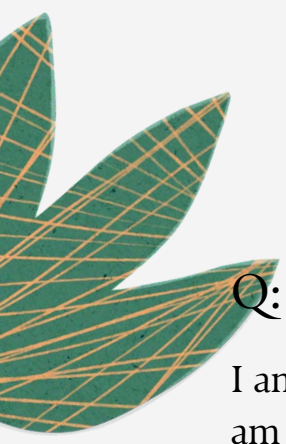
Chef Mengly Mork, a talented Cambodian chef, decodes and elevates the traditions of Cambodia's most authentic street food, delighting guests at this restaurant.

In the Wat Bo Village neighborhood of Siem Reap, the city of the majestic Angkor Wat religious complex, the PINAKPOU Restaurant is a culinary gem on the gastronomic scene, where the young chef Mengly Mork makes his dream of "introducing the world to authentic Cambodian street food" come true.

What he means is that the recipes aren't created purely from his imagination but are rooted in countryside cooking. The core concept behind his menu, which features just a handful of starters, mains and desserts, is to take the type of food eaten in rural homes, on the street and in the "jungle", and to shake up and reinterpret those recipes.

You can dine at his restaurant in Siem Reap, located at Street 25, Watbo Road,

Keep reading to see how you can make the Num Banh Chuk Crab (many travellers refer to it as Crab Noodle Soup).



Q: Can you introduce yourself?

I am Mengly Mork and I am a homegrown chef from Siem Reap, Cambodia. I am 34 years old and I'm based in Siem Reap. I have been a chef for 14 years, and my cuisine is like Cambodian innovative cuisine and street food together. And I love Cambodian family food and street food together. Like new inventive Cambodian cuisine.



Q. Can you tell us about your journey to becoming a chef?

I've been to hospitality school, the popular one in Siem Reap called École Paul Dubrule. I was there for two years, doing cooking, food, beverage, and food service. And I've been traveling with food to Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand and China before COVID. And now it has been 14 years, and I really understand with this kind of profession that these are my skills and this is my journey to be a local, professional chef.



Q: How did the culture and surroundings in Cambodia influence your culinary style?

Yeah, surrounding countries of Cambodia, it's like another mirror to show us left or right or front or back. Because sometimes we can see on on top of us and then to one another, we have to bring and create, like my list sometimes is from my grandma's recipe. But I bring my knowledge, I've been traveling in Singapore, I've been traveling in other countries. I've tried Michelin style, I've tried street food. Let's try some of the good restaurants in Asia, actually. And then yeah, why not? We bring just more, more dishes and then create and promote kindness in a better way. And in the future, it would be another record or more people coming to try the food and they're gonna spread the word. This is how I feel and that I really want to create my own style.



CRAB NOODLE SOUP (Nom Bahn Chok Kdam)

Now let's try this recipe for Crab Noodle Soup! While Chef Mengly may prepare it differently, this recipe is a common way that many Cambodians prepare this dish.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cooked crabs, cleaned and cracked into pieces
- 1 pound fresh rice noodles
- 2 cups bean sprouts
- Fresh mint, basil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 to 2 red chili peppers, finely chopped, Herbs, water lily and banana flowers
- 4 cups chicken or seafood stock
- 2 tbsps fish sauce
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 lime, wedged
- 2tsp of Prohok
- Salt, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

- Sauté garlic and red chilli peppers in a pot with oil until fragrant.
- Add lemongrass and cook for another minute.
- Add stock and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove lemongrass.
- Add fish sauce and sugar to the broth.
- Cook rice noodles separately and rinse with cold water.
- To serve, place noodles into bowls and top with crab pieces.
- Ladle broth over noodles and crab.
- Serve with fresh herbs, bean sprouts, and lime wedges.



SAMLOR KORKO Fish Stew

For Kroeung paste:

- 6 lemongrass stalks, thinly sliced
- 16 makrut lime leaves
- 4 tbsp fresh turmeric, thinly sliced
- 10 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 4 tbsp galangal, thinly sliced
- 3 shallots, chopped
- 1 tsp salt

For Samlor Korko:

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp prahok
- 100 g kroeung
- 2 tsp palm sugar or brown sugar
- 2 lbs meaty, white fish in large chunks
- 4 tbsp roasted rice
- 1.7 lbs seasonal vegetables, cut into bite-size pieces (i.e. pumpkin, green papaya, eggplant, green beans, and winter melon)
- 3.5 oz leafy vegetables

Photo Credit | Wikipedia

INSTRUCTIONS

- To prepare Kroeung, use a mortar and pestle to grind the ingredients together until they form a thick paste.
- Heat the prahok over medium heat until it has a slight change in color. Then, introduce the kroeung and sugar, and sauté for a minute until aromatic. Add the vegetables, making sure they are well coated.
- Add the fish and roasted rice, stirring until everything blends together. Pour in water and let it simmer until the vegetables and fish are nearly fully cooked.
- Finally, add the leafy greens, stir, and season to your taste. Enjoy this dish served with rice.

FLAVORS OF CHINA



STUFFED RIVER SNAILS GUANGXI, CHINA

INGREDIENTS:

- 12-15 fresh river snails
- 1/4 cup minced pork
- 1/4 cup chopped spring onions
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp ginger, minced
- 1 tsp cornstarch
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1/2 tsp white pepper
- Salt to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

- Wash the snails and carefully use a toothpick to remove the snail's operculum.
- In a bowl, combine pork, garlic, ginger, spring onions, cornstarch, soy sauce, white pepper, and salt. Mix well.
- Fill each snail with the pork mixture.
- Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and add a few tablespoons of cooking oil.
- Add the stuffed snails to the pan. Stir-fry for about 5-7 minutes until they are cooked through and tender. Serve and enjoy!

GUILIN RICE NOODLES

Guangxi, China



INGREDIENTS:

- 8 oz (about 225g) Guilin rice noodles
- 1/2 cup minced pork
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-2 fresh red chilies, thinly sliced
- 2-3 sprigs of fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2-3 sprigs of fresh mint leaves, chopped
- 1-2 teaspoons chili oil
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon black vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- Salt, to taste
- 4-5 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- Optional toppings: sliced scallions, peanuts, pickled vegetables

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cook the Guilin rice noodles, drain and set aside.
- In a bowl, mix the soy sauce, black vinegar, sugar, and a pinch of salt.
- Heat oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant.
- Stir fry minced pork until slightly browned.
- Boil broth in a large pot, then simmer.
- Place the cooked Guilin rice noodles into individual serving bowls.
- Top the noodles with the cooked minced pork, minced garlic, fresh red chilies, and chopped cilantro and mint.
- Drizzle the soy sauce and black vinegar mixture over the noodles. Add chili oil if desired.
- Carefully ladle the broth over the noodles and toppings in each bowl.
- Garnish with sliced scallions, peanuts, or pickled vegetables.



CROSSING BRIDGE NOODLES

Yunnan Style



INGREDIENTS:

For the Broth:

- 6-8 cups of chicken broth
- 1-2 slices of ginger
- 1-2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1-2 slices of ham or cooked chicken
- Salt and white pepper to taste

For the Noodle Bowl:

- Thin rice noodles (rice vermicelli)
- Thinly sliced raw chicken, beef, or tofu
- Fresh vegetables such as bean sprouts, baby bok choy, spinach, and sliced mushrooms
- 1-2 eggs, lightly beaten
- Green onions, chopped
- Fresh cilantro leaves (optional)
- Fresh lime wedges (optional)
- Chili oil or hot sauce (optional)

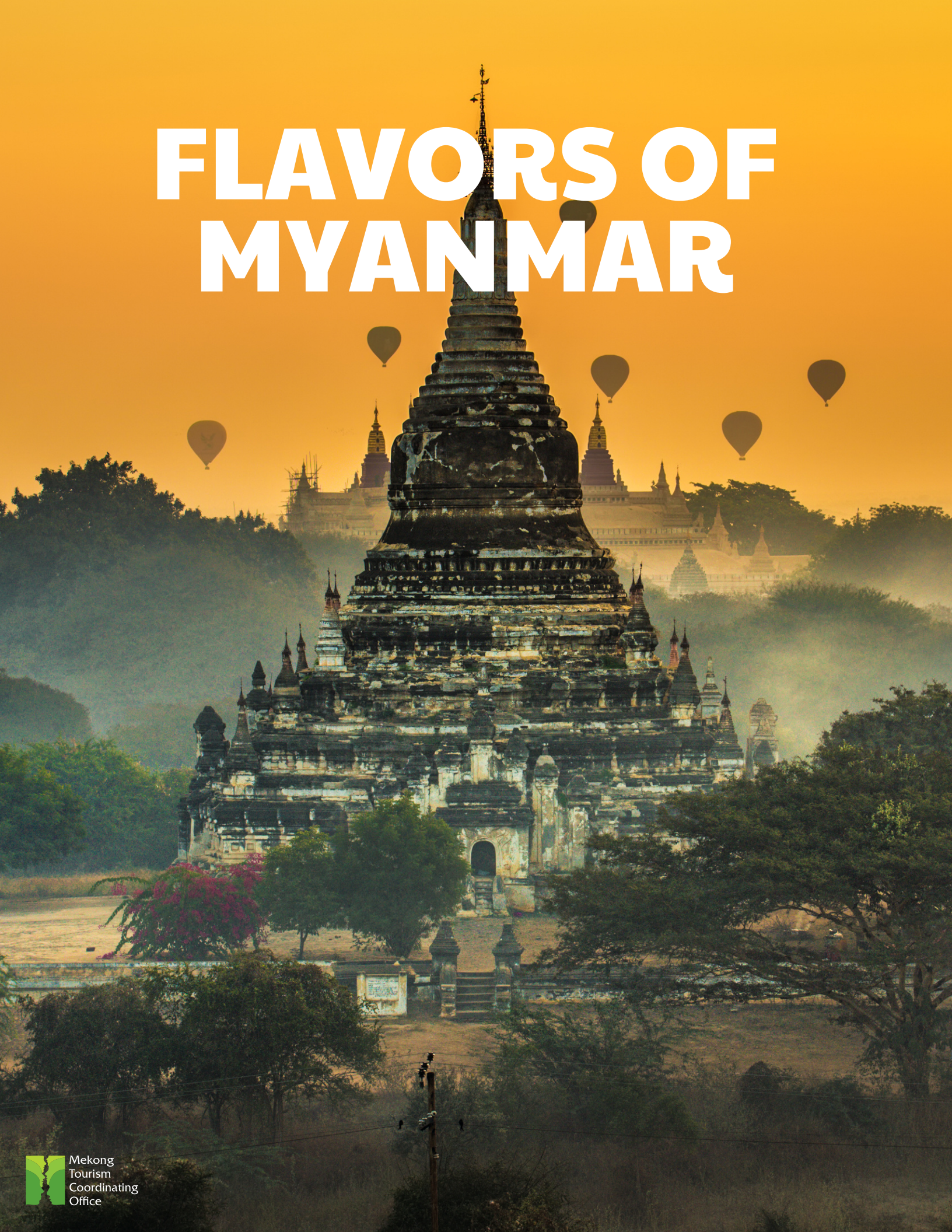
INSTRUCTIONS:

- Bring the chicken broth to a simmer. Add the ginger slices, minced garlic, and slices of meat. Simmer for 10-15 minutes. Season with salt and white pepper to taste.
- Blanch the thinly sliced meat briefly in the hot broth until cooked.
- Cook the rice noodles in a separate pot of boiling water. Drain the noodles and rinse them with cold water.
- Carefully ladle the hot broth over the noodles bowl, ensuring it covers all the ingredients. The hot broth will cook the raw vegetables and finish cooking the protein.
- Slowly pour the lightly beaten eggs into the hot broth.
- Top the bowl with chopped green onions, fresh cilantro leaves (optional), and a squeeze of fresh lime juice.

Photo Credit | Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office

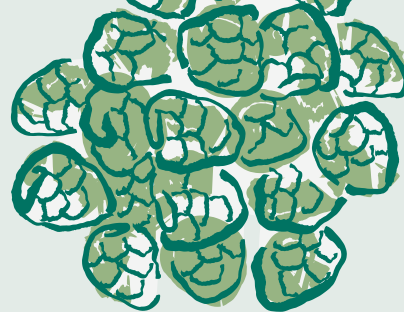


FLAVORS OF MYANMAR



BURMESE TEMPURA

A kyaw Sone



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 cup water
- Assorted vegetables (e.g., sweet potatoes, eggplant, green beans, carrots, onions), thinly sliced
- Cooking oil for frying

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Mix the flour, salt, and turmeric powder, adding water while whisking until the batter is smooth.
- In a deep frying pan or wok, heat enough cooking oil for deep frying over medium-high heat.
- Dip the vegetable slices into the batter and coat them evenly. Carefully place the coated vegetables into the hot oil.
- Fry the vegetables until they turn golden brown and crispy, about 2-3 minutes per batch.
- Use a slotted spoon to remove the fried tempura from the oil, catching excess oil with a paper towel.
- Serve while it's hot and crispy.

YELLOW STICKY RICE

Sweet Burmese Dessert



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup glutinous rice (also known as sticky rice)
- 1 1/2 cups coconut milk
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar (adjust to taste)
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder (for the yellow color)
- 2-3 pandan leaves (optional, for flavor and aroma)
- 1-2 tablespoons sesame seeds (for garnish)
- Banana leaves or parchment paper for lining the container

INSTRUCTIONS:

- After rinsing and soaking the rice, drain it in a fine-mesh colander. Line a steamer tray with banana leaves or parchment paper.
- Steam the rice over medium-high heat for about 25-30 minutes. Stir occasionally.
- In a separate saucepan, combine the coconut milk, granulated sugar, salt, and turmeric powder. Add pandan leaves if using.
- Heat the mixture over medium heat, stirring until the sugar has completely dissolved. Remove the pandan leaves.
- Transfer the steamed rice to a large mixing bowl and pour the yellow coconut mixture over the cooked rice. Stir to combine, coating the rice with the mixture.
- Line a container with banana leaves or parchment paper. Transfer the coated sticky rice to the container and press it down evenly to create a compact layer.
- Allow it to cool at room temperature for about 2-3 hours.

BURMESE MILK TEA

Lahpet Yay



INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups water
- 4-6 tablespoons loose black tea leaves (or tea bags)
- 1 cup evaporated milk or condensed milk (adjust to taste)
- 1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk (adjust to taste)
- Sugar, to taste
- Pinch of salt
- Crushed ice (optional)
- Boiled water for rinsing

INSTRUCTIONS:

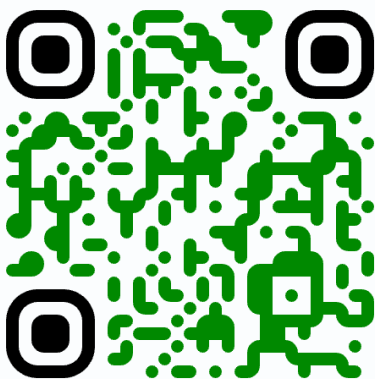
- Rinse the tea leaves or tea bags with boiling water to remove any bitterness, then drain.
- Add the rinsed tea leaves or tea bags to the boiling water.
- Reduce the heat and let the tea simmer for about 5-7 minutes.
- Use a tea strainer to strain the brewed tea into another pot or container.
- While the tea is hot, add the evaporated milk or condensed milk to the brewed tea.
- Stir in sweetened condensed milk and adjust the sweetness to taste, adding more sugar if needed.
- A tiny pinch of salt can be added to enhance the flavors of the tea. Serve iced or hot.

Follow us on
Facebook



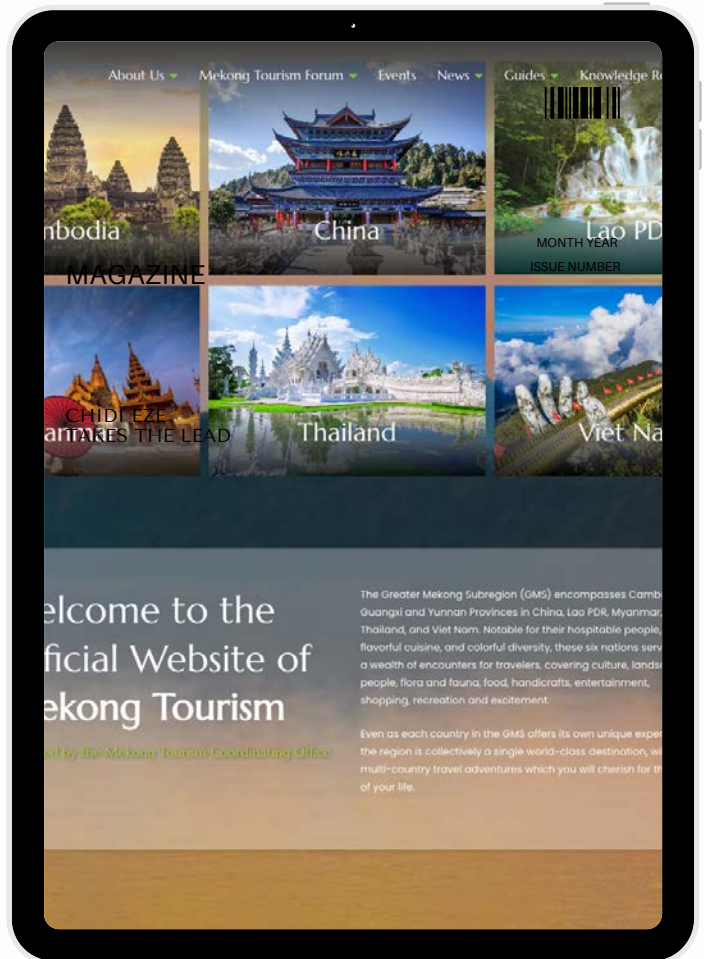
[Facebook.com/mekongtourismofficial](https://www.facebook.com/mekongtourismofficial)

Follow us on
Instagram



[Instagram.com/tourismmekong](https://www.instagram.com/tourismmekong)

Follow Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office



Scan me!