

# Herbs & Spices For Thai Cooking

สมุนไพร เครื่องเทศ ..... สำหรับปรุงอาหาร

The Special combination of herbs and spices used in preparing Thai dishes is what gives Thai food its very distinctive character, both within Thailand and throughout the world. There are 27 main herbs and spices which form the real basis for Thai cooking with that special Thai flavor. Below is a chart with descriptions and sketches of those twenty-seven. A red star indicates those non-chewable ingredients. So be sure, don't chew and swallow the unpleasant ones. (This is not a page of Thai Vegetables)

**HORAPA**  
A sweet basil similar to the kind used in Italian Pesto and various European Tomato dishes. Used as a vegetable and for flavoring.

**GA-PROW**  
A sweet basil different from Horapa in that the aroma and flavor is released only in cooking. Used in fish, beef and chicken dishes.

**MANGLUG**  
A sweet basil with a somewhat peppery taste. Sometimes called lemon-scented basil. Used as a vegetable and a flavoring.

**MINT (Saranae)**  
Very similar to the mint used in mhu sauces in England. Used in Thai cooking as a vegetable and a flavoring.

**PEPPER (Prik - Thai)**  
Black, white, and green peppercorn types. Black is milder and more aromatic than white. Green peppercorns have a special taste all their own. Used in flavoring.

**CHILLIS (Prik)**  
More than ten types of Chillis are used in Thai cooking. They vary in size and color, but all are spicy. The milder chillis used in the West are sometimes substituted, but rarely. Used for flavoring.

**GARLIC (Gra-Tiem)**  
Thailand is literally overflowing with garlic plants. Whole cloves, smashed garlic, chopped garlic, and garlic oil are used in almost every Thai dish.

**SHALLOTS (Horm-Lek)**  
Small red onions which are used in nearly every Thai dish. A special flavor, to be sure, and so special that even some Thais prefer to do without these in their food.

**SESAME (Nga)**  
Identical to Sesame seeds the world over. In Thai cooking Sesame seeds are used for oil and for flavoring. The seeds are white with black shells.

**MACE (Dorg Junn)**  
The orange outer covering of Nutmeg. Mace is used in making Musaman curry paste. Plant native to Indonesia.

**NUTMEG (Loog Junn)**  
A nut enclosed in a very hard brown or orange shell. The nut is crushed and used in making Musaman curry paste (See Mace above).

**LEMON GRASS (Ta-Krai)**  
This plant looks like coarse grass. The lower part of the stalk is used for flavoring mainly, but also as an ingredient in certain dishes -- the most famous is Tom Yum.

**SPRING ONIONS (Tohn Horm)**  
Your standard long-stemmed, small onion, green and white and used in Thai food as a garnish for soups, salads and vegetables.

**BAY LEAF (Gra-waa)**  
Very similar to the Bay Leaf of the West, the Bay Leaf in Thailand is actually called Cassia; that is, it is not exactly the same but comes from the same tree. Used in curries.

**CLOVES (Gaan Plo)**  
Dried flowerbuds of an evergreen tree. Cloves are common to Western dishes, but in Thai cooking are used only for the Musaman curry paste. The leaves are also used with Betel-Nut.

**CARDAMOM (Loog Gra-Wan)**  
Small off-white capsules from a plant native to India, which contain black seeds. The seeds give off a cool, refreshing aroma and are used as a garnish for Musaman curry.

**CINNAMON (Ob Chuey)**  
From the bark of a tree, the type of cinnamon used in Thailand is of only one kind, that from the Cassia tree. It is used in meat dishes and curries.

**PANDANUS LEAF (Toey)**  
Long narrow green leaves of the herbaceous plant. Used in Thai cooking as a flavoring and a coloring.

**CUMIN (Yee-Raa)**  
Seeds that look like Caraway and Fennel, but taste quite different. Only Cumin is used in Thai cooking, not the other two, and it is used in making curry pastes.

**COMMON GINGER (Khing)**  
In Chinese shops, known as green ginger, roots are pickled or made into drinks. Young ginger is used for a condiment with chicken or beef dishes.

**GALANGAL or SIAMESE GINGER (Khaa)**  
The roots are larger than those of the Common Ginger, and Siamese Ginger is always used to make curry pastes used in Thai food.

**GRA-SHAI**  
A type of ginger with no English name. Always added to fish curries, and sometimes used as a raw vegetable after peeling.

**TUMERIC (Kha-Min)**  
Bright orange roots which are used for the coloring in yellow curries. White Turmeric, a different type, is used as a raw vegetable and resembles ginger.

**LIME (Ma-Nao)**  
The common citrus lime is native to China and Southeast Asia. The whole lime fruit is used in Thai food, mainly for desserts. The peel is used as a flavoring.

**KAFFIR LIME (Ma-Grut)**  
A knobby dark green fruit the size of a large lime. The juice and peel are used in cooking as flavoring. Similar to lemon, lemon peel and lemon verbana.

**MANDARIN ORANGE (Som Khiew Wahn)**  
A thin-skinned orange which remains green when ripe. Identical to the Mandarin Orange known in the West. The whole fruit is used for desserts and flavoring.

**CITRON (Som Saa)**  
Round, dark green fruit with very strong aroma. The peel is often used in flavoring. If you can't find it, orange peel is the best substitute.

**JASMINE (Mali)**  
Flower buds of the Jasmine plant, picked in the evening before they open and used as a scent in drinking water, tea and desserts.