

Khao yum, rice salad Thai style

Blue, pink, yellow, and green rice may not be something everyone eats every day. In Thailand, Indonesia, and India, the rice is often dyed as it's cooked with completely natural ingredients and plants such as flowers and leaves. One dish that I must have colored rice for is *khao yum*, a type of rice salad from southern Thailand. The rice is cooked with dried blue butterfly pea flower, red cabbage, or pandan leaves and turns blue or green. The flowers don't have any particular flavor but the pandan leaves, which you can find in Asian stores, give the taste of buttery popcorn.

The dish is served on a plate with various accompaniments that are mixed with the rice to form a kind of salad. The most classic toppings are shredded lime leaves, peanuts, pomelo, shallots, chili, dried shrimp, ginger, lime, and lemongrass. Sometimes I also mix in crispy pork rind, which gives a little crunch and can be found on the snack shelf in Asian stores or well-stocked general grocery stores. It's best with home-fried onions. I usually fry garlic and shallots together in a little oil in a pan, but if you're not in the mood to fry them yourself, they're always available in a bag or jar in Asian stores.

Prepare the colored water (see page 154). If you're going to make pandan water, you should make it a day before you cook the rice.

Chop and prepare everything for the dish before cooking the rice.

For the **dressing**, mix the ingredients in a bowl.

Rinse the rice thoroughly in cold water. Mix with the colored water in a pot and bring to a boil. Stir and reduce to a low heat and simmer covered for about 20 minutes.

Fluff the rice with a fork and serve into bowls. Turn the bowls upside down on plates and place all the ingredients in small piles around the rice in a ring. Serve and drizzle with the dressing.

4 servings

Rice

2 cups (340 g) jasmine rice
3 cups (600 ml) colored water

On the side

1 pomelo, cut into small pieces
2 shallots, finely chopped
2–4 green Thai chilies (depending on how strong you want it, use jalapeño for something milder)
¼ cup (5 g) shredded coriander
8 fresh or frozen lime leaves, finely shredded
1 lime, peeled and cut into small pieces
1 inch (2 cm) of ginger, finely shredded
2 stalks of lemongrass, finely shredded
¼ cup (35 g) chopped peanuts
¼ cup (45 g) fried shallots
2 tbsp. fried garlic
2 tbsp. toasted coconut

Dressing

Squeezed juice of one lime
4 tbsp. fish sauce
2 tsp. granulated sugar

