

MAKE YOUR OWN TAKEOUT

Flavor Builders



Tamarind

The tart, fruity flavor of tamarind is essential for authentic-tasting pad thai. The fruit is sold in a variety of forms, from fresh pods to bricks of pulp to pure concentrate and powder. The pods must be opened to remove the seedy pulp; the bricks require soaking and straining. Concentrate is used straight from the container, as is tamarind powder.



When we tasted the options while developing our pad thai recipe, we liked the fresh flavor of pods or pulp, but they required the most preparation. Tamarind powder was easy to use but had a faint flavor. Tamarind juice concentrate offered the best of both worlds: tangy, fresh flavor and ease of use. Look for tamarind juice concentrate manufactured in Thailand, which is thinner and tastes brighter than the paste concentrate produced in other countries. (If all you can find is a paste concentrate, mix 1½ tablespoons with 1½ tablespoons hot water to use it in our Everyday Pad Thai recipe.)



Toasted Sesame Oil

While plain sesame oil has very little color, smell, or flavor, toasted (or roasted) sesame oil boasts deeper color and a much stronger, richer flavor. We've found that a little goes a long way in dressings, dipping sauces, and stir-fries in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese recipes.



Due to its potent flavor and relatively low smoke point, it shouldn't be used as a primary cooking oil. But try adding a few drops to neutral vegetable or peanut oil when stir-frying to give food a mildly nutty flavor boost. Store toasted sesame oil in the refrigerator to keep its flavor fresh.

Scallion Pancakes Step by Step

A great scallion pancake boasts multiple paper-thin layers studded with scallions. Here's how we achieve it.



1. ROLL OUT
dough into
12-inch round.



2. BRUSH with
oil and flour;
sprinkle with salt
and scallions.



3. ROLL UP
round into
cylinder.



4. COIL cylinder,
tucking end
underneath,
then flatten.



5. ROLL OUT
flattened spiral into
9-inch round;
cut slit.