Pad Thai for a Crowd

Make-ahead · Serves a crowd · Spicy · Serves 10–12

Ken's note: TBD

For six people with generous leftovers. At this volume, one wok will steam the noodles, so split the stir-fry into two rounds and combine them in a big bowl at the end. Brown the proteins in batches, taste the tamarind (some pastes are much sharper than others), and cook the sauce with the noodles until it clings.

Ingredients

Sauce

- ⅔ cup tamarind paste
- ½ cup fish sauce
- 5 Tbsp soy sauce
- 1 cup palm sugar or brown sugar, plus more to taste
- 5 Tbsp sriracha
- ⅓–½ cup water, to thin

The dish

- 1¼ lb dried flat rice noodles (two 14-oz packages is fine, with a little left over)
- ½ cup avocado oil or other neutral oil, divided across batches
- 1½ lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1¼ lb boneless, skinless chicken breast or thigh, thinly sliced
- 8 large eggs, beaten with a pinch of salt
- 7–8 garlic cloves, minced
- 2–3 shallots, thinly sliced
- 4 cups bean sprouts (about 1 lb), divided
- 10 scallions, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1¼ cups garlic chives or regular chives, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1¼ cups carrots, julienned (optional)
- 1–1¼ cups roasted peanuts, crushed
- 5 limes, cut into wedges
- Dried chili flakes
- Cilantro, chopped (optional)

Method

1. Whisk or blend until the sugar dissolves. Taste: if the tamarind is very sharp, add a spoonful of sugar; if it’s already round, leave it. Make this in one batch. It can be made ahead.
2. Soak all the noodles in warm water 20–30 minutes, until pliable but still firm. Drain.
3. In a hot wok or large skillet, sear the shrimp in a little oil, in batches, about 1 minute per side, until just opaque. Set aside. Brown the chicken in batches, 3–4 minutes per batch, and add it to the shrimp. Scramble the eggs until just set but still glossy, and add them to the plate.
4. Divide the noodles, sauce, and remaining raw vegetables in half. For each round: heat oil and stir-fry half the garlic and shallot until fragrant; add half the noodles and a portion of the sauce, tossing 1–2 minutes, until the sauce reduces and clings; add half the cooked protein and egg, and half the bean sprouts, scallions, chives, and carrots; toss 1–2 minutes, then transfer to a very large bowl or pot.
5. Combine both batches, tossing gently. Taste — a splash more fish sauce, a squeeze of lime, or a little more sauce if it looks dry. Serve with crushed peanuts, the remaining raw bean sprouts, chili flakes, cilantro if you like, and plenty of lime.
6. Leftovers keep 3–4 days. Reheat in a skillet with a splash of water or oil, and add fresh peanuts, lime, and chili flakes at the table.