

Gluten-Free, Grain Free Chicken Pad Thai

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In a small pan, warm 1 tbsp coconut oil on medium/low heat. Add the finely-chopped macadamia nuts and minced garlic, and toast for one minute. Add the remaining ingredients, and simmer until well mixed and slightly thickened, about four minutes. Set the sauce aside for now.

Pad Thai sauce (yields 1/2 cup)
2 tbsp tamarind paste or concentrate
2 tbsp fish sauce
20 macadamia nuts, chopped
1 tbsp honey (or palm sugar)
1 tsp salt and white pepper
1/2 tsp cayenne pepper (or 1 birds eye chili, deseeded and minced)
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp coconut oil

the rest:
6 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, sliced in bite-sized pieces (about 2 lbs)
1/2 tsp each salt and white pepper
2 eggs
9oz noodles: Cappello's, rice noodles, or zucchini pasta
1/4 cup julienned carrots
1 small handful bean sprouts (optional)
20 macadamia nuts, chopped
1 small handful chopped cilantro
2 tsp lime juice
coconut oil (in 1 tbsp increments, probably 6 tbsp altogether)

In a wok or similarly-shaped pan, warm 1 tbsp of coconut oil on medium heat for a minute or two. Add the chicken thighs and sprinkle with some salt and pepper. Sauté, in batches as needed, and brown on both sides. Add additional oil as needed. Should take about three minutes per side to cook through. Just as the chicken finishes, set it aside; don't overcook – the chicken will be returned to the pan in a few minutes and you don't want to dry it out. As you cook it in batches, cover the chicken that has already been cooked.

As your chicken cooks, let's prep your other ingredients. If using Cappello's fettucine like I did, drop it in boiling water for 45 seconds, drain and rinse with cold water, and mix in 1 tsp oil (I used macadamia nut oil) to keep it from sticking as it sits. Similarly, you could use rice noodles or zucchini noodles. If using rice noodles, soak them in warm water for 30 minutes, then dip in boiling water for about 15 seconds, drain and rinse with cold water, and mix with 1 tsp oil. Zucchini noodles don't need to be pre-cooked.

Scramble your eggs and set them aside. When making Pad Thai or fried rice, I like to do what I call a "late scramble": I don't pre-beat my eggs, but crack them into the pan, let them cook for a few seconds, and the half-heartedly scramble them as they cook. The resulting eggs are a pretty mix of both white and yellow scramble.

Once you have your other ingredients prepped and in their own bowls for easy access, let's put it all together. One thing to note is that we're going to make each bowl individually – if you tried to add everything in at once you'd get a mushy and unappealing end product. It's worth the extra little effort.

A pair of sturdy chopsticks or some tongs are going to be your best tools for tossing everything while keeping your delicate noodles intact. Also, since this meal serves four, we're going to add each ingredient in fourths.

Warm your pan/wok to med/high, adding 1 tbsp coconut oil until shimmering. Add 1/4 of the chicken, toss, and add 1/4 of the sauce, and toss again. Throw in the noodles, toss and let cook for about 20 seconds, then add in the remaining ingredients in this order (1/4 at a time): carrots, bean sprouts (if using, I didn't), macadamia nuts, cilantro, and lime juice. As you add each ingredient, gently toss before adding the next ingredient.

Repeat these steps three more times for each batch, and you'll be done in no time.

Garnish with lime wedges and cilantro, and enjoy.

Notes:

- *This variation does just as well with shrimp, sliced pork, and sliced beef. Or a combination of them.*
- *If you buy tamarind paste in a block, it's a good idea to warm it up in a pan and melt it a little (add water if needed), then strain any leftover pieces of shell out.*