Main dishes / Thailand

Thai Basil Fried Rice (Khao Pad Krapao)

Day-old jasmine rice blasted in a searing wok with ground pork, fish sauce, oyster sauce, and enough Thai chilies to make the kitchen uncomfortable — then buried in an avalanche of holy basil that wilts to a glossy, anise-fragrant blanket. Topped with a fried egg whose lacey crisp edges are as important as the rice itself.

Time 15 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 300 g Day-old cooked jasmine rice (cold, separated)
- ☐ 150 g Ground pork (or coarsely hand-chopped pork shoulder)
- ☐ 15 g Garlic cloves, rough-minced
- ☐ 10 g Bird's eye chilies (prik kee noo), sliced or smashed (3–6 to taste)
- ☐ 20 g Fish sauce (Tiparos or Megachef)
- ☐ 20 g Oyster sauce
- ☐ 10 g Light soy sauce
- ☐ 40 g Neutral oil (vegetable or lard)
- ☐ 30 g Holy basil (bai krapao), leaves picked — Italian basil is a poor substitute
- ☐ 2 g Eggs, for frying (1 per serving)

Let's make it.

01 Heat a wok or large heavy skillet over the highest flame until smoke wisps from the surface — 2 minutes minimum. Add 30 g of the oil and swirl immediately. Add the garlic and chilies all at once and stir-fry for 20 seconds until the garlic is gold and the kitchen fills with a sharp, peppery fragrance. Add the ground pork, breaking it up with a spatula. Let it sear undisturbed for 30 seconds, then break and toss. Cook for 2–3 minutes total until no pink remains and the pork has some golden, crumbly edges rather than being pale and steamed.

02 Add the cold rice to the wok, breaking up any clumps with the spatula before it hits the heat. Pour the fish sauce, oyster sauce, and soy sauce around the edge of the wok (not directly on the rice) so the sauces hit the hot metal and sizzle. Toss everything together vigorously for 2–3 minutes, pressing the rice flat against the wok surface for 20 seconds at a time to allow contact browning, then tossing to redistribute. The goal is every grain coated and slightly toasted, not steamed.

03 Remove the wok from heat. Add all the holy basil leaves at once and fold them through the rice with 4–5 broad strokes of the spatula. The residual heat of the rice and wok will wilt the basil in 20–30 seconds — you want it collapsed and glossy but not black or slimy. Holy basil wilts much faster than Italian basil and turns bitter if overcooked. The leaves should turn a deep, jewel-like green and release a wave of clove-anise fragrance. Taste and adjust with a few drops more fish sauce if needed.

04 In a small wok or skillet, heat the remaining 10 g of oil over high heat until it shimmers and just begins to smoke. Crack eggs into the oil and let them fry undisturbed for 60–90 seconds. The whites should blister and puff immediately on contact, forming golden lacey edges while the yolk stays barely set and glossy. Tilt the pan and baste the yolk with hot oil using a spoon. The egg is done when the white is fully set and golden-fringed, the yolk still deep orange and runny. Serve immediately atop the rice.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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