

TASTING NOTES



Cambodian Tasting Menu

August 21 - December 19, 2026 + NYE

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Trigo Food + Drink
132 Main Street
Lafleche, Saskatchewan

A Warm Welcome



Cambodia is a country of remarkable contrasts and quiet wonders. From the lively streets of Phnom Penh to the waterways of the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers; from rice fields and ancient temples to the Bokor Mountains and the coastal towns of Kep and Kampot, Cambodia offers an experience that feels both deeply welcoming and still somewhat undiscovered. While it is often overshadowed by its better-known neighbours, Thailand and Vietnam, Cambodia has a character, rhythm, and culinary identity all its own.

Traveling through Cambodia can feel a little rough around the edges at times, but that is part of what makes it so memorable and real. Beneath the surface, there is warmth, generosity, and a deep sense of hospitality. Visitors discover vibrant markets, peaceful temples, unforgettable landscapes, and, of course, the awe of Angkor Wat in Siem Reap. At the same time, it is impossible to understand present



day Cambodia without acknowledging the lasting impact of the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975 to 1979. The trauma of that period, including the loss of an estimated 1.5 to 3 million people through forced labour, starvation, and mass executions, continues to shape the country and its people today.



Although this introduction is not meant to dwell on Cambodia's recent history, we believe it is important to recognize it. The events of that era are not distant history; they happened just over 40 years ago. Families, education, religion, culture, agriculture, and everyday life were profoundly disrupted. Cambodia has made significant progress in recent decades, with growing cities, improved infrastructure, and a renewed sense of possibility, but the effects of that past remain part of the country's story.



Cambodia is a place that deserves to be discovered more fully, especially through its food. Chef Adam has been traveling to Cambodia for more than 20 years, with his 10th visit taking place in February 2026. Over those years, he has been fortunate to build friendships with people who own cooking schools and restaurants in Phnom Penh. When he is there, much of his time is spent cooking, learning recipes, visiting markets, sharing meals, and happily doing the dishes.

We have wanted to shine a light on Cambodian cuisine for a long time and now feels like the right moment to share it with you. Cambodian food is fragrant, layered, and generous. It is built on fresh herbs, rice, fish, coconut, fermented flavours, aromatic pastes, sour notes, gentle sweetness, and careful balance. Some flavours may feel familiar, while others may be completely new. Our hope is that this menu offers not only a meal, but a small journey into a cuisine and culture that deserve more attention.



Some Key Ingredients of Cambodian Cuisine

Kroeung

There simply is no Cambodian cuisine without kroeung. The word refers to a family of herb and spice pastes that form the foundation of many Khmer and Cambodian dishes. The most important version is the yellow-green kroeung, which we use in *Nom Banh Chok*, *Pineapple Samlor Machu*, and *Fish Amok*. Although the ingredients can vary slightly depending on the dish, the key ingredients are lemongrass, galangal, turmeric, finger ginger, garlic, shallots, and makrut lime leaf.

We also use a red kroeung for the *Samlor Chicken Kari*. Its ingredients include coriander and cumin seeds, lemongrass, galangal, garlic, makrut lime leaf, shallots, and dried chilies that have been soaked and de-seeded.

Each kroeung is traditionally prepared with a pestle and mortar; the ingredients pounded one by one. The toughest ingredients are added first, usually the makrut lime leaf or lemongrass, so that everything breaks down evenly into a fragrant paste.



The importance of these pastes in Cambodian cooking cannot be overstated. It is almost impossible to imagine a Cambodian meal without them. In local street markets, you can find small bags containing all the ingredients needed to make kroeung at home, and virtually every home kitchen has several pestles and mortars in different sizes; some even dedicated to making one specific type of kroeung.



Galangal is an aromatic root (rhizome) from the ginger family, widely used in Southeast Asian cooking. It tastes citrusy, sharp, and pine-like with less fiery spice than common ginger.

Makrut Lime Leaf leaves are distinctly citrus. The flavour they provide is quite bold, bright and fresh with more of a lemony taste. While they have a citrus taste, they don't have the same sharpness as standard citrus fruits. We mostly use them in the kroeungs as well as one of the herbs in the spiced peanuts and as a garnish to get more intensity.





Lemongrass is a tall, tropical grass with a fresh, citrus scent and flavor. It's a key ingredient in Southeast Asian cooking, herbal teas, and natural bug repellents. Did you know there are over 100 species of lemongrass!

Kampot Pepper is widely considered one of the best peppers in the world, and it's one of the few spices with a PGI designation (Protected Geographic Indication)—meaning it can only carry the name if it's actually grown in Kampot province, Cambodia. Same idea as Champagne only being Champagne if it's from Champagne, France.



It's harvested by hand from February through May, and comes in a few types, each suited to different dishes. Black pepper is bold, aromatic, with hints of citrus. Red pepper is sweeter and fruitier. White pepper is delicate and floral. We also use salted green/fresh Kampot peppercorns as one of the key ingredients in our Kampot Pepper Crab dish.

We have all our Kampot Peppers available for sale in our market area, including some in a ready to use spice grinder.



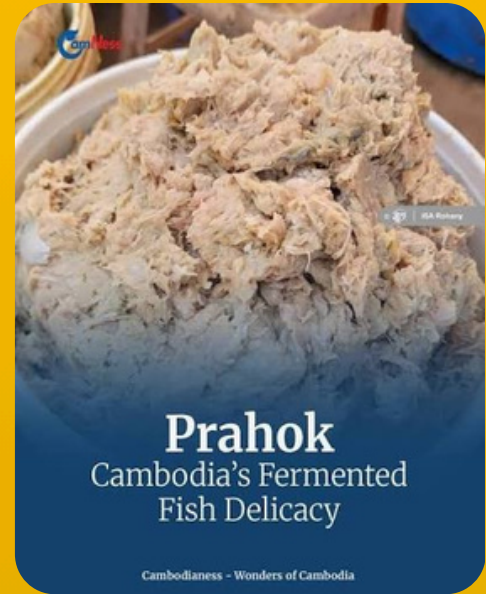
Finger Ginger, commonly known as fingerroot or Chinese keys, is a root vegetable in the ginger family. It grows as thin, fleshy roots that spread outward like fingers, offering a mild, earthy, and slightly peppery flavor used widely in Southeast Asian cooking.

Turmeric is a perennial, rhizomatous, herbaceous plant, with a warm, bitter, black pepper-like flavour and earthy, mustard aroma.



Palm Sugar is a natural, unrefined sweetener made from the sap of the sugar palm, a national symbol of Cambodia. The most famous variety comes from Kampong Speu province, holding Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status for its rich aroma and golden-brown color.

Prahok is a salted and fermented fish paste (usually mudfish) used in Cambodian cuisine as a seasoning or a condiment. It originated as a way of preserving fish during the time of the year when fresh fish was not available in abundant supply. Because of its saltiness and strong flavor, it was used as an addition to many meals in Cambodian cuisine, including soups and sauces.



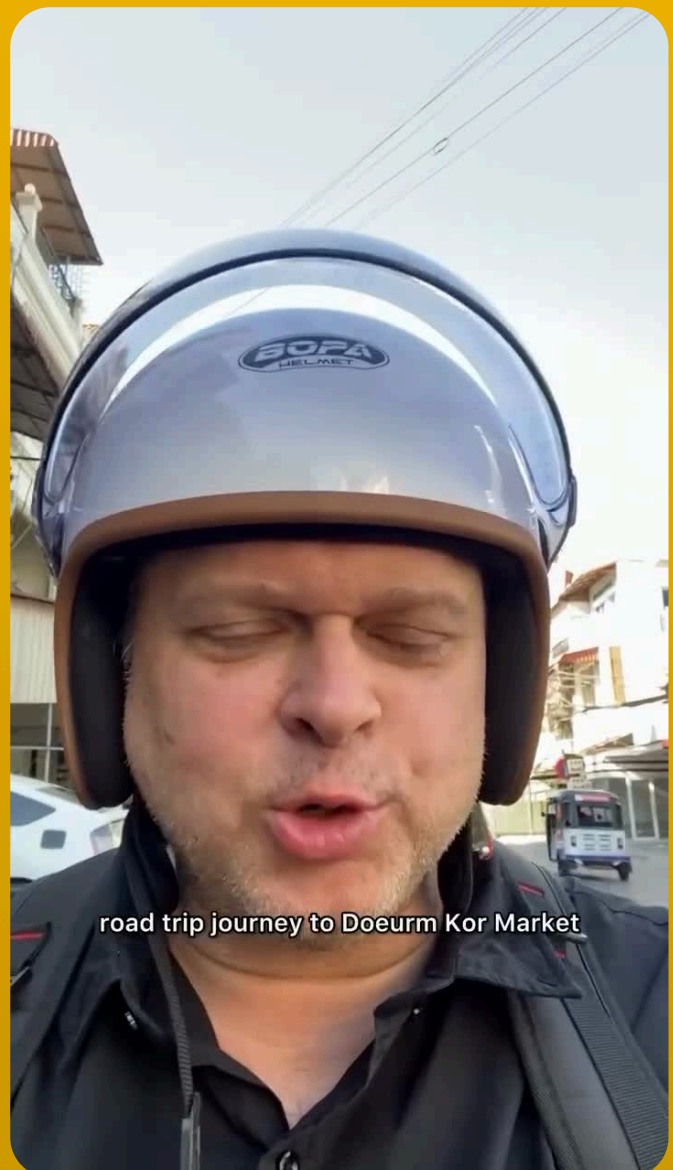
Pandan Leaf has a unique, sweet taste and scent. Often called the "vanilla of Southeast Asia". It tastes grassy and fresh with sweet notes of vanilla, almond, and coconut.

A Trip to Phnom Penh's Doeurm Kor Market

Whenever I am in Cambodia I make a special trip to Doeurm Kor Market, the wholesale food market in central Phnom Penh. Admittedly, the sights, sounds, and smells found in this market would make some people a little queasy. You can find anything here; from dry goods, to live seafood (fresh mudfish, shrimp, crab, eel), live chickens, frogs jumping around under a basket

waiting to be purchased, to fresh beef and pork with the innards on full display. Organized chaos is a good way to describe the market. It is at its most lively at 6:00 am and around 5:00 pm when people search for ingredients for their evening meal, all while trying to navigate to narrow aisles where pedestrians compete with motos (often with live animals on board). It is not for the timid!

My first stop is always to pick up fresh mango with chilli salts and a bag of spiced peanuts to eat while exploring the market.



road trip journey to Doeurm Kor Market

Cambodian Spiced Peanuts

Your first nibbles will be our Cambodian Spiced Peanuts. We roast raw peanuts in small batches in a wok with a small coating of cooking oil followed by sea salt, sugar, bird's eye chillies, lime leaf, garlic, and lemongrass. They are a little spicy, sweet, and aromatic. And dare we say, perhaps a bit addictive. If you like them, please feel free to ask for more. We also have bags for sale in our market area if you'd like to take some home.



Nataing

This moreish dip is thought to have originated in the Cambodian or Thai countryside. The rice cakes are made from left over rice or the rice that sticks to the bottom of the pot after cooking. One must not waste rice, even if its crunchy! Here we use freshly made Jasmine rice infused with coconut oil, roasted black sesame seeds, and black Kampot pepper. Formed into a mold and dried out in a low temperature oven and then finally deep fried the day of service. Given the historical French connection to Cambodia when Cambodia was part of French-Indochina from 1863 – 1953, this dish is also often served with baguettes.

The dip is made with ground pork, shallots, garlic, chilli sauce, palm sugar, fish sauce, peanuts, coconut cream and coconut milk.



Ang Dtray-Meuk

You will find grilled squid all throughout Cambodia, from restaurants to street markets. The best though will come from coastal towns along the Gulf of Thailand, such as Kep, Kampot, and Sihanoukville, where the dish is made within hours of the daily catch.

The large squid tubes are scored and marinated for a few hours with garlic, lemongrass, palm sugar, lime juice, and fish sauce. Grilled and basted the squid is served with a traditional Koh Kong seafood dipping sauce made of garlic, bird's eye chillies, palm sugar, lime juice and fish sauce. The Koh Kong sauce is sharp, hot, salty, and a touch sweet. We also serve it with sliced cucumbers, which acts as cooling agent.



The Cambodian Food Journey Continues

Nom Banh Chok

“Cambodia in a Bowl”. Nom Banh Chok is often described as the quintessential Cambodian dish. Most often found in the morning markets and eaten for breakfasts at make-shift stalls on the streets, it's a dish that is not only flavourful but beautifully presented.

The ingredient list for Nom Banh Chok is varied and often changes depending on what vegetables and herbs may be available. However, the base broth and preparation method mostly stays consistent.

We start by poaching cod fish in a coconut milk and chicken stock broth. Once poached the fish is pounded into the yellow/green kroeung herb paste and set aside. Prahok (fermented mudfish) is then gently cooked and dissolved into the reserved broth to give it that essential Cambodian flavour followed by the cod-kroeung mixture and cooked until well blended. Next, we add roasted peanuts, salt, sugar, fish sauce, and msg and let the broth simmer.



Now the fun begins. Treating your bowl like an abstract painting you can add whatever fresh herbs and vegetables you may have on hand. If we were in Cambodia this may include long bean, lotus root, banana flower, water spinach, and green papaya. To our dish you may see green beans, cabbage, spring onions, cucumbers, and carrots. After a portion of rice noodles are added to the bowl, the broth is ladled in, and the dish is finished with fresh herbs like Thai basil, and mint along with various edible flowers. A squeeze of fresh lime is almost mandatory to bring all the flavours together.

Bok Lahong

This green papaya pounded salad dish is ubiquitous throughout Cambodia. Variations abound though. It is not unusual to find pork, shrimp, or crab mixed in, depending on what region of the country you are in. It's a balanced salad, which generally sets it aside from its bolder cousins in Laos (Tum Som), Thailand (Som Tam), and Vietnam (Gỏi Đủ Đủ), which are respectively, a lot funkier, more fiery, and more fragrant. In South East Asia these salads can be described as "same, but different", as in usually the ingredients are the same (green papaya, tomatoes, peanuts, fish sauce, lime juice, chillies), but with different quantities and ratios.

"Bok" refers to salads (usually papaya) that are pounded in a mortar and pestle, mimicking the sounds of the pestle connecting to the base of the mortar...bok, bok, bok, bok.

In Cambodia, the dressing is prepared separately from the salad. Once the salad ingredients are pounded the dressing is added and usually mixed in my gloved hand. In other neighbouring countries the entire salad ingredients (dressing and salad) are prepared at once in the mortar and pestle, which results in a very “wet” salad, where the salad is almost swimming in the dressing. The benefit to having this excess dressing is that it’s used to sop up sticky rice. In Cambodia, this is generally not the case, as they prefer to have more body to the salad.

We hope you will find the Cambodian Bok Lahong salad balanced: a little spicy, a little sour, a little salty, and a little sweet.

The dressing ingredients include garlic, bird’s eye chillies, shallots, palm sugar, lime juice, and fish sauce. The salad ingredients include green papaya, cucumber, carrots, tomatoes, green beans, Thai basil, mint, and roasted peanuts.



Pineapple Samlor Machu

“Samlor” means “soup” or “stew” in the Khmer language and “Machu” means “sour”. This pineapple sour soup is one of many Cambodia’s sour soups one might find throughout the country. I learned to make this tart and tangy dish on my very first trip to Cambodia 20 years ago. I had never had a sour, or even a fruit soup before. It was quite intriguing and perfect for a hot muggy day.

The soup is well balanced by having a touch of creaminess from the coconut milk and sweetness from the pineapple. The sourness comes from making a homemade tamarind concentrate. This soup is often served with pork and can be served very thick like a stew. We opted to keep it completely vegetarian with a medium-thickness consistency.

As with many Cambodian dishes this one starts with the green/yellow Kroeung and is pounded with fermented black beans and roasted peanuts.

To make the soup we fry the black bean-peanut-kroeung along with chilli paste, and mushrooms. To this we add palm sugar, tamarind concentrate, homemade vegetable stock, fresh pineapple, coconut milk, and Thai basil.



Traditional Khmer Dishes

Fish Amok

This is considered Cambodia's national dish dating back to the Khmer Empire (802 -1431). It's a bright and aromatic dish often only served on special occasions or at tourist restaurants. It should have a creamy mousse-like consistency.

The ingredients, like many dishes, starts with a green/yellow kroeung. To this we continue to pound peanuts, chilli paste, palm sugar, shrimp paste, and chicken stock. Once removed from the mortar to a bowl we add egg yolks, fish sauce, and coconut cream. The cod fillets are coated with this creamy and fragrant concoction and left to marinate for an hour or so. The fish is then steamed and served in a banana leaf bowl topped with a thickened coconut cream sauce.



Samlor Kari

Gentle, mild, and comforting is generally how one can describe a Cambodian curry. This is not the fiery and sweat-inducing curries neighboring Thailand is known for. You may find most red chicken curries served in restaurants to be a bit runny, mostly in an effort to stretch out the batch of curry to reduce costs. You will find a thicker curry in more traditional restaurants or at home. Here, we've attempted to reach a happy medium, knowing that any excess liquid is the perfect accompaniment to the Jasmine rice.

The making of this dish starts with frying the red kroeung, shrimp paste, and palm sugar until fragrant. We next add the chicken thighs and make sure each piece is coated well and just begins to colour. Then we stir in the liquid ingredients (coconut cream, chicken stock, coconut milk, and fish sauce). After a long simmer, the addition of sweet potatoes and green beans really brings the dish together.



Kampot Pepper Crab (optional add-on dish)

Prepared to get messy!

Picture yourself sitting on the beach along the Gulf of Thailand at sundown, cold beer in hand, eating freshly caught blue crab sauteed and steamed in a sweet and sticky peppery sauce. Your hands and face are messy as you wrestle to get every last piece of that sweet crab meat out from under the hard shell. It's one of life's simple culinary pleasures. But, instead of laying back on a tropical beach in Cambodia, you are in Lafleche, at a table, with friends and family, and hopefully not afraid to get a little messy. Wet naps are compulsory when eating this dish, just as they are in Cambodia.

We use whole blue swimming crab, which we clean and prepare for steaming and sautéing. The sauce is made up of garlic, shallots, palm sugar, tamari, gluten-free oyster sauce, chicken stock, green onions, black Kampot pepper, and preserved/salted fresh green Kampot pepper. Dig in!



Sides

Jasmine Rice



After washing the rice several times to remove most of the starchiness, the rice is steamed with a little salt, coconut oil, and a knotted pandan leaf to give the rice a sweet note of vanilla and almond.

Asian Greens

There are many variations of Chinese stir-fried leafy greens throughout South East Asia. From bok choy, baby bok choy, choy sum, morning glory, and kai lan any Asian leafy green will work well with this recipe. The greens are quickly blanched, cooled, and drained. The greens are stir-fried under high heat with garlic, gluten-free oyster sauce, vegetable stock, fish sauce and finished with sesame seeds, sesame oil, and white Kampot pepper.



Dessert

Sankya Lapov

Cambodian folklore suggests that the word “Kabocha” originated from Cambodia, when the Portuguese introduced the squash to Japan in the 1500s. The Portuguese name for the squash was Camboja abóbora, which the Japanese shortened to Kabocha. Whatever the origin, the Cambodian people have embraced the Kabocha squash and have included it in their regular diets for hundreds of years.

Kabocha squash tends to be sweeter than other squashes, such as Butternut, hence it is very good to use as a dessert. Sankya Lapov is iconic in Cambodia. The squash is hollowed out and filled with a coconut cream custard. The whole pumpkin is then steamed until set, cooled, and then sliced. To finish, we garnish the dessert with a Pandan Leaf milk foam and palm sugar syrup.



Trigo Market & Take-Away Items

Be sure to check out our market area for unique homemade crafted items and ingredients from around the world. We always try to offer homemade treats dedicated to our current and past menus, including unique spices and blends. Some of our items include various Kampot peppercorns, Cambodian spiced peanuts, pickled Cambodian red onions and soybeans, homemade sauerkraut and cranberry sauce, Cambodian Butterfly Pea Flowers, and dried galangal.

We also have a small, but growing, menu of homemade take-away/prepared foods that we recently started offering which may be of interest. These include Chicken Pot Pie, Roasted Butternut Squash Soup, homemade Spanish Chorizo Sausage, Apple Crisp, Salted Dulce de Leche Brownies, and our popular Mixed Seed Crispbread (gluten-free). All come with ingredient lists and preparation instructions.

There is a separate Take Away & Market Menu loaded on to your Tablet for you to view as well as being available through our QR Code.



Many Thanks

All of us at Trigo want to thank-you for spending your evening with us to experience our Cambodian Tasting Menu.

We are dedicated to showcasing the culinary delights from all corners of the world. We offer two international menus per year (March to August and August to December). It generally takes about 1 year of planning for each of our menus, so we are always thinking ahead to what's next. Our small dedicated team is passionate about providing you with a unique culinary journey and we hope we have enjoyed yourself tonight.

We know many of you come from quite a distance and make a special effort to dine here. We are very grateful and hope to see you again at one of our other upcoming international tasting menus.

***Adam, Tina, Wadena, Elvira,
Kyle, Zoe, Avery and Viktorija.***