

Pepper and coriander paste (Rark Pak Chee, Prik Thai)

These are such basic flavourings for Thai food that I find this recipe saves a great deal of the time spent making the mixture each time it is needed. It takes almost as long to make a small quantity as a large one, so store some in the refrigerator ready for your adventures in Thai cooking. So far I have not come across this mixture bottled commercially.

Makes about 1 cup.

1 Tbl chopped garlic
2 tsp salt
2 Tbl whole black
peppercorns
2 cups well-washed,
coarsely chopped fresh
coriander including roots
2 Tbl lemon juice

Crush the garlic with the salt to a smooth paste. Roast the peppercorns in a dry pan for a minute or two, then coarsely crush in a mortar and pestle. Finely chop the coriander roots, leaves and stems. Mix all together, adding the lemon juice. This paste may also be made in a blender, but in this case reduce the black peppercorns to 1 Tbl because it is hotter if finely ground than if coarsely crushed.

Source: Charmaine Solomon's Thai Cookbook: A Complete Guide to the World's Most Exciting Cuisine (1989), Viking, Ringwood, Vic.