



Thai Curry

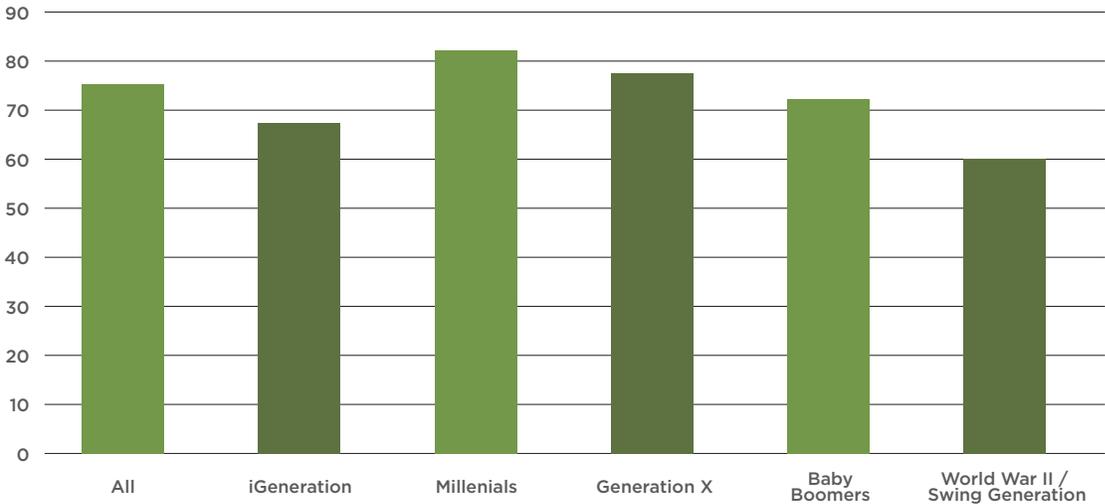
INTRODUCTION:

Thai has been called the most flavorful cuisine in the world. It comes as no surprise that Thai restaurants with well-balanced and bright flavor profiles have blossomed in popularity over the past decade. It was not due to the quick service restaurant (QSR) world, despite this cuisine's immense popularity among millennials and Generation X. The growth has been in small, family-run ethnic restaurants.

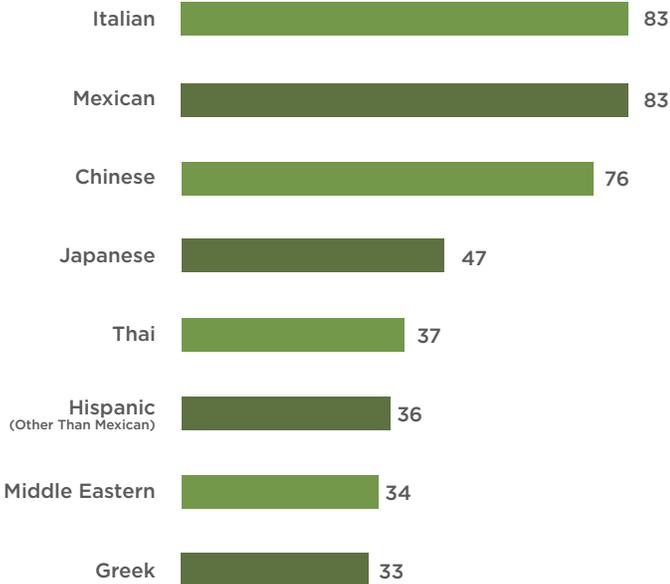
This trend looks to change as the recent proliferation of Asian-inspired dishes at chains indicate a shift toward broader comfort level, interest and acceptance from the American public as a whole. This new growth in Thai-inspired dishes allows for retail and QSR to dive deeper as a safe exploration for the American consumer into authentic Thai cuisine. One of the most approachable profiles for Americans' taste palates is the various curries found in Thailand. They are broadly appealing, popular flavor profiles and a safe step towards ethnic cuisine.

The general public already understands and loves basic curries, but many Americans are unaware of all the variations available to curries and the differences between them.

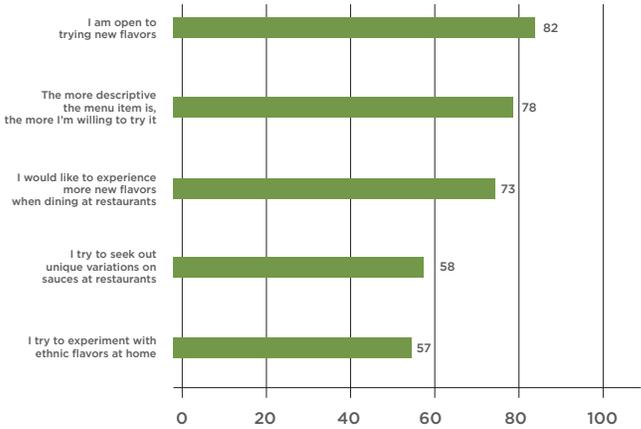
AS GENERATIONS SKEW YOUNGER, THEY ARE MORE OPEN TO BOLD NEW FLAVORS. THIS CHART SHOWS THIS TREND WILL CONTINUE ON WITH iGENERATION ONCE THEY BEGIN TO HAVE MORE SAY OVER THEIR PURCHASES.



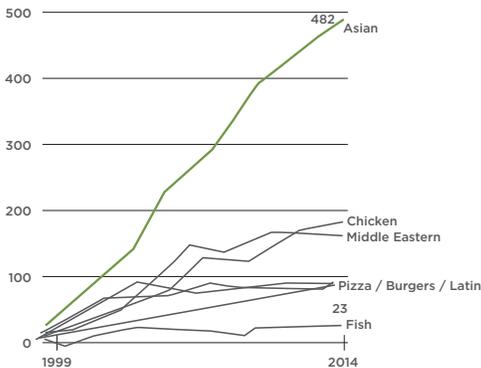
WITH THE DESIRE FOR ETHNIC FOOD GAINING, YOUNGER CROWDS WILL MOVE PAST THE “BIG THREE”. THE BIG THREE ARE IN REFERENCE TO ITALIAN, MEXICAN, AND CHINESE CUISINES. THIS STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAI WILL BE ONE OF THE LEADING OPTIONS.



CONSUMER ATTITUDES SPECIFIC TO ASIAN WANT MORE AUTHENTICITY, WITH THE DRIVERS BEING TRADITIONAL SAUCES AND SPICES; CURRIES WOULD FALL INTO THIS CATEGORY.



ASIAN FAST FOOD HAS EXPLODED GLOBALLY. IT'S ANOTHER KEY INDICATOR THAT THIS TREND WILL WORK ITS WAY INTO THE AMERICAN QSR WORLD.



Source: Based on information resources Inc. Infoscan reviews: US Census Bureau, Economic Census/Mintel

WHAT IS A CURRY?



GAENG = CURRY

On Thai menus, when you see the word Gaeng, it means the dish has a curry paste in it.

Simply put, Thai curries are a paste of flavorful ingredients and a cornerstone of Thai cuisine that are eaten on a daily basis. Incredibly versatile, curries can act as a soup base, a braising liquid for delicate meat and seafood, or used dry as a seasoning for a stir fry. They can act as a sauce for a main dish, served over noodles, or even used as a dip. For our general purpose, curries break into two main classifications designated by what liquid is used to hydrate them.

Coconut milk-based curries

These are the most popular and well-known Thai curries in America. The main three curries—green, red and yellow — fall into this category.

Water-based curries

These tend to be found in the Northern region and the inland of other regions; further away from the plentiful coconut trees found along the coast. They also tend to be spicier than the coconut milk-based versions.

Thai curries are cherished in the culinary world for their perfect balance of the six tastes; savory, sweet, sour, bitter, spicy and umami. A curry has the power to build profiles that aren't just hot, but flavorful and crave-worthy all at the same time. While we in America have focused on the main three (green, red and yellow), there are numerous recipes found in the four regions of Thailand. Each is just as delicious and ready for further exploration as the next.



Green /grin/

Thai: Gaeng keow wan - แกงเขียวหวาน

Name: Sweet green curry, or green curry

Category: Coconut milk-based

Regionality: Central Region

Traditional Ingredients: Coconut milk, fresh green chilies, Thai basil, cilantro, galangal, garlic, lemongrass, shrimp paste and kaffir lime leaves.

Flavor Profiles: Strong coconut milk flavor with heavy fresh herbal notes; tends to have more bite than the milder red curries, but varies by recipes and who is making it.

Served:

Traditionally served with thin strips of meat and a side of rice.

Information:

Don't be fooled by the name "sweet green." The word "sweet" refers to the particular green color and not the mildness or flavor of the dish. This is traditionally the hottest of the main curries.

THAI CURRY



Red /red/

Thai: Gaeng phet - แกงเผ็ด

Name: Red curry

Category: Coconut milk-based

Regionality: Central Region

Traditional Ingredients: Coconut milk, red chili peppers, lemongrass, galangal, shrimp paste, garlic, shallots, salt, kaffir lime, coriander, cumin and peppercorns.

Flavor Profiles: Medium to heavy coconut milk flavor with mild heat, lemongrass and galangal bite.

Served:

Traditionally served with meat, but can be vegetarian as well.

Information:

The red color is derived from the use of red chili peppers in the paste for flavor and color. Red curry has the most derivatives from the main three with many one offs and variations.



Yellow /'jelou/

Thai: Gaeng leung - แกงเหลือง

Name: Yellow curry

Category: Coconut milk-based

Regionality: Central Region

Traditional Ingredients: Coconut milk, cumin, turmeric, garlic, Thai chili peppers, salt, lemongrass, galangal, cinnamon and sugar.

Flavor Profiles: Mild heat and turmeric with coconut milk flavor, galangal and lemongrass back notes.

Served:

This is often served with chicken or prepared vegetarian. It is rarely seen with beef or pork because it is heavily influenced by India.

Information:

One of the main three. This is traditionally the mildest of the main three Thai curries. Many people confuse it with the curries from India, because of the bright yellow color from the use of turmeric. It has a very different flavor profile, yet is still a Thai sauce.



Panang /pi-nang/

Thai: Gaeng Phanaeng - แกงพะเนียง

Name: Panang curry, or Phanaeng curry

Category: Coconut milk-based

Regionality: Central Region

Traditional Ingredients: Coconut milk, red chilis, peanuts, sugar, galangal, lemongrass, shallots, shrimp paste, garlic, cumin and cardamom.

Flavor Profiles: Coconut milk profile with ground peanuts, toasted spice notes, with a sweet and savory profile.

Served:

With vegetables, rice or noodles on the side.

Information:

It is a type of red curry that is a little thicker and has peanuts. Panang has a higher level of dried brown spices in it compared to the main three.

THAI CURRY



Massaman /mah-sah-mon/

Thai: Gaeng massaman - ม้ามัน

Name: Massaman curry, or matsaman curry

Category: Coconut milk-based

Regionality: Central and Southern Region

Traditional Ingredients: Coconut milk, chili peppers, shallots, garlic, galangal, shrimp paste, lemongrass, sugar, cloves, mace, nutmeg, cardamom, cumin and cinnamon.

Flavor Profiles: Coconut milk profile with strong brown spice notes; it should be more sweet and savory than hot and spicy.

Served:

Most commonly served with chicken.

Information:

It is known for its high level of dried brown spices compared to the main three.



Jungle /junglə/

Thai: Gaeng Pah, or Kaeng Pa - แกงป่า

Name: Jungle, dry, or Southern curry

Category: Water-based

Regionality: Southern Region (inland)

Traditional Ingredients: Water or stock, green chilis, lemongrass, galangal, shallots and garlic.

Flavor Profiles: Much stronger in the seasonings, as the coconut milk is not there to counter the flavors.

Served:

Commonly served with meat or vegetables.

Information:

It is a sour and spicy seafood soup or water-based curry, with the main driving flavor being tamarind.



Sour Curry /saʊr/

Thai: Kaeng som, or Gaeng som - แกงส้ม

Name: Sour curry, or sour yellow curry

Category: Water-based

Regionality: Central Region

Traditional Ingredients: Tamarind, kaffir lime juice, sugar, turmeric, lemongrass, garlic and shallots.

Flavor Profiles: Sour and spicy. The sour taste comes from the use of tamarind.

Served:

Traditionally cooked with seafood, served with fresh vegetables and rice, both on a separate plate from the curry.

Information:

It is a sour and spicy seafood soup or water-based curry, with the main driving flavor being tamarind.

THAI CURRY



Spicy Fish Curry /'spaisi/

Thai: Gaeng Tai Pia - แกงไตปลา

Name: Spicy fish stomach curry

Category: Water-based, or coconut milk-based

Regionality: Southern Region

Traditional Ingredients: Water or coconut milk, Tai Pia (a salty sauce made from fish entrails. In America, shrimp or fish paste are often substituted), kaffir lime, dried red chilis, lemongrass and garlic.

Flavor Profiles: Salty, spicy and fermented, with heavy umami and seafood profile.

Served:

Traditionally cooked with seafood, served with fresh vegetables and rice, both on a separate plate from the curry.

Information:

America may not be ready for this name, but it is a traditional Thai curry and commonly found on family dinner tables in the southern coastal regions.

CURRIES OF THAILAND CONCLUSION:

In the end, you have to know who your customers are and what their expectations are of your brand. If they are in the millennial or younger age group, then a deeper look into authentic Thai may be exactly the excitement they are looking for. With the already established knowledge of Thai, both retailers and restaurants can benefit from this still expanding category.

Let Asenzya® help you with your next big project. Whether you are looking for technical help or trend analysis, Asenzya® can be your guide.

SOURCES:

<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/vegan-food/the-ultimate-guide-to-thai-curries-learn-how-to-make-a-curry-paste/>

<http://www.templeofthai.com/cooking/types-thai-curry-regional.php>

<https://www.macmillandictionary.com>

