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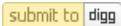

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Thai cookery course, Brighton

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Founder of Chilli Chicks, Bookie (www.chillichicks.co.uk)

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If you have ever been to Thailand, it is not just the friendliness and beauty of the country that leaves a lasting impression but the food too. From delicious Pad Thai sold for a few baht on street corners, to crispy fried fish and creamy coconut curries, it is no wonder so many people return to Thailand for the culinary experience as much as anything else.

But if you live in Brighton you no longer need to shell out a fortune for the experience, as there is a brilliant, authentic Thai cookery course right on your door step.

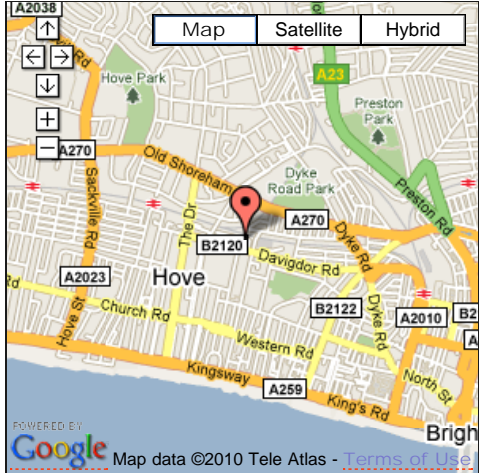
Chilli Chicks has been set up by the delightful Bookie (her nickname) who was raised in the northern province of Lampang before settling in the UK five years ago. She provides the ingredients and the experience, all you have to do is turn up.

I booked a one night a week group course over three Tuesdays. I arrived starving and couldn't wait until the end when I would get the chance to eat the Pad Thai and Red Thai curry that we would be making.

I shared my class with a couple, Sam and Alistair and we soon got to know each other as we pounded a mixture of fragrant coriander root, lemon grass, garlic, chilli and shrimp paste.

'Keep going,' Bookie laughed as our arms tired.

Bookie herself had learned the skills of Thai cooking from her grandmother, who by all accounts headed a strict kitchen involving a lot of pounding pastes.



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Finally, when we had obliterated the chopped ingredients into a fiery looking red paste we fried it in a pan, before adding the vegetables, tofu and coconut milk. Fish sauce and holy basil were left until the last minute. And the taste? It transported me back to the beaches of Kao Chang, all I needed was a beer Chang. But the dish I enjoyed making the most during the course was Dim Sum.

Thailand is widely influenced by China and Bookie told us that Dim Sum is even sold in Thailand's 7-11 convenience stores that abound in most of the country's major towns and cities.

I made prawn and water chestnut dim sum, first peeling and de-veining the prawns before mincing and then adding garlic and coriander root. Then came the surprisingly tricky but fun task of filling the square shapes of wonton pastry.

Bookie demonstrated with a little parcel that looked like it had been styled for a magazine. Mine? It looked like the scraggy end of a reject Christmas cracker. But once steamed and eaten with a homemade dipping sauce and minced garlic fried in oil it was delicious.

Each of the two and a half hour lessons flew by and I not only learned some brilliant cooking skills but got the inside gossip on the best Thai restaurants and supermarkets in Brighton (Thai Connection www.thai-connection.co.uk and Unithai, 10 Church Road, Hove). It is a great thing to do on your own, with a friend or a partner or even in a group.

It costs £89 for the three week course in which you learn to make six dishes. Chilli Chicks is now also running one off Saturday cook and eat sessions for £35 per person. Take some alcohol, cook in a group and then enjoy the results. Perfect! It means I'll get the chance to eat my Thai food with that beer Chang after all.

Contact tel: +44 7886 902855, e-mail: info@chillichicks.co.uk

Useful links

[Chilli Chicks, Thai cookery course, Brighton](#)

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