The History of Thai Food

Thai food is internationally famous. Whether chili hot or comparatively bland, harmony and contrast are the guiding principles behind each dish. Thai cuisine is essentially a marriage of centuries-old Easter and Western influences harmoniously combined into something uniquely Thai. Characteristics of Thai food depend on who cooks it and where it is cooked. Dishes can be refined and adjusted to suit all tastes.

Originally, Thai cooking reflected the characteristics of a waterborne lifestyle. Aquatic animals, plants, and herbs were major ingredients. With their Buddhist background, Thais shunned the use of large pieces of meat. Big cuts were shredded and blended with herbs and spices. Traditional Thai cooking methods were stewing and baking, or grilling but Chinese influences saw the introduction of frying, stir-frying and deep-frying. Chilies and other ingredients were introduced to Thai cooking by Portuguese missionaries who had acquired a taste of South American culinary while working there during the late 1600s. Culinary from the 17th century onwards included Portuguese, Dutch, French and Japanese techniques. Thais were very adept at adapting foreign cooking cooking methods and substituting ingredients. Coconut milk was substituted for other dairy products.

Overpowering pure spices were toned down and enhanced by fresh herbs such as lemon grass and galangal. Eventually, fewer and less spices were used in Thai curries, while the use of fresh herbs increased. It is generally acknowledged that Thai curries burn intensely, but briefly, whereas other curries, with strong spices, burn for longer periods. Instead of serving dishes in courses, a Thai meal is served all at once, permitting diners to enjoy complementary combinations of different tastes.

Questions 1 - 10

Complete the summary below.

*Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.*
Although the main tenets of every meal are **1** ..... and **2** ..... , the final taste is determined by who cooks it. At first, the ingredients used in Thai cooking were the result of a **3** ..... way of life. Cooking techniques became more varied thanks to the **4** ..... . Thai ingredients started to become more eclectic with the introduction of products from South America such as **5** ..... . Further change began in the 17th century through the influence of people from various countries such as the **6** ..... and **7** .....and the substitution of **8** ..... with **9** ..... . One main difference between Thai curries and those from other countries is that the latter burn for **10** ..... .

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