

Performing Pad Thai:

An Exploration of the Performance of Thai Cuisine as a Result of American Influence

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Introduction:

“Performing Pad Thai” examines the ways in which American political, economic, and cultural influence in Thailand has affected Thai cuisine.



Methodology:

Through a historical overview, material critical contexts, oral history interviews, and an original cookbook, this thesis argues that Pad Thai, Thailand’s national dish, constitutes performances of fabricated authenticity in Thai nation-building and American neocolonialism that deeply impact the experiences and identities of Thai Americans.



Conclusion:

US intervention in Thailand allowed tourists to experience Thai food, to create imaginings about Thailand and its people, and to further fuel the desire for the exotic other. However, this does not have to be the case. By performing food for themselves rather than for the consumption of others, Thai people will be able to reclaim their voice and narrative.



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