FFOODS Spectrum
perspectives on food technologies & business
ASIA

Thailandâ??s Tom Yum Kung soup earns UNESCO spotlight

05 December 2024 | News

Tom Yum Kung delivers a symphony of flavoursâ??sweet, sour, savoury, spicy, creamy, and slightly bitter



Tom Yum Kung delivers a symphony of flavoursâ??sweet, sour, savoury, spicy, creamy, and slightly bitter

Thailandâ??s beloved sour and spicy soup, tom yum kung, has been officially added to UNESCOâ??s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This milestone highlights the global recognition of Thailandâ??s rich culinary heritage.

The announcement was made on December 3 during the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in AsunciÃ³n, Paraguay. Tom yum kung now joins other treasured Thai cultural elements on UNESCOâ??s list, including the Khon masked dance, traditional Thai massage, the southern Thai dance-drama Nora, and the vibrant Songkran festival.

Tom yum kung is a traditional prawn soup that reflects the essence of Thai cuisine. The dish features prawns boiled with aromatic herbs such as lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, galangal root, and shallots, seasoned with a blend of local condiments. Known for its distinctive aroma and vibrant colours, Tom Yum Kung delivers a symphony of flavoursâ??sweet, sour, savoury, spicy, creamy, and slightly bitter.

The dish's origins can be traced back to Buddhist riverside communities in Thailandâ??s Central Plains, a fertile region that has long been a hub for the countryâ??s food production. Adhering to Buddhist principles, the communities avoided killing large animals, opting instead for the abundant freshwater prawns in the area. Their knowledge of medicinal herbs and local ingredients led to the creation of tom yum kung, which is believed to energise and promote wellness, especially during the monsoon season.

Tom yum kung is more than just a dish; it reflects Thai Buddhist values and is a testament to the enduring legacy of traditional knowledge and harmonious living with nature.