

American chefs have become fixated on southeast Asia, traveling to countries like Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia and bringing home the sweet, sour, salty, spicy (and sometimes funky) flavors.

By Kristin Donnelly

Food photographs by Seth Smoot

RECIPE

## pork larb lettuce wrap

TOTAL: 25 MIN • 4 SERVINGS

At Plum Alley in Salt Lake City, chef Ryan Lowder makes what he calls "American Asian food," which includes delicious versions of his favorite Thai dishes. He especially loves this northern Thai pork salad wrapped in lettuce leaves.

### 1. PREPARE THE FILLING

In a skillet, heat **1 tablespoon vegetable oil**. Add **4 thinly sliced garlic cloves** and cook over moderately low heat, stirring a few times, until golden brown, about 1 minute. Add **1 teaspoon sugar** and cook for about 20 seconds. Add **½ pound ground pork or beef** and cook over moderately high heat, breaking up the meat finely, until no pink remains, about 3 minutes. Add **1 teaspoon fish sauce** and season with salt and pepper.

### 2. TOAST THE RICE

In a medium skillet, cook **1 tablespoon long-grain rice** over moderate heat, shaking the pan, until browned, about 3 minutes. Transfer the rice to a spice grinder and let cool, then grind to a powder.

### 3. MAKE THE DIPPING SAUCE

In a small bowl, combine **2 tablespoons fresh lime juice** with **2 tablespoons fish sauce**, **1 tablespoon sugar**, **2 thinly sliced Thai chiles** and **1 tablespoon water**. Stir well until the sugar dissolves.

### 4. SERVE

Reheat the pork. Off the heat, stir in **1 thinly sliced Thai chile**, **one-quarter thinly sliced red onion** and **¼ cup each of torn basil, mint and cilantro leaves**. Sprinkle the pork with the rice powder, spoon into **Boston lettuce leaves** and serve with the sauce.

