

EXPERT

Seasonal Sweets

Michelin-starred pastry wizard Roger Van Damme whips up fresh desserts with Southeast Asia's fave fruits.

By Diana Hubbell

When it comes to top-notch local produce, we're spoiled for choice in Southeast Asia. Just ask **Roger Van Damme**, the world renowned pastry chef who's on a sojourn in Bangkok for the upcoming **Four Seasons World Gourmet Festival** (fourseasons.com/bangkok; September 2–8) and has fallen hard for the flavors of Thailand. Already, local herbs such as lemongrass and *pandan* perfume his ornate confections, and he looks forward to experimenting further with the wealth of local produce here. "The

taste of your fruit," he says, "is so much better than the fruit we have in Europe."

Van Damme's word on the subject carries quite a bit of weight. While continuing to churn out innovative, spun-sugar art at his Michelin-starred teahouse, Het Gebaar, this "godfather of molecular pastry" has managed to publish two bestselling cookbooks and star in his own TV show. We caught up with the globetrotting celeb to steal some of his suggestions for each season. +



The much-lauded chef Roger van Damme.



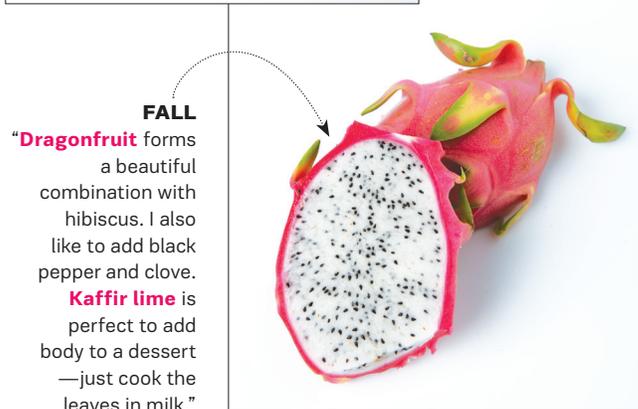
WINTER

"I love to pair **pineapple** with coconut. Also, you can freshen it up with some lime. I would combine **jackfruit** with sweet potato. Both contain a lot of starch and are perfect to make dessert crisps."



SPRING

"**Rambutan** combines perfectly with flowers in general, but specifically with beautiful, romantic elderflowers. **Lychee** is superb with roses and white chocolate."



FALL

"**Dragonfruit** forms a beautiful combination with hibiscus. I also like to add black pepper and clove. **Kaffir lime** is perfect to add body to a dessert—just cook the leaves in milk."



SUMMER

"**Mango** is magnificent with passion fruit and almond—together they provide a match of sweet and sour. **Durian** goes well with dark chocolate, as its bitterness blends perfectly with the sweet flesh."

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