

Sichuan Noodles with Peanut Sauce

This is Beverly Paull's recipe for an Asian noodle salad without cilantro.

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup canned vegetable broth; more if needed
- 1 cup super-chunky peanut butter
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- ½ tablespoon chile-garlic sauce
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 12 ounces dried chow mein noodles
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 8 large bok choy leaves
- 2 red bell peppers, halved lengthwise
- 2 large carrots, peeled
- 1 bunch green onions
- 2 cups shredded napa cabbage
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

INSTRUCTIONS: Mix together the vegetable broth, peanut butter, soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, chile-garlic sauce and the minced garlic in medium-size bowl to blend well. The sauce will be thick.

Cook the chow mein noodles

in a large pot of boiling salted water until just tender, but still firm to the bite, approximately 6 minutes. Drain.

Rinse the noodles under cold tap water, drain again and let them cool.

When the noodles are cool enough to handle, cut them into 4- to 5-inch lengths. Transfer the noodles to a very large bowl. Toss them with canola oil to coat.

Cut the bok choy leaves, bell peppers, carrots and green onions into matchstick-size strips.

The sauce, noodles and vegetables may be prepared up to 4 hours ahead of serving. Place in separate containers, cover and refrigerate.

Bring the sauce to room temperature before continuing with the recipe, thinning it with additional vegetable broth, if necessary.

Add the shredded napa cabbage and vegetable strips to the noodles. Toss with enough peanut sauce to coat.

Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve.

Serves 6 as a main course

PER SERVING: 640 calories, 18 g protein, 53 g carbohydrate, 41 g fat (7 g saturated), 0 cholesterol, 1,304 mg sodium, 8 g fiber.