

Sesame-Ginger-Peanut Noodle Salad

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[Prep: 25 minutes / Cooking: 5 minutes / TOTAL: 30 minutes]

[Serves 4 small dinner sized portions]

Noodle Salad:

- small bunch of broccoli, washed and slivered
- 4 purple kale leaves, washed, stems removed and shredded
- ½ large cucumber, washed, peeled, deseeded and sliced
- ¼ medium red onion, peeled and slivered
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes [I have a thai kind that I like to use called Dragonfly Dried Chilli Crush]
- small piece of fresh ginger, about 1.5" cube, peeled and grated with a zester
- juice from ½ lime
- ½ package soba noodles

Sauce:

- 1 garlic clove, peeled and pressed
- 2 tablespoons low sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons mirin or rice wine
- 3 tablespoons peanut oil
- 3 tablespoons peanut butter – try for sugar free or low salt kind
- 3 tablespoons tahini paste

- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/3 cup boiled noodle water reserved
- This noodle salad recipe is super easy and there's literally no cooking involved. Start out with the
- veggies. The broccoli should be washed and cut into bite sized pieces, the cucumber peeled, de-seeded and cut into little half moon slices. Likewise with the red onion, it should be peeled and slivered - here you could use scallions instead if you like. The kale should be washed and de-stemmed - just slice the leaf along the stem nearly to the top on each side. The stem can be tough and bitter, especially if uncooked. I should point out here that the kale doesn't have to be purple - it just creates a nice color contrast with the rest of the greens, any other leafy green can be substituted. Put all of the veggies in a large bowl - large enough to accommodate the noodles that will be mixed in at the end. These last three steps should be done over the large bowl: squeeze the ½ lime, press the peeled garlic clove and grate the peeled ginger with a zester/micro grater. Mix all the ingredients together. The acidity in the lime will help to break down the tougher veggies a little - think of it as a marinade.

There are many types of noodles that will work for this dish. I had half a packet of soba noodles in my pantry, but you could even use linguine - though I would break the pasta in half before boiling. I was happy to only have half a packet because I wanted this to be more of a noodle salad than noodle heavy dish. Fill your pot with 8 cups of water, cover and turn the heat on high. It should take about 5 minutes to come to a boil. [You should have enough time to prepare the sauce while waiting for the water to heat up - see the directions below]. Once it's boiling, add the soba noodles and leave uncovered. Wait for the water to come back to a boil and then add 1 cup cold water and wait for the water to boil one last time. [These directions are specifically for those using soba noodles]. Before straining the noodles in a colander over the sink, reserve about a 1/3 cup of the noodle water.

Now onto the sauce. I use a small bullet blender for the next step but a mini food processor will also work. As for the peanut butter I tried to find one with no sugar and low salt, but all I could find was a low sugar and salt variety - because of this I used 1 tablespoon of sugar and no extra salt. Add the peanut oil, peanut butter, tahini paste, sugar, mirin, rice vinegar and soy sauce to the blender and mix until all the ingredients are well incorporated. The consistency should be thick - it will be thinned out with the reserved noodle water later.

All that's really left to do is mix everything together. First toss the noodles with the veggies, add the sesame seeds and red pepper flakes and then alternate incorporating the Sesame-Ginger Peanut sauce and the reserved water a little at a time. Mix well each time. Everything should be coated well with the sauce. If you have time to wait to eat, put the noodle salad in the fridge for about 15 minutes so it gets chilled. If not, eat it warm tonight and then cold tomorrow!