



Not All Noodles Speak Italian

Spize Cafe offers tips about Asian noodles for National Noodle Month

March is National Noodle Month and for many people, hearing the word “noodle” conjures up a vision of a plate of hearty Italian pasta. Well, not at eco-minded Spize Cafe where noodles are a main ingredient in a number of their pan-Asian dishes. From Spize Cafe’s fresh spring rolls and noodle salads, to its signature Thai fondue hotpots, Asian noodles add a palatable note to diners’ plates.

There are a wide variety of Asian noodles available in all shapes, sizes and textures, but most can be broken down into four groups based on the ingredients they are made with. These groups include bean, egg, rice and wheat, according to Meechai Kowae, Thailand-native and Spize Cafe owner and chef.

To help cooks find the right noodle for their favorite Asian dish to make at home, Kowae offers insight into each of these four groups:

- *Bean Noodles*, also known as cellophane or glass noodles because of their transparency when cooked, are naturally low in carbohydrates as they are made of mung bean starch. Most often used in Chinese or Thai cuisine, bean noodles absorb flavors easily and are great in soups, on salads and even wrapped up in spring rolls. Try Spize Cafe’s at-home recipe for its colorful Cellophane Noodle Salad with shrimp available for download at SpizeCafe.com.
- *Egg Noodles*, often called dan mein, are often used to make popular Chinese chow mein and lo mein dishes. Made of wheat flour with eggs, these noodles are chewier in texture and typically appear slightly yellow in color.
- *Rice Noodles*, found in several Asian cultures, are sometimes called rice vermicelli or rice sticks. Often confused with bean noodles because of their clear appearance once cooked, rice noodles are made of rice flour. Similar to bean noodles, rice noodles work well on salads, in soups and are a great addition to stir fry recipes.
- *Wheat Noodles*, such as Japanese udon, somen and soba noodles, are either made from wheat or buckwheat flour. Udon noodles are typically very thick and work well in soups, while somen and soba noodles are thinner and are delicious served chilled with dipping sauces.



Spize Cafe Cellophane Noodle Salad

By Meechai Kowae

Serves Two

Dressing Ingredients

3 limes, juiced
1 ½ tablespoons palm sugar or sugar
1 tablespoon fish sauce
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons coconut milk
1 teaspoon ground red chili pepper - *add more to turn up the spize!*
½ stalk of lemongrass, chopped - *available at Asian grocery stores*
2 tablespoons red onion, diced

Dressing Directions

- Combine lime juice, sugar, fish sauce, salt, water and coconut milk in a mixing bowl and whisk to mix together thoroughly.
- Add chopped lemongrass and diced red onion and stir to combine.
- Cover bowl and store in refrigerator until needed.

Salad Ingredients

12 shrimp, medium-sized, peeled and deveined
5 ounces cellophane noodles - *available at Asian grocery stores*
1/4 cup cashew nuts
1 dried red chili pepper, whole
6 hearts of Romaine lettuce leaves
10 grape tomatoes, halved
1 carrot, small, peeled and cut into thin disk-shaped slices
Cilantro to garnish

Salad Preparation

- In a medium-sized pot, bring 6 cups of water to boil. Add shrimp to water and cook for approximately two minutes or until the shrimp are pinkish in color.* Remove shrimp from water and let cool until time for salad assembly.
- In a separate large pot, bring 8 cups of water to boil. Add cellophane noodles to water and cook until tender for approximately 7-8 minutes or as recommended on the noodle package. Strain noodles from water and let cool until time for salad assembly.
- In a saucepan, roast cashew nuts and dried red chili pepper on medium heat (do not add oil). Stir cashews and pepper with spatula until browned and aromatic. Remove cashews and pepper from pan and let cool until time for salad assembly.

**Shrimp also can be grilled or sautéed.*

Salad Assembly

- Remove bowl with salad dressing from refrigerator and mix to ensure all ingredients are thoroughly combined.
- Add cooked shrimp, cooked noodles, roasted cashews and pepper to salad dressing. Stir well to fully coat all ingredients with dressing.
- Place three romaine lettuce leaves on each plate to create the salad base.
- Sprinkle tomato halves and carrot slices over romaine leaves on each plate.
- Separate dressing mixture into two portions and spoon over romaine leaves, tomatoes and carrot on each plate.
- Garnish with cilantro to complete. Enjoy!

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