

LEITE'S CULINARIA



Sesame-Peanut Noodles

by Ted Allen

from *The Food You Want to Eat*

(Clarkson Potter, 2005)

Serves 4

This is a real favorite in my house. I've adapted it from a recipe in one of my favorite collections, *The New Basics Cookbook*, by Julee Rosso and Sheila Lukins, my copy of which has a broken spine and is so stained it's hard to read. In my little variation, you can add cooked chicken or shrimp or asparagus, or you can just do it as is. I like it with soba, a Japanese-style noodle made from buckwheat, but you can make it with penne, fettuccine, or farfalle, too.

INGREDIENTS

Kosher salt for boiling noodles

1/4 cup sesame seeds

1/4 cup peanut butter

1/4 cup toasted sesame oil

1/3 cup roasted peanuts, cashews, or whatever nuts you have

1/3 cup low-sodium soy sauce

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

1 tablespoon mirin or sherry (see [Note](#))

2 medium garlic cloves

1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (or more if you like it spicy)

1 English cucumber (also called hothouse cukes—the long skinny ones), peeled

1 pound soba noodles

1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

3 scallions, green parts only, sliced 1/4 inch thick on an angle

METHOD

1. Bring a large pot of salted water (1 teaspoon salt per quart of water) to a boil.
2. Meanwhile, toast the sesame seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat, stirring frequently, until they turn golden brown, about 5 minutes.
3. In a food processor, combine the peanut butter, sesame oil, peanuts, soy sauce, vinegar, mirin or sherry, garlic, and red pepper flakes. Process to a puree. Stir in half the toasted sesame seeds.
4. Cut the cucumber in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds with a spoon; discard the seeds. Slice the cucumber halves crosswise about 1/4 inch thick; set aside.
5. When the water comes to a boil, add the noodles and cook until tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Drain very well, shaking the colander until it stops dripping, and dump into a bowl. Add the peanut mixture, cilantro, and black pepper, and toss to coat. Turn out onto a large platter. Arrange the cucumber slices around the edge of the platter, sprinkle the scallions on top, and sprinkle the remaining sesame seeds on last. Serve

warm or at room temperature.

Note: Mirin is a sweet Japanese rice wine; you'll find it in the Asian section of your supermarket.

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