



Peanut Noodle Salad

June/July 2010

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

We use ordinary chunky peanut butter in our Peanut Noodle Salad for its gentle sweetness, good crunch, and lack of grittiness. Because we used chunky peanut butter, there was no need to add chopped peanuts. Using thick dried spaghetti or linguini kept the sauce smooth—and saved a trip to the grocery store for exotic rice noodles.

Cooling the cooked noodles under cold running water and coating them with sesame oil before tossing them in the sauce created a barrier that helped prevent pasty pasta.

Serves 6 to 8

If you prefer natural peanut butter, add 1 tablespoon brown sugar to the dressing. Use a mild hot sauce, such as Frank's. If you use a hotter hot sauce, such as Tabasco, reduce the amount to 1 teaspoon.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound spaghetti or linguine
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 3 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- 3/4 cup chunky peanut butter (see note)
- 6 tablespoons soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon hot sauce (see note)
- 1 cucumber, peeled, quartered lengthwise, seeded, and sliced thin
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1/4-inch strips
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro

INSTRUCTIONS

- **1. COOK PASTA** Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add pasta and salt to boiling water and cook until al dente. Reserve 3/4 cup cooking water. Drain pasta in colander, rinse with cold water until cool, drain once more, and transfer to large bowl. Add sesame oil and toss to coat.
- **2. DRESS AND TOSS** Whisk peanut butter, soy sauce, vinegar, ginger, hot sauce, and 6 tablespoons pasta cooking water in medium bowl until smooth. Add dressing, cucumber, bell pepper, and cilantro to pasta and toss to combine, adding reserved pasta water as needed to adjust consistency. Serve.
- **MAKE AHEAD** Oil-coated pasta, dressing, and vegetables can be refrigerated in separate airtight containers for 2 days. Bring ingredients to room temperature before tossing together. Add warm water to thin as needed.