

Szechuan Cucumber Salad

Adapted from *Appetite for China*

Serves 4:

Ingredients

2 large cucumbers
kosher salt
3 tablespoons canola oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon ground red pepper or red pepper flakes
2 tablespoons rice vinegar
2 teaspoons sesame oil
1 teaspoon sugar

Preparation

Peel and trim cucumbers.

Slice in half lengthwise and scoop seeds from center using a melon baller.

Cut cucumber halves in half lengthwise, then slice into large chunks.

Place in a colander and toss with salt--this will help remove their excess moisture.

Set aside to drain.

To make dressing, heat oil in a small skillet over medium low heat.

Add minced garlic and ground red pepper or red pepper flakes.

Cook until garlic turns golden then turn off heat and let cool slightly.

In a medium bowl, combine rice vinegar and sesame oil.

Stir in cooled garlic mixture.

Blot excess moisture off cucumbers with a paper towel then add to the bowl.

Toss to combine.

Marinate in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving.

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Dan Dan Noodles

Adapted from *Chef Han Chiang, Han Dynasty*

Serves 4:

Ingredients

2 1/2 tablespoons canola oil, divided
1/4 cup ground pork
1/2 tablespoon minced garlic
2 tablespoons preserved Chinese vegetables, or Korean kimchi (optional)
1/3 cup plus 1/2 tablespoon soy sauce, divided
2 tablespoons tahini
2 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons chile oil
1/2 teaspoon hot sesame oil
2 1/2 tablespoons sugar
1 pound flour noodles, preferably fresh, or somen or rounded udon

Preparation

In a medium skillet, heat 1/2 tablespoon canola oil over medium high heat.
Add ground pork and garlic and cook, stirring often, until pork is cooked through.
Chop preserved vegetables or kimchi finely and add to pan along with 1/2 tablespoon soy sauce.
Cook until the meat is golden, then turn off heat.
In a medium bowl, whisk together remaining 2 tablespoons canola oil and tahini until blended.
Add water, 1/3 cup soy sauce, chile oil, hot sesame oil and sugar.
Whisk all until emulsified.
Bring a large pot of water to boil and cook noodles according to package instructions.
Drain well.
Pour sesame sauce into a serving bowl and add cooked noodles.
Top with cooked pork mixture.
Toss noodles table side and serve Sichuan Cucumber Salad on the side.

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