

Recipe

Crunchy Thai Cucumber & Peanut Salad

Dressing Ingredients

2 medium limes—juiced/zested

½ cup of rice-wine vinegar

½ cup of dark brown sugar

1 tablespoon of Thai fish sauce (nam pla)

½ teaspoon of salt

½ teaspoon of black pepper

Dressing Directions

- Juice and zest your lime into a medium saucepan.
- Pour in the rice-wine vinegar, fish sauce, brown sugar, and salt & pepper into the same saucepan.
- Heat the mixture on your stove (medium-high heat), bringing the liquid to a steaming boil. Stir occasionally with a fork to help the sugar melt in.
- Cook the dressing for 4-5 minutes, allowing it to reduce in volume by half. A thin syrup will form.
- Turn off the heat and allow it to cool at room temperature while you prep the salad ingredients.



Salad Ingredients

2 large English or Japanese cucumbers

2 thai chili peppers (can substitute with jalapeño)

1 shallot—sliced into thin rounds

4 tablespoons of fresh cilantro leaves/stems

10 mint leaves—chopped

½ cup of salted peanuts

Salad Directions

- Wash your whole English cucumbers.
- Chop off and discard the top and the bottom of the cucumbers (these tend to dry out and can be tough).
- Cut both cucumbers in half lengthwise. Lay the cucumber halves flat side down then on a cutting board.
- Slice each cucumber half into 1 ½ to 2- inch (bite-size) pieces. You can cut on a diagonal angle to create rhombus-like pretty shape. Put the cucumbers in a salad bowl.
- Remove the top of the Thai chilis—cutting them into thin rounds. If you want a spicy salad, keep the seeds. If you'd prefer a mild salad, you should cut the chilis in half first and scoop out/discard the seeds—before slicing into rounds.
- Add the chilis to the salad bowl with the cucumber.
- Chop (roughly) both the cilantro leaves/stems and the mint leaves. Add the chopped herbs to the salad bowl with the cucumber pieces and chili.



- Remove the outer, papery layer of the shallot with a knife. Cut the shallots in half, laying them flat side down. Slice the shallot halves into very thin half-moon rounds—1/8-inch thick. Add the shallot slivers to the salad bowl.
- Heat a small non-stick skillet over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add in the salted peanuts and toss constantly. Toast the peanuts until they just begin to brown on the outside. When still hot, mix the peanuts in with your other salad ingredients.
- Pour the cooled-down dressing over your cucumber-peanut-herb mix. (It's fine if the dressing is still a little warm). Toss with a serving spoon, ensuring that everything gets coated in your syrupy dressing.
- Let the salad rest at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving—this gives all the flavors time to marry and meld. Store extra salad in your fridge for 3-4 days after.

Chef Chris Atwood's Notes:

*Thai food celebrates the four S's – **sweet, savory, sour, and spicy**. Each distinct flavor sings in harmony when combined. And yet, the individual flavors still get to hit their solo notes. You taste the heat of the chili. You taste the umami of the fish sauce. You taste the caramel-y sweetness from brown sugar. You taste the tartness of lime juice and rice vinegar. On top of it all, the fresh herbs add brightness. This easy weeknight recipe is best with English or Japanese cucumbers—they're crisper than the American variety and the seeds are smaller. Thai fish sauce (**nam pla**) tends to be sweeter than the Vietnamese version, so – if possible – seek out a Thai brand. Serve this salad as a side with a Thai curry or noodle dish or as a stand-alone appetizer—ideal for sunny-day barbecues or outdoor picnics.*

