

Serves: 4 servings as a side

INGREDIENTS

- **TEA LEAF PASTE**

- ½ cup dried [Gunpowder Green Tea](#) leaves
- ⅔ cup safflower or canola oil
- 4 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons minced ginger
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes

- **SALAD**

- 6 cups sliced romaine lettuce leaves
- 2 medium roma tomatoes, chopped
- ¼ cup sunflower seeds, lightly toasted
- ¼ cup roasted peanuts
- 2 to 3 tablespoons fried garlic (see note for directions)
- Juice from 1 lime
- 2 tablespoons safflower or canola oil
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add the green tea leaves to a medium-sized heat-safe bowl. Pick out any twigs or hard stems. Pour hot water over the tea leaves and let it soak for at least an hour, until the tea leaves soften. Use a strainer to help drain the tea leaves. Rinse the leaves under water. Transfer the leaves back to the bowl and cover it with water once again. Let the leaves soak overnight.
2. Drain the tea leaves and squeeze out the excess liquid. Transfer the leaves to a food processor. Add the oil, garlic, ginger, lime juice salt and red pepper flakes and blitz until you get a tea leaf paste, scraping the sides of the bowl if necessary. Transfer the tea leaf paste to a jar, close tightly with the lid and let it refrigerate for at least 2 days.
3. When you're ready to serve the salad, scoop out ½ cup of the tea leaf paste. Mix it with a small pinch of salt, 2 tablespoons of safflower or canola oil, 1½ teaspoons lime juice and ⅛ teaspoon red pepper flakes.
4. Cover a large plate with the lettuce leaves. Sprinkle about 1 teaspoon lime juice over the lettuce. Place the tea leaf dressing in the center of the plate into a mound. Arrange separate piles of the chopped tomatoes, sunflower seeds, peanuts and fried garlic. Toss everything together to serve. Sprinkle the sesame seeds over the salad, if you like.