

Chilled Soba Noodles with Cucumber, Snow Peas, and Radishes for Two

COOK'S
ILLUSTRATED

✓ WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Soba noodles, made from buckwheat flour or a buckwheat-wheat flour blend, have a chewy texture and nutty flavor and are often enjoyed chilled. For a refreshing cold noodle salad, we cooked soba noodles in unsalted boiling water until tender but still resilient and rinsed them under cold running water to remove excess starch and prevent sticking. We then tossed the soba with a miso-based dressing, which clung to and flavored the noodles without overpowering their distinct taste. We also cut a mix of vegetables into varying sizes so they'd incorporate nicely into the noodles while adding crunch and color. Sprinkling strips of toasted nori over the top added more texture and a subtle briny taste.

INGREDIENTS

4	ounces dried soba noodles
$\frac{1}{2}$	(8-inch square) sheet nori (optional)
1 $\frac{1}{2}$	tablespoons white miso
1 $\frac{1}{2}$	tablespoons mirin
1	tablespoon toasted sesame oil
1 $\frac{1}{2}$	teaspoons sesame seeds
$\frac{1}{2}$	teaspoon grated fresh ginger
$\frac{1}{8} - \frac{1}{4}$	teaspoon red pepper flakes
$\frac{1}{4}$	English cucumber, quartered lengthwise, seeded, and sliced thin on bias
2	ounces snow peas, strings removed, cut lengthwise into matchsticks
2	radishes, trimmed, halved, and sliced into thin half-moons
2	scallions, sliced thin on bias

*All-Purpose Whisks***BUY WINNER**

	Stockpots
	BUY WINNER

FROM THE SHOP

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 2

Sheets of nori, a dried seaweed that adds a subtle briny umami flavor and crisp texture to this salad, can be found in packets at Asian markets or in the Asian section of the supermarket. Plain pretoasted seaweed snacks can be substituted for the roasted nori, and yellow, red, or brown miso can be substituted for the white miso, if desired. This dish isn't meant to be overtly spicy, but if you prefer more heat, use the full $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of red pepper flakes. These chilled noodles pair nicely with salmon, shrimp, tofu, or chicken for lunch or a light dinner.

Total time: 35 minutes

1. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot. Stir in noodles and cook according to package directions, stirring occasionally, until noodles are cooked through but still retain some chew. Drain noodles and rinse under cold water until chilled. Drain well and transfer to large bowl.
2. Grip nori sheet, if using, with tongs and hold about 2 inches above low flame on gas burner. Toast, flipping nori every 3 to 5 seconds, until nori is aromatic and shrinks slightly, about 20 seconds. If you do not have a gas stove, toast nori on rimmed baking sheet in 275-degree oven until it is aromatic and shrinks slightly, 20 to 25 minutes, flipping nori halfway through toasting. Using scissors, cut nori into 1-inch strips.
3. Combine miso, mirin, oil, $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons water, sesame seeds, ginger, and pepper flakes in small bowl and whisk until smooth. Add dressing to noodles and toss to combine. Add cucumber, snow peas, radishes, scallions, and nori, if using, and toss well to evenly distribute. Season with salt to taste, and serve.

Secrets to Stellar Soba Noodle Salad



- 1. Buy soba that lists wheat flour along with buckwheat flour on the ingredient list.** This type has a milder flavor than the pure buckwheat style, and because of the gluten contributed by the wheat, it boasts a more resilient texture and a nutty-sweet taste.
- 2. Don't salt the water** since the soba is served with a highly seasoned dressing and the noodles themselves may have been salted during manufacturing.
- 3. Follow package directions for timing** since brands vary widely. Check the noodles for doneness early and often.
- 4. Rinse the noodles with lots of cold water** after draining them to stop cooking and remove excess surface starch that could cause clumping.

INGREDIENT SPOTLIGHT

Mirin



The dressing for our soba noodles gets its depth from mirin, a Japanese rice wine that can take different forms. The traditional form is hon-mirin ("real mirin"), a delicately savory-sweet wine that's made exclusively from fermented rice and is available

online and in some liquor stores. Supermarkets sell a product labeled “sweet cooking wine,” “sweetened sake,” or “aji-mirin” (“tastes like mirin”) that’s made with sweeteners, alcohol, rice, and salt. We have determined that in applications where mirin is a main ingredient, it’s worth seeking out the traditional, high-quality mirin. However, in recipes such as this one that call for just a few tablespoons, it’s fine to use the supermarket stuff, which is much cheaper: In a taste test, we couldn’t tell which batch of noodles contained which type of mirin.

Vegetable Prep School

Here's how to strategically cut the vegetables into shapes that will get tangled in the noodles instead of dropping to the bottom of the bowl.



Cucumber

Quarter lengthwise, seed, and slice thin on bias.

**Scallions**

Slice white and green parts thin on bias.

**Radishes**

Trim ends, halve, and slice into thin half-moons.

**Snow Peas**

Remove strings and cut lengthwise into matchsticks.

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 JOHN C. 16 DAYS

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turned out great. A "make again" as my family rates things. This is a great recipe, and I will definitely make it again. My butcher gladly butterflied the chicken for me, therefore I found