



Very Vietnamese Summer Roll Bowls with "Nuoc Cham" Salty-Sweet Vinaigrette

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** 0 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls) and Rock and Saw.

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

mince: to chop into teeny tiny pieces.

shred: to reduce food into small shreds or strips (similar to grate).

whisk: to beat or stir ingredients vigorously with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

soak: to immerse a hard food for a certain amount of time in a liquid to soften it.

Equipment

- Large bowls (2)
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Citrus squeezer (optional)
- Measuring spoons
- Whisk
- Colander or strainer
- Grater or food processor
- Wooden spoon

Ingredients

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Vinaigrette:

1 garlic clove

2 limes

3 T soy sauce ******(for GLUTEN/SOY ALLERGY sub 3 T coconut aminos)******

3 T rice wine vinegar

2 T vegetable oil ******

2 T honey, sugar, agave or maple syrup

1 T water

Noodle bowls:

1 14-oz pkg rice noodles

5 C warm water

2 large carrots

2 large cucumbers

1 head romaine lettuce

2 green onions

1/2 bunch cilantro

1/2 bunch mint

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Gluten/Wheat/Soy: For 3 T soy sauce, substitute 3 T coconut aminos.

Soy: Substitute canola oil or other nut-free oil for vegetable oil.

Instructions

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mince + slice + squeeze

We'll make the "Nuoc Cham"(Ne-wok chahm) vinaigrette first! Mince **1 garlic clove** into tiny pieces. Slice

2 limes in half and squeeze the juice into a large bowl.

add + whisk

Add the minced garlic, **3 tablespoons soy sauce**, **3 tablespoons rice wine vinegar**, **2 tablespoons vegetable oil**, **2 tablespoons honey**, and **1 tablespoon water** to the bowl. Whisk until well combined.

soak + drain

Put **1 package of rice noodles** in **5 cups of warm water** into a separate large bowl. Allow them to soak for 10 to 15 minutes. Then, drain the noodles and set aside.

shred + chop + tear

Using a grater or food processor, shred **2 large carrots** and **2 large cucumbers**. Chop **1 head of romaine lettuce** into strips. Chop **2 green onions**. Tear **1/2 bunch of cilantro** and **1/2 bunch of mint** (no stems!).

combine + marinate + toss

Combine the shredded carrots and cucumbers, add them to the bowl with the "Nuoc Cham" Salty-Sweet Vinaigrette, and let them marinate for about 10 minutes. Then, add the drained noodles, chopped lettuce, green onions, torn cilantro leaves, and torn mint leaves to the bowl. Toss it all together, then eat! "Xin mòi" (Sin moy) or "Enjoy your meal" in Vietnamese!

Featured Ingredient: Cucumber!

Hi! I'm Cucumber!

"I'm as cool as a cucumber. Actually, I am a cucumber! I have a thick, dark green peel; I am longer than I am wide; and I am a fruit that's often used as a veggie! There are three types of cucumbers: slicing, pickling, and burpless. The slicing and burpless varieties, with or without their peels, are tasty and refreshing sliced, chopped, or minced in salads, sandwiches, salsa, sauces, appetizers, and smoothies or other drinks. The pickling cucumber eventually becomes a pickle (after its pickling spa treatment)!"

History & Etymology

Cucumbers are one of the oldest known cultivated vegetables. They have been grown for at least 3,000 years and are believed to have originated in India.

The early Greeks or Romans may have introduced cucumbers to Europe. Records indicate that the French cultivated them in the 9th century and the English in the 14th century. Then Spanish explorers brought cucumbers to the Americas in the 16th century.

Pickled cucumbers, or pickles, may have been produced first by workers building the Great Wall of China or by people in Mesopotamia's Tigris Valley.

A 1630 book called "New England's Plantation" by Francis Higginson, describing plants grown in a garden

on Conant's Island in Boston Harbor, mentions "cowcumpers." The cucumber may have been dubbed cowcumber due to thinking at that time that uncooked vegetables were fit only for cows.

The word "cucumber" comes from late Middle English, from the Old French "cocombre," from the Latin "cucumis."

Anatomy

The cucumber is a creeping vine plant that is part of the Cucurbitaceae or gourd family. Other members are melon, squash, pumpkin, and watermelon. Cucumbers grow on a vine, often in sandy soil. Sandy soil warms faster in the spring, giving cucumbers a more favorable growing environment.

Cucumber length varies. Slicers are 6 to 8 inches, burpless 8 to 10 inches, and picklers are 3 to 5 inches long.

Cucumbers have a mild melon flavor. Slicing cucumbers will have seeds in their flesh, preferably small, soft seeds. Burpless cucumbers are slightly sweeter with a more tender skin and are easier to digest. They may also have no or very few seeds.

"Cool as a cucumber" isn't just a catchy phrase. A cucumber's inner temperature can be 10 to 20 degrees cooler than the outside air. This is because it consists mainly of water, which also applies to watermelons, and it takes more energy to heat the water inside the cucumber than the air around it. No wonder these are such summertime favorites! However, we don't say "as cool as a watermelon," so how did this expression become part of our vocabulary? It may have come from a poem in John Gay's *Poems, New Song on New Similes* from 1732.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Cucumbers are ready to be harvested 50 to 70 days after planting. They are ripe when they are firm and bright or dark green. Slicing cucumbers will be six to eight inches long. Avoid leaving them on the vine too long, or their taste may become bitter and their rind tougher.

At the store, look for firm cucumbers without blemishes, wrinkles, or soft spots. Organic cucumbers are the best choice to avoid pesticide residue, if available. In addition, washing them reduces the amount of residue and pathogens.

If you don't eat your fresh, uncut cucumbers immediately, store them in your refrigerator crisper drawer in a plastic bag for up to three days if unwaxed and up to a week if waxed.

You can eat slicing and burpless cucumbers by themselves, slice or chop them into salads, or blend them into sauces and smoothies.

Pickling cucumbers are pickled whole or sliced in brine, sugar, vinegar, and spices. There are several kinds of pickles, such as sweet, bread-and-butter, gherkin, and kosher dill.

Nutrition

Cucumbers are 96 percent water, have very little fat, and are low in calories.

Cucumbers contain small amounts of the vitamins you need every day and 16 percent of the daily value of vitamin K, which helps with blood clotting.