

Mixed Vegetable Salad with Indonesian Peanut Sauce

This delicious salad can be eaten as a first course or a main meal. Most of the prep work involves cutting and blanching the vegetables, but it goes by quickly. Prawn crackers are the traditional accompaniment, but store-bought vegetable chips make a great vegan substitute. If you're short on time, you can turn this into a fresh salad using lettuce, spinach, cucumbers and/or carrots.

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES

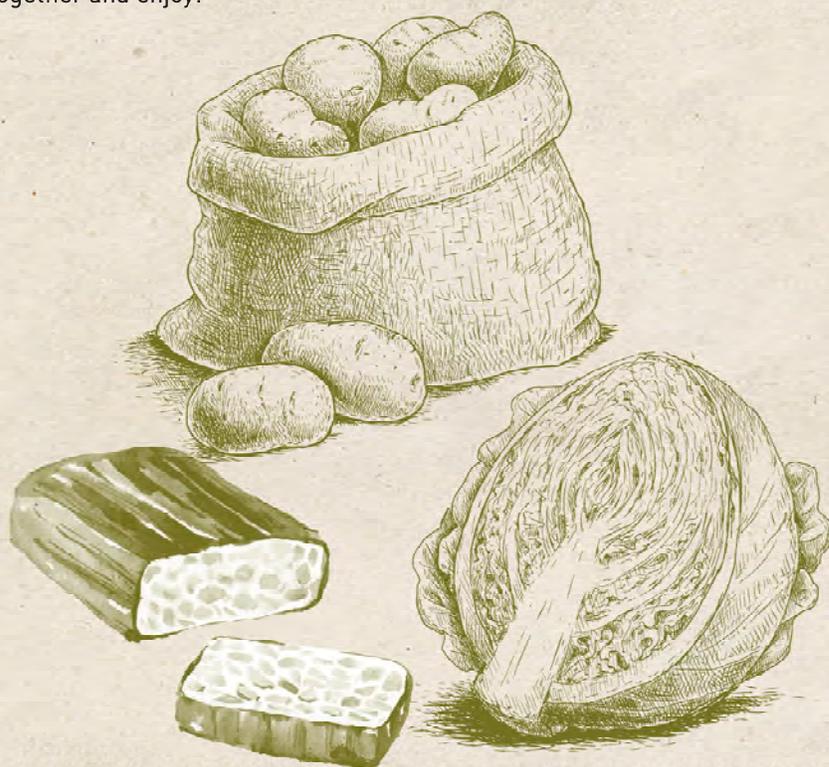
MAKES: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

- 8 oz (225 g) yellow potatoes**
- 3 cups (300 g) shredded green cabbage**
- 3 cups (90 g) baby spinach**
- 2 cups (200 g) bean sprouts**
- 5 oz (300 g) green beans, cut into 2-in (5-cm) lengths**
- 1 small seedless cucumber, cut into half-moons**
- 2 large hard-boiled eggs, sliced into wedges**
- 8 oz (225 g) Fried Golden Tofu (page 43) or tempeh, cut into 2-in (5-cm) cubes**
- 1 cup (250 ml) Gourmet Indonesian Peanut Sauce (page 36)**
- Vegetable chips or straws, for garnish**
- Fried Shallots (page 26), for garnish**

Cook the potatoes in boiling salted water for 20 to 25 minutes, until fork-tender. Peel and cut into 2-inch (5-cm) cubes.

Prepare a bowl or tub of ice water. Blanch the cabbage for 1 to 2 minutes, until translucent and wilted, and transfer to the ice bath. When cool, drain on kitchen towels. Set aside. Repeat with the spinach (30 seconds to 1 minute), bean sprouts (30 seconds to 1 minute) and green beans (3 to 4 minutes). (See page 41 for tips on blanching vegetables.)

Arrange the vegetables, eggs and tofu on a large platter. Serve with a bowl of Gourmet Indonesian Peanut Sauce, with the vegetable chips and Fried Shallots on small plates alongside. Each diner should pick and choose an assortment of ingredients to put on their plate. Drizzle 2 to 3 tablespoons of Gourmet Indonesian Peanut Sauce over the vegetables and top with vegetable chips and Fried Shallots. Stir everything together and enjoy!



Gourmet Indonesian Peanut Sauce

The title says it all. This is based on my mom's recipe, which accompanies Mixed Vegetable Salad with Indonesian Peanut Sauce (page 81). Raw peanuts are roasted on the stovetop or in the oven, and then ground. You'll also have to hunt down tamarind pulp and lime leaves, but it's worth the trouble—the addition of freshly roasted peanuts and fragrant herbs makes for unsurpassed flavor.

PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 25 MINUTES

MAKES: 1 CUP (250 ML)

2 tablespoons vegetable oil (or just enough to coat the peanuts)

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons (200 g) raw skinless peanuts

1½ cups (375 ml) water

2 Asian (kaffir) lime leaves (optional)

1 tablespoon seedless wet tamarind pulp, or 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice

3 tablespoons coconut palm sugar or 2 tablespoons dark brown sugar

2 teaspoons fine sea salt

1 teaspoon sambal oelek chili paste

1 to 2 Thai chilies, chopped (optional)

Tips Raw peanuts—skin-on and skinless—are available in the bulk food section in many grocery stores.

- The sauce will keep for up to a week in the fridge. To reheat, add a little water if it's thick, and then warm on the stove or in the microwave.

Pour the oil into a large wok or and set over medium heat until shimmering hot. Add the peanuts and stir and cook until golden brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Toss them continuously so they cook evenly without burning.

Scoop up the peanuts with a slotted spoon and transfer to a paper-towel lined plate to cool. Remove any burnt peanuts, they will taste bitter.

When the peanuts are cool enough to handle, grind them in a small food processor or pulverize them with a mortar and pestle until they have texture of coarse sand.

Mix the water together with the lime leaves, tamarind, sugar and salt in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then adjust the heat until it is bubbling gently. Simmer for about 5 minutes, breaking up the tamarind pulp.

Remove the lime leaves and any chunks of tamarind pulp with a slotted spoon. Add the ground peanuts and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Adjust the heat and simmer gently until thick and creamy like gravy, 8 to 10 minutes, stirring often so the sauce doesn't stick to the bottom of the pot.

Remove from the heat and stir in the *sambal oelek* and Thai chilies (if using). Taste and adjust the seasonings as needed, making sure the acidity of the tamarind or lime sings through.

Serve the peanut sauce with vegetables or as a dipping sauce for grilled kebabs.