

Tempura and Cold Soba Salad

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Soba Noodles

Ingredients:

- 2 quarts water + 1-2 cups cold water, separate
- 12 ounces soba (buckwheat) noodles (or other thin Asian noodle)

Directions:

1. Heat 2 quarts of water to a boil in a large pot over high heat. Add the noodles a small bundle at a time, stirring gently to separate. When the water returns to a full boil, add 1 cup of cold water. Repeat this twice. When the water returns to a full boil, check the noodles for doneness. You want to cook them until they are firm-tender. Do not overcook them.
2. Drain the noodles in a colander and rinse well under cold running water until the noodles are cool. This not only stops the cooking process, but also removes the starch from the noodles. This is an essential part of soba noodle making. Once the noodles are cool, drain them and cover them with a damp kitchen towel and set them aside allowing them to cool completely.

Spicy Dipping Sauce

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup green onion, chopped
- 6 Tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 4 Tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground (dry) mustard
- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 Tablespoons sesame oil (optional)
- 2/3 teaspoon sea salt
- 2/3 teaspoon pepper

- 4 Tablespoons water

Directions:

1. Combine green onion, soy sauce, rice vinegar, sugar, ground mustard, vegetable oil, sesame oil, sea salt and pepper in covered container.
2. Shake ingredients together until salt dissolves.
3. Add water, shake until mixed.
4. Set aside until ready to serve.

Common Hiyashi Soba Toppings:

- Thin omelet strips
- Ham
- Boiled chicken breasts
- Cucumber
- Boiled bean sprouts
- Tomatoes
- Toasted nori (Dried Seaweed)
- Green onions
- Wasabi powder
- Finely grated daikon (Japanese radish)
- Beni Shoga (Pickled Ginger)

All toppings should be julienne, finely diced or grated. Prepare and refrigerate covered until needed.

Serving:

Traditionally soba is served on a bamboo basket tray, but if you don't have these, you can simply serve them on a plate or in a bowl. Divide up the noodles, laying them on your serving dishes. Sprinkle each one with nori. In small side bowl or cup, place 1/2 cup (120 ml) of dipping sauce into each. In separate small side dishes, serve each person a small amount of wasabi, grated daikon, and green onions.

The noodles are eaten by sprinkling the desired garnishes into the dipping sauce and eating the noodles by first dipping them into the sauce. Feel free to slurp away! Oishii!

Tempura

Ingredients:

- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 cup iced water
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour, plus extra for dredging
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- Vegetable or canola oil for frying
- Water bath for keeping tempura batter cold
- Vegetables and seafood of your choice

Directions:

1. Place the iced water into a small mixing bowl.
2. Lightly beat the egg yolk and gradually pour it into the iced water. Stir (preferably with chopsticks) until well blended.
3. Add flour, cornstarch and baking powder all at once.
4. Stroke a few times with chopsticks until ingredients are loosely combined. Batter should be runny and lumpy.
5. Place bowl of batter in ice water bath to keep cold while frying tempura.
6. Heat oil in a large pan or wok. For vegetables, the oil should be 320 degrees F. For seafood, 340 degrees F.
7. While oil is heating, prepare your vegetables and seafood.
8. Begin by frying the vegetables that leave the least odor in the oil, such as sweet potatoes.
9. Dredge the vegetables and seafood through a shallow bowl of flour, then coat in the tempura batter.
10. Carefully slip the battered pieces into the hot oil and allow to cook until golden.
11. Remove from oil with a slotted spoon and place on a wire rack atop a baking sheet to drain and cool.
12. Serve hot with Mentsuyu (recipe follows).
13. Enjoy!!

Mentsuyu - Traditional Dipping Sauce

Ingredients:

- 2 cups vegetable stock
- 1/3 cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/3 cup mirin (sweet rice wine)

Directions:

1. Gently heat mirin in saucepan.
2. Add soy sauce and stock. Bring to a boil.

3. Remove from heat.
4. Refrigerate until ready to serve.