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Around the World with Noodles

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Noodles are a staple in many cultures around the world. The first noodles are thought to be eaten at least 4,000 years ago. Noodles can provide a low-cost source of carbohydrates to a healthy diet. Carbohydrates provide needed energy for children and adults to grow and function. If you have been avoiding noodles due to food allergies or food intolerances, the good news is they can be made from a variety of different grains, beans, and starches.



Understanding different types of noodles and how to use them may help you become more creative in coming up with your family's favorite noodle recipes. It will also help you know how to substitute one type of noodle for another when that's what you have in your pantry.

Major Types of Noodles/Pasta

Italian pasta is primarily made with wheat flour and comes in hundreds of shapes. Generally, there are three main shapes for Italian pasta: ribbons, tubes or cylinders, and extruded shapes.

- Ribbon pasta is cut into thin strands like spaghetti. They work well with tomato and lighter sauces. Wider ribbons, such as fettuccine, work well with thicker cream sauces.
- Tube-shaped pasta like penne pair well with meat sauces.
- Extruded pasta comes in lots of shapes, such as bow tie, corkscrew, and shells. Their nooks and crannies provide space for oil-based sauces like pesto to stick.
- be made from tapioca, mung beans, sweet potato starch, or arrowroot. Glass noodles are usually rehydrated before cooking in stir-fries, soups, or as a filling in spring rolls.



Asian noodles can be made from wheat, rice, buckwheat, potato starch, tapioca, mung beans, or arrow root. These are the ones most easily found at grocery stores.

- Egg noodles are made from wheat and egg. They can be stir-fried as *lo mein* or boiled and deep-fried into *chow mein*, a garnish to salads.
- Thin Japanese wheat noodles are called *somen*. They are usually sold dried and generally served cold. The thick ones are called *udon*. Dried *udon* noodles are cooked in soup noodle dishes while pre-cooked *udon*, sold in vacuum-packed pouches, are good for stir-fries.
- *Soba* noodles are made from buckwheat flour and are usually served cold in the summer and hot in the winter.



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- Ramen noodles are made from wheat flour with the addition of *kansui*, an alkaline salt to give it a yellow color and firm texture.
- Rice noodles come as thin strands or flat. They cook faster than wheat noodles, around three minutes, and are prepared in popular dishes such as *pad Thai*, Vietnamese *phở*, and Filipino *pancit bihon*. They absorb flavors readily and work well in soups or stir-fries.
- Glass or cellophane noodles are called as such because they become transparent after cooking. They have
- gelatinous and chewy texture. They can be made from tapioca, mung beans, sweet potato starch, or arrowroot. Glass noodles are usually rehydrated before cooking in stir-fries, soups, or as a filling in spring rolls.



Let's Talk

Children like to eat foods they are familiar with. Providing them with plenty of opportunity to try different kinds of food can increase the variety of food they will eat.

Tips to Increase Acceptance of New Foods:

- Offer non-familiar with familiar foods. If they like teriyaki chicken, try using teriyaki sauce with noodles. Add vegetables that they like to eat.
- Enjoy eating meals together. Try to have as many family meals as possible together every week. Be a good role model by showing your children that you eat a variety of nutritious foods. Teach your children that it's also okay for them not to like certain foods and how to politely say "no, thank you".
- Encourage your children to participate in the whole preparing and eating process. You can take them grocery shopping, help you grow a garden, and cook meals.

Recipe for Health

Garlicky Asian-Inspired Stir-fried Noodles

Ingredients:

- 12 ounces Chinese egg noodles, soba noodles, rice noodles, or spaghetti
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 10 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup thinly sliced scallions
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger
- 2 cups of bok choy, sliced thinly
- ½ cup roasted and chopped peanuts
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon rice wine or 1 tsp rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- 1 to 2 teaspoons sriracha or other hot sauce (optional)
- Juice of ½ lime
- 1 cup cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped



Procedure:

1. Wash hands and clean kitchen counter before preparing food.
2. In a large pot of boiling water, cook the noodles until they are halfway done but still firm. Follow package directions. Drain and toss with a tablespoon of oil. Set aside.
3. In a large skillet, add the remaining oil and sauté the garlic until fragrant. Add in the scallions, ginger, spinach or other vegetables, and stir-fry for about a minute.
4. Add in the noodles and stir-fry for another minute.
5. Add in the soy sauce, rice wine or rice vinegar, sesame oil, and sriracha (if using). Stir-fry until the noodles are coated.
6. Turn off heat and add the lime juice and cilantro leaves. Top with chopped peanuts.