

Mango-Avocado Spring Rolls

Makes 10 to 12 rolls

Rice vermicelli, extremely thin and brittle dried noodles made from rice, are available at Asian markets, natural food stores, and well-stocked supermarkets. Don't confuse them with cellophane noodles, which are made from mung bean starch.

3 ounces rice vermicelli

12 rice paper wrappers

2 ripe Hass avocados

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 ripe mango, peeled, pitted, and cut into 1/4-inch slices

1 medium English cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, and cut into thin strips

2 cups finely chopped romaine or iceberg lettuce

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves

1. Soak the vermicelli in a medium bowl of hot water until soft, about 1 minute, and drain well. Cut the noodles into 4- or 5-inch lengths and set aside.

2. Fill a large shallow bowl with warm water and add one rice paper wrapper at a time, soaking it in the water for a few seconds until soft. Remove it from the water and lay it on a dry work surface. Pit and peel the avocados and cut into 1/4-inch strips. Toss the avocado strips with the lemon juice to prevent discoloration, then place 2 or 3 avocado strips down the center of each the wrapper, leaving a 1-inch margin at each end. Add a few strips of mango, followed by a layer of cucumber strips. Top with some of the rice noodles and a layer of lettuce strips. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, and sprinkle with some of the cilantro leaves.

3. Pull one side of the rice paper over the filling, folding over the two short ends, rolling up tightly to enclose the filling. Transfer to a serving plate and repeat with the remaining ingredients. Serve immediately or cover the rolls with a damp cloth for no more than 1 hour before serving.

Tricolor Rotini with Pesto Bianco

Makes 4 servings

Creamy and flavorful, this pesto bianco, or "white pesto," is made with pine nuts, cashews, and artichoke hearts. It lightly cloaks the colorful short spiral rotini pasta, although you can substitute another pasta shape if you prefer. Sprinkle with parsley, basil, green peas, or chopped black olives for added color and flavor. Do not use marinated artichoke hearts because the flavor is too strong. Use frozen artichoke hearts instead of canned, but you'll need to cook them first according to package directions.

2 or 3 garlic cloves

1/3 cup pine nuts

1/3 cup unsalted raw cashews

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup coarsely chopped canned artichoke hearts, drained and rinsed

1/2 cup plain unsweetened soy milk

1/4 cup olive oil

1 pound tricolor rotini

1. In a food processor, combine the garlic, pine nuts, cashews, and salt and process to a paste. Add the artichokes and process until smooth. Add the soy milk and process until well blended. With the machine running, slowly stream in the oil. Transfer to a small bowl and set aside. Alternatively, you can warm the sauce in a saucepan over very low heat but, like most pestos, tossing it with the hot cooked pasta is usually enough to warm it up.

2. In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the rotini over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until al dente, about 10 minutes. Drain the pasta and transfer to a large serving bowl. Add the pesto and toss gently to combine. Serve immediately.

Green Tea Rice with Lemon Snow Peas and Tofu

Makes 4 servings

This light and lovely rice dish is flavored with green tea and lemon for a sophisticated taste. Crunchy snow peas and golden fried tofu complete the meal.

3 cups water

4 green tea bags

1 1/2 cups white sushi rice

2 tablespoons canola or grapeseed oil

8 ounces extra-firm tofu, drained and cut into

1/4-inch dice

3 green onions, minced

2 cups snow peas, trimmed and cut diagonally into 1-inch pieces

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 teaspoon grated lemon zest

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. In a large saucepan, bring the water to a boil. Add the tea bags and remove from the heat. Let stand for 7 minutes and remove and discard the tea bags. Rinse the rice under running water until the water runs clear, then add to the brewed tea. Cover and cook over medium heat until tender, about 25 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

2. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the tofu and cook until golden brown, 5 minutes. Add the green onions and snow peas and cook until softened, 3 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice and zest.

3. In a large bowl, combine the cooked rice with the tofu and snow pea mixture. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve immediately.