

V RECIPES

(VEGETARIAN, VIETNAMESE)



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Lemon Grass

Use lemon grass for flavoring, but not to eat. Peel off the tough outer layers and use only the pale, lower portion of the stems, but still keep it in fairly large pieces so that you can pick it out like bay leaves when the dish is done.

Lemon grass can be pounded into a paste and used for marinades and in stir-fry dishes, but grind it to death in a mortar and pestle rather than using a food processor or other cutter in which some of the fibers can survive.

Rice Paper Wrappers

These round rice wrappers can be found in large Oriental or Thai/Vietnamese markets. They come dried and in several sizes, so choose the one that is most convenient for your particular dish.

Place a moistened kitchen towel on the counter and put a few sheets of rice paper on the towel. Do not let them overlap. Using a plant sprayer or mister, spray them on both sides with water and allow them to soak up the water for a few minutes. Prepare only the amount you need. Once wet, they are not reusable. Do not let them sit too long or they will become soggy. When they are soft they are ready to serve.

Roasted Rice

Heat a small, dry frying pan over high heat and add the rice. Toast, stirring constantly, until rice is brown. Transfer to a blender and grind into a powder. Store as suggested above. You can generally prepare a quantity of it and keep it in a jar to have on hand when needed.

CONDIMENTS



Crisp Fried Shallots

yields 1/4 cup

1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup thinly sliced shallots

Heat the oil in a small saucepan until hot but not smoking, about 300F. Add the shallots and fry over moderate heat until crispy and golden brown, about 5 minutes. Do not overcook. Immediately remove the shallots with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

Cooked this way, shallots can be stored in a tightly covered jar on the kitchen shelf for up to 1 month.

Roasted Peanuts

1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup thinly sliced shallots

Place the peanuts in a skillet over moderate heat and cook, stirring constantly, until the nuts turn golden brown, about 5 minutes. Allow to cool. Pound in a mortar with a pestle or process in a spice grinder until the peanuts are a bit chunky.

Use shelled and skinned unsalted peanuts for this purpose. Cook a small amount at a time and use shortly after they are roasted to preserve their flavor. Amounts are specified in recipes using roasted peanuts. Store-bought dry-roasted-roasted unsalted peanuts may also be substituted in recipes calling for roasted peanuts.

Roasted Rice Powder

1/2 cup raw glutinous rice

Soak the glutinous rice in warm water for 1 hour. Drain.

Place the rice in a small skillet over moderate heat. Toast the rice, stirring constantly with chopsticks or a wooden spoon, until deep golden brown, about 15 minutes.

Transfer the roasted rice to a spice grinder or blender and process to a fine powder (the powder should resemble saw dust). Sift the ground rice through a very fine sieve into a bowl. Discard the grainy bits.

Store the rice powder in a tightly covered jar in your refrigerator and use as needed.

Roasted rice powder is used as a flavoring and binding agent and will keep for up to 3 months.

Salt, Pepper and Lime Mix

1 tsp salt
1 tsp freshly-ground white pepper
1/2 lime

Combine salt and pepper, squeeze lime juice into the mixture and stir well.

Scallion Oil

yields 1 cup

1/4 cup peanut oil
2 scallions, finely sliced

Heat the oil in a small saucepan until hot but not smoking, about 300F. Remove the pan from the heat and add the sliced scallions.

Let the mixture steep at room temperature until completely cooled. This oil mixture will keep stored in a tightly covered jar at room temperature for 1 week.

Scallion oil can be brushed over noodles, vegetables or breads.

Traditional Herbs

yields 4 to 6 servings

1 bunch cilantro
1 bunch mint
1 bunch holy (Thai) basil
1 bunch saw leaf (ngo gai)

Keeping the stems and leaves intact, clean the cilantro, mint, holy basil, and saw leaves thoroughly, drain on paper towels, and arrange on a plate in individual piles.

Some of these herbs are hard to get unless you live near a Southeast Asian food market. Mint and cilantro, however, are available in most markets, lessening the problem of not finding the more exotic herbs. Italian basil is not a substitute for holy, or Thai, basil, as its flavor is much different.

Basic Vegetable Platter

yields 8 servings

2 cup	soft lettuce leaves (Boston or similar, not iceberg)
1 cup	fresh mint leaves
1 cup	fresh coriander (Chinese parsley)
1 cup	cucumber slices

Peel cucumber in lengthwise strips and with green strips in between; then cut in half lengthwise and into thin horizontal slices, forming semi-circles.

Arrange a mound of lettuce in the center of a platter. Around the lettuce, and touching it, arrange separate mounds of mint and coriander.

Arrange the cucumbers in overlapping slices around the complete outer rim of the platter.

A salad or vegetable platter is a very important part of a Vietnamese meal; indeed, it is served at practically every one. The vegetables, which are eaten along with many dishes, are arranged on a platter, and diner helps himself to whatever he desires. This is the basic arrangement of the vegetable platter. On those occasions when a recipe calls for another vegetable, it can be added to this platter.

Supreme Vegetable Platter

1 large	head of Boston or other soft lettuce, separated into Individual leaves
1 bunch	scallions, cut into 2 inch lengths
1 cup	coriander leaves
1 cup	mint leaves
1 cup	fresh Asian or regular basil leaves
1	cucumber, peeled in alternating strips, halved lengthwise and sliced thinly crosswise
4 oz	fresh bean sprouts
1	ripe mango
1 bunch	ripe bananas
1	ripe papaya
6	apples

On a large platter, decoratively arrange all of the ingredients in separate groups.

Vietnamese meals include an abundance of fresh lettuce, herbs, unripe fruits and raw vegetables. These are arranged attractively on a platter and are used for wrapping cooked foods at the table, usually dipped in Nuoc Cham and eaten out of hand.

SAUCES



Chili Sauce 1

yields 1-1/3 cups

2 Tbs	chopped garlic
2 Tbs	coarsely chopped fresh chili peppers
1/4 cup	soy sauce
1/4 cup	white vinegar
3/4 cup	water
2 Tbs	thinly sliced scallion

Combine all ingredients except scallions in a blender and mix until smooth. Pour in individual dipping bowls and garnish with scallions.

Chili Sauce 2

2	dried red chilies
2	cloves garlic
1/2 tsp	sugar
2 Tbs	fish sauce
1 Tbs	vinegar
1 Tbs	lemon juice

Mince chilies and garlic finely and place in a mortar. Mash with the heel of a cleaver or pestle. Add sugar and stir until it dissolves.

Add fish sauce, vinegar and lemon juice, stirring between each addition.

The taste is sour and hot, very puckery. If you make it in a food processor, don't over process. It should have small chunks of each ingredient rather than being a homogeneous liquid. Variations: use green serrano chilies instead of dried red ones, lime juice instead of the lemon juice or palm sugar instead of granulated.

Fish Sauce 1

1/4 cup superfine sugar
3/4 cup boiling water
3 Tbs freshly squeezed
lemon juice
3 Tbs light soy sauce

Dissolve the sugar in the boiling water, then allow to cool. Once cooled, add the lemon juice and soy sauce and mix well to combine.

This is the vegetarian equivalent of dipping fish sauce. This sauce is quick and easy to make, and if you want to liven it up, add some pickled vegetables and chile.

Fish Sauce 2

1-1/2 cup shredded dried seaweed
4 cups water
3 cloves garlic (crushed but not
peeled)
1-1/2 Tbs black peppercorns
1/2 cup dark Chinese soy sauce

Place the seaweed in a pot and add 4 cups of water. Bring to a boil, then turn down the heat to keep it bubbling along. Cook for 20 minutes.

Add the rest of the ingredients and enough water to make about 6 cups total in the pot. Bring back to a boil, then boil fairly high for at least 1/2 hour. At this point, begin to taste (just a little, though—it's strong).

When the stock is reduced by about half, it will be almost too salty to eat, and that means it is ready. Strain through fine mesh or a coffee filter and allow to cool.

Fish Sauce 3

2 cups	shredded dried seaweed
4 cups	water
3 cloves	garlic (smashed but not minced)
1-1/2 Tbs	whole black peppercorns
1/2 cup	soy sauce
2 tsp	lime juice
2 tsp	lemon juice
2 Tbs	vinegar
3 tsp	sugar
1 tsp	ground ginger
1 tsp	ground garlic
1/4 tsp	chili powder

In a large bowl, add 2 cups dried seaweed to 4 cups water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes.

Add the rest of the ingredients and return to a boil, turn heat down to medium and cook for 30 minutes. You can adjust the salt level by adding water.

Allow to cool, and then strain into a container.

Garlic Chili Sauce

yields 1/2 cup

15	whole fresh red chili peppers
1 tsp	grey salt
8 tsp	garlic, finely chopped
1-1/2 Tbs	sugar cane
3 Tbs	rice vinegar
1 tsp	corn starch
2 Tbs	water

Pick fully ripened extremely red in color chilies. Wash them. Pat dry them with a paper towel. Remove all stems then roughly slice all the chiles. Blend the chili peppers, salt, garlic, sugar and vinegar in a mini-prep with about 10 pulses.

Dissolve the cornstarch in water.

Transfer the chili mixture into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add the cornstarch liquid. Lower the heat to simmer for about 5-6 minutes. Stir constantly to make sure the cornstarch is properly absorbed.

Place the cooked mixture in a small jar. Let it cool down to room temperature. Store in the refrigerator.

This sauce is similar to Sriracha hot chili sauce.

Hot and Sweet Sauce

yields 1/2 cup

1/2 cup rice or cider vinegar
1/2 cup sugar
1-2 cloves garlic, finely minced
1/4 tsp salt
1-1/2 tsp dried red pepper flakes

Place the vinegar in a small non-reactive saucepan and heat to a boil. Add the sugar, stirring until it has completely dissolved, then lower the heat to medium-low and let simmer for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, using a mortar and pestle or a bowl and the back of a spoon, pound or mash the garlic and salt to a smooth paste. Stir in the pepper flakes and blend well. Remove the vinegar mixture from the heat and stir in the garlic paste. Let cool to room temperature. Store sealed in a glass jar in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

Hot Mustard Sauce

yields 1/2 cup

1/3 cup dry Chinese hot mustard
1/4 cup water
3 Tbs rice vinegar
1 pinch salt

Put the mustard in a small bowl and slowly drizzle in the water, whisking to make a thin paste. Add the vinegar and salt and whisk well to blend. Set aside until needed. The sauce can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to one week. Stir well before serving.

Lemongrass Marinade

1/4 cup lemongrass, chopped
(4-6 stalks)
or
1/4 cup dried lemongrass
or
6 strips lemon zest
3 cloves garlic, minced
2-3 shallots, minced
2 serrano, jalapeño or
Thai chilies, minced
2 tsp brown sugar
3 Tbs fish sauce
3 Tbs lime juice
1 tsp Vietnamese or Thai
hot sauce or chili oil or
Tabasco sauce

Cut off the top 2/3 of each lemongrass stalk, trim off the outside leaves and roots, and slice the core thinly.

Purée the lemongrass, garlic, shallots, chilies, and brown sugar to a fine paste. Work in the fish sauce, lime juice, and hot sauce.

Marinate vegetables or tofu for 30 minutes to 1 hour, turning once or twice.

Peanut Sauce 1

1 Tbs granulated sugar
2 Tbs garlic chili sauce or
Sriracha hot chili sauce
2 Tbs water
fresh hot red chili slices to
taste (optional)
1 Tbs roasted peanuts

Here's one that's very simple and good. This sauce is used in Buddhist vegetarian dishes.

Mix the sugar with the chili sauce and water. Add some slices of fresh red chili pepper, if desired, and sprinkle with roasted peanuts.

Peanut Sauce 2

yields 3 servings

1/3 cup	unsweetened peanut butter
3 Tbs	rice wine vinegar
3 Tbs	water
1 Tbs	soy sauce
1 tsp	sesame oil
1 clove	garlic, pressed
1/2 pkt	sugar substitute
1/4 tsp	red pepper flakes
2 Tbs	chopped fresh cilantro

In a medium bowl, mix peanut butter, vinegar, water, soy sauce, sesame oil, garlic, sugar substitute, and red pepper flakes until smooth.

Stir in cilantro. Add salt to taste.

Peanut Sauce 3

yields 1 cup

1/4 cup	roasted peanuts, ground
1 Tbs	peanut oil
2 cloves	garlic, minced
1 tsp	chili paste
2 Tbs	tomato paste
1/2 cup	vegetable broth or water
1/2 tsp	sugar
1 Tbs	peanut butter
1/4 cup	hoisin sauce
1	fresh red chile pepper, seeded and thinly sliced

Prepare the roasted peanuts. Set aside. Heat the oil in a small saucepan. When the oil is hot, add the garlic, chili paste and tomato paste, Fry until the garlic is golden brown, about 30 seconds.

Add the broth, sugar, peanut butter and hoisin sauce and whisk to dissolve the peanut butter. Bring to a boil, Reduce the heat and simmer for 3 minutes. Divide the sauce among individual dipping bowls and garnish with the ground peanuts and sliced chile. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Peanut, Garlic, and Chili Paste

yields 1/2 cup

1/4 cup vegetable oil
4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1 tsp curry powder
3-4 dried red chilies, seeded and ground
1/4 cup finely-ground unsalted roasted peanuts

Heat the oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir-fry the garlic until fragrant, about 5 minutes. Add the curry powder, chilies, and peanuts and stir until the mixture forms a paste, 10 to 15 minutes.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool. Transfer to a jar and refrigerate until ready to use.

Salt, Pepper, and Lemon Sauce

yields 2 tablespoons

2 Tbs freshly squeezed lemon juice
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp fine white pepper

Combine all the ingredients and mix well.

Soy Sauce Dip

1/4 cup	soy sauce
1 clove	garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp	sugar
1 tsp	freshly-ground white pepper
1 med	red chili, finely chopped
1 Tbs	finely-chopped peanuts (optional)
1	lime cut into wedges and squeezed

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Add a squeeze of fresh lime to taste.

Sweet and Sour Sauce

3 cloves	garlic, finely chopped
1 Tbs	oil
2 Tbs	sliced shallots
2	pickled shallots, sliced
1 sm	carrot, diced
1 sm	green bell pepper, diced
1 med	red chili diced
2 Tbs	sugar
	Salt to taste
	Freshly-ground white pepper to taste
1 tsp	tomato sauce
1/4 cup	vinegar
1 Tbs	cornstarch mixed with
1 tsp	water

Saute garlic in oil until slightly colored. Add sliced shallots, pickled shallots, carrot, green bell pepper, chili, sugar, and salt and pepper to taste. Keep frying, add Tomato Sauce and vinegar. Bring combination to a boil, and add cornstarch mixture. Reduce heat, stir, and simmer for 1 minute.

Tomato Sauce

1 Tbs	vegetable oil
3 cloves	garlic, finely chopped
3 med	tomatoes peeled, seeded, and finely chopped
1 cup	chicken stock or fresh coconut juice
1 pinch	salt
1 tsp	sugar

Saute garlic in oil until slightly browned. Add tomatoes, then stir for 5 minutes, adding stock or coconut juice. Bring to a boil, add a small amount of water. Mix thoroughly, reduce heat, and then season to taste with salt and sugar. Simmer until reduced by one-third or until desired thickness is achieved.

Yellow Bean Sauce

1 cup	yellow beans, boiled and drained
2 Tbs	coconut milk
2 Tbs	ground peanuts
2 tsp	sugar
3 cloves	garlic
1 med	red chili
1	lemongrass stalk
2 Tbs	vegetable oil

Combine all ingredients, except oil, in a food processor. Blend until finely chopped and well combined. Heat oil in pan, stir-fry all ingredients and simmer for 2 minutes. Cool before serving.

APPETIZERS



Garden Rolls

yields 2 servings

GARDEN ROLLS

1-1/2 oz	dried cellophane
	or
	bean thread noodles
6	rice paper wrappers
6 pieces	red leaf lettuce, rinsed, dried, and stem-end trimmed
1 cup	carrots, shredded
1 bunch	fresh coriander, rinsed
4 oz	Asian-seasoned baked tofu
6	thin scallions green ends, slivered

Soak noodles in boiling water to cover, about 7 minutes, or until softened. Drain, rinse in cold water and drain again. When cool, divide into 6 equal-sized portions.

Assemble ingredients in separate piles on work surface, cutting tofu into thin slices for total of 12 pieces.

Starting with first roll, quickly wet rice paper wrapper in warm water, and place flat on work surface. Place 1 piece leaf lettuce on wrapper and layer on top shredded carrots, leafy sprigs fresh coriander, 2 strips tofu and 1 portion noodles.

Wrap up roll tightly, starting at nearest rounded edge, taking one turn. Fold in left edge over filling, leaving right edge open. Continue rolling wrapper tightly into neat packet. Insert scallion into unwrapped edge of roll so green end protrudes like plume.

Repeat process with remaining ingredients. Set aside rolls on serving platter, and cover with damp paper towels until ready to serve.

DIPPING SAUCE

1/2 cup	hoisin sauce
1 Tbs	crunchy peanut butter
1 Tbs	Asian chili paste or to taste

To mix dipping sauce, stir all ingredients until well mixed. Place in serving dish, and pass with garden rolls.

Spring Rolls 1

yields 40 rolls

1 oz	cellophane (bean thread) noodles
1 Tbs	dried tree ear mushrooms
6	dried Chinese mushrooms
1 large	carrot, finely shredded
1 large	leek, white part only, chopped
6	water chestnuts
	or
	1/2 small Jicama, peeled and chopped
1 lb	firm bean curd (tofu) crumbled
1 cup	fresh bean sprouts, coarsely chopped
6 cloves	garlic, minced
3 Tbs	fish sauce
2	eggs
1/2 tsp	freshly-ground white pepper
1/2 cup	sugar
40 sm	rice papers rounds, 6-1/2"
	Peanut oil for frying

Soak the cellophane noodles in warm water and the mushrooms in hot water for 30 minutes; drain. Cut the noodles into 1/2-inch lengths. Remove and discard the stems from the mushrooms; squeeze to extract most of the soaking liquid. Mince all of the mushrooms.

Combine all of the filling ingredients in a large mixing bowl; blend well with your hands. Set aside.

To assemble the rolls, fill a large bowl with 4 cups of warm water and dissolve the sugar in it. Rice paper is quite fragile, so work with only 4 sheets at a time, keeping the remaining sheets covered with a barely damp cloth to prevent curling. Immerse the rice paper, one sheet at a time, into the sweetened warm water. Quickly withdraw it and lay it flat on a dry towel. Do this with 4 sheets without letting them touch each other. The rice paper will become pliable within seconds. Fold over the bottom third of each round. Put 1 generous teaspoon of filling in the center of the folded-over portion. Press it into a compact rectangle. Fold one side of the paper over the mixture, then the other side. Roll from the bottom to the top to completely enclose the filling. Continue until all of the mixture is used. (The rolls can be prepared 1 day in advance. Wrap and refrigerate.)

If possible use 2 skillets to fry the rolls. Pour 1 to 1-1/2 inches of oil into each skillet and heat to 325 degrees. Working in batches, add some of the rolls without letting them touch, or they will stick together. Fry for 10 to 12 minutes, turning often, until golden and crisp. Remove the rolls from the oil with tongs and drain on paper towels. Keep warm in a low oven until all of the rolls are cooked.

To accompany the rolls, prepare rice vermicelli or Japanese alimentary paste noodles, a vegetable platter, and peanut sauce. Each diner wraps a roll in a lettuce leaf along with some noodles and selected items from the vegetable platter and dips the package in the dipping sauce.

Spring Rolls 2

yields 4 servings

5	fresh steamed rice flour wrappers
1 large	rice paper sprinkled with water
8 sprigs	water spinach
1/2 cup	fresh fragrant leaves (mixture of basil, mint and cilantro)
1 med	sweet potato, peeled, cooked, and thinly sliced
1/4 cup	steamed rice vermicelli noodles

Spread steamed rice flour wrappers over softened rice paper (which makes it easier to roll but is discarded). Place water spinach, fragrant leaves, sweet potato and rice noodles in a line along the paper. Roll tightly. Cut into 1-inch segments and display them on a plate.

Spring Rolls 3

1 oz	cellophane noodles, soaked in warm water for 20 minutes, then drained and chopped fine
2 squares	bean curd finely chopped
3 sm	potatoes, peeled and cut paper thin with a peeler and then shredded
1 Tbs	tree ears, soaked in warm water 20 minutes, then drained and chopped
1 cup	bean sprouts
1 med	carrot, peeled paper thin and cut into 1 inch sections and shredded
1	leek, white part chopped
1 dash	black pepper
10	dried rice papers
2 cup	peanut oil

Combine all ingredients except rice papers and oil. Cut the rice papers into quarters. Wet the surface of each paper with water (use your fingers or a brush), and within about 1 minute the paper will become flexible enough to be filled. Place about 1 Tbs of the filling on each paper and roll. Heat the oil in a wok to about 350 degrees. Place rolls, flaps-down, into oil and cook 20 minutes (10 minutes each side), until completely done.

Spring Rolls 4

yields 8 servings

2 cup Chinese cabbage, thinly sliced
1/2 tsp kosher salt
1/2 cup tree ear fungus
1/2 lb bean sprouts
2 Tbs soy sauce
2 Tbs water
2 tsp cornstarch
8 oz firm tofu
1 Tbs oil
2 carrots, peeled and julienned cut
1 sm onion, thinly sliced
1 cup bamboo shoots, julienned
4 large rice-flour wrappers -
or
16 wheat flour wrappers
oil for deep-frying
16 small lettuce leaves

Place cabbage in a colander, and sprinkle with salt. Leave for 20 minutes, then rinse, drain, and pat dry. Soak tree ear fungus in water for 10 minutes to rehydrate. Remove string-like tails from bean sprouts.

Mix together soy sauce, the water, and cornstarch. Slice tofu into strips 1/2 inch by 2 inches. Heat oil in a wok or large skillet. Add carrots, cabbage, tree ear fungus, onion, bean sprouts, and bamboo shoots. Toss and cook over high heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Add soy-cornstarch mixture and tofu, and stir to cook for another 30 seconds. Remove to a bowl and cool.

Quarter rice-flour wrappers or use whole spring roll wrapper. Place a rounded tablespoon of filling on each wrapper. Roll wrapper to enclose filling, tucking in ends as you roll. Brush edge with water and press to seal.

Reserve until all are completed. Pour oil in a wok or deep saucepan to a depth of 3 inches. Heat to 370 degrees. Add one or two spring rolls at a time and cook for 2 minutes on the first side. Turn and cook for 1 minute on the other side. Drain on paper towels, and serve in a lettuce leaf.

Spring Rolls 5

yields 12 rolls

8	dried black mushroom
2 pkt	bean thread noodles
2 med	carrot, julienned
1 cup	snow peas, stemmed, stringed and julienned
1	cucumber, seeded and julienned
1 cup	mung bean sprouts
16	rice paper rounds
24	mint leaves
3	scallions, cut into thin slivers
12	basil leaves

Soak black mushrooms in hot water to cover for 20 to 30 minutes. Stem and cut in fine julienne. Soak bean threads in cold water to cover 20 to 30 minutes. Cook in 2 quarts boiling water until al dente, about 1 minute.

Transfer to colander and rinse with cold water, drain well. Blanch carrots in boiling noodle water 1 minute. Rinse in cold water. Blanch, drain and rinse snow peas and bean sprouts the same way (blanch bean sprouts for 30 seconds).

Fill a large shallow bowl with cold water. Soak a sheet of rice paper for 1 minute. Carefully transfer to a dry paper towel, and let sit 1 to 2 minutes until pliable. To assemble rolls, arrange 2 mint leaves in a row along the bottom third of the rice paper. Arrange 1/12 of noodles, mushrooms, carrots, scallions, cucumber and snow peas in a row on top. Roll up rice paper, folding in flaps after first turn. Add one basil leaf after first turn. This forms a compact roll about 6 inches long.

*Once assembled, they will keep for 6 hours, covered in refrigerator.
To serve, cut in half on the diagonal.*

Spring Rolls 6

yields 36 rolls

4 oz	thin rice stick or cellophane noodles
1/2 cup	bean sprouts
1/2 cup	carrot, grated
1/2 cup	daikon or jicama, grated
1 clove	garlic, minced
1 Tbs	soy sauce
1 cup	cilantro, coarsely chopped, reserving a few sprigs for garnish
1/2 cup	dill or mint leaves, or a mixture, coarsely chopped
3 Tbs	peanuts, roasted, unsalted, coarsely chopped (optional)
12 sheets	rice paper
1 head	soft lettuce, such as Boston lettuce, leaves washed, dried and cut in half

Soak noodles in boiling water for 5 minutes or until soft and pliable. Drain, immerse in cold water and drain again. Cut noodles into 2-inch lengths.

In a large bowl, mix noodles with bean sprouts, carrot, daikon or jicama, garlic, and soy sauce.

Working with no more than 2 rice paper sheets at a time, immerse the rice paper in a shallow bowl of warm water and quickly remove it. (Letting the rice wrapper sit in the water can result in its disintegration.) Lay the wrapper on a plate and place about two Tbs of the noodle mixture toward the bottom of the wrapper. Add a pinch of each herb and a few pea-nuts (if desired). Fold the bottom of the wrapper up over the mixture, about a third of the way up. Tuck sides of the wrapper in and roll up tightly to form a tube. The damp paper should stick together. Place on a tray or plate and cover with a damp towel or plastic wrap until all the rice papers are filled.

Cut each roll into three pieces. To eat, wrap roll in lettuce leaf and dip in chili sauce.

Stuffed Tomatoes 1

yields 4 servings

4 med	tomatoes
1 square	bean curd, mashed to a paste
1/4 cup	straw mushrooms
2 Tbs	cellophane noodles, soaked in warm water for 20 minutes, drained, finely chopped
1/2	leek, white part chopped
	freshly-ground white pepper to taste
1/2 tsp	salt
1/4 tsp	granulated sugar
2 Tbs	vegetable oil

Remove and discard the tops and pulp of the tomatoes. Combine the remaining ingredients, except for the oil, and stuff into tomatoes.

Heat the oil in a frying pan over a high flame. Put the tomatoes in the pan, stuffed-side down, then turn the heat down to medium and cover. Fry until brown, about 3 minutes more. Remove from heat.

Serve with either peanut sauce or thin soy sauce.

Stuffed Tomatoes 2

yields 4 servings

4 large tomatoes
2 dried Chinese mushrooms
1-1/2 tsp dried tree ear mushrooms
1/2 oz cellophane (bean thread) noodles
4 cloves garlic, chopped
2 shallots, thinly sliced
2 scallions, thinly sliced
1/4 tsp sugar
2 tsp fish sauce
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 Tbs peanut oil
freshly-ground white pepper to taste

Cut off the stem end of each tomato. Using a spoon, gently scoop out the pulp. Discard the tops and pulp. Dry the insides of the tomatoes with paper towels.

Soak the mushrooms in hot water and the noodles in warm water for 30 minutes. Drain well. Squeeze out the excess water from the mushrooms. Cut off the stems and discard. Mince the caps. Coarsely chop the noodles.

In a mixing bowl, combine the chopped mushrooms and noodles, half of the garlic, the shallots, scallions, sugar, fish sauce and egg. Blend with your hands; set aside to marinate for 30 minutes.

Stuff the mixture into the tomatoes, pressing firmly. Smooth the top into a mounded dome.

Heat the oil in a wok or skillet over moderate heat. Place the stuffed tomatoes, stuffing-side down, in the hot oil. Cover the wok and fry for 5 minutes. Using a large spatula, gently turn the tomatoes (try not to break the skins), meat-side up, and cook for 3 minutes longer.

Make a small space in the center of the wok and add the reserved garlic; fry until fragrant. Stir the sauce mixture and pour into the wok. Bring the sauce to a quick boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, for 15 minutes, turning the tomatoes frequently to coat with the sauce.

The tomatoes are ready when the stuffing has absorbed half of the sauce and the tomatoes are nicely glazed. Transfer to a serving platter and sprinkle with white pepper.

SOUPS



Buddhist Monk's Soup

yields 6 servings

1 quart	water
1 lb	pumpkin or butternut squash, peeled and cut into large chunks
1	sweet potato, peeled and cut into chunks
1/2 cup	shelled raw peanuts, red skin removed, soaked 30 minutes, drained, and roughly chopped
1/3 cup	dried mung beans, soaked for 30 minutes and drained
3 Tbs	vegetable oil
1 square	bean curd
1 quart	coconut milk fresh or canned
1/2 oz	cellophane noodles, soaked for 20 minutes, drained, and cut 1" crosswise pieces

Bring the water to a boil. Drop in the pumpkin or squash, sweet potato, peanuts, and mung beans. Cook over medium heat for 35 minutes.

While the soup is cooking, prepare the bean curd. Heat the oil in a small frying pan and fry the bean curd on both sides until light brown. Slice lengthwise into strips 1/4-inch wide and reserve until needed.

After 35 minutes of cooking, check to make certain that the mung beans are soft. If they are, add the coconut milk. Add salt. Bring to a boil and drop in the cellophane noodles and fried bean curd. Serve with rice and peanut sauce.

Buddhist Sour Soup

yields 4-6 servings

SOUP

1 lb	tofu
1/4 cup	tamarind pulp, dissolved in 1 cup hot water
2 cups	okra
5 cup	water
3/4 cup	fresh pineapple, in 1/4" chunks
1 stalk	giant taro (optional), cut 1 1/2" lengths,
3 Tbs	sugar
2 tsp	salt
2 medium	tomatoes, cut into wedges
1 tsp	soy sauce

OPTIONAL GARNISHES

1/4 cup	peanut or vegetable oil
1/2 cup	shallots, chopped
2-3 cups	bean sprouts, rinsed and drained
12	Asian basil leaves, coarsely torn
6 sprig	rice paddy herb (optional)
2-4	bird or serrano chiles, minced

For the soup, place the tofu blocks on a plate, place another plate on top, and weight with a jar or 14 to 28-ounce can. Let stand for 30 minutes. Water will be pressed out of the tofu as it stands; drain it off every 15 minutes or so. Cut the tofu into 1/2-inch cubes and set aside.

Use your fingers to squeeze and press the tamarind to dissolve it completely and to squeeze the last of the pulp off any seeds and pith. Place a sieve over a small bowl and pour the tamarind water through. Discard any solids and set the liquid aside.

If the okra is large, cut crosswise in half and cut off any tough tips, leaving the stems on.

For the garnish, heat the oil in a small heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shallots and cook until well-browned, then remove from the heat and set aside.

To make the soup, place the tamarind liquid and the 5 cups water in a large nonreactive pot. Bring to a vigorous boil, then add the okra (if your okra is very fresh and tender, add it later, with the tomato wedges) and pineapple.

Boil vigorously for 3 minutes, then add the taro, if using, the sugar, salt, and tomato wedges. Bring back to a boil, then add the tofu cubes and soy sauce and cook for 2 minutes. Taste and adjust the balance of seasonings if you wish.

Daikon, Chinese Cabbage, and Tofu Soup

yields 4 servings

SOUP

7 cup	vegetable stock
3/4 lb	daikon radish, peeled, and cut into 1/2" cubes
4 slices	fresh ginger, 1/4" thick
	sea salt to taste
1/2 lb	Chinese cabbage cored, and coarsely chopped
1/2 lb	soft tofu, sliced

In a large pot, bring the stock, daikon and ginger to a boil. Season lightly with salt. Turn down to a simmer and cook for 20 to 30 minutes until the daikon is tender.

Add the cabbage, return to a boil and cook for 5 minutes. Add the tofu and heat through. Adjust the seasoning and serve.

OPTIONAL GARNISHES

Chopped cilantro
Green onions
Chilies
Fresh lime wedges
A few drops of sesame oil

Hot and Sour Soup

2 cups	onions, thinly sliced
5 cloves	garlic, minced or pressed
1-2	fresh chiles, seeded and minced, or to taste
7 cups	light vegetable broth
1 can	straw mushrooms, reserve liquid (15 ounce)
1 can	unsweetened pineapple chunks (8 ounce)
1 cup	chopped fresh tomatoes
2 Tbs	fresh basil, chopped
1 Tbs	fresh mint or cilantro, chopped
2 Tbs	fresh lime juice
1/4 cup	soy sauce
1-1/2 cup	firm tofu (8 ounces), cut into 1/2 inch cubes
	mung sprouts
	basil leaves
	lime wedges

In a large soup pot, saute the onions in a bit of the reserved mushroom liquid on low heat for about 5 minutes, until soft. Add garlic and chiles and saute for another minute, stirring to prevent sticking.

Stir in the stock, mushrooms, pineapple and tomatoes and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the basil, mint or cilantro, lime juice, soy sauce and tofu. Simmer for 5–10 minutes until the flavors are well blended.

Sprinkle with sprouts and basil leaves and accompany each serving with a wedge of lime.

BROTH

1 small	onion, unpeeled and quartered
2	shallots, unpeeled and halved
8 cloves	garlic, halved
1-inch	ginger, coarsely sliced
2	cinnamon sticks
2 pods	star anise
4	cloves
8 cups	clear vegetable stock
3 Tbs	soy sauce
	salt

To make the broth, heat a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, shallots, garlic, ginger, cinnamon sticks, star anise, and cloves and dry-roast, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to char.

Add the stock and soy sauce and bring to a boil over high heat. Turn the heat down to medium-low, cover, and simmer for about 25 minutes. Strain into a clean pot and discard the solids. Taste the broth and add salt if necessary. Keep warm over low heat.

SOUP

1 lb	rice noodles
8 oz	seitan or fried tofu, sliced
6	scallions, thinly sliced (both green and white parts)
1-1/2 cups	bean sprouts
handful	basil, mint or cilantro leaves, left whole
1	lime, cut into wedges
	hoisin sauce
	sriracha chili or garlic chili paste

While the broth is simmering, prepare the rice noodles. Place the noodles in a large bowl. Pour boiling water over the noodles to cover and soak for 20 minutes.

When you are ready to assemble the soup, add the seitan or tofu to the warm broth and allow to heat through. Drain the soaked rice noodles and divide evenly among 4 to 6 large bowls. Using a slotted spoon, scoop the seitan or tofu out of the broth and distribute among the bowls. Ladle the hot broth over the noodles.

Serve the bowls of pho with the scallions, bean sprouts, herbs, lime wedges, hoisin sauce and chili sauce on a separate platter so that everyone can season their own soup as they wish.

Sweet Banana and Coconut Milk Soup

yields 4 servings

1 cup	canned unsweetened coconut milk
1 cup	water
1/4 cup	tapioca pearls
1/2 cup	sugar
1 pinch	coarse sea salt
1-1/2	ripe bananas, peeled and diced
	or 1 cup fresh sweet yellow corn kernels
	toasted sesame seeds

Bring the coconut milk and 1 cup water to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, stir in the tapioca pearls, sugar, and salt, and cook until tapioca pearls are translucent, about 30 minutes. Add banana or fresh corn kernels and cook for 10 minutes more.

Divide among 4 bowls, garnish each with a sprinkle or 2 of sesame seeds, and serve hot, at room temperature, or chilled.

Tofu Soup

yields 4-6 servings

3 large dried shiitake mushrooms
6 cup vegetable stock
20 polygonum leaves, plus
extra for garnish
or 10 cilantro sprigs, plus
extra leaves for garnish
6 oz baby bok choy or spinach,
root ends trimmed, and
leaves separated
10 oz medium-firm tofu, rinsed,
drained, and cut into 1/2"
cubes
coarse sea salt to taste
freshly-ground white pepper to taste
1 scallion, trimmed and
thinly sliced diagonally

Put the mushrooms in a bowl with hot water to cover, and set a plate over the bowl to prevent steam from escaping. Let stand until the mushrooms rehydrate, about 20 minutes. Squeeze the mushrooms between the palms of your hands to get rid of the excess water. Using a paring knife, remove any stems from the mushrooms and julienne the caps.

Pour the stock into a pot and bring it to a gentle boil over medium heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low, add the polygonum leaves or cilantro sprigs, and simmer partially covered until ready to use.

Meanwhile, bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Wash the bok choy under cold running water, then drain. Blanch the leaves in the boiling salted water until cooked but still firm, about 1 minute.

With a slotted spoon, remove the bok choy, drain, and add to the stock along with the tofu. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and simmer over low heat until the tofu is heated through, about 2 minutes.

Serve hot in a communal bowl or individual soup bowls, and garnish with fresh polygonum or cilantro and scallion.

SALAD



Cabbage Salad with Cucumber Peanuts and Cilantro

yields 4-6 servings

1 head	white cabbage, cored and thinly sliced
4-6 cloves	garlic, chopped
1/2	English cucumber, cut into bite-sized pieces
1	carrot, coarsely grated
1/2 cup	distilled white vinegar
3 Tbs	sugar or honey
3 Tbs	soy sauce or fish sauce
2	fresh chiles, seeded and chopped
1/4 cup	mild vegetable oil
2/3 cup	dry-roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped
2-3 Tbs	cilantro, coarsely chopped

Toss cabbage with garlic, cucumber, carrot, vinegar, sugar or honey, soy sauce or fish sauce, chiles and vegetable oil. Chill until ready to serve, then top with peanuts and cilantro.

Couscous Salad

yields 4-6 servings

DRESSING

1 clove	garlic, minced
1 tsp	ginger root, minced
6 Tbs	fresh lime juice
3 Tbs	sugar
2 Tbs	peanut oil
2 Tbs	fish sauce
1 tsp	hot pepper flakes

In a pint jar, combine the garlic, ginger root, lime juice, sugar, peanut oil, fish sauce, and hot pepper flakes, if using. Shake well. Set aside.

SALAD

1-1/3 cup	boiling water
1	extra-large bouillon cube
1 Tbs	peanut oil
1 cup	couscous
2 Tbs	fresh cilantro, finely chopped
2 Tbs	fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
1/2 cup	salted dry-roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped
2 medium	carrots, peeled and shredded
1 medium	cucumber, peeled, seeded, and shredded
6	green onions, finely sliced
1/2 head	Napa cabbage, finely shredded
	Fresh cilantro leaves for garnish
	Fresh mint leaves for garnish

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, bring the water, bouillon cube, and peanut oil to a boil. Add the couscous in a stream. Remove from the heat. Stir once. Cover and let stand until the couscous is tender, 12-15 minutes. Set aside to cool. Mix with half of the cilantro, half of the mint, and half of the peanuts.

In a large bowl, combine the carrots, cucumber, onions, cabbage, and remaining cilantro and mint. Add the dressing and toss thoroughly.

Spoon equal portions of couscous onto 6 dinner plates. Top with the vegetable mixture, and garnish with remaining peanuts, cilantro, and mint leaves. Serve at room temperature.

Green Papaya Salad 1

yields 4 servings

1-1/2 lb	green papaya or green mango, peeled, halved lengthwise, and seeded
2	limes or lemons, juiced
3 Tbs	fish sauce
3 Tbs	sugar
2	red bird's eye or Thai chilies, seeded and julienned
1 Tbs	unsalted roasted peanuts, finely-chopped
4 sprigs	cilantro, root ends and tough stems removed

Cut the papaya or mango into matchstick strips. Whisk together the lime juice, fish sauce and sugar in a bowl until the sugar is completely dissolved. Add the papaya and chilies and toss until well combined. Let stand for 20 minutes.

Transfer to a serving plate, sprinkle with peanuts and garnish with cilantro.

Green Papaya Salad 2

yields 6 servings

1/4 cup	lime juice
2 Tbs	water
3 Tbs	soy sauce
1 Tbs	garlic, minced
3 cups	green papaya, peeled, seeded, and shredded
1/2 cup	carrot, shredded
1/2 cup	red pepper, julienned
1/4 cup	mint, coarsely chopped
1/4 cup	cilantro, coarsely chopped
3 Tbs	scallions, coarsely chopped
1/2 cup	tomatoes, coarsely chopped, peeled, and seeded
2 Tbs	sesame seeds (optional)
2 Tbs	unsalted peanuts, chopped (optional)

Combine first four ingredients in a small dish to make the dressing. In a large salad bowl, gently combine all the other ingredients. Pour dressing over salad and mix thoroughly before serving.

Herb and Salad Plate

yields 6-8 servings

HERB SALAD

Asian or sweet basil leaves
mint leaves
coriander sprigs
leaf lettuce (one or more kinds),
separated into leaves
scallions, small and trimmed
lime wedges, small
bird chiles whole or minced
cucumber slices or chunks
bean sprouts, raw or briefly parboiled
and drained

Set out the ingredients of your choice on one or more plates or shallow bowls to accompany any meal.

CARROT AND DAIKON PICKLED SALAD

1/2 lb carrots, peeled
1/2 lb daikon radish, peeled
1-1/2 cup water
1/2 tsp kosher salt
1/4 cup rice vinegar
2 Tbs sugar
sriracha chili or garlic chili paste

Cut the tip off each carrot on a long diagonal. Use a mandoline or other vegetable slicer or a coarse grater to slice the carrots into strips, or use a knife to cut into matchsticks. Place the carrots in a large strainer and set aside.

Use the same method to make daikon strips. Add to the carrots in the strainer and mix well with your hands. Sprinkle on the salt and toss to mix. Place over a bowl or in the sink and let stand for 20-30 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a nonreactive saucepan, combine the water, vinegar, and sugar and bring to a boil. Then, immediately remove from the heat, and cool to room temperature.

Rinse the vegetables briefly with cold water, then squeeze dry and transfer to a medium bowl. Pour over the vinegar mixture and stir gently with a wooden spoon to ensure all the vegetables are well moistened. Let stand for 1 hour before serving.

To serve, lift the salad out of the vinegar bath and mound attractively on a plate.

Continued

PICKLED BEAN SPROUT SALAD

1 lb	mung bean sprouts
5 large	scallions, trimmed, smashed flat, sliced lengthwise into ribbons, and then cut crosswise into 2" to 3" lengths
1 Tbs	kosher salt
1/2 tsp	sugar
1/2 cup	rice vinegar
4 cup	water

Rinse the bean sprouts well in cold water, drain, and place in a large bowl. Add scallions and set aside.

Place the remaining ingredients in a nonreactive saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring with a wooden spoon to dissolve the salt and sugar. Remove from the heat and let cool to room temperature.

Pour the vinegar mixture over the sprouts and scallions and stir gently to immerse all the vegetables. Let stand at room temperature for 1 to 2 hours.

Drain the bean sprouts and serve mounded on several plates.

Mint and Tomato Salad

yields 4 servings

SALAD

2 tsp	garlic, minced
1 tsp	salt, or to taste
1 pinch	chile, such as jalapeno, minced (optional)
1 cup	tender mint leaves, coarsely torn
2-3	scallions, trimmed, sliced lengthwise into ribbons, and then cut crosswise into 1" lengths
5 medium	tomatoes, thinly sliced

Place the garlic and salt in a large mortar and pound together. Or place them in a large bowl and use the back of a flat spoon to mash them against the side of the bowl.

Add the fresh chile, if using, the mint, and the scallions and continue to pound or mash to soften and blend.

Add the tomatoes and gently pound or mash until broken up a little. Add the chile oil and toss well. Serve the salad mounded in a shallow bowl, with the juices poured over.

HOT CHILE OIL

1/2 cup	peanut or vegetable oil
3 Tbs	dried red chile flakes

Heat the oil in a wok or skillet. As soon as it starts to smoke, toss in the chile flakes, taking care not to splash yourself, and remove from the heat.

Let stand until completely cool, then transfer to a clean dry glass jar and store in a cool place. If you wish, in several days you can strain out the chiles and store them separately or discard them, leaving you with just a gleaming orange oil.

Add the chile oil to the salad and toss well. Serve the salad mounded in a shallow bowl, with the juices poured over.

Table Salad

1 head	Boston lettuce, leaves separated
	or
	12 small round or triangle rice papers, soaked
1/2	cucumber, peeled, halved, seeds removed, and thinly sliced
2-3	carrots, peeled and julienned, or shredded
1	unripe star fruit, sliced thin into stars
1 cup	rice vermicelli (optional)

Arrange the lettuce or rice papers, cucumber, carrots, and star fruit on a large serving platter or several plates.

Place vermicelli (if using) in a dish with lukewarm water to cover. Let soak until pliable, about 20 minutes. Bring a pot filled with water to a boil over high heat. Drain the vermicelli and, working in batches, place them in a sieve and lower into the boiling water. Untangle the noodles with chopsticks and boil until tender but firm, about 3 seconds. Drain and set on the plate with the other ingredients.

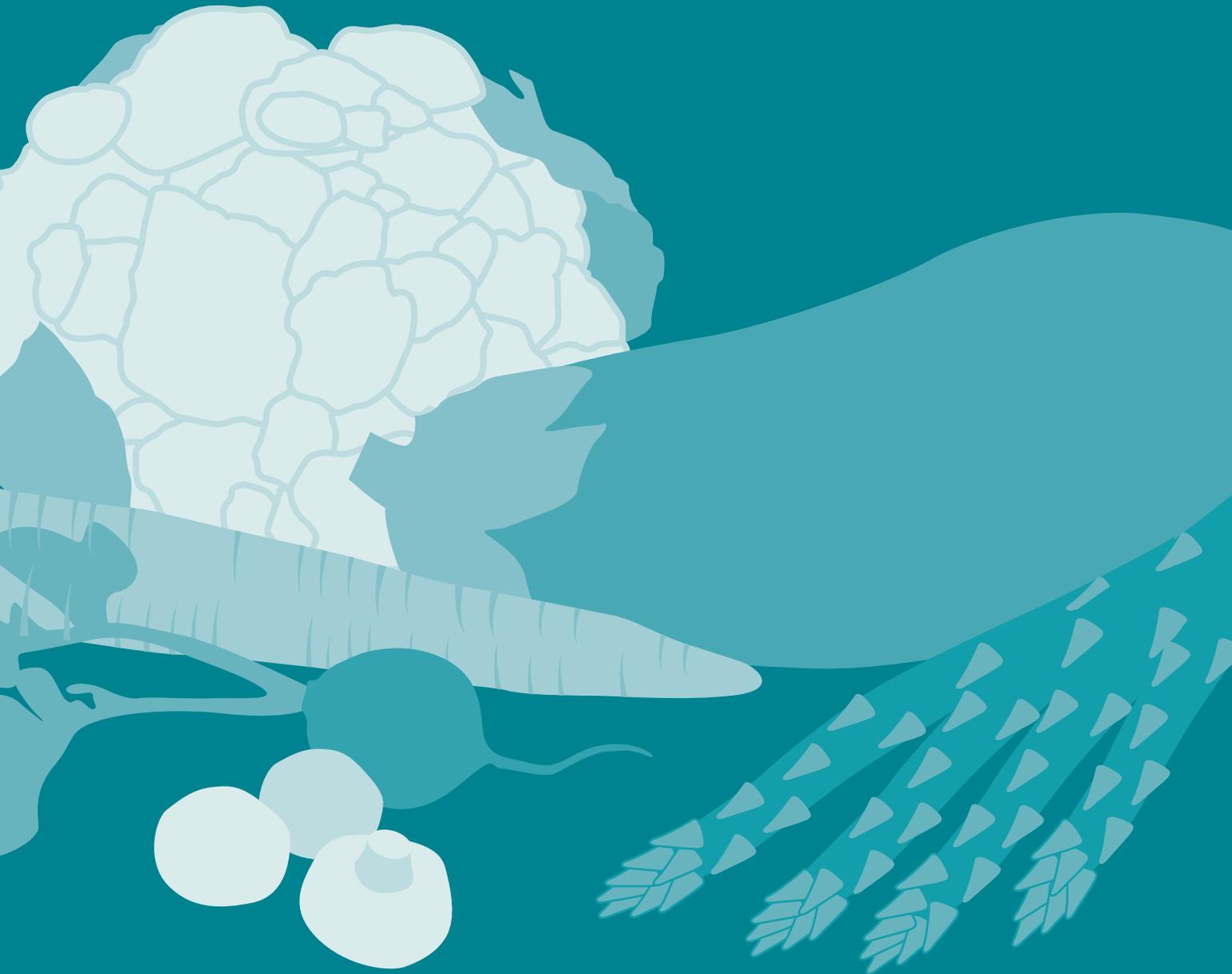
To prepare the rice papers, soak them in lukewarm water and cover for about 10 minutes, and then drain on paper towels.

Vietnamese Salad

1/4 lb	cellophane noodles, boiled and rinsed
2 cup	bean sprouts
1 small	cucumber, sliced
1 head	lettuce, shredded
2 cup	carrots, slivered and soaked in sweet vinegar
2 cup	scallion, chopped
1/4 cup	oil
3 Tbs	warm water
3 Tbs	sugar
3 Tbs	lemon juice or rice vinegar
6 Tbs	fish sauce
1 clove	garlic, minced
2 Tbs	hot chili peppers
1/4 cup	peanuts

Toss salad ingredients together, add fish sauce, and serve immediately.

VEGETABLES



Braised Bamboo Shoots

yields 4 servings

1 lb	whole winter bamboo shoots
1 Tbs	vegetable oil
1/4 cup	soy sauce
1/2 cup	water
1 Tbs	sugar
1 tsp	sesame oil

Cut the bamboo shoots lengthwise into pieces 1/2 inch wide and 2-1/2 inches long.

In a saucepan, heat the vegetable oil until it smokes. Add the bamboo shoots and stir-fry for 1 minute. Stir in the soy sauce, water and sugar. Bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pan and simmer for 1 hour, or until the shoots are tender but still crunchy. Add the sesame oil and mix well.

Serve hot, with the sauce drizzled over rice.

Buddhist Mushroom Fry

2 Tbs	sesame oil
2 cloves	garlic
2 Tbs	cooking oil
1	can Chinese mushrooms (7 oz)
7 oz	straw mushrooms
7 oz	button mushrooms
1	red pepper
1 Tbs	light soy sauce
7 oz	water
1 tsp	cornflour

Heat the oil and fry the garlic until light brown. Add all the mushrooms and red pepper and fry over high heat for 2 minutes. Add the sesame oil, soy sauce and continue to stir fry for 2 minutes.

Dissolve the cornflour in water and add to the wok. Bring to a quick boil and dish up to serve.

Carrot and Radish Pickles

yields 4 servings

1 cup	carrot, julienned
1 cup	daikon radish, julienned
1 Tbs	salt
2 Tbs	sugar
1/4 cup	white vinegar

Sprinkle carrot and radish with salt, allow to stand for 10 minutes. Press vegetables gently with a dry towel to remove excess moisture. Rinse and drain.

In a mixing bowl, combine sugar and vinegar with vegetables, then marinate for at least 2 hours before serving. Best when served chilled.

Cauliflower with Straw Mushrooms

yields 2 servings

1 cup	cauliflower florets
1	leek, white part only
1 Tbs	soy sauce
2 Tbs	water
1/4 tsp	sugar
1 Tbs	olive oil
1/2 cup	straw mushrooms
1 cup	steamed rice

Cut the cauliflower into thin lengthwise slices; slice the leeks horizontally into thin slices. Place in separate bowls. Combine the soy sauce, 1 tablespoon of water, and sugar in a small bowl.

Heat the oil in a frying pan over high flame. Drop the leeks in the oil and cook, stirring for 30 seconds. Add the cauliflower. Add remaining tablespoon of water and cover, turn heat to medium and cook for 2 minutes. Uncover and add the straw mushrooms and sauce. Cook stirring for 2 more minutes. Serve over steamed rice.

Hot and Sour Stir-Fried Vegetables

yields 4-6 servings

2-4 Tbs	vegetable oil
1 tsp	fresh ginger, finely chopped
3 cloves	garlic, crushed
1 sm	red onion, chopped
1 cup	carrots, thinly sliced
1 cup	green beans, sliced diagonally
1/2 cup	green cabbage, cut into 1" squares
1 cup	zucchini, thinly sliced
1 tsp	salt
3 tsp	sugar
1 Tbs	soy sauce
2 Tbs	fish sauce
2 Tbs	fresh lime juice
1	fresh hot red cayenne, thinly sliced
2 Tbs	green onion, chopped
4 Tbs	fresh coriander, chopped

Heat wok; add oil. Stir-fry the ginger, garlic, and onion until soft. Add the carrots and green beans. Stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the cabbage, zucchini, salt, sugar, soy sauce, fish sauce, lime juice, and cayenne. Stir-fry for another 2 minute until all the vegetables are tender, but not overcooked. Garnish with green onion and coriander.

Pan-Fried Water Spinach with Yellow Bean Sauce

yields 4 servings

PAN-FRIED WATER SPINACH

- 1 lb water spinach, washed
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 baby leeks or spring onions, white part finely sliced
- 2 Tbs vegetable oil
- 2 Tbs yellow bean sauce
- salt to taste
- freshly-ground white pepper to taste

Blanch spinach in boiling water and drain well. Fry garlic and leeks in oil until soft, then add spinach and Yellow Bean Sauce. Fry over high heat. Season with salt and pepper.

YELLOW BEAN SAUCE

- 1 cup yellow beans, boiled and drained
- 2 Tbs coconut milk
- 2 Tbs ground peanuts
- 2 tsp sugar
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 med red chili
- 1 lemongrass stalk
- 2 Tbs vegetable oil

Combine all ingredients, except oil, in a food processor. Blend until finely chopped and well combined. Heat oil in pan, stir-fry all ingredients and simmer for 2 minutes. Cool before serving.

Pickled Spring Onions

yields 4 servings

1 lb	spring onions, white part only
2 cup	vinegar
1/2 cup	palm sugar
2 Tbs	salt
5	shallots, diced

Dry the onions under the sun, for half a day (or in a very low-temperature oven, for 1-1/2 hours) or until semi-dry. Place in a sterilized glass jar.

Boil the vinegar, sugar and salt; allow to cool. Pour liquid into the jar to cover the onions. Marinate for 3 days.

Will last for 2 to 3 weeks refrigerated.

Pickled Vegetables

1 lb	carrots, peeled and cut into 2" long matchsticks
3 Tbs	coarse sea salt
1 lb	daikon, peeled and cut into 2" long by 1/2" wide thin planks
6 Tbs	sugar
1 cup	white rice vinegar
1-1/2 lb	cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, and sliced diagonally 1/8" thick

Put the carrots in a sieve set over a bowl. Toss carrots with 1 tablespoon of the salt and let stand to get rid of excess water, about 45 minutes. Gently press carrots against the sieve to remove any remaining moisture. Rinse and drain. Place the carrots in a clean kitchen towel, then twist the towel to squeeze out any excess water. Repeat the process using the daikon.

Whisk together the sugar and vinegar until sugar is completely dissolved. Divide this pickling mixture among 3 quart-size plastic bags, and set 1 bag aside to use later. Add the carrots and daikon separately to the other 2 bags, seal and toss to coat evenly. Lay bags flat on a plate and refrigerate at least 24 hours, turning the bags over every hour if possible.

After about 20 hours, repeat step 1 using the cucumbers. After draining, place the cucumbers in the third plastic bag of pickling mix, seal, and toss to coat. Lay the bag flat on a plate and refrigerate for 4 to 6 hours, turning bag every hour if possible. The cucumber needs only 4 to 6 hours to absorb the flavor of the vinegar marinade.

Drain the carrots, daikon and cucumbers well at room temperature for 30 to 45 minutes before serving.

Piquant Cauliflower

yields 4 servings

	cooking spray
2	shallots, thinly sliced
3 cloves	garlic, minced
1-2 Tbs	soy sauce
3	tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and cubed
1 large	cauliflower, cut into flowerets
1 sm	onion, thinly sliced
2/3 cup	vegetable stock
1/2 tsp	lemon juice
2	scallions, thinly sliced
	cilantro for garnish

Spray a skillet or wok with cooking spray and sauté shallots and garlic for 1 minute. Add the soy sauce and tomatoes, and sauté for another 3 minutes.

Add the cauliflower, onion, stock, lemon juice, and scallions. Reduce the heat and cook until the vegetables are tender-crisp, about 10 minutes.

Place cauliflower mixture on a platter. Garnish with cilantro.

Preserved Cabbage

yields 4 servings

1 med	cabbage, diced
1 Tbs	salt
1 Tbs	ginger root, crushed
2 cup	vinegar
2 Tbs	sugar
2 Tbs	polygonum leaves, finely-chopped

Sprinkle the cabbage with salt and ginger and allow to stand for 30 minutes. With a dry towel, press the excess moisture from the cabbage (a salad spinner works well here).

Place cabbage in a jar. Mix vinegar, sugar and polygonum, and pour over the cabbage until completely covered. After 1 day, as the cabbage begins to ferment, bubbles will appear. When the liquid in the jar is clear and the bubbles are gone (roughly 3 days later), it is ready to eat.

Preserved Mustard Greens

1 lb	mustard greens
2 cup	water
1 Tbs	salt
1/4 cup	sugar

Dry mustard greens in the sun for half a day (or in a very low-temperature oven for 1 1/2 hours) or until semi-dry. Blanch in boiling salted water for 1 minute and drain.

Cut into short segments, or keep in whole pieces. Place in a sterilized glass jar. Bring water, salt and sugar to a boil, then cool down. Pour the liquid into the jar, making sure that all leaves are covered.

Marinate for 1 week, or until the stems turn yellow and crisp.

Roasted Eggplant with Mint Sauce

1 lb	Japanese eggplants
	canola oil spray
4 tsp	fresh lime juice
4 tsp	rice vinegar
4 tsp	fish sauce
2-1/2 Tbs	sugar plus
3 cloves	garlic, minced
1/4 cup	fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
1/8 tsp	red pepper powder, more to taste (optional)
1 dash	salt (optional)

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Cut the eggplants on the diagonal into 3/4-inch slices. Lightly coat a baking sheet with canola oil spray. Place the eggplant slices side by side on the sheet. Lightly spray the top of the slices with more oil spray. Bake for 20 minutes, turn the slices over and bake for 10 minutes more, or until golden brown on each side.

While the eggplant is baking, combine the lime juice, rice vinegar, fish sauce, red pepper powder, sugar, garlic, mint, and salt, if using, in a small bowl. Stir until the sugar dissolves. Drizzle the sauce over the warm eggplant.

You can roast the eggplant and make the sauce ahead if you like. When serving, just reheat the eggplant and add the sauce.

Stir-Fried Asparagus

yields 4-6 servings

1-1/2 Tbs vegetable oil
1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
1 bunch white asparagus stems,
peeled and thinly sliced
diagonally
1 Tbs fish sauce
freshly-ground white pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a wok over high heat and stir-fry the garlic until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the asparagus, season with fish sauce and pepper, and stir-fry until tender, about 7 minutes.

Stir-Fried Bamboo Shoots and Shiitakes

yields 4-6 servings

8 large dried shiitake mushrooms
2 tbs vegetable oil
2 oz fresh ginger, peeled,
sliced, and lightly crushed
6 oz canned bamboo shoots
blanched, drained, and
julienned
1/3 cup chicken stock
2 Tbs fish sauce
1 pinch sugar
freshly-ground white pepper to taste

Soak the mushrooms in hot water to cover in a bowl until rehydrated and softened, about 30 minutes. Drain and rinse. Squeeze the mushrooms between the palms of your hands to extract any remaining water. With a knife, remove and discard any hard stems, then cut the mushroom caps into julienne strips.

In a wok or skillet, heat the oil and stir-fry the ginger over high heat until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the mushrooms and the bamboo shoots and stir-fry for about 5 minutes.

Reduce the heat to medium, add the chicken stock, fish sauce, and sugar and season to taste with white pepper. Mix well, cover with a lid, and cook until heated through, about 20 minutes more. Serve hot.

Stir-Fried Charred Eggplant with Spicy Sweet-Sour Sauce

yields 4 servings

1-1/2 tsp sugar
2 Tbs distilled white vinegar
1 Tbs fish sauce
2 large red chile peppers, seeded and shredded
2 lb firm eggplants
3 Tbs peanut oil
8 cloves garlic, crushed
1/4 cup fresh basil, shredded
freshly-ground white pepper to taste

Combine the sugar, vinegar, fish sauce and chiles in a small bowl. Set the sauce aside.

Prick the eggplants with a fork. Grill over medium coals or hot gas flames, turning until the flesh is soft and the skins charred, about 4 minutes. If using an electric stove, place the eggplants directly on the burners. Remove to a rack and allow to cool. Peel and discard the charred skin. Cut the eggplants into strips, 2 1/2 inches long by 1/2 inch wide.

Heat the oil in a wok or large skillet until very hot. Add the garlic and stir-fry for a few seconds. Add the eggplants and saute for 2 minutes. Add the sauce and saute for 1 minute, tossing to coat the eggplants with the sauce. Add the basil and remove from the heat.

Transfer to a warm serving platter. Sprinkle with white pepper and serve with rice as part of a family meal.

Stir-Fried Mung Bean Sprouts

yields 4-6 servings

1-1/2 Tbs vegetable oil
2 scallions, cut into 1-1/2"-long pieces and halved lengthwise
1-1/2 lb mung bean sprouts, root ends trimmed and discarded
1 Tbs fish sauce
freshly-ground white pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a wok over high heat. Add the scallions and stir-fry until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the mung bean sprouts, season with fish sauce and pepper to taste and stir-fry until just beginning to wilt, 2 to 3 minutes. Serve immediately.

Stir-Fried Vegetables With Lemongrass

yields 4 servings

2 large	stalks of fresh lemongrass, tender inner white bulb only, thinly sliced
3 Tbs	vegetable oil
3 large	shallots, thinly sliced
1 lb	cauliflower, cut into 1" florets
12	asparagus spears, cut into 1" lengths
2 med	carrots, shredded
1	red bell pepper, cut into 1" pieces
3/4 cup	water
1/2 cup	unsweetened coconut milk
3 Tbs	soy sauce
	freshly-ground pepper
1/2 cup	basil, chopped
1 cup	mung bean sprouts
	rice for serving

In a mini food processor, finely chop the lemongrass.

In a large skillet, heat the vegetable oil. Add the lemongrass and shallots and stir-fry over high heat until the shallots are golden brown, about 2 minutes.

Add the cauliflower, asparagus, carrots, and red bell pepper along with ½ cup of the water; cover and cook over moderately high heat, stirring a few times, until the vegetables are crisp-tender, about 3 minutes.

Stir in the coconut milk, soy sauce and the remaining ¼ cup of water and bring to a simmer. Remove from the heat and season with pepper. Stir in the basil and bean sprouts. Transfer the stir-fried vegetables to bowls and serve with rice.

Stir-Fried Water Spinach

yields 4-6 servings

1-1/2 Tbs vegetable oil
1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
1 lb water spinach stems,
trimmed, washed, drained,
and halved crosswise
freshly-ground white pepper to taste
1 Tbs preserved bean curd or
fish sauce

Heat the oil in a wok over high heat and stir-fry the garlic until fragrant and lightly golden, about 1 minute. Add the water spinach, season with pepper, and stir-fry until wilted, about 3 minutes. Add the bean curd, stir-fry until it is evenly distributed, then cover and cook until done, 2 to 3 minutes more.

Vegetables in Fish Sauce

3/4 cup fish sauce
1/4 cup sugar
1 large turnip
2 med carrots
1 Tbs salt
12 sm shallots, peeled
12 cloves garlic, peeled
12 fresh red chile peppers

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees. Combine the fish sauce, sugar and 1-1/2 cups of water in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil and boil for 2 minutes over high heat. Cool thoroughly.

Peel the turnip and carrots and cut into sticks 1/2" by 1/2" by 1-1/2" long. Rub the vegetables with the salt; let stand 30 minutes in the sink. Rinse under cold running water to remove all the salt. Squeeze out the water and pat dry.

Spread the turnip and carrot sticks on a baking sheet or roasting pan. Place in the oven and leave the door ajar. Let dry out for about 2 hours, turning the vegetables every 30 minutes. The vegetables are ready when they have shrunk by two thirds. Remove from the oven and allow to cool thoroughly. (Note: It is very important to let the boiled liquid and the vegetables cool before combining. The cooling prevents the vegetables from fermenting.)

Place the dried turnip and carrot sticks in the bottom of a 1-quart Mason jar. Layer the shallots, garlic and chiles on top. Pour the fish sauce-sugar mixture over the vegetables and close the jar tightly. Refrigerate. After 2 weeks, the vegetables are ready. They can be eaten at once or refrigerated for several months. Drain before serving.

Potato Patties

yields 4-6 servings

2	Idaho potatoes
1 tsp	salt
1/4 cup	cornstarch
1 large	egg, lightly beaten
2	scallions, minced
1/2	onion, minced
3 cloves	garlic, minced
1 tsp	fish sauce
2 tsp	curry powder
	freshly-ground white pepper
2/3 cup	vegetable oil for frying

Shred the potatoes in a food processor and place in a colander. Sprinkle with the salt and mix well. Let stand in the sink for 15 minutes. Squeeze the potatoes dry and place in a mixing bowl. Add the cornstarch and mix thoroughly. Add all the remaining ingredients except the oil and mix well.

Divide the oil between two 9-inch skillet over moderately-high heat. Drop the potato mixture by tablespoonfuls into the hot oil, forming individual patties about 2 1/2 inches in diameter. The patties should not be too thick. Fry until golden brown on the bottom, about 5 minutes. Turn and cook the other side until brown and crispy. Drain on paper towels, then transfer to a serving platter. Serve immediately with fish sauce.

You can substitute sweet potatoes or taro root for Idaho potatoes.

Yunnan Greens

yields 4 servings

1 lb	bok choy
1 Tbs	salt
2 Tbs	peanut or vegetable oil
2	Thai dried red chiles
1/2 tsp	ginger, minced
1/2 cup	mild vegetable broth or water
1 tsp	cornstarch dissolved in 2 Tbs water

Place a large pot of water on to boil. Meanwhile, cut the bok choy lengthwise into thirds or quarters and place in a sink full of cold water to soak for several minutes. Wash thoroughly to get any dirt out of the base of the stalks.

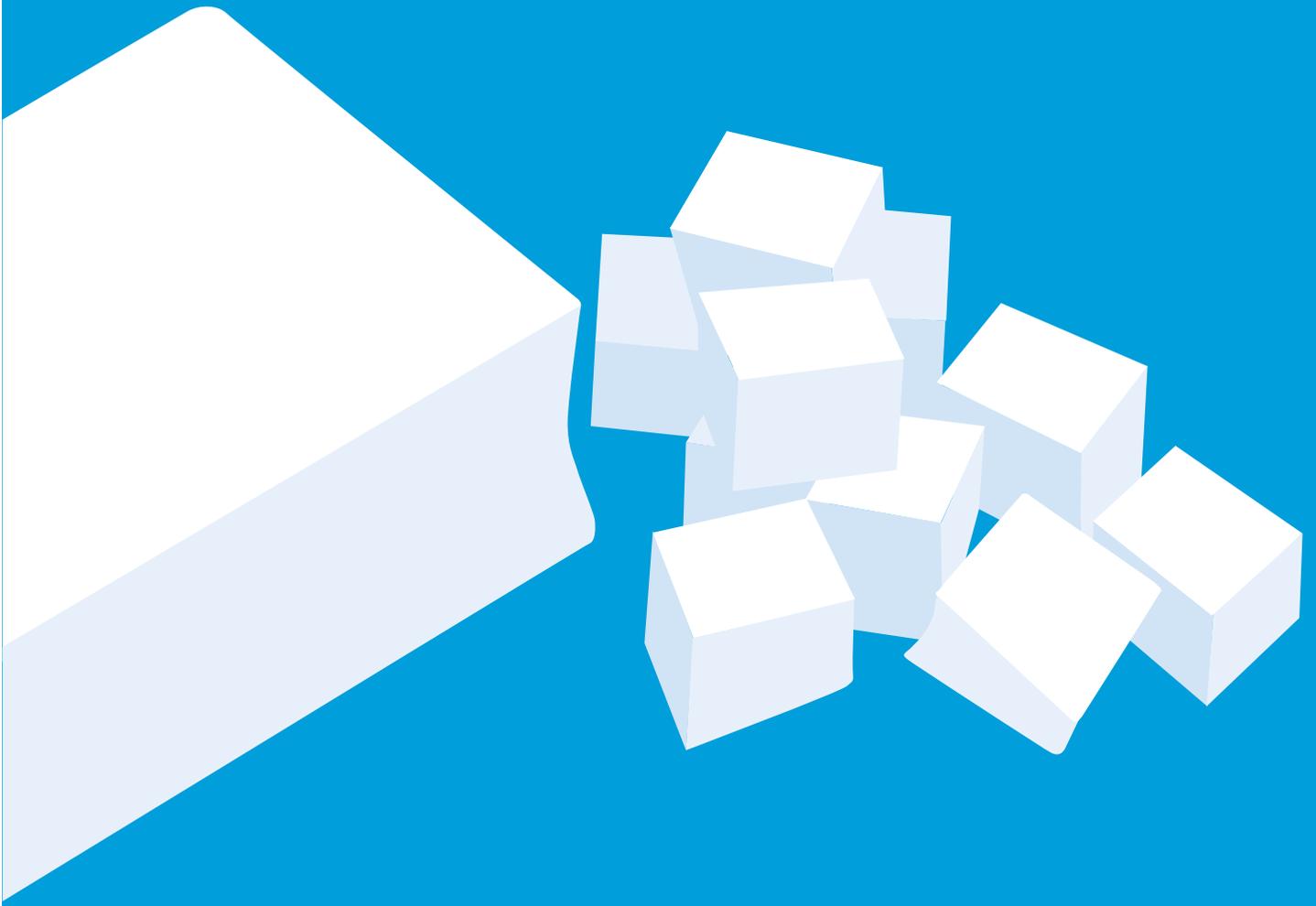
When the water is boiling, add about 1 tablespoon salt, bring back to the boil, and add the bok choy. Stir with a long-handled wooden spoon to make sure all the greens are immersed. Bring back to a boil, boil for under a minute, drain, and set aside.

Heat a large wok over high heat. Add the oil and swirl to coat the wok. Toss in the chiles and ginger. Stir briefly, then add the greens and stir-fry for 30 seconds, pressing them against the sides of the wok to sear them a little. Add the broth and let it boil for about 30 seconds.

Stir the cornstarch paste well, then add it together with 1/2 teaspoon salt. Stir-fry for another 15 to 30 seconds, turn out onto a small platter, and serve.

Warn your guests that the chiles are not for eating, just for flavor.

TOFU



Braised Tofu with Ginger

yields 4-6 servings

1 Tbs vegetable oil
1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
2 oz fresh ginger, peeled and minced
1 tsp Vietnamese chili and garlic sauce or more to taste
2 scallions, root ends trimmed, cut 1-1/2" long and halved lengthwise
1 lb firm tofu cut into 1/2" cubes
1 Tbs dipping sauce
coarse sea salt to taste
freshly-ground white pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a clay pot or heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Stir-fry the garlic and ginger until fragrant and lightly golden, about 5 minutes

Reduce the heat to low, add the chili and garlic sauce, scallions, tofu, and dipping sauce, and carefully mix (so as not to break up the tofu too much) until well combined. Cover and cook for 5 minutes.

Season to taste with salt and pepper and continue cooking, covered, until all the flavors have blended together, another 10 minutes. Serve with rice.

Curried Tofu Sauté

yields 4 servings

1/2 cup	vegetable stock or water
4	firm tofu cakes (3 oz each), cut crosswise into 1/2"-thick slices
	vegetable oil for frying
1-1/2 Tbs	vegetable oil
1	green bell pepper, sliced 1/4" thick
1 small	onion, cut thin wedges
1/2 tsp	curry paste or powder
1/4 cup	coconut milk
1/2 tsp	dried chile flakes or to taste
1 Tbs	coriander, chopped
1/4 cup	peanuts, chopped

In a large skillet, heat 1/3-inch oil over medium-high heat until hot. Pat the tofu dry with paper towels and add enough of the tofu slices to fill the pan without overcrowding it. Cook until brown and crisp on both sides, about 3 minutes per side. Drain on paper towels. Repeat with the remaining tofu slices.

In a large skillet or wok over high heat, heat the 1-1/2 tablespoons oil and cook the pepper and the onion, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the curry paste and cook, stirring one minute. Add the stock, coconut milk, chili flakes, and tofu and simmer, stirring occasionally, to heat through and thicken slightly, about 3 minutes.

Sprinkle with chopped peanuts and serve with rice.

Salt and Pepper Tofu

yields 2 servings

SALT AND PEPPER SEASONING MIX

1 Tbs	salt
1 tsp	sugar
1 tsp	fine white pepper
1 tsp	ground ginger
1/2 tsp	five-spice powder

Put all of the ingredients in a bowl and mix together well.

SALT AND PEPPER TOFU

1/2 lb	tofu pillows (Chinese-style pressed firm tofu)
Oil, for deep-frying	
2	scallions, sliced
1	bird's-eye chile, sliced
1 tsp	garlic, ground
salt and pepper seasoning mix	

Cut the tofu into 1-1/2" by 3/4" pieces and place on a cloth to dry. Put enough oil in a wok to deep-fry the tofu and heat to 350°F, or until a cube of bread dropped in the oil browns in 15 seconds. Deep-fry the tofu for about 5 minutes, or until it is golden and very crisp. Once all of the tofu is cooked, remove the oil from the wok and reserve for later use.

Place 2 teaspoons of oil back into the wok and place over high heat. Add the scallions, chile, and garlic, stir-fry for 30 seconds, then return the tofu to the wok. Toss to combine the flavors and season with the salt and pepper seasoning mix. Serve with salt, pepper, and lemon dipping sauce or vegetarian dipping sauce .

Spicy Lemongrass Tofu

yields 4 servings

2	lemongrass stalks, outer layers peeled, bottom white part thinly sliced and finely chopped
1-1/2 Tbs	soy sauce
2 tsp	Thai bird chilies or other fresh chili, chopped
1/2 tsp	dried chili flakes
1 tsp	turmeric, ground
2 tsp	sugar
1/2 tsp	salt
12 oz	tofu, drained, patted dry and cut into 3/4" cubes
4 Tbs	vegetable oil
1/2	yellow onion, cut into 1/8" slices
2	shallots, thinly sliced
1 tsp	garlic, minced
4 Tbs	peanuts, roasted and chopped
10	pepper leaves, shredded, or 2/3 cup loosely packed Asian basil leaves

Combine the lemongrass, soy sauce, chilies, chili flakes, turmeric, sugar and salt in a bowl. Add the tofu cubes and turn to coat them evenly. Marinate for 30 minutes.

Heat half of the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over moderately high heat. Add the onion, shallot and garlic and stir until fragrant, about 1 minute. Reduce the heat to low and cook until the onions are soft, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a plate and keep warm.

Wipe the pan clean and heat the remaining oil over moderate heat. Add the tofu mixture and, using chopstick or wooden spoons, turn so it cooks evenly, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the onion mixture and cook, uncovered, for another 2 to 3 minutes. Add half the peanuts and all the pepper leaves.

Remove from the heat and transfer to a serving plate. Garnish with the remaining peanuts and serve immediately with steamed rice.

Stir-Fried Tofu and Vine-Ripened Tomatoes

yields 4 servings

4 cups	canola oil, for frying, plus 3 tablespoons
1-1/4 lb	medium or firm tofu, cut into 1-1/4" cubes
1 cup	yellow onion, cut into 1/4" slices
2 tsp	garlic, minced
1-1/2 lb	vine-ripened tomatoes, cut into 3/4" wedges
3 Tbs	mirin (rice wine)
1/2 cup	green onions, cut into 1"-long pieces
	salt, to taste

Heat 4 cups canola oil in a 2-quart pot to 375°F. Working in batches, deep-fry the cubes of tofu until golden brown, making sure they don't stick to each other. Wait between batches for oil to return to 375°. Drain tofu on paper towels.

Heat a wok or large skillet over high heat until hot. Add 3 tablespoons canola oil. Add onion and garlic, and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring. Add tomatoes and cook, stirring carefully, just until tomatoes begin start to break down, about 1 to 2 minutes. Glaze with mirin and cook for approximately 1 to 2 minutes. Add the tofu and green onions, stir, and season with salt to taste.

Tofu with Eggplant and Peppers

yields 4 servings

cooking spray

1 lb extra-firm tofu, drained

1 med onion, chopped

2 Tbs soy sauce

2 large tomatoes, peeled and cut into eighths

2 large red peppers, chopped

1/2 jalapeño or other hot pepper, seeded and minced

1 med eggplant, cut into 1" cubes

1 lb mushrooms

1 summer squash, cut into 1" cubes

1 bunch scallions, coarsely chopped

1 Tbs tomato paste

1/4 cup cilantro, for garnish

Spray a wok or skillet with cooking spray and sauté tofu until brown on both sides. Cut into 1-inch cubes and set aside.

In same pan, sauté onion for one minute. Add soy sauce and one tablespoon of water if necessary. Add tomatoes, red peppers, hot peppers, eggplant, mushrooms, squash, scallions, and tomato paste and reduce heat. Simmer for about 10 minutes, or until vegetables are soft.

Add tofu and continue cooking until tofu is heated through. Place on platter, garnishing with cilantro. Serve with rice or rice noodles.

Vietnamese Tofu Kabobs with Watercress Salad

yields 4 servings

1/4 cup	fresh lime juice
2 Tbs	tamari or dark soy sauce
2 Tbs	brown sugar
1 Tbs	vegetable oil
4 clove	garlic, minced
2	serrano or jalapeno chile peppers, seeded and minced
1 lb	extra-firm tofu, well drained
1 large	red bell pepper, cut into 1 1/4" pieces
5 cup	watercress, tough stems trimmed
1 cup	cucumber, seedless and thinly sliced
1 cup	bean sprouts, rinsed
1/4 cup	unsalted dry-roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped

In small bowl, whisk together lime juice, tamari, sugar, oil, garlic and peppers. Blot tofu dry with paper towels and cut into 1-1/4" cubes. Place in shallow glass or ceramic dish. Spoon half the lime juice mixture over tofu, stirring gently to coat. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator at least 2 hours or up to 1 day. Stir 1 tablespoon water into remaining lime juice mixture (this will become salad dressing), cover and refrigerate.

Prepare a hot charcoal fire or preheat gas grill on high. Remove tofu from marinade, reserving marinade for basting. Alternately thread tofu cubes and red pepper pieces onto four 14-inch or eight 10-inch skewers. In large bowl, combine watercress, cucumber and bean sprouts.

Lightly oil grill rack. Grill tofu skewers, turning and basting occasionally with reserved marinade, until lightly browned on all sides, 6 to 8 minutes total. Toss watercress salad with reserved dressing. Divide salad among plates and top with tofu skewers. Sprinkle with peanuts and serve right away.

If you are using wooden skewers, remember to soak them in water for at least 1 hour to prevent them from scorching on the grill.

NOODLES



Noodles With Mixed Vegetables

yields 4 servings

8 oz cellophane noodles
cooking spray
5 cloves garlic, minced
1 Tbs ginger, minced
4 shallots, thinly sliced
2 scallions, thinly sliced
1–2 Tbs soy sauce
2–3 Tbs water
2 small carrots, peeled and
julienned
1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced
2 summer squash, coarsely
chopped

In a large bowl or pot, soak noodles in boiling water for 5 minutes or until they are soft and pliable. Drain and set aside.

Spray a wok or skillet with cooking spray and over high heat, sauté garlic, ginger, shallots, and scallions for about 1 minute. Add the soy sauce, water, and carrots and sauté for an additional 2 minutes. Add mushrooms and squash and sauté for another minute. Add noodles, stirring constantly until they are heated through. Serve immediately.

Rice Noodles with Cilantro, Mint and Peanuts

yields 6 servings

1/4 cup	rice vinegar
1 Tbs	sugar
1/2	sweet onion (such as Vidalia), thinly sliced, separated into rings
8 oz	firm dried rice noodles
1/4 cup	fresh lime juice
2 tsp	vegetable oil
1/2 tsp	dried crushed red pepper
1/3 cup	fresh mint, chopped
1/3 cup	fresh cilantro, chopped
1	large cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, thinly sliced
4	green onions, thinly sliced
3	fresh plum tomatoes, seeded, chopped
2 Tbs	lightly salted cocktail peanuts, chopped

Whisk vinegar and sugar in medium bowl to blend. Add onion rings and toss to coat. Cover and let stand at least 30 minutes and up to 4 hours. Drain, reserving 2 tablespoons vinegar mixture.

Cook noodles in large pot of boiling water until tender but still firm to bite, about 2 minutes. Drain. Rinse under cold water. Drain well.

Whisk lime juice, oil and crushed red pepper in small bowl to blend. Stir in mint and cilantro. Using kitchen shears, cut noodles into 3- to 4-inch-long sections. Place handful of noodles in large bowl. Drizzle with reserved 2 tablespoons vinegar mixture and toss to coat. Add remaining noodles, cucumber, green onions, tomatoes and marinated onions. Drizzle lime juice mixture over and toss gently. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with peanuts and serve.

Rice Vermicelli

yields 4 servings

8 oz	dried rice vermicelli or 1 pound fresh bun
8	romaine lettuce leaves, ribs removed and julienned
2	carrots, peeled and julienned
1/2	cucumber, peeled, seeded, and thinly sliced into crescents
12 large	mint leaves, julienned
	fish dipping sauce

If using dried rice vermicelli, place it in a bowl and cover with lukewarm water. Let stand until pliable, about 20 minutes.

Bring a pot of hot water to a boil. Drain and divide the rice vermicelli into 4 equal portions. Place 1 portion at a time in a sieve and lower it into the boiling water. Untangle the noodles with chopsticks and boil until tender but firm, about 3 seconds. Remove, drain, and place in a large bowl. Repeat this step until you have 4 individual servings. If using fresh bun, there is no need to boil them.

Divide the noodles among 4 bowls. Scatter some lettuce, carrot, cucumber, and mint over each bowl. Drizzle with fish sauce and toss well.

Stir-Fried Bean Curd with Lemon Grass on Crisp Noodles

yields 4 servings

2 stalk	fresh lemon grass or 2 Tbs dried lemon grass
1 lb	firm bean curd or tofu
	vegetable oil for deep-frying
4 oz	cellophane (bean thread) noodles
10 oz	canned straw mushrooms, drained, with 2/3 cup of the mushroom liquid reserved
1/4 cup	hoisin sauce
2 Tbs	soy sauce
1-1/2 Tbs	tomato paste
2	red chile peppers, seeded and sliced thin
2	leeks, white part only, thinly sliced
1	red bell pepper cut into 1" chunks
1	green bell pepper, cut into 1" chunks
	freshly-ground white pepper to taste
	coriander sprigs for garnish

If you are using fresh lemon grass, discard the outer leaves and upper half of the stalk. Cut into thin slices and finely chop. If you are using dried lemon grass, soak in warm water for 1 hour. Drain and finely chop.

Cut the bean curd into 1-inch cubes. Drain on a double thickness of paper towels.

Pour 1 inch of oil in a wok or skillet and set over moderately-high heat. Fry the bean curd cubes, without crowding, until browned on all sides, about 8 minutes, or until crisp and golden brown. Remove the bean curd with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

Drop about one-fourth of the cellophane noodles into the hot oil (365 degrees). As they puff and expand, push them down into the oil. Turn the noodles and continue to cook until the crackling stops, 15 to 20 seconds in all. Remove and drain on paper towels. Place on a serving platter and keep warm in a 200 degree oven. Cook the remaining noodles in the same manner.

Combine the reserved mushroom liquid, hoisin sauce, soy sauce, tomato paste and chiles in a bowl; stir to blend. Set the sauce aside.

Remove all but 3 tablespoons of the oil from the wok. Drop in the leeks and lemon grass and stir-fry over moderately-high heat for 1 minute. Add the bell peppers and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the mushrooms and bean curd cubes and stir-fry for 1 minute longer. Stir in the sauce and bring to a boil. Stir until the sauce thickens, about 2 minutes.

Pour the mixture over the cellophane noodles. Sprinkle with white pepper and garnish with coriander sprigs.

Stir-Fried Noodles with Mushrooms

yields 4 servings

4 Tbs	vegetable oil
4 cloves	garlic, crushed and chopped
3	shallots, finely chopped
1 inch	fresh root ginger, crushed and chopped
3	red chilies, finely sliced
6	dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked and sliced
4	dried black fungus, soaked and sliced
6.5 oz	canned straw mushrooms, drained
1 lb	egg noodles, cooked
2 Tbs	cilantro, chopped

Heat the oil in a saucepan. Stir fry the garlic, shallots, ginger and chilies for 40 seconds. Add the shiitake mushrooms, black fungus and straw mushrooms. Stir fry for 2 minutes.

Run hot water over the noodles to separate them. Add the noodles to the saucepan and stir fry quickly to warm them through. Toss, add the cilantro, and serve.

Vietnamese Rice-Noodle Salad

yields 4 servings

4 cloves	garlic, finely chopped
1 cup	cilantro, chopped
1	Jalapeno pepper, chopped
1 Tbs	honey
1/4 cup	fresh lime juice
3 Tbs	fish sauce
1 tsp	Kosher salt
1 lb	dried rice vermicelli
2	carrots, julienned
1	cucumber, halved, peeled, seeded, sliced thin into half-rounds
1/4 cup	fresh mint, chopped
1/2 cup	napa cabbage, finely-shredded
1/4 cup	dry-roasted nuts, chopped

Place the garlic, cilantro, jalapeno, honey, lime juice, fish sauce and salt in the bowl of a food processor and process until almost smooth.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, add the noodles and cook for 2 minutes. Drain, rinse well with cold water and drain again.

In a large bowl, combine the sauce, noodles, carrots, cucumber, mint and napa cabbage. Toss well and garnish with peanuts.

Vietnamese-Style Bean-Thread Noodles

yields 4 servings

1 bunch bean-thread noodles (2 oz)
2 Tbs peanut or light olive oil
1 large onion, quartered and thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups cabbage, thinly-shredded
2 cups fresh tomatoes, diced
1/2 cup fresh mung bean sprouts
1/2 lb firm tofu, diced
2-3 Tbs rice vinegar, to taste
dried hot red pepper flakes to taste
salt to taste
chopped peanuts for garnish
fresh basil leaves, thinly-sliced, for garnish (optional)

Immerse the bundle of noodles in cold water in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, remove from the heat, cover, and let sit for 3 to 5 minutes, or until al dente, then drain. When cool enough to handle, place on a cutting board and cut in several directions to create shorter lengths.

In the meantime, heat the oil in a stir-fry pan or wok. Add the onion and stir-fry over medium heat until translucent. Turn up the heat, add the garlic and cabbage and stir-fry until the cabbage is tender-crisp and lightly browned, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add the tomatoes and sprouts and continue to fry, stirring frequently, until the tomatoes are soft and the sprouts tender-crisp, another 5 to 7 minutes.

Stir in the vinegar, tofu, and red pepper flakes, and cellophane noodles. Cook, stirring, until everything is well heated through. Serve at once, garnishing each serving with chopped peanuts and the optional basil.

CREPES



Vietnamese Crepes 1

CREPES

3/4 cup	dried yellow mung beans
2 cup	fresh or canned coconut milk
1 cup	rice flour
1/2 tsp	sugar
1/2 tsp	salt
1/4 tsp	turmeric

Cover the mung beans with water and soak for 30 minutes. Drain. Set aside 1 cup for the filling. Place the remaining 1/2 cup in a blender with the coconut milk and process to a fine puree. Add the rice flour, sugar, salt and turmeric; blend well. Strain the mixture into a bowl or jar and refrigerate.

Steam the reserved mung beans for about 20 minutes, or until tender. Allow to cool. Cover and set aside.

The batter can be prepared one day ahead, and the accompaniments assembled just before serving. The crepes can be cooked and stuffed a few hours ahead, and reheated as needed.

Traditionally, the crepe is prepared in a wok, but a good omelet pan is fine too.

Remember to stir the rice batter well before each addition to the pan.

FILLING

1-1/2 Tbs	vegetarian dipping sauce
4 cloves	garlic, minced
1/4 tsp	sugar
	freshly-ground pepper
2 cup	fresh mushrooms, thinly sliced
2 cup	fresh bean sprouts
1 large	onion, thinly sliced
3/4 cup	vegetable oil

In another bowl, combine the mushrooms, bean sprouts, onion and the cooked mung beans. Divide the mixture into six separate mounds on a tray.

In a wok or an 8" nonstick omelet pan, heat 2 Tbs oil over moderately high heat. When the oil is very hot, stir the rice batter well and pour 1/2 cup into the wok. Quickly tilt the wok to spread the mixture into a thin pancake.

Scatter 1 mound of the vegetables on the lower half of the pancake. Reduce the heat to moderate. Cover the pan and cook for about 5 minutes, or until the bottom of the pancake is brown and crispy. Fold the pancake in half and slide it onto a platter. Keep warm in a low oven. Repeat with the remaining oil, batter and filling, making 5 more crepes.

To serve, each diner places the rice crepe with some filling on a lettuce leaf with selected herbs from the Vegetable Platter and strands of carrot and daikon from the dipping sauce. The bundle is rolled up, dipped in fish sauce and eaten out of hand.

Vietnamese Crepes 2

yields 6 servings

CREPES

1 pkt	Bot Bahn Xeo or Saigon Pan Cake flour mixture
1/2 tsp	turmeric
1	14-ounce can coconut cream (not milk)
1/2 cup	scallions, chopped both green and white parts

The packets have two pouches generally. The large bottom pouch will contain a mixture of rice flour, starch and sometimes a little sugar. The top will have a little turmeric.

Start by putting the flour, turmeric from the package and additional turmeric in a large bowl. Add in the coconut cream.

Mix thoroughly until you reach a smooth consistency. You may add more turmeric if you like more of a golden color. Careful not to add too much or else you will add a slight bitter and undesired medicinal taste. Add in the scallions and let rest while you prepare the filling.

FILLING

1 lb	shiitake mushrooms, roughly chopped
1 lb	enoki mushrooms, roughly chopped
1 pack	dried tofu
1 cup	shallots, minced
4 cloves	garlic, minced
	salt and freshly ground pepper
1 bag	bean sprouts
	canola oil

Start by heating up a large non-stick pan on medium with a couple of tablespoons of canola oil. Add the shallots and cook until translucent. Add the garlic and cook for a few minutes. Then add all the mushrooms and cook until wilted.

Cut the tofu in small strips. This will make it easier to fold over the crepe. Add the tofu, season very well with salt and pepper, cook until combined. Remove from the heat, reserve in a bowl and set aside.

When you are ready to assemble the crepe, use the same large non-stick skillet, brush it generously with canola oil and heat on high heat. Sizzle about 3/4 cup of the filling to reheat and add about a ladle full (approx. 1 cup) of the crepe mixture and swirl around.

When arranging the filling on the pan prior to adding the batter, a good tip is to leave a line in the center where you intend to fold the crepe. That will prevent chances of it being broken by a stubborn mushroom or piece of tofu. Cover with a lid without touching the crepe. If you do not have a lid, create a dome with aluminum paper. Cook for 4 minutes. The crepe will crisp up and brown beautifully.

Add a generous amount to one half of the crepe. Cover and let cook for 1–2 minutes until bean sprouts are warmed and slightly wilted. Fold the crepe in half.

Vietnamese Crepes 3

yields 6 servings

1-3/4 cups rice flour
1/4 cup wheat flour
1 cup unsweetened coconut milk
1 cup water
1 tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp superfine sugar
2 scallions, thinly sliced into rings
2 tsp sea salt
2 tsp black peppercorns, freshly ground
1/2 tsp curry powder
8 Tbs canola oil
1 cup dried mung beans
1 block tofu, firm
1 sm yellow onion, thinly sliced
1 pack enoki mushrooms, cut in half
2 cups shiitake mushrooms, sliced
2 shallots
4 cups fresh bean sprouts
1 cucumber, sliced
1 lettuce
1/2 bunch fresh Thai basil
1/2 bunch fresh Asian mint
3 Tbs pickled garlic
2 Tbs fresh red bird chili peppers, sliced
fish sauce

In a bowl wash the mung beans thoroughly. Pick out and discard any bad-shaped beans and little stones then soak them for at least 3 hours before cooking. It's best to let the beans soak overnight.

Place the mung beans in a sauce pan, cover with water and bring to a boil, then lower to medium low heat for 20 minutes. The beans should be soft and tender. Set aside.

Cut the piece of tofu into 1/4 to 1/2 inch even slices. Pour the oil in a big pan, add the sliced serrano peppers and cook until they soften. Remove the pepper slices from the pan and set aside in a plate. Cooking the serrano pepper first provides a nice aroma to the oil. Pan fry the slices until slightly golden. Don't overcook the pieces or they'll start to get hard. Transfer all the tofu to a paper towel and let it cool down. Cut the pieces of tofu into very thin slices. Set aside on a plate.

In another bowl, whisk the flours together with coconut milk and water. Add the turmeric, sugar, curry and scallions. Season with 1 teaspoon of salt and pepper. The flour should be stirred up well. Make sure there are no lumps. Add 2 tablespoons of oil. Let the batter stand for at least 1 hour in a cool place.

In a fry pan or a skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of oil over high heat. Add the slices of onions and shallots, the shredded tofu, the slices of shiitake mushrooms and the enoki mushrooms. Stir fry for about 2-3 minutes. Salt and pepper. Transfer to a plate. Set aside.

Stir the rice flour batter and ladle 1/3 cup of it into the pan. Tilt the pan to distribute the batter evenly. Keep the heat high. Cover when the edges start to dry a little, and cook until the sides of the crepe turn deep brown and curl up, about 3-4 minutes.

Spoon some mung beans and the mushroom mixture and place a few bean sprouts onto the crepe. Cover for another couple of minutes. Fold it in half using a wide spatula and slide it onto a warm plate. Wipe pan clean with a paper towel and repeat the same procedure. Pour a little more oil into the pan before beginning the next crepe.

Serve the crepes with fish sauce on the side. You can eat it wrapped in lettuce filled with basil and mint or simply plain.

You can keep the crepe batter in the refrigerator up 2-3 days.

RICE



Black-Eyed Peas and Sweet Rice in Coconut Milk

yields 4 servings

1 cup	canned or fresh coconut milk
1/3 cup	raw glutinous or sweet rice
1/2 cup	dried black-eyed peas
1/4 tsp	baking soda
1/2 cup	Sugar
1 tsp	vanilla extract

The baking soda reduces the cooking time of the beans and tenderizes them at the same time, so keep an eye on the beans while they cook; they will be done in no time.

Soak the glutinous rice and black-eyed peas separately in warm water for at least 2 hours. Drain. Cover the peas with 3 cups of water in a saucepan. Add the baking soda.

Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to moderate and simmer the beans for 10 minutes, or until just tender. Refresh with cold water and drain.

Bring 2 cups of water to a boil in a saucepan. Add the glutinous rice and boil for 5 minutes. Stir in the sugar and vanilla. Add the cooked beans and simmer for 5 minutes longer. Set aside to cool slightly. Divide the bean-rice mixture among 4 dessert bowls. Drizzle about 1/4 cup of the coconut milk on top of each. Serve warm.

For a richer taste, float a tablespoon or two of unsweetened coconut cream on top of this sweet soup/dessert.

Fried Rice

yields 4 servings

SEASONING LIQUID

2 Tbs	fish sauce
1-1/2 Tbs	rice vinegar
2 Tbs	sugar

RICE

2 bunches	scallions
3 large	carrots
2 cups	fresh bean sprouts
2 large	eggs
5 cups	Chinese-style white rice, chilled
2-1/2 Tbs	corn or safflower oil
2 Tbs	garlic, minced
1 tsp	dried hot red pepper flakes
1/4 cup	fresh cilantro or mint leaves, chopped
1/4 cup	dry-roasted peanuts, chopped

In a small bowl stir together seasoning liquid ingredients.

Finely chop enough scallions to measure about 2 cups and coarsely shred enough carrots to measure about 2 cups. Rinse bean sprouts and trim stringy root ends if desired. In a small bowl lightly beat eggs.

Spread rice in a shallow baking pan and separate grains with a fork.

In a deep 12-inch heavy non-stick skillet heat oil over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking and stir-fry eggs until scrambled, about 30 seconds. Add scallions, garlic, and red pepper flakes and stir-fry about 15 seconds, or until fragrant. Add carrots and bean sprouts and stir-fry until carrots begin to soften, about 1 minute. Add rice and cook, stirring frequently, 2 to 3 minutes, or until heated through. Stir seasoning liquid and add to fried rice, tossing to coat evenly.

Serve fried rice sprinkled with cilantro or mint and dry-roasted peanuts.

Hue Rice

yields 4 servings

3 cups rice, cooked
1 Tbs sesame seeds, toasted
1 stalk fresh lemon grass
2 shallots, sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp sugar
2 fresh chilies
4 Tbs vegetable oil
2 scallions, sliced
1 small onion
2 Tbs broth or water
2 Tbs fish sauce
freshly-ground black pepper
coriander sprigs

Rub the cold rice with wet hands to separate the grains. Set aside.

Remove outer leaves from lemon grass, trim, and mince. Grind together the lemon grass, shallots, garlic, sugar and chilies.

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a wok or skillet. Add the scallions and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the lemon grass mixture and stir-fry for 5 minutes over high heat. Remove to a dish. Pour the remaining 2 tablespoons oil into the wok. Add the onion and stir-fry until translucent. Add the rice and stir-fry for 5 minutes.

Stir in the broth, fish sauce and black pepper to taste. Add the lemon grass and shrimp mixture and the toasted sesame seeds. Stir to combine well. Transfer to heated platter.

Sprinkle with additional black pepper and garnish with the coriander sprigs.

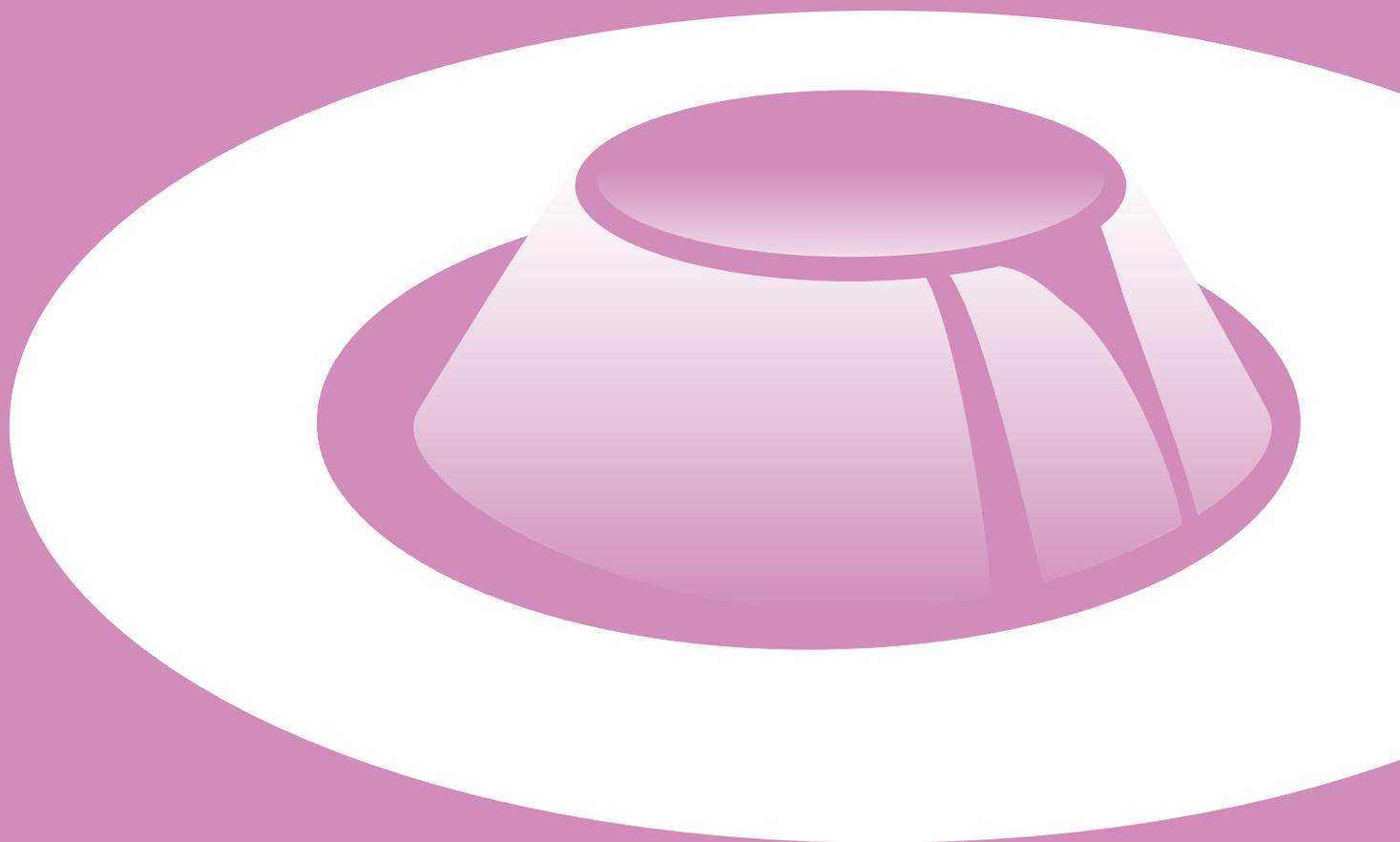
Yellow Rice

yields 4 servings

2 tsp vegetable oil
2 Tbs shallot, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
1-1/2 cups jasmine rice or basmati rice, well rinsed
2-1/4 cups vegetable broth
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp turmeric

Heat oil in heavy medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add shallot and garlic; saute until just beginning to brown, about 2 minutes. Add rice, broth, salt, and turmeric. Bring rice to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed, about 18 minutes.

DESSERTS



Action Vietnam Cookies

3/4 cup	solid vegetable shortening
1 cup	firmly packed light brown sugar
1	egg
1-1/2 cup	all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp	baking soda
1 tsp	salt
1 tsp	ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp	ground nutmeg
1/2 cup	coarsely chopped walnuts
1/2 cup	semisweet chocolate morsels (plain or mint flavored)
1/2 cup	shredded coconut
1/2 cup	raisins dredged in 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1 cup	ripe bananas (2 or 3)
1-3/4 cup	quick-cooking rolled oats, uncooked

In a large mixing bowl with an electric mixer, beat together shortening and brown sugar. Add egg and continue beating until ingredients are well blended.

Sift together flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. Add flour mixture to shortening mixture, stirring to keep batter well blended. Add walnuts, chocolate morsels, coconut, raisins and bananas; mix well.

Gradually stir in oats, mixing well.

Drop dough from end of teaspoon onto lightly greased baking sheets. Bake in a preheated 375° oven 12 minutes or until done.

To save time spent baking, drop batter on cookie sheet lined with heavy-duty aluminum foil. When done and slightly cooled, cookies will “peel” off the foil. Liner can be used again, or having two or three foil liners ready with cookie batches for baking will hasten the baking time considerably.

These cookies can be frozen or stored in the pantry. They are not fragile and withstand the rigors of shipping.

Coconut Flan with Caramel

yields 5 servings

CARAMEL

1/4 cup	sugar
1/4 cup	hot water

Cook the sugar in a small heavy saucepan over low heat, swirling the pan constantly, until brown. Stir the hot water into the caramel, being careful to guard against splattering (the mixture will bubble vigorously). Boil the mixture, swirling the pan occasionally, until the sugar is thoroughly dissolved, about 2 minutes.

Pour the caramel syrup into a 1-quart souffle dish or five 4-ounce ramekins. Tilt the molds to coat all of the surfaces with caramel.

CUSTARD

1 cup	fresh or canned coconut milk
1 cup	milk
1/4 cup	sugar
4	eggs
1 tsp	vanilla extract

Make the custard: Combine the coconut milk, milk and sugar in a medium saucepan over low heat. Scald until the sugar dissolves completely. Remove from heat.

In a large bowl, whisk the eggs and vanilla. Gradually whisk the hot coconut milk mixture into the eggs, blending thoroughly.

Strain the custard through a fine sieve into a bowl. Carefully pour into the caramel-lined souffle dish or ramekins.

Line a large roasting pan with 2 layers of paper towels (see below). Put the souffle dish in the roasting pan and add hot water to reach halfway up the side of the dish. Bake in the center of the oven for 50 minutes (30 minutes if using ramekins), or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Be careful not to let the water boil; do not disturb the custard while baking. This is the only “secret” to producing a smooth and velvety custard.

Remove the souffle dish immediately from the hot water. Allow to cool in a cold-water bath. Chill thoroughly.

To serve, run a knife around the edge of the custard and turn out onto dessert plates. Serve with shaved ice or whipped cream, if desired.

The paper towels in the roasting pan serve a twofold purpose: First, they allow the hot water to circulate under the souffle dish while baking to distribute the heat evenly; second, if using small ramekins, it stabilizes them and keeps them from moving around while baking.

This custard is at its best when prepared a day in advance and refrigerated so the flavors can mellow. If you just can't wait, you might try the Vietnamese method of rapid cooling for dishes such as this: place a small scoop of shaved ice on top of each custard before serving!

Coconut Sticky Rice

yields 4 servings

1/2 cup	red azuki beans soaked for 4 hours and drained
1/2 cup	sugar
1-1/2 cup	canned unsweetened coconut milk
1 pinch	salt
2 cup	steamed sticky rice prepared just before using and kept warm

Bring 2 cups of water just to a boil in a pot over medium heat. Reduce the heat to low, add the azuki beans and 1/4 cup sugar. Cover and simmer until the beans are cooked through, about 3 hours. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

Meanwhile, bring the coconut milk to a boil in a pot over high heat. Reduce the heat to low, add the remaining sugar, the salt, and stir until the sugar is completely dissolved. Remove from the heat and add the warm sticky rice. Cover and allow the rice to soak up most of the coconut milk.

Divide the rice among 4 dessert plates and place about 2 tablespoons cooked azuki beans on each serving.

Variation: Substitute 3/4 cup skinless split mung beans (soaked for 2 hours and drained) for the red azuki beans. In step 1, cook the mung beans with 2 cups water until the water is absorbed, about 20 minutes.

Fruits in Syrup

2 Tbs	sugar
4 Tbs	water
2 Tbs	dry sherry
2 tsp	lemon or lime juice
1	orange
2 cup	fresh pineapple, cubed
1-1/2 cup	fresh or canned lichees

Cook the sugar and water into a syrup. Cool and stir in sherry and lemon/lime juice. Peel and segment the orange; toss with the pineapple and lichees. Pour the syrup over the fruits. Chill 1 hour.

Fruit Spring Rolls with Ginger Chocolate Dipping Sauce

yields 4 servings

GINGER CHOCOLATE DIPPING SAUCE

3/4 cup	whipping cream
1 Tbs	chopped fresh ginger
1-1/2 cup	sugar
1/2 cup	water
2 oz	semisweet chocolate, chopped

Heat cream and ginger to a boil in small saucepan. Remove from heat and let stand 10 minutes. Strain cream through a sieve; discard ginger. Set aside.

Heat sugar and water to a boil in separate saucepan. Reduce heat to medium; simmer until syrup becomes golden brown. Slowly whisk in ginger cream.

Whisk in chocolate; heat mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 1 minute. Pour through a sieve into a bowl. Cool.

FRUIT SPRING ROLLS

8 large	round (10-inch) rice-paper wrappers
1	mango, peeled, cut into 2-inch slices
6 sm	apricots, pitted, sliced
1/2 pint	raspberries
1/2 pint	black berries
32	cherries: 24 pitted, sliced; 8 left whole gooseberries, fresh currants for garnish

Fill shallow bowl with hot water; soak wrappers, one at a time, until pliable, about 2 minutes on each side. Pat dry.

Place one wrapper on flat surface. Build a layered wall down center of wrapper with 1/4 of each in following order: mangos, apricots, cherries and berries on top. Pull wrapper ends over fruit; roll tightly. Wrap fruit-filled roll in a second wrapper.

Repeat with remaining wrappers and fruit, saving some fruit for garnish. Wrap in plastic wrap; refrigerate until ready to serve.

To serve, cut each roll into 2-inch lengths and arrange on 4 individual plates; garnish with gooseberries, currants and whole cherries. Pour sauce into 4 small bowls; place one on each plate.

Imperial Nougat

1 cup sugar
2/3 cup roasted peanuts
1/2 cup roasted sesame seeds
2 Tbs waterchestnut flour
1/2 lemon, juiced
2/3 cup water
2 Tbs cooking oil
1/4 tsp vanilla
metal tray

Grease metal tray with 1 tablespoon oil and spread over with 1/4 cup of sesame seeds.

Mix 1/3 cup of water with the flour. Stir well and set aside.

In a saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon cooking oil, and then add 1/3 cup of remaining water and sugar in. Bring the sugar mixture to the boil. Boil rapidly until the mixture turns golden and thick. Add lemon juice and stir to combine.

Add the flour into the sugar mixture, continuing to stir until all lumps are gone. Reduce the heat. Keep stirring to avoid burning at the bottom until the flour is folded evenly into the mixture.

When the flour is cooked (it will become semi-transparent) stir in the vanilla and peanuts. Remove from heat.

Pour the mixture over the greased metal tray. Roll out evenly (1 cm thick), and top with the remaining sesame seeds. Cut into bite-size pieces. Serve with hot tea.

Lychee and Ginger Ice

4 oz lichees in heavy syrup
1/2 oz ginger root, peeled and grated
fresh mint leaves
fresh lichees
sponge ginger cookies (optional)

Put the lichees in a blender or food processor together with the ginger and water, and process to a fine puree. Pour the mixture into a 9-inch square baking pan and put into the freezer for 3 hours

Break the iced mixture into chunks and process again until slushy. Return to the baking pan and freeze once more until solid.

Allow the mixture to soften slightly (about 5 minutes) and scoop into 4 champagne glasses or rice bowls. Garnish with mint leaves, lichees, and cookies, if desired.

Pineapple and Banana Fritters

1/2 cup self-rising flour
1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp salt
1/2 tsp baking powder
2 Tbs vegetable oil
vegetable oil for deep frying
4 bananas
4 pineapple rings, fresh or
canned
1 egg white, beaten until stiff
confectioner's sugar, sieved

Make the batter first. Mix the flours, baking powder, salt, and oil in a large bowl. Stir in just enough water to make a smooth paste. Fold in the egg white a little at a time.

Peel the bananas and cut in half, lengthwise. Dry the pineapple rings on paper towels.

Heat some oil in a wok for deep-frying. Dip the fruit in the batter and cook in small batches (do not put more than comfortably float on the oil) until puffy and golden. This should not take more than 2 minutes.

Drain the cooked fritters on paper towels and sprinkle with the sieved confectioner's sugar. Serve while hot.

Steamed Rice Mould with Coconut Cream

9 oz glutinous rice
3 tsp salt
3 cup coconut milk, thin
2 oz brown sugar
1/2 cup water
1-3/4 cup coconut milk, thick

Wash rice and put in a sauce pan with salt and thin coconut milk. Cover and cook on moderate heat until liquid begins to bubble, then turn heat down and continue to cook until rice softens and forms a thick paste.

Spoon into a lightly greased 10 inch baking tray. Cover tin with a sheet of aluminum foil pierced in two corners. Set over a sauce pan of boiling water to steam until firm.

Cool, then chill. Prepare sugar syrup by dissolving brown sugar in water. Bring to the boil, turn heat down and cook without stirring, until becomes slightly sticky. Cool and then chill.

To serve, cut rice mould into serving pieces. Pour a little sugar syrup and thick coconut milk over each.

Tropical Sorbet and Granita

yields 4 servings

Two 20-ounce cans tropical fruit, such as pineapple, packed in its own juice (for a granita texture) or in light syrup (for a sorbet texture)

Wash and dry the cans. Freeze unopened cans for at least 12 hours or until solidly frozen. Unopened cans may be stored in freezer until ready for use.

When ready, remove cans from freezer and open both ends over a cutting board, pushing the fruit out of the can with a wooden spoon. Coarsely chop fruit and place in blender or food processor. Process until smooth. Serve immediately, softly frozen, or pack in an airtight container and freeze for 2 hours, until frozen solid.

Using a melon baller, scoop out sorbet and serve in a parfait glass or ice cream bowl. Garnish with slices of fresh fruit.

Asian markets will offer a wide variety of canned fruit, including canned mangosteen, jackfruit, lichees, loquats, and sapodillas.

DRINKS



3-COLOR BEAN DRINK

1 cup	dried red kidney beans or adzuki beans
1 cup	dried split/peeled yellow mung beans
2 cups	coconut milk
1-1/2 cups	sugar (or more to taste)
1 cup	green jelly strips
2 cups	crushed ice

In two separate bowls, cover the red beans and yellow beans with an inch of water. Soak overnight.

Transfer each type of bean into its own small saucepan. Add ½ cup of sugar to each, and add more water to cover beans by an inch if necessary. Bring to a boil over high heat. Cover, and reduce heat to medium low. Stirring occasionally, simmer each pot until soft (about an hour for the red beans, and 45 minutes to an hour for the yellow beans). The red beans should be whole, but the yellow beans will begin to break down. Refrigerate.

Meanwhile, add the remaining ½ cup of sugar to the coconut milk in a small saucepan over medium heat. Stir until the sugar has completely dissolved. Refrigerate.

Once components are chilled, layer equal parts in a tall glass in this order (quantities to taste): yellow bean, red bean, green jelly. Fill the rest of the cup to the brim with crushed ice, then pour coconut milk over the top.

Stored separately, ingredients will keep up to 5 days in the refrigerator.

Avocado Shake

yields 8 servings

4	avocados, ripe
half	a lemon, juiced
1 Tbs	honey
1 quart	ice cubes, crushed
1-1/2 cups	soy milk
1 cup	sweetened condensed milk, to taste

Peel the avocados and chop them into cubes. Drizzle lemon juice on the avocados to avoid oxidation. Add honey, if you like.

In a blender, combine all the ingredients until very smooth.

Pour into 8 glasses.

Add more or less soy milk, depending on how you like the consistency of your shake.

Ginger Lemongrass Drink

yields 6 servings

2-1/2 cups superfine sugar, to taste
5 cups water
1/4 cup palm sugar
1 quart ice cubes
4 stalks lemongrass, with extra for garnish
2 chunks ginger, about 3 inches
1/4 cup crystallized candied ginger, cut in half

Wash the lemongrass. Remove all the white powder from the leaves and also a few outer leaves. Cut the stalks in half and crush them; cut the remaining stalk into extremely thin slices. Grind the thin slices of lemongrass, then transfer and mix everything in a food processor. It should turn into a fine moist powder. Set aside. Combine the water and lemongrass powder. Bring to a boil and let simmer for about 15 minutes. Filter through a fine sieve. Clean the ginger, carefully removing any dirt. You don't have to peel it. Thinly slice both chunks. Set aside.

In a sauce pan, melt the sugar without any water over high heat. Carefully watch the sugar; as soon as the edges of the pan start caramelizing, immediately lower the heat to medium-low. Gently jiggle the saucepan in circles. Do not stir. Lower the heat to the lowest setting when there are only a few remaining non-caramelized pieces. Don't let the sugar get dark brown or you'll get a burnt taste.

When all the sugar is an amber color, remove from the heat, pause for about a minute (be careful of splattering when the water is added), then slowly add the boiling lemongrass water, palm sugar, fresh ginger and candied ginger. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon. Bring back to a full boil then let simmer for about 10 minutes. Remove from the stove and cool completely. Serve in tall glasses with ice; stir well and garnish with a stalk of lemongrass.

Iced Lemongrass Tea

1/4 cup chopped fresh lemongrass tops
or
2 Tbs dried flakes
4 cup boiling water
sugar to taste

Preheat teapot with boiling water; discard water. Add lemongrass and boiling water, steep 8 to 10 minutes; strain. Allow to cool, sweeten to taste, and serve in tall glasses with ice.

Vietnamese Coffee

2 Tbs sweetened condensed
 milk
6 oz strong black coffee

Place the milk in the bottom of an 8 ounce glass. Carefully pour in coffee, trying not to disturb the layer of milk. Stir milk up from bottom and sip coffee. There will probably be some milk left in the bottom of the glass when you are finished.

In restaurants and cafes, dark-roast coffee is brewed in an individual drip pot that sits on top of a glass, slowly dripping into sweet milk. It takes about 10 to 15 minutes for the water to finish dripping through, and the coffee is sipped at an equally leisurely pace. Both the coffee and the pots are available in Southeast Asian markets, but any type of coffee and any brew-method that produces a strong, rich-tasting cup will do.

This coffee may also be served iced. Add ice cubes on top of the sweet milk and proceed.

Vietnamese Fruit Shakes

1/2 large ripe mango
 or
 1/2 ripe avocado
 or
 1/2 sm ripe papaya
1/4 cup sweetened condensed
 milk
2 cup ice
1 Tbs sugar

Peel and pit mango; cut into chunks. Pulse ingredients in blender or food processor until ice is pureed. Add sugar to taste.

