

Super Simple Shiitake Soba Salad + Teriyaki Tofu Croutons + Japanese Orange Blossom Shakes



super simple shiitake soba salad

cook+drain+rinse

Cook **12 oz. dried buckwheat soba noodles** according to package directions. Drain and rinse quickly under cold running water and then drain again completely. Set to the side.

snap+slice+sauté

Have your kids snap off the stems from **6-8 oz. shiitake mushrooms** and discard. Then slice up the mushroom caps into strips. Add the mushrooms, along with **1½ T oil** and **1 T soy sauce** to a skillet on your stovetop. Turn the heat onto medium high and sauté the mushrooms, tossing occasionally, until they are tender and slightly golden, about 5-8 minutes. Then turn off heat and let mushrooms cool a bit.

grate+squeeze+whisk

While the mushrooms are cooking, have your kids grate **1 T fresh ginger** and squeeze the juice out of **half of an orange**. Combine ginger and orange juice in a large bowl and add **1½ T oil**, **3 T soy sauce**, **1½ T rice wine vinegar**, **1½ T honey**, and **½ tsp salt**. Whisk together to create the dressing for the salad.

chop+add+toss

Chop (or grate) **1 medium carrot** and **1 medium cucumber** into small bits and add to the bowl with the dressing. Take the mushrooms out of the skillet with any remaining sauce and add to the bowl. Toss the pre-cooked noodles with the vegetables and dressing until well coated.

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top+drizzle

Serve the salad topped with the tofu croutons (recipe below), **freshly torn cilantro**, and **a pinch of sesame or sunflower seeds (optional)** and drizzle with more soy sauce, rice vinegar, and/or oil just before serving if it needs a little perking up. This salad can be served at room temperature or chilled.

teriyaki tofu croutons

blot+cut+grate

Have your kids blot **¼ lb extra firm tofu** (drained) with paper towels to get rid of extra moisture. Cut the tofu into cubes and grate **½ tsp fresh ginger**. Set to the side.

heat+brown

Heat a nonstick skillet on your stovetop over medium heat and add **1 T oil** along with the chopped tofu. Do not stir the tofu - let it brown on one side undisturbed for 3 minutes. Be careful to stand away from the pan, as the oil will splatter! Then flip the tofu and let it brown on the other side undisturbed for 3 minutes more.

measure+whisk+bubble

Measure **½ T honey** and **1 T soy sauce** into a bowl and add grated ginger. Whisk to make your teriyaki sauce. When tofu is finished cooking, carefully add sauce to the skillet and let it bubble gently on medium or medium-low heat - be careful of splatters!

stir+reduce

Cook until the sauce thickens and reduces to about 2 tablespoons. This will take about 2-4 minutes. Stir the sauce frequently while cooking - remember, the honey in the sauce can burn easily and if you find this happening, reduce the heat. When finished, the sauce should be thick enough that it coats and sticks to the tofu. Serve tofu croutons with the soba noodle salad!

japanese orange blossom shakes

peel+add+pour

Peel **2½ oranges** and add the oranges to your blender or a pitcher for use with an immersion blender. Then have your kids pour in **2 C vanilla yogurt**, **4 T honey**, and **3-4 C ice**.

blend+enjoy!

Blend until smooth, thick, and creamy. Enjoy!

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shopping list

Shiitake Soba Salad

- 6-8 oz shiitake mushrooms
- 3 T oil
- 4 T soy sauce
- ½ tsp salt
- 12 oz dried buckwheat soba noodles
- ½ orange
- 2 T rice wine vinegar
- 1 T honey/agave/sugar
- 1 T fresh ginger root
- 1 medium cucumber
- 1 medium carrot
- sesame or sunflower seeds (optional)
- fresh cilantro (optional)

Teriyaki Tofu Croutons

- ¼ lb extra firm tofu
- ½ T honey
- 1 T soy sauce
- 1 T oil
- ½ tsp fresh ginger root

Orange Blossom Shakes

- 2 C vanilla yogurt
- 2½ oranges
- 4 T honey/sugar/agave
- 3-4 C ice

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The History of Soba Noodles

Soba is the Japanese name for buckwheat. Soba noodles have been eaten for centuries, but became a main staple of the Tokyo region in Japan during the Edo period, when the wealthy Japanese began to prefer white rice over brown rice. White rice is low in thiamine as compared to thiamine-rich brown rice, and buckwheat became the main source for thiamine instead. Soba noodles were thus not only a comfort food, but also a necessary source for nutrients. Thiamin helps your body convert food into energy and it is vital for a healthy brain, muscles, skin and hair.

Soba noodles are used today to make country-style soups and occasionally they are eaten cooled with a dipping sauce. Soba is typically eaten with chopsticks, and in Japan, it is considered acceptable to slurp the noodles noisily. This is especially common with hot noodles, as drawing up the noodles quickly into the mouth helps cool them.

The Surprise Ingredient of the Week is: Shiitake Mushrooms!

- ★ **Shiitake (pronounced Shih-TALK-ee) mushrooms are also called Black Forest Mushrooms or Chinese mushrooms.**
- ★ **Prized for their therapeutic effects, shiitake mushrooms are native to China and other parts of Asia.** Shiitakes are known to strengthen, detoxify, and restore. They're good for the cardiovascular system and are known to soothe bronchial inflammation. They also contain vitamin D and the B vitamins B2 and B12.
- ★ **Shiitakes are more like animals than plants!** Unlike plants, mushrooms can't obtain and produce energy from the sun. They need to consume organic matter to produce energy to survive. Due to this, shiitakes grown on logs, dead tree trunks, and sawdust!
- ★ **Shiitakes are the second most widely produced edible mushroom,** with a pronounced earthy flavor and hearty, meaty texture once cooked.
- ★ **Shiitakes are shaped like umbrellas, with a brown cap and tan gills.** The stem is too tough and woody to eat - discard it or save it to use when making soup stocks!
- ★ **For centuries, Chinese people picked shiitakes wild and dried them.** It was the Japanese who learned to cultivate wild shiitakes. They did this by putting fresh mushrooms on a dead log and annoying them to self-inoculate. Legend has it that there used to be shiitake wars where people would plot to steal valuable inoculated logs!

Time for a laugh!

Why did everyone want to hang out with the mushroom at the party? He was a real fungi!

Why did the fungi leave the party? There wasn't mushroom (*much room*) to dance!

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