

Asian Noodles

It takes just minutes to make this simple, tasty dish, which can be a meal in itself. Almonds give it crunch and flavor. You can also add small cubes of flavored, baked tofu. For optimal freshness and texture serve this dish the day you prepare it.

- 1/2 cup raw, unsalted almonds**
- 8-10 ounces noodles such as spaghetti (preferably whole wheat, spelt, or udon noodles)**

Dressing:

- 3 tablespoons toasted sesame oil**
 - 5 tablespoons soy sauce**
 - 1/2 teaspoon red chili oil (found in Asian food section of markets)**
 - 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar**
 - 1 tablespoon sugar**
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- 1 medium bunch of green onions including green tops, washed, ends trimmed, sliced thinly**
 - 1 small cucumber, peeled and seeds removed, in small dice**

Place almonds in a baking dish. Bake them in a 300° oven for about 15-20 minutes until they are lightly toasted and fragrant. Remove almonds from oven, and cool them. Then chop them into medium pieces in a hand chopper or blender. (If you have leftover toasted almonds store them in a tight container in the freezer.)

Fill a large saucepan with water and bring it to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package directions. Do not overcook, or it will be mushy. Drain pasta and rinse it with cold water.

In a small bowl make the dressing, stirring it to dissolve the sugar. Prepare the green onions and cucumbers. In a large bowl or saucepan combine the pasta, green onions, cucumbers, and dressing. Gently stir in the chopped, toasted almonds. Serve noodles the same day at room temperature.

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