



USE YOUR NOODLE

From udon to soba and beyond, Asian noodles make everyday dinners new. Fill your pantry with some of the many options available, and try these easy, inspiring recipes.

BY TONY ROSENFELD

Noodles, from bottom left: fresh udon, pad thai rice noodles, egg noodles, rice vermicelli, soba, dried udon.

RICE NOODLES WITH SHRIMP AND CILANTRO

Southeast Asian dried rice flour noodles have a mild taste, but like white rice, they're great at soaking up the flavors of sauces and intense broths. They're available in myriad sizes (this recipe calls for flat, wide pad thai noodles) and can be used in both soups and stir-fries.



UDON WITH TOFU AND STIR-FRIED VEGETABLES

These wheat-based Japanese noodles are available both dried (used in this recipe) and fresh (see Chicken Noodle Soup with Lemongrass, below). Dried udon are flatter than their fresh counterparts and closer in texture to linguine.

CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP WITH LEMONGRASS

In this cross between Vietnamese pho and Japanese udon noodle soup, fresh udon noodles are the star. Fat and bouncy in texture, they cook faster and tend to be more delicate than dried.

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**PEANUT SOBA
WITH STIR-FRIED BEEF
AND BROCCOLI**

Soba are thin, delicately textured Japanese noodles made of buckwheat, with a deep color and a nutty, earthy flavor. Although they're traditionally served cold with a dipping sauce, they can be used in soups or tossed with sauces. In the United States, varieties made from wheat, wild yam, and seaweed are also available, usually dried.



**CRISPY NOODLE CAKES
WITH HOISIN CHICKEN**

This recipe calls for dried rice vermicelli, the rice flour version of Italy's classic thin pasta. Here, the cooked vermicelli is formed into cakes, pan-fried until crisp, and topped with a savory mixture of chicken, mushrooms, and spinach.

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**CHINESE EGG NOODLES
WITH FIVE-SPICE PORK**

Available in the produce area of most supermarkets, egg noodles are a wheat-based, quick-cooking fresh variety. Because of the egg in the dough, they have a soft texture and rich flavor. Be sure to read the ingredient list before you buy—some fresh egg noodles look yellow but don't actually contain eggs (just food coloring).



COVER RECIPE

chicken noodle soup with lemongrass

Serves 4

- 2½ Tbs. canola oil
- 2 small boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about ¾ lb.), butterflied (cut horizontally almost all the way through and then opened like a book)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 medium shallots (about 4 oz.), peeled and thinly sliced into rings
- 2 stalks lemongrass, trimmed, outer layers discarded, halved lengthwise, and smashed with the side of a chef's knife
- 1 Tbs. minced fresh ginger
- 2 tsp. packed light brown sugar
- 5½ cups lower-salt chicken broth
- 3½ oz. shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and quartered (1½ cups)
- 9 oz. fresh udon noodles
- 1 Thai bird chile (or 1 small serrano pepper), sliced into thin rings
- 8 large fresh basil leaves, torn; plus sprigs for garnish
- 1 medium lime, half juiced and half cut into wedges
- 1 Tbs. soy sauce; more to taste
- 2 medium scallions, trimmed and sliced, for garnish (optional)
- 1 medium carrot, cut into matchsticks, for garnish (optional)
- ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, for garnish (optional)

Heat 1½ Tbs. of the oil in a 5- to 6-quart Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Season the chicken with ½ tsp. each salt and pepper, and cook without disturbing until it's browned and releases easily from the bottom of the pot, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook until the second side is browned and almost firm to the touch (just short of cooked through), 1 to 2 minutes more. Transfer the chicken to a cutting board to cool.

Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil and the shallots to the pot. Sprinkle with ¼ tsp. salt, reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring, until the shallots start soften, about 2 minutes. Add the lemongrass, ginger, and brown sugar and cook, stirring, until the ginger and lemongrass sizzle and become fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the chicken broth, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot, and raise the heat to medium high. Bring the broth to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 5 to 7 minutes.

Meanwhile, bring a medium pot of well-salted water to a boil and cook the noodles, stirring, until just tender, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a colander and run under cold water to cool slightly. Drain well.

Use your fingers or the tines of a fork to shred the chicken. Add the chicken and noodles to the broth and cook until the noodles are completely tender and the chicken is cooked through, about 2 minutes. Discard the lemongrass. Stir in the chiles, torn basil, lime juice, and soy sauce; season with more soy to taste. Divide the noodles among 4 large, deep bowls. Ladle the soup over the noodles and garnish with the basil sprigs and scallions, carrot, and cilantro, if using. Serve with the lime wedges for squeezing.

Try this beer: Schönramer Pils

udon with tofu and stir-fried vegetables

Serves 4

- Kosher salt
- ¾ lb. dried udon noodles
- 3 cups lower-salt chicken broth
- 1 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. oyster sauce
- 1 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. rice vinegar
- 4 tsp. Asian sesame oil
- ¼ cup minced fresh ginger
- 2 Tbs. canola oil
- ¾ lb. bok choy, cut crosswise into ¾-inch pieces (4 cups)
- 3½ oz. shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and thinly sliced (1½ cups)
- ½ lb. extra-firm tofu, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 2 medium carrots, cut into matchsticks
- 3 medium scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced, for garnish

Bring a medium pot of well-salted water to a boil. Add the noodles and cook, stirring, until tender, about 8 minutes. Transfer to a colander and run under cold water to cool slightly. Drain well.

In a medium bowl, mix the chicken broth, oyster sauce, vinegar, and 2 tsp. of the sesame oil.

Heat the ginger and canola oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until the ginger sizzles steadily for about 30 seconds. Add the bok choy and mushrooms, sprinkle with the remaining 2 tsp. sesame oil and ¾ tsp. salt and cook, tossing after 1 minute, until the bok choy turns dark green and begins to soften, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the chicken broth mixture, tofu, and carrots and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer,

cover, and cook until the carrots are soft and the tofu is heated through, 5 to 7 minutes.

Distribute the noodles among 4 bowls. Spoon the vegetables, tofu, and broth over the noodles. Sprinkle with the scallions and serve.

Try this beer: Hitachino Nest White Ale

peanut soba with stir-fried beef and broccoli

Serves 4

- Kosher salt
- ¾ lb. flank steak, cut across the grain into thin strips
- 3 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. soy sauce
- 1 medium navel orange
- 1 1½-inch piece ginger, peeled and sliced
- 1 large clove garlic, peeled
- ¼ cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 Tbs. oyster sauce
- 8 oz. soba noodles
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh mint
- 3 Tbs. canola or peanut oil
- 10 oz. broccoli crowns, cut into 1-inch florets (about 4½ cups)

Bring a medium pot of well-salted water to a boil. Toss the beef with 2 tsp. soy sauce and ½ tsp. salt.

Finely grate the orange zest and then juice the orange. Put the ginger and garlic in a food processor and pulse until minced. Transfer all but 1 tsp. of the mixture to a small ramekin. Add the peanut butter, zest, 2 Tbs. of the juice, and 2 Tbs. of the soy sauce to the food processor. Process until smooth, adding 1 to 2 Tbs. water so the mixture loosens a bit.

In a small bowl, mix 2 Tbs. of the remaining orange juice with the oyster sauce, the remaining 1 Tbs. soy sauce, and 2 Tbs. water. Cook the soba noodles in the boiling water, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 5 minutes. Drain well. Transfer the noodles to a large bowl and toss with the peanut butter mixture and half of the mint.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat 1½ Tbs. of the oil with the minced garlic and ginger over medium-high heat until sizzling. Add the beef and cook, stirring, until it just loses its raw color, 1½ to 2 minutes. Transfer to a large plate. Reduce the heat to medium, add the remaining 1½ Tbs. oil to the skillet, and then the broccoli. Cook, stirring, until browned in places, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the oyster sauce mixture, cover, and cook until the broccoli is crisp-tender, about 2 minutes. Return the

beef and its juices to the pan and cook, stirring, until heated through, about 1 minute.

Portion the noodles among 4 plates and top with the beef and broccoli. Sprinkle with the remaining mint and serve.

Try this beer: Sly Fox Gang Aft Agley

chinese egg noodles with five-spice pork

Serves 4

- Kosher salt
- ⅓ cup salted peanuts
- ¼ lb. bacon (3 to 4 thick slices), cut in thin strips
- 2 medium cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- 1 2-inch piece ginger, coarsely chopped
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- ¼ cup canola or peanut oil
- ¾ lb. ground pork
- ½ tsp. five-spice powder
- 3 scallions, trimmed and sliced (white and green parts kept separate)
- 2 Tbs. soy sauce
- 1 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbs. Asian sesame oil
- 2 tsp. white vinegar
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar
- ¾ lb. fresh Chinese-style egg noodles

Bring a medium pot of well-salted water to a boil. Meanwhile, coarsely chop the peanuts in a food processor. Transfer to a small bowl. Put the bacon, garlic, ginger, and red pepper flakes in the food processor and pulse to finely chop.

Heat the oil in a heavy-duty 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the bacon mixture and cook, breaking it apart with a spoon until the bacon renders most of its fat and darkens somewhat, about 4 minutes. Raise the heat to medium high and add the pork, five-spice powder, and ¼ tsp. salt. Cook, breaking up the meat with a spoon, until it loses all of its raw color, about 3 minutes. Stir in the scallion whites, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, sesame oil, vinegar, and sugar. Keep warm over low heat.

Cook the noodles in the boiling water, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 3 minutes. Drain and put in a large bowl; toss in the pork mixture. Portion among 4 bowls, sprinkle with the peanuts and scallion greens, and serve.

Try this beer: Hair of the Dog Fred

rice noodles with shrimp and cilantro

Serves 3 to 4

- Kosher salt
- 6 oz. ¼-inch-wide dried rice noodles (pad thai)
- 2 medium limes, 1 juiced and 1 cut into wedges
- 1½ Tbs. packed light brown sugar
- 2 tsp. soy sauce
- 1 tsp. fish sauce
- ¾ lb. peeled and deveined large shrimp (31 to 40 per lb.)
- 3 Tbs. canola or peanut oil
- ½ tsp. ground coriander
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ½ medium red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and finely diced
- 1 medium jalapeño, seeded and finely diced
- 1 large shallot, finely diced
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Bring a medium pot of well-salted water to a boil. Add the noodles, lower the heat to a gentle simmer, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the noodles are just tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a colander and run under cold water to cool slightly. Drain well.

In a small bowl, combine the lime juice, sugar, soy sauce, and fish sauce; set aside.

In a medium bowl, toss the shrimp with 1 Tbs. of the oil, the coriander, ½ tsp. pepper, and ¼ tsp. salt.

Heat the remaining 2 Tbs. oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Add the red pepper, jalapeño, and shallot, sprinkle with ¼ tsp. salt, and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the shrimp and cook, stirring, until it turns pink and is almost cooked through, about 2 minutes. Add the lime juice mixture and cook, stirring, until the shrimp is cooked through, about 1 minute more. Add the noodles and half of the cilantro; toss until the noodles heat through and pick up the sauce, 1 to 2 minutes.

Serve sprinkled with the remaining cilantro, with the lime wedges on the side for squeezing.

Try this beer: Brew Free! or Die IPA

crispy noodle cakes with hoisin chicken

Serves 2

- ¼ lb. dried rice sticks (vermicelli)
- 1 Tbs. plus 1 tsp. Asian sesame oil
- 2 small boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about ¾ lb.), cut into ½-inch dice
- 1 tsp. dry sherry
- Kosher salt
- 2 Tbs. hoisin sauce
- 1 Tbs. soy sauce
- 2 tsp. rice vinegar
- 3 Tbs. canola oil
- 3½ oz. shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and thinly sliced (1½ cups)
- 4 oz. baby spinach (4 lightly packed cups)
- Asian chile sauce, like Sriracha (optional)

Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Remove the pot from the heat, add the noodles, and soak them until tender, about 5 minutes. Drain, transfer to a baking sheet lined with paper towels, and pat dry. Toss the noodles with 1 Tbs. of the sesame oil.

Toss the chicken with the remaining 1 tsp. sesame oil, the sherry, and ¼ tsp. salt.

In a small bowl, mix the hoisin sauce, soy sauce, and vinegar.

Heat 1½ Tbs. of the canola oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring, until softened and lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Add the chicken and cook, stirring, until it just loses its raw color, about 2 minutes. Add the spinach and cook, stirring, until it wilts, about 1 minute. Add the hoisin mixture and cook, stirring, until the chicken is cooked through, about 1 minute. Transfer to a bowl.

Wipe out the skillet with a paper towel. Heat the remaining 1½ Tbs. oil over medium heat. Divide the noodles in half and spread them in the pan, forming two oblong cakes (if they become entangled, just cut them apart with scissors). Sprinkle lightly with salt and cook until the bottoms are lightly browned and crisp, 4 to 5 minutes. Flip, sprinkle lightly with salt, and cook until the second sides are browned and crisp, about 4 minutes more. Transfer to serving plates, top with the chicken, and serve with chile sauce, if using.

Try this beer: Harviestoun Brewery Old Engine Oil

Tony Rosenfeld is a Fine Cooking contributing editor. □