



... It's Worth the Trip!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Quick and Easy "Peanutty" Pork Lo Mein

For some reason, carbohydrates have gotten a bad rap. There are actually diets that strongly encourage severely limiting them to meet weight loss goals and body fat percentage goals. While it is true that limiting carbohydrates results in quick weight loss and the body will burn fat for its fuel, this may not be the best course of action for long-term weight maintenance, or for those wanting to build lean muscle mass.

To function optimally, your body and brain need carbohydrates. In fact, a diet that is too low in carbohydrates will actually result in a slower metabolism. We want our metabolism, the rate we burn energy and what determines our overall energy needs, to be as high as possible because the higher our metabolism is, the easier it is to meet and maintain overall weight and body fat percentage goals, long-term. Further, it is impossible to build and maintain muscle mass while depriving the body of carbohydrates. For those wanting to see "gains" from their hard work in the gym to grow bigger biceps, you need to fuel your body with carbohydrates. In all seriousness, though, for long-term weight loss, it's important to build muscle so the body can burn fat on its own. Quite frankly, this is a brilliant and effective strategy! (Plus, you will look great with more muscle.) The more muscle your body has, the higher your metabolism is and the more calories you need. So when you don't consume enough, your body will burn fat.

Carbohydrates are not the enemy! They key is to focus on balancing your carbohydrates with proteins, and fats, while choosing the most nutritious foods most of the time. Here is a good place to start: Aim for most of your carbohydrate choices to be both vegetables and fruits and whole grains (whole wheat, oats, brown rice, quinoa, etc.). For those that are healthy with no medical conditions, a good recommended macronutrient breakdown target would be to have the number of calories in the daily diet coming from carbohydrates be 40-45%, while those from fat be less than 30% (with most of the choices being from healthy fats) and 20-30% from protein.

This meal takes a take-out favorite and makes it more nutrient dense by using whole wheat noodles, lean proteins, while loading it with a variety of produce! The flavor and ease of making is worth a try!



Ingredients: 4 Servings

- ½ lb. uncooked whole wheat noodles (fettuccine or spaghetti)
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ¼ cup crunchy peanut butter
- 2½ tbsp. low sodium soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. white vinegar
- 1 tbsp. freshly grated ginger (or 1½ tsp. ginger powder)
- ½ tsp. hot chili sauce or red pepper flakes (optional)
- 2 tbsp. olive or sesame oil
- ¼ cup sweet onions (sliced)
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 12-16 oz. boneless pork loin (cut into thin slices)
- 1 - 8 oz. can water chestnuts (drained)
- 1 - 8 oz. can bamboo shoots, drained
- ½ head medium sized sliced cabbage

Directions:

1. Put on a pot of boiling water for pasta. Cook the noodles to al dente.
2. While the pasta is cooking, heat oil in skillet over medium-high heat. Once hot, add the onion and stir fry for about one minute. Add the sliced pork. Toss occasionally until cooked.
3. Once the pork is cooked, add to it 2 tbsp. of water, cabbage, bamboo shoots, water chestnuts, and garlic. Toss and stir fry, until the cabbage is cooked where it still has a little firmness.
4. While the cabbage is cooking, quickly whisk together the orange juice, peanut butter, soy sauce, vinegar, ginger, and chili or red pepper (if using).
5. Add the cooked noodles to the pork and cabbage, and toss. Cook for about 2 minutes and then pour the sauce over noodles. Stir to coat. Continue folding and mixing the lo mein over heat for about a minute.
6. Serve by plating ¼ of the low-mien on a plate, alongside a piece of your favorite fruit.

Tips:

- This recipe is so versatile, you can use your favorite vegetables and meats.
- To save on time, you can even use leftover cooked veggies and meat. Just decrease the oil to 1 tbsp. in step 2.

DISCLAIMER:

THIS RECIPE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY DOD OF ANY INDIVIDUAL VENDOR. ANY PRODUCT OF SIMILAR SPECIFICATION MAY BE USED TO MAKE THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL.

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