

TRB

The Rock Barn
Field - to - Fork

thai spring roll salad with roasted pork

Dressing

4 shallots, thinly sliced
6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
2 inch piece of ginger, peeled, thinly sliced
2 hot chilies, seeded and chopped (plus more, to taste)
4 Tbl. soy sauce
2 Tbl. fish sauce
3 limes, juiced
4 Tbl. brown sugar
Rice wine vinegar, to taste
4 Tbl. neutral oil (like canola or peanut)
½ bunch cilantro leaves, chopped (use the rest for the salad)

Salad

2 ounces dried cellophane noodles
1 pork sirloin by The Rock Barn
8 cups greens, such as thinly shredded Napa cabbage or washed, torn tender lettuces
4 whole scallions, trimmed, thinly sliced
4 small pickling cucumbers, thinly sliced
1 carrot, grated
2+ cups fresh herbs, picked: cilantro leaves, mint leaves, basil, etc., washed & patted dry
½ cup roasted peanuts, crushed or finely chopped

This time of year, my patio planters overfloweth with herbs, cucumbers, and all manner of summer vegetables perfect for an entrée salad. This Thai-inspired recipe makes a great home for whatever's fresh in your garden. If you're using a dense green like cabbage, the salad leftovers make a great lunch the next day; if you're using tender greens like butter lettuce, only dress the portions you plan on eating that night to keep everything from getting too soggy. Serves four.

method

Make the dressing. In a medium bowl, combine shallot, garlic, ginger, chilies, soy sauce, fish sauce, and lime juice. Add the brown sugar and stir until completely dissolved. Whisk in the oil a tablespoon at a time until the mixture emulsifies. Taste, and balance with rice wine vinegar, oil, and kosher salt if necessary. Stir in the cilantro leaves and put the dressing aside while you prepare the rest of the dish to allow the flavors to marry.

Hydrate the noodles. Place the noodles in a deep bowl and cover with warm tap water. Soak the noodles until tender, about 20 minutes, then drain well. Snip into manageable lengths with scissors, then toss with about 2 tablespoons of dressing.

Pan-roast the sirloin. Preheat the oven to 400° F. Heat a dry cast iron skillet on the stovetop over medium-high heat. Pat the sirloin dry with a paper towel. Rub each side of the meat with neutral oil (like canola or peanut) and season with kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper. Add a slick of oil of the cast iron pan and allow it to heat until beginning to smoke. Sear the sirloin on each side until a dark golden crust forms (4 or 5 minutes per side) and drop the skillet into the preheated oven. Roast until a meat thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the sirloin reads 135° F (about 10 minutes more). Remove the pork from the oven and set aside to rest at room temperature, tented in foil, while you prepare the salad. You can also cook off the pork a few hours ahead of time – just make sure it comes back to room temperature before serving.

Assemble the salad. In a large bowl, combine the greens, scallions, cucumbers, and carrot. Whisk the dressing, then add to the salad a few spoonfuls at a time, tossing and tasting as you go, adding just enough dressing to make the mixture moist and flavorful. Add the noodles, tossing to distribute evenly through the salad. Add the herbs and peanuts, reserving a few pinches of each for garnish, and toss to combine. Transfer the salad to a serving platter.

Slice and Serve. Once the pork has rested for 10 minutes (or all the way to room temperature), thinly slice across the grain. Feather the sirloin over the top of the salad and spoon additional dressing over the pork. Sprinkle the remaining herbs and peanuts over the top and serve.