

Asian- Inspired Shrimp Salad with Tropical Fruit

(Serves 2)

Tangy fruit and opalescent pink shrimp dressed with a spicy sweet-and-tart vinaigrette make a nice light beginning for a special meal. If you cannot find a mango or papaya in the market, 2 oranges, peeled and sectioned, or 1/2 cantaloupe, peeled, seeded and diced, can be substituted. Or the salad can be made without fruit and with the addition of cucumber (see below). The shrimp can be poached the night before or earlier in the day when you prepare the vinaigrette. Dice or slice the fruit as you like. Assemble at the last minute.

- 2 cups (16 fl oz/500 ml) water or dry white wine
- 1/2 lb. (250 g) medium-sized shrimp (prawns), peeled and deveined (about 10)
- 1 ripe papaya or mango
- 3 cups (6 oz/185 g) torn mixed lettuces
- 3 tablespoons torn fresh mint leaves
- 3 tablespoons torn fresh basil leaves
- FOR THE VINAIGRETTE:
- 1/3 cup (3 fl oz/80 ml) peanut oil or olive oil
- finely grated zest of 1 lime (see glossary) 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes or
- 1/2 teaspoon diced fresh jalapeno (hot green) chili pepper, or to taste
- Salt

In a saucepan over high heat, bring the water or wine to a boil. Add the shrimp and cook until they turn pink and curl, 3-5 minutes.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a bowl. Cover and refrigerate until needed.

If using a papaya, peel, then cut in half lengthwise and scoop out and discard the seeds.

Dice or slice the flesh. If using a mango, cut off the flesh from either side of the large central pit, then dice or slice the flesh. (There will be some tasty flesh still clinging to the pit; eat it off while standing over the sink for a true chef's treat.)

In a bowl combine the lettuces, mint and basil and toss to mix.

To make the vinaigrette, in a small bowl, thoroughly whisk together the peanut or olive oil, lime zest and juice, brown sugar, pepper flakes or jalapeno pepper and the salt to taste.

Add a few tablespoons of the vinaigrette to the shrimp, toss well and let stand for a few minutes.

Drizzle half of the remaining vinaigrette over the lettuces and herbs and toss thoroughly.

Divide the lettuce mixture between 2 individual plates.

Top with the shrimp and papaya or mango.

Drizzle the remaining vinaigrette over the top.

Shrimp Salad with Cucumber

Omit the fruit. Peel 1 small cucumber, cut in half lengthwise and scoop out and discard the seeds. Slice the cucumber thinly and place in a bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of the vinaigrette to the cucumber, toss well and let stand for 10 minutes.

Proceed as directed for the shrimp and lettuce mixture, then assemble the salad, substituting the cucumber for the fruit.