



ANDREA NGUYEN'S

Pass the Fish Sauce

recipe

Viet-Thai Melon Salad

Use a firm-sweet melon; a super ripe melon may be too soft or even mushy once it's been salted. One kind of melon is fine but two is more fun. You could do three, if you want. Instead of peanuts, use cashews or maybe sliced almonds. Sunflower seeds would be alright too. Pounding the nuts (or seeds) releases oil and flavor more than chopping.

Serves 4 to 6

- 1/3 cup [Nước Chấm Vinaigrette](#), plus more as needed
 - 2 tsp packed grated lime zest, fresh or thawed
 - Brimming 1/3 cup unsalted or lightly salted, roasted peanuts, pounded or finely chopped
 - 1/4 teaspoon minced and mashed garlic
 - 1 lb trimmed watermelon
 - 1 lb trimmed cantaloupe
 - Fine sea salt or [MSG Salt](#), plus more as needed
 - 1/2 teaspoon sugar
 - 2/3 cup lightly packed hand-torn soft leaf herbs, such as mint, cilantro and/or basil (any kind)
1. In a small bowl, combine the vinaigrette with the lime zest, peanuts, and garlic. Let sit 10 to 15 minutes to develop flavor and texture.
 2. Meanwhile, cut the melon into 1-inch chunks, transfer to a mixing bowl and season with about 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon sugar. Let the fruit sit for 10 minutes to release liquid.
 3. Pour off excess liquid, pour over the dressing, and toss to coat well. Taste to verify flavor. Add salt or extra dressing, if a more savory note is needed. Add the herbs, toss to distribute. Transfer to shallow bowl and serve immediately. If you let the salad sit for too long it releases liquid and the flavor becomes diluted.