Thai Mango Salad (Yam Mamuang)

Thai mango salad is a vibrant, refreshing dish that perfectly balances the four fundamental flavors of Thai cuisine: sweet, sour, salty, and spicy[1]. This salad features crisp, tart green mangoes as the star ingredient, tossed with fresh herbs, crunchy vegetables, and a punchy lime-based dressing, then topped with roasted peanuts or cashews for textural contrast.

Unlike the sweet yellow mangoes used for desserts, this salad traditionally uses **green (unripe) mangoes**, which are firm, crunchy, and pleasantly sour—almost like a firm apple in texture but with a distinctive tropical tang. The result is an incredibly refreshing salad that's popular as a side dish, appetizer, or light meal throughout Thailand and Southeast Asia.



If you can't find green mangoes at Asian markets, you can substitute with tart Granny Smith apples or even firm, underripe regular mangoes, though the flavor will be different.

Ingredients

For the salad

- 2 large green (unripe) mangoes, julienned (about 3-4 cups)
- 1 medium carrot, julienned
- 2-3 shallots, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves
- 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves
- 2-3 Thai bird's eye chilies, thinly sliced[2]
- 1/3 cup roasted peanuts or cashews, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons dried shrimp (optional, but traditional)

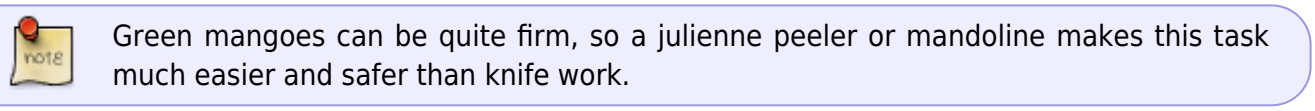
For the dressing

- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce[3]
- 1-2 tablespoons palm sugar or brown sugar
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 Thai chili, minced (optional, for extra heat)

Instructions

Prepare the mangoes

Peel the green mangoes using a vegetable peeler. Using a julienne peeler or sharp knife, cut the mango flesh into thin matchstick strips[4]. Alternatively, use a box grater with large holes. Place the julienned mango in a large mixing bowl.



Green mangoes can be quite firm, so a julienne peeler or mandoline makes this task much easier and safer than knife work.

Prepare the other vegetables

Julienne the carrot to match the mango strips. Thinly slice the shallots into rings. Add both to the bowl with the mango. If using dried shrimp, roughly chop them and add to the bowl as well.

Make the dressing

In a small bowl, combine lime juice, fish sauce, and palm sugar. Stir vigorously until the sugar completely dissolves[5]. Add the minced garlic and optional chili. Taste and adjust—it should be balanced between sour, salty, and sweet with a slight edge of tartness.


The dressing should taste quite strong on its own, as it will be diluted by the volume of vegetables. Don't be alarmed if it seems too intense when you taste it straight.

Assemble the salad

Pour the dressing over the mango mixture. Add the sliced chilies, cilantro, and mint leaves. Toss everything together thoroughly, using your hands or salad tongs to ensure even coating[6]. Let the salad sit for 5-10 minutes to allow flavors to meld.

Serve

Transfer to a serving plate and top with the chopped roasted peanuts or cashews. Serve immediately while still crisp and fresh.


This salad is best eaten within an hour of making, as the salt and acid in the dressing will start to soften the vegetables over time.

Variations

- **Seafood version:** Add cooked shrimp, grilled squid, or lump crab meat for a more substantial dish
- **Protein boost:** Top with grilled chicken or crispy fried tofu
- **Fruit additions:** Include julienned cucumber, green papaya, or green apple for extra crunch
- **Herb variations:** Try Thai basil or saw-leaf coriander (culantro) in addition to or instead of mint

Serving Suggestions

Thai mango salad pairs beautifully with grilled meats, especially Thai-style grilled chicken (gai yang) or pork. It's also excellent as part of a larger Thai meal alongside curry, sticky rice, and other salads. The bright, acidic flavors make it an ideal counterpoint to rich, coconut-based curries.

1)

The interplay of these flavors is central to Thai cooking philosophy

2)

Adjust according to heat tolerance—these are quite spicy

3)

For vegetarian version, substitute with soy sauce or mushroom soy sauce

4)

Work around the large flat pit in the center

5)

This may take 1-2 minutes of stirring

6)

Traditionally, this is done by hand to help the flavors penetrate

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