Thai Cucumber and Pineapple Salad

This is an easy and very delicious recipe for a cool salad. Prep time takes about 45 minutes but chow time is super fast as it is an awesome dish.

1) Place all salad dressing ingredients in a cup. Stir well. Set aside.
2) Place pineapple chunks in a mixing bowl.
3) To prepare the cucumber: Remove skin with a vegetable peeler, or cut off with a knife (if the cucumber is organic, leave the skin on for extra nutrients and fiber). Next, cut the cucumber in half lengthwise. Cut these sections again lengthwise (several times if the cucumber is thick), then slice the other way to create cubes. Add these to the mixing bowl.
4) Clean out the seeds of the red bell pepper, then slice it thinly into strips. Slice these in half to create matchstick-like pieces. Add these to the mixing bowl.
5) Add the sliced spring green onions, plus the whole roasted peanuts. Add most of the basil and coriander, putting aside a little of each for the garnish.
6) Pour the salad dressing over. Toss well.
7) Pour or scoop the salad onto a serving plate. Top with the extra basil and coriander plus a sprinkling of ground or chopped peanuts. If desired, serve with lime wedges on the side.

SALAD DRESSING:
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 red chilli, de-seeded and minced, OR 1 tsp. chili sauce (or more if you want it extra spicy)
2 Tbsp. soy sauce
2 Tbsp. fish sauce, OR vegetarian fish sauce (look for vegetarian fish sauce at Vietnamese stores)
juice of 1/2 lime (about 1 Tbsp.)
2 tsp. brown sugar
1/2 tsp. shrimp paste, OR 1/2 Tbsp. more fish sauce (or vegetarian fish sauce)

Salad Tips: This salad is at its best when first tossed. Try to eat up leftovers as soon as possible. For added protein (if serving as a main course), toss in 1 cup cooked shrimp, or 1 package deep-fried tofu cut into cubes. If you're planning to serve it at a party or take it to a potluck: Prepare all the ingredients and place them in separate containers in the refrigerator. Also, prepare the dressing and keep in a jar or covered container in the refrigerator. Then simply toss all together right before serving.

Optional: To make this salad a complete meal, add 1 cup cooked shrimp, or 1 package deep-fried tofu.

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5) Add the sliced spring green onion, plus the whole roasted peanuts. Add most of the basil and coriander, putting aside a little of each for the garnish.
6) Now pour the salad dressing over. Toss well.
7) Pour or scoop the salad onto a serving plate. Top with the extra basil and coriander you kept back, plus a sprinkling of ground or chopped peanuts. If desired, serve with lime wedges on the side.

ENJOY!