



### **Burmese Tea Leaf Salad**

**Serves 4**

- 1/2 cup loose green tea leaves
- 1 lemon, 1/2 juiced and 1/2 sliced into wedges for serving
- 12 cloves garlic, (8 sliced)
- 1/2 jalapeño pepper, diced and divided into two
- 1 tbsp. minced ginger
- 1 bunch green onions, diced and divided into two
- 1 large head of romaine lettuce, roughly chopped
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup roasted peanuts
- 1/4 cup sesame seeds, roasted (I used white and black)
- 1/2 cup green lentils (I used brown)
- 1 cup peanut oil (for frying)

Let's begin with the fermented tea leaves. Note that you will have to do this step at least two days in advance, so plan ahead. The tea leaves are the

heart and soul of this salad, so give this step a little extra attention.

Begin by sorting through your tea leaves and removing any twigs or stems so that you're just left with the leaves. Pour hot, not quite boiling, water over the leaves and let them steep for 10 minutes. Drain the leaves and then soak them in cold water for 1 hour. Drain the leaves again in a fine mesh strainer, pressing down to remove as much liquid as possible. Transfer your leaves to a food processor or blender with the juice of 1/2 a lemon, 4 cloves of garlic, half of your diced jalapeño pepper, half the green onions, and the 1 tbsp. of ginger. Blend until you have a thick, smooth pesto-like sauce. Transfer to an airtight container and store in a cool, dark place like a pantry for 2 days. Refrigerate after two days.

Wait two days... Finally, it's salad day!

Start by boiling your lentils as per the package directions. (Instead, I used two kinds of lentils, French puy and brown lentils, soaked for 4 hours, and then drained well on paper towels.) Heat the peanut oil in a deep saucepan over high heat for frying. Carefully place your lentils in the hot oil – it should sizzle immediately, and bubble up a bit. Slowly stir the lentils for 4 - 5 minutes as they fry until they are nice and crispy, but not burnt. The best method to remove tiny lentils from the hot oil is to pour them through a strainer fitted over a metal or glass bowl. (The French lentils, after cooling, needed to be crisper, so I simply put them back in the pan and fried for a few more minutes.)

Next, fry your remaining 8 cloves of garlic in the same oil over medium heat. Just like the lentils, fry until golden and crispy, stirring often to ensure that it doesn't burn. Remove garlic slices from the oil and set aside on a bed of paper towels to cool and dry.

It's time to assemble this masterpiece. Using a large shallow bowl or serving plate, build the base of your salad with the chopped romaine. Begin to add toppings in individual clumps around the outer edge of the plate – the halved grape tomatoes, sesame seeds, roasted peanuts, fried garlic, diced green onions, diced jalapeños, lemon wedges and the crunchy fried lentils. Next, add a generous scoop of fermented tea leaves right in the

middle of the salad – this is your centerpiece.

To complete the salad, squeeze the lemon wedges all over, and then using two forks, carefully begin to spread the tea leaves outwards, and then pull the other ingredients inwards, tossing until fully mixed.

**Notes:** Since the tea leaves must be prepared two days in advance, if you want to continue with other prep at the same time you can. The lentils can be fried, garlic fried and sesame seeds toasted, and then stored in glass jars.

The tea leaves will be more than you need for this salad. You can cut the recipe in half easily.

Slightly adapted from Jason Faber at <http://www.raiseatoast.ca/burmese-tea-leaf-salad-recipe-burma-superstar-san-francisco/>

Photo credit: Jason Faber



**Burma-Style Chicken Salad**

**Serves 2-4**

Almost any leftover cooked ingredient can be made into salad in Burmese

cuisine, and often is. If you have leftover cooked chicken after making chicken broth from whole legs or roasting a chicken, transform it into this refreshing salad. Serve as a light main course for lunch or as an appetizer.

### **Ingredients**

2 cups large bite-sized pieces cooked chicken (cut or pull the chicken into pieces)

1/3 to 1/2 cup thinly sliced shallots, soaked in cold water for 10 minutes and drained

2 tbsp. fresh lime juice

2 tsp. shallot oil

1 tsp. salt

2 tsp. minced green cayenne chile, or to taste

1 tbsp. toasted chickpea flour (optional)

1 to 2 tbsp. fried shallots (see separate recipe)

Scant 1/2 cup chopped coriander or mint, or Vietnamese coriander

### **Directions**

Place the chicken in a shallow serving bowl. Add the raw shallots and toss.

To find chickpea flour (sometimes called besan), try Southeast Asian markets or any well-stocked bulk bin department. To toast it, place a cast-iron or other skillet over medium-high heat, add the flour and use a wooden spoon to stir it frequently as it heats and starts to toast. After about 6 or 7 minutes, it will start to change color. Lower the heat a little and continue to stir as it gets a little more color, then remove from the heat and continue to stir for another minute as the pan starts to cool.

Mix together the lime juice, shallot oil, salt and green chile in a small bowl or cup. Pour over the salad and mix thoroughly, using your hands. If you have the time, let stand for 10 minutes.

Just before serving, add the toasted chickpea flour, if you wish, the fried shallots and herbs, and mix well. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

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### **Fried Shallots and Shallot Oil**

#### **Ingredients**

1 cup peanut oil

2 cups (about 1/2 lb.) thinly sliced Asian or European shallots

#### **Directions**

Place a wide heavy skillet or a large stable wok over medium-high heat and add the oil. Toss in a slice of shallot. As the oil heats, it will rise to the surface, sizzling lightly.

When it has reached the surface, add the rest of the shallots carefully, so you don't splash yourself with the oil, and lower the heat to medium. (The shallots may seem crowded, but they'll shrink as they cook.) Stir gently and frequently with a long-handled wooden spoon or a spider. The shallots will bubble as they give off their moisture. If they start to brown early in the first 5 minutes, lower the heat a little more. After about 10 minutes, they should start to color. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally to prevent them from sticking to the pan or to each other, until they have turned a golden brown, another 3 minutes or so.

Line a plate with paper towels. Use tongs or a spider to lift a clump of fried shallots out of the oil, pausing for a moment to shake off excess oil into the

pan, then place on the paper towel. Turn off the heat, transfer the remaining shallots to the plate, and blot gently with another paper towel. Separate any clumps, sprinkle with salt and toss them a little, then let them air dry 5 to 10 minutes, so they crisp up and cool. (If your kitchen is very hot and humid, they may not crisp up; don't worry, the flavor will still be there.)

Transfer the shallots to a clean, dry, wide mouthed glass jar. Once they have cooled completely, seal tightly. Transfer the oil to another clean dry jar, using all but the very last of it, which will have some stray pieces of shallot debris. (You can set that oil aside for stir-frying.) Once the oil has cooled completely, cover tightly and store in a cool dark place or refrigerator.

**TIP:**

You'll end up with about 3/4 cup fried shallots and 1-1/4 cups shallot oil, but they both keep well and have many uses: drizzle the oil on salads or freshly cooked greens, and use a handful of shallots to finish and flavor a salad.

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## **Shrimp salad**

**Serves 4 to 6**

### **Ingredients**

2 tablespoons peanut oil

1 pound medium to large shrimp, peeled, deveined, and rinsed

3 scallions, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced

1/2 medium English cucumber

2 tablespoons chopped coriander

1 green or red cayenne chile, minced, or 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon red chile powder

1 teaspoon fish sauce

2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

Salt (optional)

### **Directions**

Place a wok or large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil, then toss in the shrimp and stir-fry just until they turn pink, a minute or two.

Transfer the shrimp to a cutting board. Slice on the diagonal and place in a

shallow bowl. Add the scallions.

Cut the cucumber into 1 1/2-inch lengths and slice each length into julienne strips. You should have a scant cup. Add the cucumber, coriander, and chile to the shrimp and toss lightly. Add the fish sauce and lime juice and toss to mix well. Taste and add a little salt if you wish, then toss and serve immediately.

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