



## **Green Papaya Salad**

By Jeremy Niehuss

Serves 4

1 small unripe green papaya  
1 garlic clove  
1 to 2 Thai bird chilies, chopped  
3 tablespoons sugar  
3 tablespoons fish sauce  
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice with pulp  
3 tablespoons water  
1 carrot, sliced into matchsticks  
½ cup grape or cherry tomatoes, cut in half  
¼ head red cabbage, cored and thinly sliced  
¾ cup mung bean sprouts  
1 tablespoon cilantro leaves, chopped  
8 Thai basil leaves or substitute regular basil leaves, thinly sliced  
2 tablespoons shallots, peeled and thinly sliced  
8 large lettuce leaves (bib, butter, romaine or leaf), washed and patted dry  
Roasted and chopped peanuts for garnish

Peel the papaya and cut it in half. Using a large spoon, scrape out the seeds and the membrane underneath them. Using a knife or a mandolin (see tip below), cut the papaya into 'matchsticks' (julienned). Wash the papaya under cold water in a colander. Drain excess water and spread the pieces out on paper towels to dry.

To make the dressing, use a mortar and pestle or food processor. Add the garlic, chilies and sugar and work into a paste. Transfer the paste to a small bowl and add the fish sauce, lime juice and water. Mix well. The sauce should have a pleasant saltiness with a touch of acidity. If the dressing is too acidic or salty it will macerate the vegetables making them mushy with no texture.

In a large bowl, combine the rinsed papaya, carrots, tomatoes, cabbage, sprouts, cilantro, basil and shallots. Add ¼ (one quarter) to 1/3 cup (one third) of the dressing and toss to combine. Taste and adjust flavor with more dressing if needed. There should be a small amount of dressing in the bottom of the bowl. Allow the vegetables to sit for about 5 to 10 minutes gently tossing a couple of times. During this time the vegetables will soften slightly. Some of the vegetables will soften more than others leaving a salad with a variety of textures.

Place 2 lettuce leaves on each plate and spoon the salad onto the leaves. Garnish with the peanuts and serve. Any remaining dressing will keep for up to two weeks in the refrigerator.