

RECIPES IN SEASON





Global Wraps

Asian fusion
roll-ups and the
joys of hand-held foods

BY YING COMPESTINE

Nai Nai had just given me a new pair of small, red training chopsticks, tied together at the top with a rubber band. Grandmother explained that having them tied together helps children learn to use chopsticks, a skill that, my American friends are happy to hear, is less instinctive than learned over time.

I was 4 years old, growing up in the city of Wuhan in central China, a time when I spent many hours following grandmother around in our kitchen. I enjoyed watching Nai Nai slice meat, boil dumplings and cut tofu. Her skillful knife turned bamboo shoots into miniature trees, scallions into brushes, white onions into roses, and carrots and icicle radishes into flowers. Best of all, I got to taste what Nai Nai cooked before my brothers did.

That day Nai Nai served rice noodles for lunch. Even with the rubber bands in place, I grew frustrated and hungry as the noodles kept slipping from my chopsticks. Finally, I rolled up my sleeves, grabbed the noodles with my hands and stuffed them into my mouth.

Eating with our hands—something that comes naturally to many of us who grew up using chopsticks—is one of my favorite ways of enjoying food. As a child I loved to eat food in wrappers, especially dumplings and spring rolls: food I could touch and feel without the struggle of my little chopsticks. In my opinion, it was a more appealing and joyful way of eating.

Clockwise from left: Curried Chicken Wraps (page 54), Cucumber Raita (page 55), Hand-Roll Sushi with Brown Rice, Sesame & Smoked Salmon (page 52), Lettuce Cups with Tofu & Cashews (page 51), Chile-Garlic Dipping Sauce (page 55), Pan-Fried Dumplings (page 51), Thai Sauce (page 55), Shrimp Spring Rolls (page 53)

After relocating to the United States as an adult, I now enjoy creating fusion roll-ups using both Asian and Western wrappers, an assortment of flavorful Asian fillings and versatile dipping sauces.

My young son loves a quick dinner of spicy curry chicken wrapped in a tortilla. A quick stir-fry of savory flavored tofu, vegetables and cashews nestled in a cool, crisp lettuce cup is a great way to welcome spring. (Anyone trying to avoid breads will want to take note of this elegant trick.)

Wrapped foods make for a creative, fresh and healthful meal. And they're just the thing if you have to eat on the go. Because wraps are versatile and easy to prepare, they can

be served as appetizers or the whole meal.

Once you've learned the basics, you will find yourself creating your own casual and seasonal roll-ups to suit your time, place and mood. Perhaps it's the 4-year-old in us; a meal without eating utensils—be they forks or chopsticks—is an occasion for taking food into our own hands and enjoying it with gleeful freedom.

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WRAPPING IT UP



◀ **WONTON WRAPPERS:** These square wheat-flour wrappers are used for pan-fried, steamed or boiled Chinese dumplings. Fresh wonton wrappers will keep, well wrapped, in the refrigerator for up to 1 week or for up to 3 months

in the freezer. You can find them in large supermarkets and Asian markets.

RICE-PAPER WRAPPERS: ▶

These round or triangular translucent sheets made from rice flour are widely used in Vietnamese and Thai cooking. Dipped in warm water, the delicate sheets become soft and pliable in



seconds. It just takes a few times working with them to master the technique. Once opened, store in airtight plastic bags. In a cool, dry place they will keep for a couple of months. You can find them in Asian markets and specialty stores.

FLOUR TORTILLAS: ▶

Tortillas are typically made with refined flour, but whole-wheat varieties are becoming increasingly available in supermarkets. Sizes range from 6 to 10 inches in diameter. Heat tortillas (see "Two Easy Ways to Heat Tortillas," page 55) to make them soft and pliable for wrapping around fillings. I recommend flour tortillas, rather than corn tortillas, for these



recipes. (To make your own tortillas, see the recipe on page 54.)

▼ **NORI:** This nutritious dried seaweed is popular as a wrapper for sushi and can also be sliced and used as a garnish for Japanese dishes. Nori is available in Asian markets and natural-foods stores.



Pan-Fried Dumplings

PREP TIME: 40 MINUTES | **START TO FINISH:** 1 HOUR

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare recipe through Step 2. Cover and refrigerate Chile-Garlic Dipping Sauce for up to 4 days, meat filling for up to 1 day.

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

CRISP PAN-FRIED DUMPLINGS don't have to be loaded with fat. Cooking them in a mixture of water and oil lets the filling heat through while the outside becomes delightfully crisp and golden.

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Chile-Garlic Dipping Sauce (page 55)

FILLING

- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound lean ground pork, beef or turkey
- 3 large napa cabbage leaves, stemmed and minced (2 cups)
- 4 fresh shiitake mushroom caps or oyster mushrooms, diced ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)
- 1 medium leek (white part only), washed thoroughly (see *Cooking Tip, page 76*) and minced
- 2 scallions, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 tablespoon rice wine or medium-dry sherry
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

DUMPLINGS

- 36 wonton wrappers (10 ounces) (see *"Wrapping It Up," page 50*)
- 2 tablespoons canola oil, divided
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water, divided

1. Make Chile-Garlic Dipping Sauce.
2. To prepare filling: Mix all filling ingredients in large bowl.
3. To assemble dumplings: Organize your work area with a bowl of cold water, stack of wonton wrappers (cover with a damp cloth while assembling dumplings) and a floured plate to hold the dumplings.
4. Using a $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch round cookie cutter (or clean can), cut wonton wrappers into circles (they need not be perfectly round). Using a pastry brush, brush the edges of a wrapper with water. Spoon 1 heaping teaspoon of filling into the center of the wrapper. Fold the wrapper over to form a half-moon shape, pressing the edges together to seal. Repeat with remaining wrappers and filling. Keep dumplings covered with a damp cloth while working to prevent them from drying out.
5. Preheat oven to 200°F.
6. Combine 1 tablespoon oil and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Place one-third of the dumplings in

the skillet so that they are not touching; cover and cook until dumplings puff up and are light brown on the bottom, 4 to 5 minutes. Carefully flip with tongs and cook, covered, until the other side is light brown and filling is no longer pink in the center, about 1 minute more. Transfer dumplings to a baking sheet and place in the oven to keep warm. Repeat procedure with half the remaining dumplings, the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and another $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water. Then, cook remaining dumplings in the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water. (There is enough oil left in the skillet for the final batch.) Serve hot, with Chile-Garlic Dipping Sauce.

MAKES 12 APPETIZER SERVINGS, 3 DUMPLINGS EACH.

PER DUMPLING: 174 CALORIES; 6 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT, 3 G MONO); 15 MG CHOLESTEROL; 21 G CARBOHYDRATE; 8 G PROTEIN; 1 G FIBER; 444 MG SODIUM.

Lettuce Cups with Tofu & Cashews

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES | **START TO FINISH:** 45 MINUTES

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare recipe through Step 4. Cover and refrigerate filling for up to 1 day; refrigerate lettuce cups in an airtight container for up to 4 hours. | **DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** MODERATE

LETTUCE LEAVES MAKE a refreshing low-calorie wrapper for an intensely flavored vegetarian filling. The mixture of crisp vegetables, fruit and crunchy nuts complements tofu beautifully. If you prefer, you can substitute shrimp or lean meat for the tofu.

- 4 medium heads Boston lettuce
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Chile-Garlic Dipping Sauce (page 55)
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chile puree with garlic
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup oyster mushrooms, finely chopped
- 1 8-ounce package flavored baked tofu (see *Ingredient Note, page 76*), cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely diced carrot
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely diced green apple
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup canned water chestnuts, rinsed and finely diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted cashews, toasted (see *Cooking Tip, page 76*) and coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 2 scallions, trimmed and minced

INGREDIENT NOTE:
Do not substitute regular flavored tofu in this recipe; it is too soft. Be sure the label says "baked."

1. Cut out lettuce cores. Separate the leaves to make "cups." Wash and pat dry. (Reserve small inner leaves for another use.)
2. Make Chile-Garlic Dipping Sauce. Place cornstarch in a small

bowl. Gradually whisk in ¼ cup of the dipping sauce and the chile puree with garlic. Set aside. Reserve the remaining dipping sauce for serving.

3. Heat a wok or large skillet over medium-high heat. Add oil and tilt pan to coat it evenly. Add ginger and garlic; stir-fry until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add mushrooms and tofu; stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add carrot, apple and water chestnuts; stir-fry for 30 seconds.
4. Add the dipping sauce-cornstarch mixture. Cook, stirring, until vegetables are heated through and sauce has thickened, about 2 minutes. Add cashews, sesame oil and scallions; toss to combine.
5. **To assemble cups:** Spoon about 2 tablespoons of the filling into each lettuce cup and serve with the remaining ½ cup dipping sauce.

**MAKES 12 APPETIZER SERVINGS,
2 LETTUCE CUPS EACH.**

PER CUP: 135 CALORIES; 8 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT, 3 G MONO); 0 MG CHOLESTEROL; 10 G CARBOHYDRATE; 7 G PROTEIN; 2 G FIBER; 276 MG SODIUM.

Hand-Roll Sushi with Brown Rice, Sesame & Smoked Salmon

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES | **START TO FINISH:** 1½ HOURS (including rice-cooking time) | **TO MAKE AHEAD:** Cook rice up to 1 day ahead and refrigerate or use leftover cooked rice (1½ cups). | **DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** EASY

THESE SATISFYING AND healthy delicacies will lure you away from the sushi bar and into your own kitchen. They are surprisingly easy to make and sure to be a hit with your guests. Use this recipe as a template to create your own variations by replacing the smoked salmon with imitation crab and avocado (as in California rolls) or flavored tofu, the brown rice with white sushi rice, etc.

- ½ cup sweet brown rice (see Note) or short-grain brown rice
- 1¼ cups water
- 1½ tablespoons black or white sesame seeds, toasted (see *Cooking Tip*, page 76)
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- ½ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon wasabi paste (see *Ingredient Note*, page 76)
- 7 8-by-7-inch sheets toasted nori (see *“Wrapping It Up,”* page 50)
- 8 ounces thinly sliced smoked salmon, cut into 1-by-1-inch pieces

INGREDIENT NOTE: Sweet brown rice (also called sweet mochi rice) is a short-grain rice used in Japanese cooking. You can find it in natural-foods stores and Asian grocery stores.

- ½ English cucumber, shredded (about 1¼ cups)
- 1 cup alfalfa sprouts
- ½ cup pickled ginger

1. Place rice and water in a medium saucepan; bring to a simmer. Cover; cook over low heat until the rice is tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed, 45 to 50 minutes. Let cool.
2. Combine rice, sesame seeds and vinegar in a medium bowl; mix well. Whisk together soy sauce and wasabi.
3. Using tongs, wave nori sheets, one at a time, over a gas flame or electric burner until slightly crisp, about 30 seconds (see *photo, below*). Cut each sheet in half to make two 7-by-4-inch rectangles.

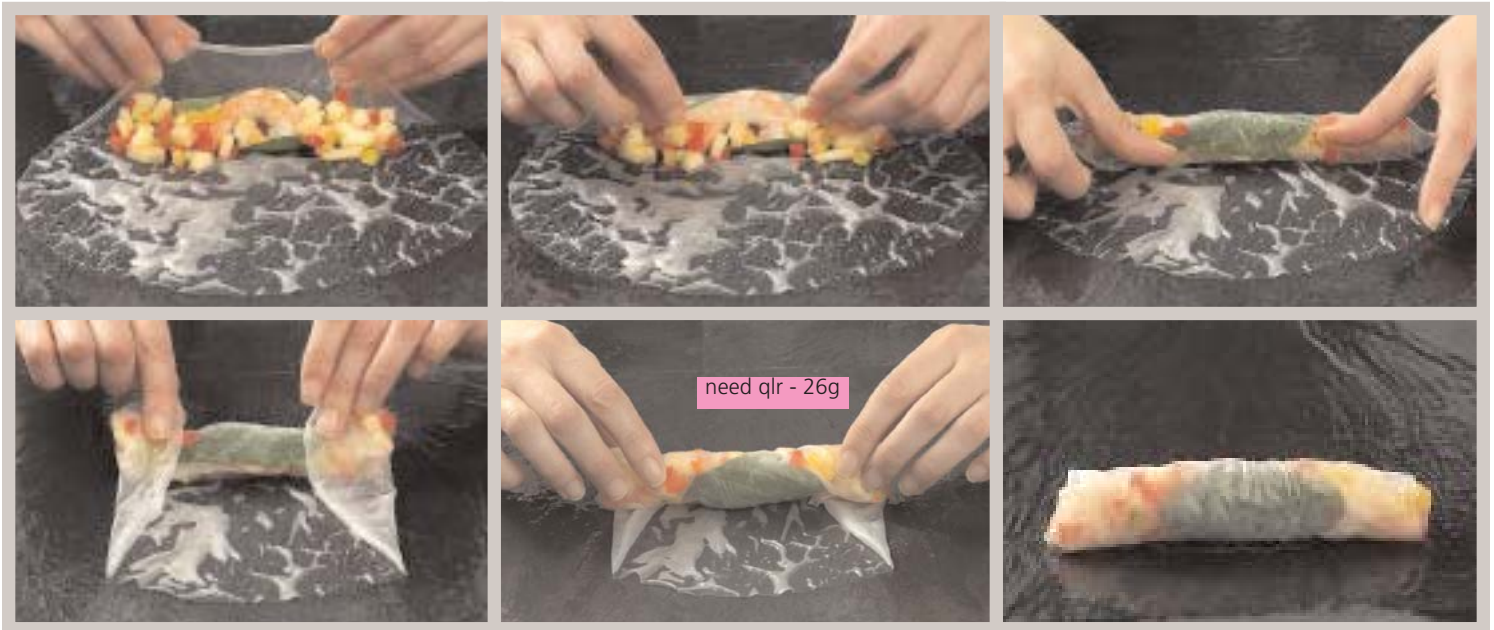


4. **To assemble hand-rolls:** Roll a nori sheet into a cone, glossy side out (a small opening at the narrow end is fine). Dab the lower outside corner with water and press firmly to seal the cone. Spoon about 2 tablespoons of the rice mixture into the cone, dip a finger into water and press rice around and up to cover the inside, making a hole in the middle. Stuff the hole with 1 tablespoon salmon (see *photo, below*), then 1 tablespoon each of cucumber and sprouts. Top with a piece of ginger. Between cones, dip the spoon in cold water to prevent sticking. Serve immediately, with the soy sauce mixture and the remaining pickled ginger.



MAKES 7 APPETIZER SERVINGS, 2 ROLLS EACH.

PER ROLL: 66 CALORIES; 1 G TOTAL FAT (0 G SAT, 0 G MONO); 4 MG CHOLESTEROL; 9 G CARBOHYDRATE; 4 G PROTEIN; 1 G FIBER; 629 MG SODIUM.



Shrimp Spring Rolls

PREP TIME: 50 MINUTES | **START TO FINISH:** 50 MINUTES
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

WHEN I WAS GROWING UP IN CHINA during the Cultural Revolution, a birthday cake was considered Western and bourgeois. Instead, my mother made spring rolls, along with other finger foods, for my birthday celebration (because of my trouble with chopsticks!).

1 cup Thai Sauce (page 55)

SHRIMP & MARINADE

- 1 tablespoon rice wine or medium-dry sherry
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce (see *Ingredient Note*, page 76)
- 1/2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 small fresh red chile pepper, such as Fresno, seeded and minced (2 tablespoons)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh ginger
- 20 medium shrimp (4 1/2 ounces), peeled and deveined

FILLING & WRAPPERS

- 1 large apple or peach, peeled and diced
- 4 scallions, green part only, cut into thin slivers
- 1 small red bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 small yellow bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1/2 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon canola oil

- 20 8-inch rice-paper wrappers (see “Wrapping It Up,” page 50)
- 20 fresh basil leaves or mint leaves

1. Make Thai Sauce. Cover and refrigerate.
2. **To prepare marinade:** Combine rice wine (or sherry), fish sauce, lemon juice, cilantro, chile pepper, garlic and ginger in a medium bowl. Add shrimp and toss to coat. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
3. **To prepare filling:** Combine apple (or peach), scallions, bell peppers, vinegar and sesame oil in a medium bowl; toss to coat.
4. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add canola oil and tilt to coat the pan evenly. Add shrimp and marinade; stir-fry until shrimp turn pink, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Set aside.
5. **To assemble rolls:** Dip a wrapper in warm water for a few seconds. Carefully transfer it to a clean work surface and let stand until soft, about 1 minute. Center 1 basil leaf (or mint leaf) in the bottom third of the wrapper; top with a shrimp and 2 tablespoons of the filling. Fold the wrapper over the filling and roll into a tight cylinder, folding in the sides about halfway (see photos, above). Assemble the remaining spring rolls the same way. Keep the finished rolls covered with a damp cloth to prevent them from drying out. Serve with Thai Sauce.

**MAKES 10 APPETIZER SERVINGS,
 2 SPRING ROLLS EACH.**

PER ROLL: 170 CALORIES; 5 G TOTAL FAT (0 G SAT, 2 G MONO); 19 MG CHOLESTEROL; 27 G CARBOHYDRATE; 5 G PROTEIN; 1 G FIBER; 475 MG SODIUM.

Curried Chicken Wraps

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES | **START TO FINISH:** 20 MINUTES (with store-bought tortillas) | **DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** MODERATE

SWEET, JUICY GRAPES complement curried chicken in this easy filling. The filling from India and tortilla wrapper from Central America make this recipe another example of how you can successfully blend elements from East and West. Any leftover filling is delicious, served cold, in a wrap the following day.

- 1½ cups Cucumber Raita (page 55)
- 8 Whole-Wheat Flour Tortillas (recipe follows) or store-bought (see “Wrapping It Up,” page 50)
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- ½ cup chopped scallions (1 bunch)
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated orange zest (from 1 large orange; see page 70)
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped jalapeño or serrano pepper (2 small peppers)
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 tablespoon rice wine, sake or orange juice
- ½ teaspoon salt, or to taste
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1½ cups red seedless grapes (8 ounces), washed, dried and halved

1. Prepare Cucumber Raita.
2. Heat tortillas (see “Two Easy Ways to Heat Tortillas,” page 55).
3. Meanwhile, cut chicken into ¼-inch-thick slices. Turn slices on their sides and cut into ¼-inch-strips.
4. Heat a wok or large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add oil and tilt the pan to coat it evenly. Add scallions, ginger, orange zest and jalapeño (or serrano). Cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute.
5. Add chicken; stir-fry for 1 minute. Add curry powder, rice wine (or sake or orange juice), salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, until chicken is browned and no longer pink in the center, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl. Add grapes; toss to mix.
6. To serve, spoon about ½ cup of the chicken mixture into each warm tortilla. Top with 2 tablespoons raita. Roll up tortilla and eat with your fingers. Serve remaining raita for dipping.

**MAKES 4 SERVINGS,
2 WRAPS EACH.**

PER WRAP: 278 CALORIES; 9 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT, 4 G MONO); 35 MG CHOLESTEROL; 31 G CARBOHYDRATE; 19 G PROTEIN; 3 G FIBER; 427 MG SODIUM.

◆ Whole-Wheat Flour Tortillas

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES | **START TO FINISH:** 1½ HOURS
TO MAKE AHEAD: The tortillas will keep sealed in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 1 week or in the freezer for up to 1 month.
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

IF YOU HAVE NEVER MADE your own tortillas, you’ll find yourself amazed at their relative ease and truly fabulous flavor. Although ready-made tortillas are as close as your grocer’s shelves, many contain partially hydrogenated vegetable oil (trans-fatty acids) and lack the nutritional benefits of whole-wheat flour.

- 1 cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- ½-¾ cup warm water

1. Combine whole-wheat flour, white flour and salt in a large bowl. Sprinkle in oil and blend thoroughly with a fork. Gradually add ½ cup water, stirring to moisten evenly. If the dough is too dry to gather into a ball, add more water. Turn out onto a lightly floured work surface; knead briefly. The dough should be soft and easy to knead.
2. Divide the dough into 8 equal pieces. Flatten each one between lightly floured palms into a 3-inch disk. Cover with plastic wrap and let rest for 30 minutes.
3. On a lightly floured surface, using a rolling pin, roll out each tortilla into a 7- to 8-inch rough circle. Keep tortillas covered with a damp towel as you work. (You can stack them with parchment or wax paper between each layer.)
4. Heat an 8-inch or larger skillet, preferably cast-iron, over medium-high heat until hot. Cook each tortilla until it is speckled with brown spots and puffed, about 45 seconds on each side (see photo, below).



MAKES 8 TORTILLAS.

PER TORTILLA: 147 CALORIES; 6 G TOTAL FAT (0 G SAT, 3 G MONO); 0 MG CHOLESTEROL; 21 G CARBOHYDRATE; 4 G PROTEIN; 2 G FIBER; 147 MG SODIUM.

◆ **Cucumber Raita**

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES | **START TO FINISH:** 10 MINUTES
TO MAKE AHEAD: Raita will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. | **DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** EASY

RAITA IS USED IN Indian cuisine as a cooling balance for spicy dishes. Try it with curries or as a condiment for grilled meat or poultry.

- 1 cup low-fat plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes to allow flavors to blend.

MAKES 1½ CUPS.

PER TABLESPOON: 8 CALORIES; 0 G TOTAL FAT (0 G SAT, 0 G MONO); 1 MG CHOLESTEROL; 1 G CARBOHYDRATE; 1 G PROTEIN; 0 G FIBER; 32 MG SODIUM.

◆ **Chile-Garlic Dipping Sauce**

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES | **START TO FINISH:** 10 MINUTES
TO MAKE AHEAD: The sauce will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. | **DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** EASY

IN ADDITION TO making a delicious sauce for dumplings, this can be used as a marinade for chicken, pork or beef and as a dressing for Asian noodles.

- ¼ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ cup strong brewed green tea
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 fresh red chile pepper, such as Fresno, seeded and minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 scallion, minced
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons honey

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes to allow flavors to blend.

MAKES ¾ CUP.

PER TABLESPOON: 17 CALORIES; 1 G TOTAL FAT (0 G SAT, 0 G MONO); 0 MG CHOLESTEROL; 2 G CARBOHYDRATE; 0 G PROTEIN; 0 G FIBER; 179 MG SODIUM.

◆ **Thai Sauce**

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES | **START TO FINISH:** 15 MINUTES
TO MAKE AHEAD: The sauce will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. | **DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** EASY

THIS IS A VARIATION OF a popular sauce from Thailand. It can be used as a dipping sauce or salad dressing. For a smooth sauce, puree it in a blender.

- 2 tablespoons almond butter or peanut butter
- ½ cup plain soy milk
- ¼ cup low-fat unsweetened coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce, or to taste
(see *Ingredient Note, page 76*)
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium fresh red chile pepper, such as Fresno, seeded and minced
- 1 scallion, minced
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro

Place almond butter (or peanut butter) in a medium bowl. Slowly whisk in soy milk, coconut milk, lime juice, fish sauce and honey until smooth. Stir in garlic, chile pepper, scallion and cilantro. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes to allow flavors to blend.

MAKES 1 CUP.

PER TABLESPOON: 23 CALORIES; 1 G TOTAL FAT (0 G SAT, 1 G MONO); 0 MG CHOLESTEROL; 3 G CARBOHYDRATE; 1 G PROTEIN; 0 G FIBER; 90 MG SODIUM. 🌿

TWO EASY WAYS
TO HEAT
TORTILLAS:

Microwave: Stack 4 tortillas between damp paper towels and microwave on high for 30 seconds, or until hot and pliable.

Oven: Preheat oven to 300°F. Stack tortillas (about 4 in a batch) and wrap tightly in foil. Place in oven for 5 to 10 minutes, or until warm.