

Vegetarian Japchae

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I'll be the first to admit...I don't cook often. But japchae is the one dish my mom taught me that's simple enough to make, and it's become a family favorite. It's the dish that shows up at every holiday, and especially during Thanksgiving, you'll always find a big platter of it right next to the turkey. Since my fiancé is vegetarian, it's something we can all enjoy together, and my kids absolutely love it. And the best part? The leftovers. The day after Thanksgiving, I mix the japchae with our leftover turkey and turn it into a quick stir-fry...it's our family's version of the ultimate comfort meal.

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SERVES: 8

INGREDIENTS

200 g glass noodles (dangmyeon)
1 medium carrot, julienned
1 handful spinach or bok choy
1 small onion, thinly sliced
1 bell pepper (any color), thinly sliced
4–5 mushrooms (shiitake or oyster), sliced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp sesame oil, for stir-frying
Salt, to taste
Sesame seeds, for garnish

Sauce (Japchae Marinade)

3 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp sesame oil
2 tbsp cooking wine (mirin)
1 tsp grated ginger (or a few drops of ginger liquid)

INSTRUCTIONS

01 Prepare the noodles

Soak glass noodles in room-temperature water for 30 minutes until softened. Drain well.

02 Cook each vegetable separately

1. In a large pan, heat a little sesame oil and stir-fry each vegetable (carrots, onions, bell peppers, mushrooms, and greens) one at a time.
2. Season lightly with salt and a touch of minced garlic while stir-frying.
3. Set aside in a large mixing bowl.

03 Make the sauce

In a small bowl, mix together soy sauce, sugar, sesame oil, mirin, and ginger until well combined.

04 Cook the noodles

In the same pan, add the soaked noodles and half of the sauce. Stir-fry over medium heat until noodles become glossy and absorb most of the sauce.

05 Combine everything

Add the cooked vegetables back into the pan. Pour in the remaining sauce and toss everything gently until evenly mixed.

06 Finish & serve

Sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds, adjust seasoning if needed, and serve warm or at room temperature.