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FRIED GREEN TOMATO SALAD

- Oil
- 2 oz. rice sticks or 2 cups chow mein noodles
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 egg beaten with 1 tbsp. water
- 4 medium green tomatoes, cut in 1-inch cubes (2 1/2 cups)
- Salt
- 2 green onions, with tops, sliced
- 2 cups shredded iceberg lettuce
- 4 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp. rice wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. Asian-style sesame oil
- 2 tsp. soy sauce

Pour about 1/2 inch of oil into a wide, heavy skillet and heat until very hot. If using rice sticks, cut with scissors into 4 portions and gently tease apart strands. One portion at a time, fry rice sticks in hot oil until they puff. Turn over and puff again. Drain on paper towels. Set aside. (If using chow mein noodles, no frying is necessary.)

Place flour in a shallow bowl and egg in another bowl. In batches, dust the tomatoes with flour, dip in the beaten egg and dust with flour again. You may need to add more flour. Using a small sieve or slotted spoon, transfer the tomato pieces from the flour, shaking off excess, to the hot oil. Fry until golden on all sides. Drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with salt.

When all tomatoes have been fried, combine in a bowl with the green onions and shredded lettuce.

In a small jar, shake together the 4 tablespoons vegetable oil, rice wine vinegar, sesame oil and soy sauce. Pour over salad and toss.

Place rice sticks or chow mein noodles on four salad plates or in four salad bowls. Mound salad on top.

Makes 4 servings.

Note: This recipe varies slightly from the one in the book, which does not call for dusting the tomatoes the first time with flour. The recipes will work fine that way, but the breading clings better when the tomatoes are dusted with flour twice.

Also, at the farmer's market I just crunched up the fried rice sticks and tossed them with the rest of the salad ingredients. The presentation isn't as dramatic but it's easier and tastes just as good.