

Vermicelli Salad

It's fun to try new foods from different cultures, and this take on a popular Japanese noodle dish is refreshing and a lot of fun to eat. Your child is sure to find this colorful pink, green and white salad simply irresistible. Put her in charge of the slicing and measuring so she can hone her knife skills and her ability to follow written directions. For an added challenge, give your youngster a pair of chopsticks to eat the salad with. She'll have fun learning how to use these traditional Japanese utensils while giving her fine motor skills a good workout.



What You Need:

- 1-200 gram package harusame noodles, available at your specialty markets (sometimes in the international aisle at your grocery store)
- 1 6-ounce package red kamaboko or steamed fish cake (it's actually white and pink, not red)
- 1 Japanese or Hothouse cucumber, peeled and cut into very thin strips (See Step 5)
- 2 cups boiled ham, cut into very thin strips (See Step 6)
- 1 small bunch scallions (It should yield about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup when thinly sliced. If your child doesn't like scallions, then substitute them with something else, like peas)
- 1 cup mayo

What You Do:

1. Prepare the harusame noodles as directed on the package. Set it aside.
2. For safety, this step is for parents. Carefully slide a knife between the kamaboko and wooden base that it is attached to so that you have just the half-moon shaped log of kamaboko. Discard the wooden base.
3. Slice the kamaboko into thin slices so that you have a bunch of half-moon shaped pieces that are about 1/8" thick.
4. Working in small batches, slice each half moon into thin slices lengthwise, so that you get about 6-8 very thin slices per half-moon.
5. Do the same with the peeled cucumber, cutting it in half lengthwise first and then slicing it into thin strips.
6. Similarly, cut the ham into thin strips that are about as wide and long as the kamaboko.
7. Thinly slice the scallions, using both the green and white ends.
8. In a large bowl, combine the noodles, kamaboko, ham and scallions.
9. Using a couple of spoons, gently but thoroughly stir in the mayo and make sure all of the ingredients are mixed well together.
10. Chill the salad in the refrigerator for an hour or more.
11. Stir again just before serving.

Tip: If you want to "zhoozh" it up and make it extra nutritious and tasty, try throwing in some cooked corn and small cubes of firm tofu.

Harusame are dried starch noodles that are commonly used in Japanese salads, soups and hot pot dishes. This recipe is often prepared during warm summer months because it is refreshing and eaten cold, but it can be enjoyed any time of year.

**This recipe is peanut and tree nut free

