

# Chayote, Jícama & Asian Pear Salad

From Isabel Coss, executive chef at Pascual in Washington, D.C.



Warning! This trifecta of crisp and crunchy vegetables and fruit dressed in zingy and balanced vinaigrette might become your new favorite side dish or starter.

Do you know chayote squash? It's a beloved ingredient in Mexico and Central America, and typically available in the produce department of large grocery stores. Sometimes called mirliton, its taste and texture is akin to mild apple and cucumber. The dressed salad is best enjoyed the same day it's made. You'll have vinaigrette left over, which can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

## Vinaigrette

- ½ jalapeño chile pepper, stemmed, seeded and coarsely chopped (2 tablespoons)
- One 1½-inch piece fresh ginger root, peeled and coarsely chopped (1 tablespoon)
- ¼ cup well-stirred sunflower butter
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1½ teaspoons unseasoned rice wine vinegar
- Juice from 1 or 2 limes (2½ tablespoons or more as needed)
- ¼ cup soy sauce or tamari
- 1¼ cups avocado oil (may substitute a 50-50 blend of grapeseed and olive oils)
- Kosher salt

## Directions

**For the vinaigrette:** Combine the jalapeño, ginger, sunflower butter, sugar, vinegar, lime juice, and soy sauce or tamari in a blender; puree until smooth. With the motor running, gradually drizzle in the avocado oil, to form an emulsified vinaigrette. Taste, and season with salt or more lime juice. The yield is about 2 cups; reserve ½ cup for the salad.

**For the salad:** Combine the chayote, jícama, and Asian pears in a chilled mixing bowl. Lightly season with salt and toss with lime juice and olive oil until evenly coated. Add the serrano and gently toss until evenly distributed. Gradually add the reserved ½ cup of Vinaigrette, tossing until the salad is glossy yet lightly dressed. Taste, and season lightly with salt, as needed. At this point, the salad can be refrigerated in an airtight container for no more than 4 to 6 hours. Just before serving, scatter the toasted sunflower seeds and sesame seeds on top.

**NOTE:** Toast sunflower seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat until fragrant and lightly browned, shaking the pan a few times to avoid scorching, for 2 or 3 minutes.

## Salad

- 1 green chayote, peeled, cored, and cut into matchsticks (julienne)
- 1 medium jícama, peeled and julienned
- 2 Asian pears, peeled, cored, and julienned
- Kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice, or more as needed
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 serrano chile pepper, stemmed, seeded, and julienned (1 tablespoon)
- ¼ cup toasted hulled, unsalted sunflower seeds, for garnish (see NOTE)
- 1½ tablespoons white and black sesame seeds (tuxedo mix), for garnish