Papua New Guinea Papaya–Coconut Salad

An island-bright bowl inspired by PNG's tropical gardens,
where fruit and coconut shine without fuss.

INGREDIENTS

2 C ripe or semi-ripe papaya, diced
1 C cucumber, diced
1/4 C red onion, thinly sliced
1/3 C grated fresh coconut or unsweetened dried coconut
2 T lime juice
1 T coconut cream (optional)
1 small chili, minced (optional)
salt to taste
a handful of crushed peanuts or cashews (optional)

METHOD

Combine the papaya, cucumber, and red onion in a bowl.
Add the grated coconut and toss gently.
Stir in the lime juice and coconut cream if using.
Add the chili and salt to taste.
Top with crushed nuts if you like.
Serve chilled or at room temperature.

Cultural note

Papua New Guinea does not traditionally serve salads in the Western sense. Meals are centered on cooked staples like sweet potatoes, taro, bananas, and leafy greens, often prepared in earth ovens or simmered with coconut. Fresh fruits and vegetables are eaten simply, usually on their own rather than mixed together. This papaya–coconut salad draws respectfully from PNG's tropical produce and food traditions while offering a fresh, modern side dish that still feels rooted in the region.