



6 salads that pack powerful flavor and nutritional punch

# LIGHTEN UP

For years, the typical American salad was based on iceberg lettuce. While iceberg still has its advocates, the average supermarket now features a dazzling array of salad greens from which to choose. Farmers' markets and specialty stores offer even more alternatives. We also have a multitude of oils and vinegars that we can use to dress our salads, as well as herbs, seeds, nuts, cheeses, fruits and vegetables that can go into the salad bowl.

With so much to choose from, there is the temptation to use a little bit of everything, which is always a mistake. Restraint produces a good salad, excess does not. Consider the salad green that is the base of your salad and add only what will either complement it or add an interesting contrast. Kale will accommodate a number of strong tasting ingredients, but Bibb lettuce is delicate and easily overwhelmed.

When composing a salad, consider texture and color, as well as flavor. Tear greens instead of cutting them, or use whole leaves when appropriate. Remember that every salad does not have to include tomatoes, particularly when they are not in season. The general ratio for vinaigrettes is 3:1, that is three parts oil to one part vinegar, but that is not written in stone. Personally, I often prefer a 4:1 ratio, but that also depends on the acidity of both the vinegar and the oil.





Anchovy dressing pg. 57

## Kale with bell peppers, pumpkin seeds & chickpeas

Bell peppers are high in vitamin C, fiber and phytonutrients. Chickpeas provide protein and fiber, as well as vitamins and minerals. Pumpkin seeds contain protein, vitamins and minerals.



## Arugula with persimmons & parmesan

Persimmons contain fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Fuyu persimmons can be eaten while they are still crisp, like an apple. Parmigiano-Reggiano provides calcium, vitamins and minerals. Olive oil contains vitamins E and K, as well as phytonutrients.





## Butterhead with pistachios & champagne vinegar

Pistachios provide protein, fiber, vitamins E and B6, as well as minerals and phytonutrients. There are many varieties of **butterhead**, including some that are red or dappled with red.



### Know Your Leaves

#### Kale



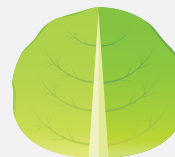
*Kale is often called a super food, and for good reason. It is loaded with antioxidants, as well as vitamins A, K and C. There are many varieties of kale in shades of green, red and purple.*

#### Arugula



*Arugula, also called rocket, is a peppery green that belongs to the broccoli and cabbage family. It contains vitamins K and C as well as minerals and phytonutrients.*

#### Butterhead



*Soft, delicate leaves and a buttery flavor devoid of bitterness are characteristic of butterhead or Bibb lettuces, the most familiar of which is Boston lettuce. Good source of vitamins A, K and C plus various minerals.*

## Kale

with bell peppers, pumpkin seeds and chick peas

READY IN 20 MINUTES // SERVES 4

- 1 bunch kale
- 1 large red, yellow or orange bell pepper
- 1 cup canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds, hulled
- ¼ cup toasted sesame seed oil
- 4 teaspoons sherry vinegar
- coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup croutons

Cut out the center rib of kale leaves and discard. Tear kale into bite-size pieces. Wash and dry kale, then measure out 8 cups and add to salad bowl. Remove core, seeds and ribs from bell pepper and cut into small dice. Add to salad bowl, along with chickpeas.

Toast pumpkin seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat, while tossing and turning them, until they begin to brown and are fragrant. Remove from skillet, sprinkle with salt and set aside.

Combine toasted sesame seed oil and sherry vinegar in a small bowl and whisk to emulsify. Add vinaigrette to salad bowl and toss well until each piece of kale is coated. Season with salt and grind some pepper over the salad, then toss again. Top with toasted pumpkin seeds and croutons.

## Arugula

with persimmons and parmesan

READY IN 15 MINUTES // SERVES 4

- 8 cups arugula
- ½ cup pine nuts
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 4 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- coarse salt
- 1 Fuyu persimmon
- Italian Parmesan (Parmigiano-Reggiano)
- freshly ground black pepper

Wash and dry arugula, remove any large stems and place arugula in salad bowl. Toast pine nuts in a dry skillet over medium heat, while tossing and turning them, until they begin to brown and are fragrant. Remove from skillet, sprinkle with salt and set aside.

Combine olive oil and balsamic vinegar in a small bowl and whisk to emulsify. Add to salad bowl and toss until each arugula leaf is coated. Season with salt, then toss again.

Peel, quarter and thinly slice persimmon. Arrange slices on top of arugula. Using a vegetable peeler, shave some Parmesan over the salad, then sprinkle with toasted pine nuts. Grind pepper over the top.

## Butterhead

with pistachios and champagne vinegar

READY IN 10 MINUTES // SERVES 4

- 2 small heads Boston lettuce
- ¼ cup roasted pistachio oil
- 1 tablespoon champagne vinegar
- coarse salt
- ¼ cup roasted and salted pistachios, shelled

Cut off base of each head, then wash and dry lettuce, discarding any wilted or bruised leaves. Add leaves to salad bowl. In a small bowl, whisk pistachio oil and champagne vinegar until emulsified. Add to salad bowl and toss until leaves are coated. Season with salt and toss again. Chop pistachios and sprinkle over salad. Once dressed, the salad should be served immediately or the delicate leaves will become sodden.

#### STORAGE SUGGESTION

Some salad gurus recommend storing washed and dried salad greens rolled up in a kitchen towel. That works well, but I also have luck keeping lettuces in the salad spinner (refrigerated, of course) after I've washed and dried them.

## CROUTONS

These are used in the Kale Salad and the Spinach Salad.

Remove crust and cut **day old French or Italian bread** into cubes about a half-inch square to yield 1 cup. Pour **1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil** into small skillet and heat. Add cubed bread. Fry on medium heat, turning bread frequently, until browned. Remove croutons and sprinkle with **Coarse salt**. Makes 1 cup croutons.





Most of us are only familiar with the green romaine lettuce that is a staple of salad bars and Caesar salads, but there are many other varieties, including some that are red and dappled red. Gardeners should seek out seeds for an Austrian heirloom called Forellenschluss (Flashy Trout's Back) for its beauty and fine flavor.

## Romaine with pears, walnut & feta cheese

Feta is a source of calcium, as well as vitamins and minerals. Walnuts contain a high level of phytonutrients, as well as protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals.



## Spinach with boiled eggs & pomegranate arils

Eggs are high in protein, as well as vitamins and minerals. Pomegranates provide vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients.



## Spring Mix with sprouts, basil & red wine vinegar

**Sprouts**, such as alfalfa and radish, contain a variety of vitamins and minerals, as do both **parsley** and **basil**. **Olive oil** has vitamins and minerals, as well as polyphenols with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.



## Romaine

with pears, walnuts and feta cheese

READY IN 15 MINUTES // SERVES 4

- ½ cup walnuts
- 1 romaine lettuce
- ¼ cup roasted walnut oil
- 4 teaspoons white wine vinegar
- coarse salt
- 1 pear
- ½ cup feta, crumbled
- freshly ground black pepper

Toast walnuts in a dry skillet over medium heat, while tossing and turning them, until they are fragrant. Remove from skillet, sprinkle with salt and set aside.

Cut lettuce from its base, discarding any limp or bruised leaves. Wash and dry romaine. Tear leaves and add to salad bowl. In a small bowl, whisk roasted walnut oil and white wine vinegar until emulsified. Add half of the vinaigrette to salad bowl and toss to coat lettuce. Season with salt and toss again. Peel, core and slice pear. Arrange pear slices on top of salad and top with feta. Drizzle remainder of vinaigrette over pears and cheese. Sprinkle walnuts and grind some black pepper over the salad.

## DRESS IT UP

### ANCHOVY DRESSING

This dressing would work well in a kale, spinach or romaine salad.

Combine **6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil** and **1 or more anchovies to taste**. Mash anchovy with a fork. Add **2 tablespoons red wine vinegar** and whisk to combine. Season with **freshly ground black pepper**.

MAKES ABOUT ½ CUP.

### YOGURT DRESSING

This dressing could be used in a spinach or romaine salad.

Whisk **½ cup plain yogurt**, **1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil** and **1 teaspoon white wine vinegar** together, then season to taste with **salt and freshly ground black pepper**. If dressing is too thick, thin with a little water.

MAKES ABOUT ½ CUP.

## Spinach

with boiled eggs and pomegranate arils

READY IN 15 MINUTES // SERVES 4

- 8 cups baby spinach
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 4 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 4 teaspoons cane vinegar
- coarse salt
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 1 cup croutons
- ½ cup pomegranate arils (seeds)
- freshly ground black pepper

Wash and dry spinach, discarding any wilted or bruised leaves. Place spinach in salad bowl. In a small bowl, whisk olive oil, mustard and cane vinegar until emulsified. Add vinaigrette to salad bowl and toss until spinach is well coated. Season with salt and toss again. Add chopped eggs, croutons and pomegranate arils. Grind black pepper over the salad.

### ADD SOME FLAVOR

There are a number of ways to incorporate the flavor of garlic in a salad dressing. If you're using croutons in the salad, you can season them with garlic. One easy way to do that is to heat the oil with several peeled garlic cloves until they brown. Then remove the garlic and toss the croutons in the oil. Another option is to macerate garlic in the vinegar, then use the vinegar to dress the salad.

## Spring Mix

with sprouts, basil and red wine vinegar

READY IN 10 MINUTES // SERVES 4

- 8 cups spring mix
- 1 cup sprouts, such as alfalfa or radish
- 1 cup basil and parsley leaves
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper

Wash and dry lettuce, discarding any wilted or bruised leaves. Combine spring mix, sprouts, basil and parsley leaves in salad bowl. In a small bowl whisk together olive oil and vinegar until emulsified. Add to salad bowl and toss until all leaves are coated. Season with salt, grind over some pepper and toss again.

### Know Your Leaves



#### Romaine

Romaine is an extremely nutritious lettuce, loaded with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.



#### Spinach

Popeye was right, spinach packs a punch. It is loaded with vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, fiber and protein.



#### Spring Mix

This is an assortment of baby salad greens and is sometimes called mesclun mix. The contents vary, but one I purchased recently was made up of 14 different varieties, including many exotic greens.