**MAKING THE BEST SALADS**.

A salad is a dish consisting of a mixture of small pieces of food, which may be mixed with a sauce or salad dressing. They are typically served cold, although some, such as south German potato salad, are served warm. Salads may contain vegetables, fruits, cheese, cooked meat, eggs, grains and nuts.

Garden salads use a base of leafy greens like lettuce, arugula, kale or spinach; they are common enough that the word *salad* alone often refers specifically to garden salads. Other types include bean salad, tuna salad, Greek salad, and Japanese somen salad (a noodle-based salad). The sauce used to flavor a salad is commonly called a salad dressing; well-known types include ranch, Thousand Island, and Vinaigrette. Vinaigrette comes in many varieties; one version is a mixture of olive oil, balsamic vinegar, herbs, and seasonings. Salads may be served at any point during a meal, such as:

Appetizer salads, light, smaller portion-salads to stimulate the appetite as the first course of the meal.

Side salads, to accompany the main course as a side dish.

Main course salads, usually containing a portion of heartier fare, such as chicken breast, salmon or slices of beef.

Dessert salads, sweet versions containing fruit, gelatin, sweeteners or whipped cream, or just fruit, which is called a fruit salad.

*Hey, maybe if I dump half a bottle of ranch dressing on it,* you think, brightening, *then it'll be more like somebody just spilled a harmless fistful of lawn clippings into an otherwise delicious puddle of mayonnaise!*

Friends, that's not what a salad is meant to be. A salad, well executed and embraced as an opportunity to stuff more things that are good into our bodies, should be a carnival of lively flavors, textures, and colors. It should excite your eyes, exercise your teeth, and make your palate sing with joy. You should stare at it intently while you eat, lustily mixing and matching its various ingredients on your fork; you should finish before you're ready to be done and then nudge your dumb salmon toward the edge of your plate to make room for more salad. It should be a glorious, indulgent feast: healthful, sure, yeah OK, but mostly delicious and diverse and fresh and ecstatic.

So, do you have a whole plateful of salad woes? If you find that your homemade salads just aren't as good as those in restaurants, perhaps the problem rests in the preparation of the salad, the choice of ingredients, or the dressing itself. Let me take you through a good and well researched guide on how you can make these salads better and perhaps make them from home.

Wash and Dry the Leaves Thoroughly

Most people simply rinse lettuce under the sink, but to really get all the dirt out, dunk the lettuce in a bowl full of water and massage the grime out. Do this over and over again, good things take time. Then use a salad spinner to completely dry the leaves, or else the salad dressing won't stick to them, resulting in a watery, bland salad.

Salt the Dressing

No matter if it's just oil and vinegar, salt the dressing to taste to enhance the salad's flavor. A lot of people neglect this step which is very important, but that's why restaurant salads taste so good — chefs often salt their dressings. Take it a step further and use a flavored salt. It will be splendid.

Use Varying Texture

Choose salad toppings that have contrasting textures like crunchy nuts, creamy cheeses, chewy dried fruit and others. For instance, [this taco salad](http://www.yumsugar.com/Easy-Taco-Salad-22741451) has crunchy radish, crumbly “cotija” cheese, juicy tomatoes, and chewy ground beef.

Create Balanced Flavors

The salad should have salty, sweet, acidic, and bitter flavors from the meat, fruit, vinaigrette, and greens. Represent as many flavor profiles as possible. This is good for your salad. For instance, [a slaw salad](http://www.yumsugar.com/Spicy-Cabbage-Mango-Papaya-Slaw-Recipe-24343469) that has salty cashews, sweet mango, acidic vinaigrette, and spicy peppers.

Measure Equal Amounts of Toppings

Don't you feel cheated when restaurants only give you a little sliver of avocado or the most minute sprinkling of cheese? To make a memorable salad, don't skimp on any of the ingredients. Try to use equal measurements of all the salad toppings, especially for classic salads like the [Cobb](http://www.popsugar.com/food/Cobb-Salad-Recipe-30513663). This means have as much Avocado as the tomato cuts and onions plus others.

Toast the Nuts

Nuts are often used as a salad topping, but rarely do people toast their almonds, cashews, or walnuts. However, [toasting nuts](http://www.yumsugar.com/How-Toast-Nuts-22111383) instantly boosts their nutty flavor and crunchy texture to your salad. Ooh and remember to cool them to room temperature before tossing them in a salad.

Experiment with Different Oils and Vinegars

Balsamic vinegar and olive oil are dependable standards, but step outside the salad dressing box and try other [infused](http://www.popsugar.com/food/How-Infuse-Olive-Oil-36280923) or interesting oils and vinegars like avocado oil, walnut oil, rice vinegar, sherry vinegar, or Champagne vinegar. I have tried avocado and it was worth the taste

Finally Add a Luxurious Topping

Blue cheese, [quail eggs](http://www.popsugar.com/food/Leek-Quail-Egg-Salad-Recipe-34439664), or [bone marrow](http://www.popsugar.com/food/Roasted-Bone-Marrow-Parsley-Salad-28179914): those are just a few luxurious toppings that suddenly make a salad unique. Place them on the top of the bed of lettuce for a dramatic presentation.

Try my receipt Sweet Potato & Arugula Salad

*Yields: 3-4 servings, adapted from Katie Lee’s recipe*

Ingredients:

* 2 cups 1/2-inch diced sweet potatoes (1-2 large sweet potatoes)
* Extra virgin olive oil for drizzling (about 1-2 tablespoons)
* kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
* 2-3 cups loosely packed baby arugula
* 4 scallions, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced
* 1/4 cup good quality mayonnaise
* 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
* 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmigianino Reggiano

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place sweet potatoes (diced) on the baking sheet. Drizzle with EVOO and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Toss with your hands to make sure sweet potatoes are covered evenly. Lay in one layer, making sure they are not stacked on top of each other for even baking.
3. Bake for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, stir the potatoes and continue baking until fork-tender, approximately 15-20 minutes longer. Let them cool completely.
4. Mix the greens (arugula and scallions). In a large bowl, mix the greens with the sweet potatoes.
5. In a small bowl, whisk the mayonnaise with the lemon juice and parmesan. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Just before serving (the sweet potatoes and the dressing can be made ahead of time), place the dressing at the bottom of your salad bowl, pour in your sweet potato and salad mixture and toss, coating the salad and potatoes evenly.
7. Dish to your guests and top with freshly grated Parmigianino

“Right now I'd love to be sitting on a Greek island somewhere because of being Greek American, eating great octopus salad and some fantastic lamb. Or sipping a little ouzo. I think the Mediterranean diet is one of the healthiest... Lots of nuts, vegetables, fruits, fresh fish, lean meats, yogurt.” Cat Cora

“Will you dance for me? Let your breasts roam for a moment -- I need to see how they dance.'  
  
'Okay.' She danced, and as she danced, she tried to think of the most delicious salads she could imagine -- with artichokes and sundried tomato and blue cheese dressing, and beets, lots of beets.”   
― [**Nicholson Baker**](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/15882.Nicholson_Baker), [**House of Holes**](http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/15005766)