

# Salad days

Take advantage of the season with a variety of fresh greens and a simple, homemade dressing

I grew up in an era of dodgy salads. Picnics involved three-bean salad dumped straight from the tin and doused in vinegar. No large gathering was complete without a jellied salad, usually so studded with pineapple chunks and mini marshmallows it verged on dessert. Green salad was iceberg lettuce drowned in a sugary red dressing that resembled thin ketchup. Little wonder I turned to baking.

Today, salads are far more enticing. Farmers markets and grocery stores offer a wide range of leafy greens, hearty cabbages and even a variety of kale. Restaurants offer salad bowls that are complete meals.

## *It's Easy Being Green*

If you want to branch beyond iceberg and romaine, consider these the next time you shop for produce.

**Tender lettuces:** Boston, bibb and butter-head lettuce look a bit like a cross between iceberg and romaine but are more tender and have a buttery taste. Their light colour and delicate flavour pair well with dark, spicier greens like arugula or radicchio.

**The Chicories:** Endive, frisée and radicchio fall into this category. Loved (or hated) for their bitterness, chicories can add visual appeal and texture to salads, as well as some bite. Prickly frisée contrasts with tender leaves, while ruby and white radicchio adds colour. Pale endive complements any dark green.

**The Babies:** Young and tender, baby arugula, spinach and kale can be used interchangeably in most salads. Not only are these young leaves less pungent than their full-grown counterparts, they are low-maintenance. They don't need to be chopped, and baby kale doesn't need to be massaged.

## *Buying and Storing*

Regardless of which greens you buy, look for fresh produce that isn't wilted or damaged. Once home, refrigerate sealed



*Charmian Christie*

packages of greens right away. If you bought your greens in bunches, rinse them in cold water and then spin them dry in a salad spinner or pat them dry in towels. Refrigerate in a loose plastic bag lined with dry paper towels to absorb excess moisture. They should keep for up to a week.

## *Five Elements of Salad Dressing*

Homemade salad dressing is one of those ludicrously simple items that makes you wonder why you don't make it more often. It takes all of two minutes, requires no specialized equipment and can be fine-tuned to suit any palate. No matter what type of dressing you're after, most contain these basic elements:

**Oil:** Olive oil is my preference, but a neutral-tasting oil, such as canola, grapeseed or safflower work well. Sesame oil and roasted nut oils can be overpowering on their own, so mix them in equal parts with your plain oil of choice. Traditionally, the oil to acid ratio is 3:1, but I prefer 2:1 or even equal parts oil and acid.

**Acid:** Plain white vinegar is a bit harsh. Less aggressive alternatives include balsamic, red wine, white wine, apple cider, sherry or even champagne vinegar. Fresh lemon juice can be substituted for some or all of the vinegar while a splash of lime juice goes well with citrus-based salads.

**Sweet:** To balance the acid, add some sweet. You can use white table sugar, but you'll add more flavour with coconut sugar, brown sugar, honey, maple syrup, apple juice, frozen orange juice concentrate or even jam.

**Salt:** A generous pinch or two is usually enough. If you're cutting back on salt, skip it in the dressing and let diners add some finishing salt at the table.

**Aromatics:** These optional additions bring the dressing to life. Minced fresh herbs, shallots, citrus rind, black pepper and/or garlic add flavour and variety. A pinch of mustard will keep the dressing emulsified.

For a creamy dressing, add a tablespoon or two of mayonnaise, sour cream, Greek yogurt or buttermilk.

## *Shake it up, baby!*

Combine all the ingredients in a small mason jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake to combine. If using a small bowl, whisk the oil into the other ingredients. Dip a piece of lettuce in the dressing to taste and adjust as necessary. Store any unused dressing in the refrigerator.





ARUGULA  
& FENNEL  
SALAD

Salad shouldn't be merely a delivery system for dressing. It shouldn't be labour intensive either. This salad is loaded with flavour and requires no chopping, just a few minutes with a grater. The result is an eclectic mix of peppery arugula, delicate fennel, crunchy nuts and a tangy-sweet dressing that balances the dish.

Salad

- 1 five-ounce (142 g) package arugula (about 4 cups)
- 1 cup (250 ml) grated fennel
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) shaved Parmesan
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) sliced almonds, toasted

Dressing

- 1/4 cup (60 ml) olive oil
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp (5 ml) honey
- Generous pinch fine sea salt

1. Place arugula in a salad bowl or on a platter. Sprinkle with grated fennel and toss to distribute. Sprinkle with Parmesan and toasted almond slices.
2. Place olive oil, balsamic, lemon juice, honey and salt in a small bowl or mason jar with tight-fitting lid. Whisk or shake until dressing is well combined. Immediately drizzle over the salad and serve.

Prep Time: 10 minutes  
Serves four



CANADA 150<sup>th</sup> RECIPES



Apple & Maple Sticky Ribs

Serves 4-6 People 10 min prep time plus 2.5 hrs cook time

Ingredients

- 2 Litres Local Apple Cider
- 1 Cup Apple Cider Vinegar
- 2 Cups Water or Chicken Stock
- 1 Cup Local Maple Syrup
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 2 Tbsp Salt
- 1 Tbsp of your Favorite Seasonings
- 1 Cinnamon Stick
- 1 Tbsp Black Peppercorns
- 2 Side Stemmler's Pork Back Ribs
- 1 Cup Rib Cooking Liquid
- 2 Tbsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 Tbsp Dijon Mustard

Instructions:

1. Combine the first 9 recipe items in a large sauce pot and bring to a boil (set aside 1/4 cup of maple syrup)
2. When it starts boiling, turn off, pour into a deep baking dish then add ribs. Cover and bake in oven for 1.5 hours at 300F
3. Once braised, remove ribs from the liquid, place in another baking dish and pour a ladleful of the braising liquid over the ribs to keep moist. Set aside.
4. Preheat oven to 425F or start your BBQ.
5. Strain the liquid for the glaze in a small sauce pot. Bring to a simmer, add the worcestershire, mustard and the rest of the maple syrup then cook down until it's reduced by half and thickened (20 minutes). **\*\*This will be the Rib Sauce\*\***
6. Brush both sides of the ribs with the glaze, place ribs in the baking dish and transfer to the oven or the bbq.
7. Bake in oven for 20 more minutes on each side or 10 minutes each side on the BBQ. Brush with any extra glaze before serving.
8. Serve with your favorite local and seasonal side dishes, such as Asparagus and Roasted Potatoes. Enjoy!



Sticky Rib & Smoked Curd Poutine

Serves 4-6 People 15min prep time plus 2.5 hrs cook time

Ingredients

- 2 Sides Stemmler's Pork Back Ribs
- 4L Braising Liquid (as seen in other recipe)
- 3 Cups Rib Sauce
- 1/2 Cup Stemmler's Smoked Cheese Curds
- 1/2 Cup Regular Cheese Curds
- 1/2 Cup Local Maple Syrup
- 2 Tbsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 Tbsp Dijon Mustard
- 6 Local Yellow Fleshed Potatoes

Instructions:

1. Combine the 9 braising liquid ingredients (from step 1 in the previous recipe) in a large pot and make the braising liquid. **Then also use step 2 as in the Sticky Rib Recipe and cook the ribs the same way.**
2. As the Ribs are braising, slice potatoes into small french fry strips. Hold them in water so they don't turn colour.
3. Once braised, remove ribs from the liquid, place in another baking dish and pour a ladleful of the braising liquid over the ribs to keep moist. Set aside. Strain the liquid in a small sauce pot. Bring to a simmer, add the worcestershire, mustard and the rest of the maple syrup then cook down until it's reduced by half and thickened (20 minutes) **\*\*This will be the Poutine Gravy\*\***. Cook another 10 minutes until it looks and feels like a gravy. Shred the Rib Meat into a bowl with your fingers or a knife then add a ladle of the gravy and keep warm.
4. Add 2 litres of cooking oil (sunflower or canola) to a pot and heat up. Strain the cut potatoes and shake off the excess water. Cook the fries until they become golden brown then transfer them to some paper towels with a slotted spoon. Season with salt & pepper.
5. Place some golden brown fries on a plate. Combine the amazing regular and smoked cheese curd together and then add some on the fries. Finally top it with the shredded rib meat and smother it with gravy. Delicious any time!



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## CITRUS & GINGER FRUIT SALAD

This dish brings summer to your table any time of year. I used a mix of grapefruit, tangerines, clementines, navel and blood oranges, but plain old navel oranges and grapefruit will do the trick. If you are taking this to a potluck, chop, don't slice the citrus. It might not be as decorative, but it will travel easily and taste just as good.

### *Salad*

**2 grapefruit** (pink or red)

**6 medium** oranges (any kind you like)

**1 cup** (250 ml) blackberries, blueberries or sliced strawberries

**2 tablespoons** (60 ml)

chopped fresh mint leaves

**2 tablespoons** (60 ml) finely chopped crystallized ginger

### *Dressing*

**1/4 cup** (60 ml) fresh orange juice

**2 tablespoons** (30 ml) orange liqueur (or more orange juice plus 1 teaspoon sugar)

**1/2 teaspoon** (2 ml) pure vanilla extract

**1.** Remove peel from the citrus. Slice in rounds and arrange on a platter. Alternatively, cut peeled citrus into small pieces and place in a bowl. Scatter with blackberries, mint and ginger.

**2.** In a small bowl or measuring cup, whisk the orange juice, liqueur (if using) and vanilla together. Drizzle the dressing over the plated citrus or toss with the chopped bowl of fruit. Chill until ready to serve.

*Prep time: 20 minutes*

*Serves four to six people*