

July: National Salad Week

By: Lisa Franzen-Castle, RD, PhD, Nutrition Specialist
UNL Panhandle Research & Extension Center
Author E-mail: lfranzen2@unl.edu

Any way you toss it, a main dish green salad is an easy, nutritious meal -- especially on a hot summer's night. National Salad Week is in July, and summer is a great time to fill up -- and not out -- on fruits and veggies in a lightly dressed salad! Check out these tips on how to make salads spectacular this summer.



Tips for nutritious and delicious salads:

Growing greens. Salad greens are easy to grow in the home garden and an important source of vitamins and minerals. Dark green leaves are good sources of vitamins A and C, iron, folic acid, and calcium. Iceberg is the most popular, but many other lettuces and salad greens such as spinach, arugula, and romaine can add interest and nutrients to meals.



Super salad toppers. There are lots of nutritious ways to top a salad. Enhance eye appeal and nutrition by adding colorful fruits and vegetables. Keep it light by limiting the amount of salad dressing to about 1 tablespoon per 1½ to 2 cups of greens. Make the flavor pop by adding artichoke hearts, dried fruits, nuts, and/or seeds.



Keep fruit from browning. Keep cut fruits, like apples and pears, from turning brown by coating them with an acidic juice such as lemon, orange or pineapple juice. Cut fruits as close to serving time as possible. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Refrigerate cut fruits and veggies so the total time at room temperature is less than 2 hours.



Fresh herbs. Toss small basil leaves or chopped larger ones in with your greens. Try chopped fresh dill. Add some minced chives or parsley. Start with about a teaspoon of herbs per person and adjust according to taste preference. Herbs boost flavor without increasing calories.



Kabob kickers. Try kicking up your salad by adding kabobs! Including protein-rich foods helps promote a feeling of fullness after meals and may help you eat fewer calories throughout the day. Kabobs with grilled chicken, beef, or pork with a combination of vegetables such as peppers, onions, and zucchini would be the perfect topper for a mixed green salad.



Food safety with salads. Summer is a great time for salads and it's important to store leafy greens at refrigerator temperatures and rinse well under running water before using. To reduce the risk of foodborne illness, observe "use by" dates printed on bagged leafy vegetables and salad mixes and use within two days after opening.



Remember to dress, don't drown, your salad in dressing to keep the calories lower and experiment with different combinations and flavors this summer. For more food, nutrition and health information go to www.food.unl.edu or scan the QR code with your smart phone or other electronic device to go straight to the website.



Additional Resources & Links:

- **“Kick Up” Your Salad by Adding Kabobs!** The next time you make kabobs, try adding them to a salad. The following main dish salad featuring lean beef and colorful red bell peppers packs a nutrient punch without a lot of calories!
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/kabob-salad>
- **Light, Lean and Delicious: Summertime Steak Salad.** Grilled steak plus a salad is a summertime favorite. Here's a quick new idea for you to try: steak salad!
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/steak-salad>
- **Making Super Salads Using MyPlate Food Groups.** What could be simpler in the summer time (or anytime) than a main dish salad. With a little planning, it's even possible to include all of the recommended MyPlate Food Groups.
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/main-dish-salads>
- **Black Bean & Rice Salad.** This is a great basic recipe; adjust the ingredients according to your preferences. <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/black-beans-rice-salad>
- **Making an Olive Oil Salad Dressing.** What healthier way to enjoy olive oil than as part of a salad dressing served over a salad filled with nutritious fruits and vegetables.
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/olive-oil-dressing>
- **Salads Can Be Made from More than Lettuce: Try a Rice Salad!** Who says a salad always has to have lettuce? Try this cool and refreshing salad made with rice.
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/rice-salad>

- **Walk Nebraska Newsletters.** Each month these newsletters cover a variety of topics related to getting active by walking year round.
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/walknenewsletters>
- **UNL Extension Calendar** – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for July.
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/july>

Sources:

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2. Schoneweis, S. (1995). Lettuce and Other Salad Greens. UNL Extension Publication, G95-1268. Accessed at: <http://www.nationaldairycouncil.org/Pages/Home.aspx>.
3. Bunning, M., and Kendall, P. (2012). Health Benefits and Safe Handling of Salad Greens. Colorado State University Extension Publication, Fact Sheet No. 9.373. Accessed at: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09373.html>
4. Henneman, A. 9 “Bites” for Better-Tasting Fruits & Veggies. UNL Extension. Accessed June 2013. Accessed at: <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/9bites>
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