

Spinach and Pine Nut Salad



Light, crispy, and healthful, this spinach salad is California dreamy. "It's the only salad I can eat without dressing," says Dr. Kristin Mowry. The roasted pine nuts complement the turkey bacon (regular bacon works fine too), and the mandarin oranges add a little extra zing.

RECIPE INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 cup pine nuts, roasted
- 8 slices of low sodium bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 8 ounces baby spinach, washed and dried
- 1 Large mandarin orange, peeled

Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Roast the pine nuts on a baking sheet for 5 to 8 minutes, until they turn golden brown, then allow them to cool. Toss together all of the ingredients in a large salad bowl just before serving--do it any sooner and the bacon and pine nuts will lose their crispness. (If you like, you can store the prepared ingredients separately in plastic bags.) Serves 4.

Crunchy Carrot Salad



For a colorful side dish that will enliven any plate, you can't beat this light and tasty salad, which is easily multiplied for a large gathering. It will retain its delightful crunch for a day or two, so you can make it in advance--just sprinkle on a few drops of lemon juice and olive oil before serving to enhance the flavors. For the best results, use California carrots, which tend to be sweeter than Canadian carrots.

RECIPE INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound carrots, peeled
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

1. Grate the carrots on the coarse side of a box grater (a food processor extracts a lot of liquid and will make the carrots too soft for this salad).
 2. In a large bowl, gently toss together the carrots and parsley.
 3. In a small bowl thoroughly stir together the olive oil, lemon juice, and salt, then pour the dressing onto the salad and toss again until the carrots are evenly coated.
 4. Let the salad stand for 20 minutes before serving, or refrigerate it and serve within 2 days. Serves 6.
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Corn, Avocado, and Tomato Salad

Here's a colorful medley that makes a delicious summer dish. You can serve it as a salad or call it a chunky dip and scoop it up with blue corn tortilla chips.



RECIPE INGREDIENTS:

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1/4 cup chopped cilantro
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
2 1/2 cups fresh corn kernels (from about 5 ears)
1 1/2 cups diced avocado (1/2-inch pieces)
1 pint cherry tomatoes, quartered
1/2 cup finely diced red onion

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lime juice, cilantro, salt, and pepper.
2. Add the corn, avocado, tomatoes, and onion and toss to mix. Serves 4 to 6.

Tips: Choose ears of corn with bright green husks that are tightly closed. The ends of the corn silk should be golden brown, not pale -- an indication that the corn was picked too early. To easily remove corn silk from the kernels, hold the ear in one hand and rub downward with a wet paper towel. To remove corn kernels for a salad or salsa, stand an uncooked ear in a shallow bowl and use a sharp, thin-bladed knife.

Grilled Everything Salad With Pesto Vinaigrette

There are two ways to serve this colorful steak-and-veggie salad: simply pile it on a bed of lettuce and dig in or put it over a bed of brown rice!



RECIPE INGREDIENTS:

1 (1 1/2-pound) beef flank steak, trimmed
Salt and freshly ground pepper
4 small summer yellow squash, thinly sliced lengthwise
4 small zucchini, thinly sliced lengthwise
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley leaves
1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh basil leaves
1 garlic clove, chopped
6 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 cup chopped red onion (optional)
2 cups grape tomatoes, halved

1. Heat the grill at the medium-high setting. Sprinkle the steak with salt and pepper to taste. Grill the meat (about 7 to 9 minutes per side on a gas grill for medium rare, longer if you prefer medium or well done). Let the steak cool, then cut it in half lengthwise and slice each half across the grain into thin strips.
2. Meanwhile, brush the yellow squash and zucchini with 2 tablespoons of the lemon juice and season it with salt and pepper. Grill the sliced vegetables, turning them once, until tender (about 2 to 3 minutes). Then cut them into thirds.
3. In a food processor, combine the parsley, basil, garlic and remaining tablespoon of lemon juice and blend well. With the motor running, slowly add the oil and blend well. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. In a large bowl, combine the steak, squash, zucchini, and onion, if desired. Add the dressing and toss to mix. Sprinkle with more salt and pepper, if desired. Stir in the tomatoes and serve. Makes 6 servings.