Salads

WHEN MOST PEOPLE hear the word "salad," they immediately think of a tossed green dinner salad. However, there are numerous salads to consider. Salads may not include anything green. Dessert salads may be sweet; appetizer salads may be salty; and accompaniment salads may be creamy. The tastes, textures, and temperatures of salad variations cover a wide range.



Objective:

List categories and examples of salads.

Key Terms:

accompaniment salads
antipasto salad
appetizer salads
base
body
bound salads
Caesar salad
ceviche
combination salads
composed salads
cooked salads
dessert salads
dressing
formally presented salad
garnish
intermezzo salad
main course salads
mesclun
palate
salad
sorbet
vegetable salads
vinaigrette
Waldorf salad

Salads: Categories and Examples

A **salad** (in French: "salade") is any cold dish assembled from meat, poultry, fish, dairy, fruit, or vegetable ingredients and served individually plated or in a buffet service, usually with some type of dressing. Generally, salads are considered wholesome and are packed with vitamins and minerals. The salad course is usually designed to complement the main dish. The artistry of the chef is often on display when a formally presented salad is on the menu. According to the *Professional Chef*, the basic principles of a good salad are:

- Fresh, quality ingredients
- Clean, crisp greens (not soggy; properly drained of excess water)

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- Visual appeal, color contrast, and harmony
- Simple assembly and garnish
- Neat and within the rim of the plate (for an individual salad)
- Appropriate food ingredient combinations (e.g., onions and sour cream, not oranges and coconut, with tuna)
- Identifiable food (e.g., carrots and mushrooms)
- Served properly chilled (not ice cold) on chilled plates; served warm/hot when appropriate (e.g., steak salad)
- Flavorful, not overly seasoned
- Properly cooked, not overcooked, ingredients

TYPES OF SALAD GREENS

Head Lettuce

Head lettuce (in French: "laitue") includes iceberg, butterhead, buttercrunch, bibb (limestone), red tip, Boston, little gem, and escarole. Head lettuce is typically milder in flavor than leaf varieties.

Leaf or Loose-Leaf Lettuce

Leaf or loose-leaf lettuce includes green, red, and oak leaf varieties; dandelion greens; spinach; sorrel; and arugula. Loose-leaf varieties are generally mild or mildly tart in flavor. For example, dandelion greens and sorrel are mildly tart and a bit sour.



FIGURE 1. Dandelion greens are tart and a bit sour. They are typically bundled or banded for sale.

Endive

Endive (chicory family) is usually bitter, with greenish-white leaves. Belgian endive looks like praying hands and is white in color. Other types are French, curly, frisée, and escarole.

Romaine

Romaine (cos lettuce) is a type of deep green to white head lettuce with a sturdy leaf and a thick rib down the center. The rib is somewhat bitter, so it is often removed. Romaine is the classic lettuce choice for Caesar salads. There is also a type of red romaine. It is often paired with anchovies, chives, olive oil, Parmesan cheese, bleu cheese, and lemon.

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Cresses

Cresses (mustard family) have a spicy, peppery flavor. Types are watercress (in French: "cresson"), garden cress, curly cress, and upland cress. Watercress looks much like Italian parsley in shape.

Arugula

Arugula (pronounced ah-ROOh-gu-lah; also known as rocket) is Italian cress and has a peppery mustard flavor. It is technically an herb and is usually sold in bunches. The individual leaves are smooth, dark green, and a bit spiky. They are similar to dandelion leaves.

Radicchio

Radicchio is Italian chicory and is commonly found as a red leaf variety. Radicchio rosso and Treviso radicchio are common types. The Treviso variety has an elongated leaf. Radicchio may be grilled and pairs well with balsamic vinegar, cheese, garlic, pancetta, and butter.

Cabbage

Cabbage for salads includes green and red heads, collards, kohlrabi, kale (long, ruffled leaves), broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Chinese celery (crinkly and mild leaves), Napa, Savoy, and bok choy. All are generally mild in flavor.

Celery

Celery leaves have a mild peppery flavor. The most common variety is Pascal; another common variety is golden celery. Celery leaves are a wonderful garnish and pair well with walnuts, almonds, bleu cheese, dill, fennel, and parsley.

Mesclun

Mesclun (French for mixture) is a mix of young, leafy salad greens, including arugula, bibb, dandelion, radicchio, and parsley. It is sometimes called spring mix or baby greens.



FIGURE 2. Mesclun, or spring mix, salads can be prepared with mature or, in this case, microgreens. Can you pick out the arugula and radicchio?

Herbs

Herbs are flavorful plants used to season food. Common herbs used with salads and salad dressings are basil, chervil, cilantro, dill, fennel, mint, parsley, sage, tarragon, chives, oregano, rosemary, savory, and thyme.

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Edible Flowers

Edible flowers are used in salads for flavor, color, and texture. Edible flowers used in salads include lavender, mustard, nasturtium, rose, scented geranium, sweet woodruff, and violets.

BASIC GREENS PREPARATION

- Purchase crisp leaves with no brown spots, and use the greens as soon as possible after purchase. If the greens must be stored, remove any wilted or bruised leaves, and store the greens in a refrigerator.
- Revive wilted greens by soaking them in ice-cold water for about three minutes.
- Allow about one cup of broken greens per serving.
- Wash and dry greens thoroughly, as oil-based dressings will not cling to wet greens. Loose-leaf greens, spinach, and romaine can be sandy and should be carefully washed and dried.
- Break or tear greens rather than cutting, as cutting causes some greens to turn a rusty color at each cut. Also, torn greens are more attractive than cut greens.
- Toss greens with dressing immediately before serving to prevent wilting. Salads should be served cool, not ice cold.

FORMALLY PRESENTED SALADS

A **formally presented salad** is a planned and thoughtful display in a manner that adheres to several specific elements and guidelines. In French cuisine, the salad is typically served as a separate course and is usually a green salad ("salade verte"). Formal salad presentation is typical in foodservice operations, but it is appropriate anywhere. Regardless of the category (type) of salad, formally presented salads have four basic elements: base, body, dressing, and garnish.

Base

The **base** is an edible platform on which the salad is displayed. It may, for example, be a large leaf of flowering kale, leaf lettuce (e.g., Boston, bibb, oak leaf, red leaf, romaine, or spinach), iceberg, Chinese cabbage, and/or an arrangement of several smaller leaves (e.g., Italian parsley, celery, basil, and arugula) arranged as a platform base.

Body

The **body** is the main ingredients (the bulk) of the salad and is often the namesake. It could be, for instance, a tossed green salad, a scoop of tuna or potato salad, or a serving of coleslaw.

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Dressing

Dressing is a savory liquid or emulsion for salads and should complement the body. Dressing typically comes in two types: thin vinaigrette or French style and creamy mayonnaise. Dressing adds flavor and moisture, binds ingredients, and/or gives the salad its characteristic flavor. Depending on the salad type, the dressing may be an integral part of the body (e.g., mayonnaise or créme fraîche), may be added just prior to serving, or may be served on the side. Virtually all salads include some type of flavorful dressing.

- Heavy and/or creamy dressings (e.g., bleu cheese and Thousand Island) typically have a mayonnaise base. They are best suited to accompany heavier, crisper greens (e.g., iceberg and romaine lettuces).
- Light dressings are a mixture of oil and vinegar with compatible herbs and spices. They are better suited to more delicate lettuce greens (e.g., Boston, bibb, and escarole). The combination of oil and vinegar, onions, garlic, herbs, and spices as a prepared mixture is a **vinaigrette**. Vinaigrette dressings are lighter in texture and taste. In addition, these dressings are often tart and crisp.

Garnish

Garnish is an edible visual enhancement or embellishment to a salad or other food items; it creates visual appeal and provides contrast. A garnish is small in size, often bright in color, and should be simple and appropriate to the salad. For instance, a large mushroom cap filled with bleu cheese and crabmeat would be overblown and inappropriate as a garnish for a simple serving of pasta salad. A garnish of chopped parsley or perhaps diced red peppers or black olives would be a more prudent choice. A garnish is placed on top of a salad and is centered or off-center. It is placed on the plate to the side of the salad and is fully edible.

SALAD CATEGORIES AND EXAMPLES

Salad categories are flexible. All of the salads classified below easily fall into a common classification, but numerous salads cross into multiple classifications, depending on the chef's purpose. Based on the situation and the chef's purpose, salads may have multiple category labels. For example, potato salad may be classified as a bound salad, an accompaniment salad, and an appetizer salad if served as part of a relish tray. Salads that fit into multiple categories are **combination salads**. Salad pairings are usually based upon the entrée. For instance, a heavy and hearty entrée (e.g., boeuf bourguignonne) is best paired with a tart green salad. Grilled meat is often paired with a tangy coleslaw or potato salad.

Appetizer Salads

Appetizer salads are edibles designed to whet the appetite. They are usually small in size and light in nature and are intended to complement the forthcoming meal. A tossed green salad is a typical American appetizer salad comprised primarily of lettuce varieties with appro-

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priate vegetables, including green peppers, onions, cucumbers, and tomatoes. It may include croutons. Shrimp cocktail is comprised of boiled and chilled shrimp, cocktail sauce, and chopped vegetables (optional). Celery and green peppers are traditionally placed beneath the shrimp.



FIGURE 3. Shrimp cocktail is a classic appetizer salad. This one is served with cos (romaine) lettuce and cocktail sauce.

Antipasto Salad

Antipasto salad (pronounced ahn-tee-PAHS-toh; literally "before the pasta") is a classic hot or cold Italian appetizer salad that offers a wide variety of options for ingredients: thinly sliced cheeses, thinly sliced smoked or cured meats and fish (e.g., ham, salami, and pepperoni, tuna, etc.), marinated vegetables, onions, greens, and olives.



FIGURE 4. Antipasto salads are colorful and flavorful. They are often designed to feed two or more guests. This one includes prosciutto ham, salami, artichokes, pickled mushrooms and olives, and fresh basil leaves.

Ceviche

Ceviche is a Latin American or South American appetizer salad of fish and/or shellfish marinated (and cooked) in an acidic liquid, such as lime or lemon juice and spices. The acid in the citrus coagulates the protein in the fish and cooks it. The dish is usually finished (garnished) with tomatoes, onions, chilies, and cilantro. Typical items used in ceviche are red snapper, sea bass, halibut, mahi-mahi, tilapia, shrimp, lobster, and scallops.

Accompaniment Salads

Accompaniment salads are items served as a side for a sandwich or other main dish or entrée. There are no steadfast rules about the variety of accompaniment salad types, so the possibilities are endless. They simply need to be an element of the main meal. Some people may call these "side salads," but side salads should not be confused with a tossed green dinner salad.

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Vegetable Salads

Vegetable salads are items comprised of single or mixed vegetables, commonly prepared as hot vegetables and served with an entrée. For example, broccoli or cauliflower florets could be blanched or steamed briefly, cooled, mixed with other ingredients (e.g., seeds and raisins), and enrobed with a light dressing or vinaigrette to be served as a salad. Beets, carrots, and artichokes are often prepared in this manner as accompaniment salads. Other vegetable salads are lentil, kidney bean, and three-bean salads.



FIGURE 5. This broccoli, red pepper, and egg salad qualifies as a vegetable salad and an accompaniment salad.

Bound Salads

Bound salads are any salad ingredients mixed with a heavy creamy dressing, such as mayonnaise or créme fraîche, to bind the ingredients. Some examples are potato salad, pasta salad, egg salad, and creamy coleslaw.

Main Course Salads

Main course salads are entrée salads; these salads are considered meals. To qualify as main course salads, they typically contain a serving of protein (e.g., chicken, fish, steak, egg, or cheese). Julienne salads (chef salads) include tossed greens, tomatoes, cucumbers, and other vegetables in addition to julienne slices of turkey, ham, and cheese. These salads are often topped with chopped or sliced hard-cooked eggs, croutons, and dressing. Spinach salads contain fresh baby spinach, mushrooms, hard-cooked eggs, onions, and traditional hot bacon dressing. **Caesar salad** is a salad with romaine lettuce, grilled chicken breast or slices of steak, croutons, anchovies, Caesar dressing (olive oil, lemon juice, raw or coddled egg, and sometimes Worcestershire sauce), and freshly grated or sliced Pecorino Romano cheese. Lobster, shrimp, and salmon salads may be served hot or cold and are usually created in a composed format. Steak salad is served hot or cold; hot grilled (and/or grilled and chilled) steak sits atop a green arugula salad made of bite-size pieces of romaine and Belgian endive, red onion, and cherry tomatoes tossed with a red wine vinaigrette. A sprinkling of freshly ground salt and pepper and a good Gorgonzola cheese complete the salad.

Intermezzo Salad

Intermezzo salad is a separate course salad or a light course that separates heavier courses in the meal. The purpose of an intermezzo salad is to cleanse the palate of heavy flavors,

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ON THE JOB...

CAREER CONNECTION: Chef du Gardé Mangér

There are many rewarding and well-paid career paths in the hospitality industry, and the one most people rush to is "chef." What most people do not know is that the word is French for "chief." In commercial kitchens, there are many chiefs. One extraordinary type of chef is the Chef du Gardé Mangér (pronounced guard mon-jay) or the chef of the "pantry."

The gardé mangér chef, and the cooks who work under the chef, prepare all the foods that will be served cold, even if they were cooked first but will be served cold later. This chef is responsible for the content and design of all the endless salad possibilities in a restaurant, and it takes a person with artistic flair, nutritional knowledge, and a feel for what people will enjoy. Many grand buffets get their most elegant appearance from the artistic works designed by the gardé mangér department, including fabulous ice carvings and tallow sculptures! Patés, platters of cold meats, elegant molds, simple salads, and extraordinary cold creations are all due to the skill and passion of gardé mangér chefs.

Most gardé mangér chefs receive their basic training in culinary colleges, typically earning an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in culinary arts and receiving training throughout the kitchen. Then they begin their careers training again under a gardé mangér chef. During this period, they hone and perfect their craft.

thereby cleansing it for the next course. It is a common fixture of elaborate multi-course meals (more typical of formal European fare). The **palate** is the tongue and mouth, which may become coated with fat (butter or oil) from the previous course. The intermezzo salad is designed to include an acid, a wine, or an element of citrus to "cut through" any heavy coating in the mouth and to clean and prepare it for the next course.

Sorbet is a small portion of smooth tart ice, typically in a citrus flavor, served with sugared grapes. Sorbet is a common intermezzo salad. A small green salad of bitter or spicy lettuce (e.g., curly endive or arugula) dressed with a light vinaigrette dressing is a popular intermezzo salad.



FIGURE 6. It is a different way of viewing a "salad," but this small portion of berry sorbet makes a perfect intermezzo salad.

Dessert Salads

Dessert salads are salads made with gelatins, whipped toppings, and fruits that are intended to be a light and refreshing end to a meal with a heavy main course. Dessert salads can be as simple as a serving of fresh mixed fruit. **Waldorf salad** is a sweetened dessert salad (sometimes used as an accompaniment salad) typically made of apples, raisins, marshmallows, oranges, nuts, and

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coconut as well as a sweet yogurt or mayonnaise dressing to bind it. (Those bound with mayonnaise would not be considered dessert salads).

Composed Salads

Composed salads are salads assembled in a preconceived physical arrangement on a plate or in a bowl. They have no real guidelines for appropriate ingredients. The assembly is specifically laid out and is completed with care in terms of element placement with regard to all of the ingredients. Composed salads tend to be more common in high-end restaurants where presentation is a key component of the dining experience.

Groupings

In groupings, a chef may tie five spears of blanched asparagus together with a thin strip of blanched red pepper and place it off center on a plate. Then the chef may tie hearts of palm together with a thin strip of blanched leek placed on the opposite side of the plate. In the middle of the plate may be a dollop of mango chutney. The vegetables may be drizzled with truffle oil.

Chef Salads

With chef salads, chain restaurants often have extremely specific rules for arranging their version of a chef salad. The intent is to create an identical salad arrangement each time the salad is ordered.



FIGURE 7. Look at how specifically this traditional Russian salad is assembled on the plate. The careful plating techniques make this a composed salad.

Cooked Salads

Cooked salads are salads in which the main ingredient is cooked prior to salad assembly. Examples are egg, tuna, chicken salad, pasta, potato, lobster, shrimp, steak, and salmon.

Summary:

Salads encompass a huge variety of creations (e.g., simple green salads to frozen confections to main dishes). Simple side dishes, appetizers, cooked and fresh vegetables, fruits, and meats (many served with dressings and some elegantly arranged) are all included in the menu category referred to as salads.

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Checking Your Knowledge:

1. Which vegetables are typically used in a "vegetable" salad?
2. Define a "composed" salad. Describe one in detail.
3. Sofia is having a chicken salad stuffed tomato for lunch. Name all the "categories" of salad this dish represents.
4. What is an intermezzo salad? What type of salad greens and dressing would be appropriate?
5. In which category would you place a simple green dinner salad?

Expanding Your Knowledge:

Whether simple or elegant, professionally prepared and arranged salads are not just thrown together and put on a plate. They are assembled with the understanding that there are four primary elements required to make a salad complete. A well-presented salad requires a base, body, dressing, and garnish. Find out exactly what these elements are and how they can be used to make a plain salad an exceptional one. Use the Internet or textbooks in the library to help you.

Web Links:

History of Salads and Dressings
http://whatscookingamerica.net/History/SaladHistory.htm

Salad Parts
http://www.fooduniversity.com/foodu/food_c/salads/salad_parts.htm

Salads
http://www.tasteofhome.com/Recipes/Course/Salads

Salads
http://www.gardemanger.com/greens.html

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