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Salad in a Jar Printable

We all want to eat healthier. But who has the time? What if you could prep a whole week of salads for lunch on Sundays? Then each morning, you simply reach into the fridge for your seasonal, nutritious meal. That's the idea behind Salad in a Jar. With this method, there's still chopping and prepping, for sure. But you do it when you have the time and you do it all at once. And by building a salad with proteins, grains, local fresh veggies and even a little in-season fruit, topped with a homemade dressing, you'll make a lunch that fills you up, keeps your taste buds happy and gives your body what it needs. In this printable, you'll find a How to Build a Better Salad guide and recipes for two homemade salad dressings, plus a recipe for Cucumber, Tomato, Feta Salad that can be adapted to Salad in a Jar style or not. Be sure to print out Real Simple magazine's Mason Jar Salad graphic for an easy reminder. Ready? Let's get cooking!

Maple Turmeric Salad Dressing

Makes about 1-1/2 cups

Ingredients

- 2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil, avocado oil or favorite high-quality oil
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup (local if you can get it)
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp. fine sea salt
- 2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Whisk together vigorously until everything is well-mixed.
2. Drizzle atop favorite salad. Store in the refrigerator in an air-tight container for up to a week.

Lemon Balsamic Dressing

Makes about 1-1/2 cups

Ingredients

- 2-3 cloves garlic
- 1 tsp. fine sea salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 4 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. freshly squeeze lemon juice
- 4 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. honey (local if you can get it)
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil or other favorite high-quality oil

Instructions

1. Place garlic, salt and pepper into food processor. Pulse until the ingredients become like a paste.
2. Add vinegar, lemon juice, Dijon and honey. Pulse until everything is well-mixed.
3. While the processor is running, drizzle oil down the chute until the dressing is mixed together and thick.
4. Refrigerate in an air-tight container for up to a week.

Cucumber, Tomato, Feta Salad

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients

- 2-3 large cucumbers (about 2 pounds), diced
- 2 large heirloom tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 large red onion (about 3/4 cup), diced
- 1 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and diced
- 1/2 cup mint leaves, finely chopped
- 6 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- juice of 1 large lemon
- 1/2 tsp. fine sea salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 4 ounces feta, crumbled

Instructions

1. Mix together cucumbers, tomatoes, onion, olives and mint in a medium bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Pour dressing over the veggies. Sprinkle feta on top.
3. Serve immediately or store in an air-tight container in the fridge for up to 2 days.

How to Build a Better Salad

Start with leafy greens — any kind of lettuce, spinach, arugula, beet greens, chard or even kale. If you don't prefer to eat greens like chard or kale raw, warm them briefly in a cast-iron skillet until they wilt. Or quick-saute them with an onion or some garlic.

Add a dollop of grains (think quinoa, barley, spelt, rice, polenta or orzo).

Or perhaps a “bean” (such as chickpeas, lentils, black beans, navy beans or kidney beans).

Or another protein (think hard-boiled eggs, chicken breasts sautéed with lemon slices, pan-fried tofu).

Top with raw veggies (beets, carrots, radishes, snow peas, green onions, sprouts of any kind, asparagus — raw or quick-sauteed).

Add herbs (choose from parsley, cilantro, chives, mint, dill, oregano or thyme).

Pile on some fruit (berries, sliced grapes or pears, mandarin oranges, dried cranberries, raisins, dates, figs).

Add nuts and seeds (minced peanuts or cashews for an Asian twist, stand-by walnuts or pecans or pistachios; sesame seeds, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds are also all great choices).

Stack on a little cheese — especially crumbled feta and dollops/slices of goat cheese.

Top with a homemade dressing.

If all the choices seem overwhelming, try stacking your salad along a theme, say Thai (greens, veggies, forbidden rice, chives and mint, cashews and a peanut dressing — you could even add shrimp for a deconstructed Pad Thai). Or try Mexican (wilted kale with black beans, onions, avocado, tomatoes, cilantro pepitas (roasted Pumpkin seeds) with an avocado dressing). The possibilities are truly endless.