

Salad of the Imagination

Season: All

Serves: 30 tastes in the classroom
or 6 at home

Fresh from the garden: chives, garlic, zucchini

Recipe source: Stephanie Alexander's *Kitchen Garden Cooking with Kids* (Penguin Lantern 2006)

Students love making 'Salad of the imagination' and there are so many possible combinations. Many of the extra ingredients listed here are heavier than the salad leaves, which means the extras will tend to sink to the bottom of the bowl. For that reason, it is often better to serve these kinds of salads on a wide shallow platter, then everyone can see the special touches. Always add the dressing and toss the salad well, just before serving.

Suggestions by season:

- Spring: herbs (such as flowering thyme), pine nuts, rocket leaves (arugula)
- Summer: tomatoes, mozzarella, basil, spinach, rocket leaves (arugula)
- Autumn: celeriac, gruyere, parsnip chips
- Winter: spinach, croutons, bacon, beetroot

Equipment:

large bowl
salad spinner
clean tea towels
kitchen paper
measuring cups and spoons
juicer (optional)
chopping board
cook's knife
small bowl
whisk
tongs
salad bowls or platters
salad servers

Ingredients:

4 cups mixed salad leaves from the garden,
washed and dried
2 cups mixed small leaves and herbs,
washed and dried

Garnishes and other ingredients such as:

croutons (plain or garlic-rubbed)
toasted nuts (pine nuts, walnuts, almonds)
toasted seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, linseed)
shavings or crumbings of cheese
(parmesan, pecorino, pressed ricotta salata,
blue cheese, feta, gruyère)
chunks of avocado
cured fish (anchovies, smoked trout)
gratings of vegetables (beetroot, carrot,
radish, celeriac)
hard-boiled eggs (sliced or chopped)
bacon (cooked until crisp, and crumbled)
raw fruits (apples, pears, citrus fruits)
pickled or preserved products (preserved
lemons, pickled plums or cherries)

Dressing ingredients such as:

acids (lemon juice or vinegar)
oils (olive oil)
additions (mustards, honey, sugar, herbs,
toasted spices)



What to do:

1. Choose your ingredients, thinking about what is in season, which flavours go together and how they will feel in a salad (for example, it's always nice to have something crunchy along with the soft green leaves).

To make the dressing:

1. To make a dressing, the most common formula is 1 part acid (such as lemon juice or vinegar) to 4 parts oil. (High-quality vinegars are very powerful, so you may need to use less.)
2. Combine your acid with your oil in a small bowl. Whisk lightly to combine.
3. Whisk in additions, which could include mustard, small amounts of honey or sugar, freshly chopped herbs (such as parsley, tarragon, chervil or mint), toasted spices (such as coriander seeds or cumin seeds), yoghurt.
4. Whichever combination you choose, always season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
5. Taste the dressing and adjust the flavours as necessary before using.

To assemble the salad:

1. Prepare any other ingredients for your salad, such as croutons or toasted seeds, cheeses, preserves, grated vegetables or hard-boiled eggs.
2. Tip the salad leaves into the bowl with the dressing, then very gently turn them in the dressing with tongs or your hands.
3. Serve on platters and scatter with croutons or edible flower garnishes, if using.

