Step Into Spring with Fresh Salad Ideas

Spring is a great time to try all sorts of fresh nutritious greens. Add leftover cooked meats, cheese, and even other vegetables and fruits to turn your salad into a main-dish meal. Here are some ideas:

**Spinach Orange Salad**
- 6 cups fresh spinach, torn
- 2 cups other greens (romaine, escarole, or leaf lettuce)
- 1 11-ounce can mandarin orange sections, OR 1 cup fresh orange sliced
- 1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced (optional)
- 1 small red onion, sliced and separated into rings.

In large bowl, combine all the ingredients. Toss with favorite low-calorie dressing or try Dijon or Raspberry dressing below.

**Dijon Dressing**
- 1/4 cup nonfat mayonnaise
- 2 Tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 Tablespoon honey
- 1 Tablespoon cider vinegar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper
- 1 clove garlic, crushed

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl or pint jar with a tight lid. Mix or shake until blended. Serve.

**Raspberry Dressing**
- 1-8 ounce container low fat raspberry yogurt
- 1 Tablespoon skim milk
- 1-1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh mint or 1/2 teaspoon dried mint, crushed

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl or pint jar with a tight lid. Mix or shake until blended. Serve.

**Make Your Own Croutons**

Cut enough white, wheat, rye or other bread into 1/2-inch cubes to measure 4 cups. Spread cubes in a 12X8-inch baking dish. Microwave at High 4 to 5 minutes, or until dry to the touch, stirring every 2 minutes. Let stand until cool.

**Marinated Salad**
- cooked meat (beef or pork) - grilled or roasted, refrigerated until cold, and sliced very thin, removing all fat, bone, etc.
- tomatoes—fresh, thick sliced and cut in half
- sweet onion-(Vidalia, Texas sweet, Spanish, sliced in thin rings.) If you don’t have a sweet onion, soak regular onion slices in cold water 30 minutes and drain to remove “hot” flavor.
- mozzarella cheese-thinly sliced into strips

Layer ingredients in a shallow bowl; sprinkle with your choice of Italian dressing. Cover and let marinate in the refrigerator up to 24 hours. Serve over favorite greens.

**Herb-Seasoned Croutons**

Microwave 1 Tablespoon butter or margarine at High 30 to 45 seconds, or until melted. Stir in 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes and 1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning. Toss cubed bread in seasoned butter. Microwave as directed above. Be creative and try other herbs to taste.

**Croutons** can also be toasted in oven or toaster oven. Bake at 375° for 10-15 minutes or until crisp.
Food Safety

Separate: Don’t Cross-Contaminate

Cross contamination is the scientific word for how bacteria can be spread from one food product to another. This is especially true when handling raw meat, poultry and seafood, so keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods like salad greens.

• Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods in your grocery shopping cart and in your refrigerator.
• If possible, use one cutting board for raw meat products and another cutting board for fresh vegetables for salads.
• Always wash hands, cutting boards, dishes and utensils with hot soapy water after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry and seafood.

Veggie Roll-Ups

Ingredients
4 leaves of favorite greens
4 Tablespoons peanut butter


Variation: Roll in a thin slice of turkey, roast beef, or cheese instead of peanut butter.

Talk with children about which plant leaves we eat (cabbage, spinach, beet greens, lettuce). Discuss color, texture, size of leaves, and taste. Have children wash and tear greens into bite size pieces for salads. This is a great way to try new vegetables, too.

Stretching Your Salad Dollars

$ Select fruits and vegetables that are in season. They are usually the best price.
$ Choose fresh fruits and vegetables that are firm, full, bright and fresh looking.
$ Amount to buy: One pound of most greens will make 6-10 servings (1/2 cup).
$ Pass up wilted vegetables and overripe fruit, despite low prices.
$ Leftover green peppers or onions may be wrapped and frozen for later use. Double wrap to prevent odor from going through freezer.
$ Try a variety of greens for salads. Look for endive, escarole, spinach and Romaine. The darker the greens, the better for nutritional value.
$ Pre-cut coleslaw cabbage or salad mixtures can be costly items. Look for sales and compare prices. You can save money by preparing your own greens.

Salad Tips

✈ Cut a clove of garlic in half and rub salad bowl with it to add flavor.
✈ Tear greens in bite size pieces rather than cutting with a knife.
✈ Remove leaves that are bruised, musty or damaged. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Use within a week.
✈ Before cooking or serving greens, wash them in a large bowl of cool water. Do not soak. Dip the greens up and down in the water to remove the sand and dirt from leaves (may need to do several times).
✈ No matter what you do, wet greens won’t keep and in a matter of days, you’ll have a soggy mess. Instead, separate the leaves, wash and dry them, and then put them away. If you use a salad spinner, you can leave the greens in the basket; pop the lid on and refrigerate the whole thing. If not, roll the washed leaves in paper towels, and refrigerate them in a closed plastic bag.
✈ Before making the salad, be sure chilled greens are dry; if leaves are wet, dressing may not coat them and flavor may be diluted.
✈ Most salads are at their best when dressing is added and tossed or mixed just before serving. Dressing can cause greens to become limp and crisp vegetables, croutons, etc. to soften.

Free Nutrition Education Programs

Nutrition Teaching Assistants are available to help limited income individuals and families throughout Herkimer County stretch their food dollars to feed themselves and their families better.

Lessons can take place in participants homes or worksites as well as at community centers. Newsletters and other resources are also available by mail.

Topics include:
• Budgeting and stretching food dollars.
• Basic nutrition and menu planning.
• Preparing low cost, easy recipes and menus.
• Preserving, storing and preparing food safely.

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