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A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul.

September 2021

MUCH MORE INTERESTING TOSSED SALADS:

Fresh Mushroom Salad

**Italian Bread Salad with Marinated and Grilled Vegetables
and *Oeufs Mollets***

Kale Salad with Roasted Sweetpotatoes and Goat Cheese

**Tossed Greens, Mango, and Charred Corn with Passion
Fruit *Vinaigrette***

Mixed Flower Vinegar with Oregano

Tossed salads can be so unexciting. Most side salads served in restaurants are composed of lettuce, maybe tomato, maybe cucumber, maybe onion. Unless you request dressing “on the side,” this meager salad selection could be drowned with a dressing “of your choice.” I guess, during this pandemic we may have been happy for even such a salad but . . .

Dark green lettuces, mesclun mixtures, and other leafy vegetables like *bok choy* or kale or spinach or radicchio or escarole or beet greens are my favorites but iceberg and romaine lettuces can still play a role by adding crispness. When two friends came to visit, I had to head for the market because I was reminded that Dot ate only iceberg lettuce. I should have remembered. When served a lovely mesclun salad at a restaurant years before, Dot had labeled it “weeds.” I have another friend who makes a salad almost the same way every day. If there is not a red pepper or romaine lettuce in her house, then there is no salad. In my family, it was celery; in some families it is the lack of a tomato.

Almost anything can be added to a bowl of well-chosen greens. The enormous variety of vegetables, herbs, and fruits we have available can add very delicious, personal touches to your salad. The possibilities are practically endless. Grilled or roasted vegetables are often a choice for us. If you grill or roast vegetables as a side with your main-course selections or if you serve these on a lettuce leaf, the same roasted vegetables can be incorporated into a complex tossed salad. I have included a couple of favorite salads that feature grilled/roasted vegetables. Two of these are *panzanella* salads which add bread to the salad in the classic Italian way. You may want to try these or use them as inspiration for tossed salads of your own that kick up the interest level a notch.

Before we leave vegetables let's consider what a difference you can make in a salad by just varying the member of the onion family you select. Unless you have an aversion to onions, you probably add onions to a tossed salad. What member of this diverse plant family do you choose—red, white, yellow, or sweet onions, scallions, chives, garlic or garlic scapes, garlic chives, leeks, tiny boiling onions, shallots, or my particular winter favorite, Vidalia salad onions?

Protein additions like hard-cooked eggs, cheeses, legumes, sautéed soy meat analogue chicken or bacon can all add interest and nutrition.

And then may come a dressing “of choice.” If you choose to serve a dressing, your choice can make that salad the star of your menu or just an afterthought. And do remember, dressing should, as a rule, be “on the side.”

Instead of *taco* chips or toasted *tostado* pieces or sautéed croutons, try crumbling lentil chips over a salad to add a nutritious crunch or add the tiny, crisp balls made from chick pea flour from the Punjab region of India known as *boondi*. Or, try edible flowers from your garden.

Know your preferences; defend them; and design your tossed salads so that every forkful is a new taste experience.

FRESH MUSHROOM SALAD

TPT - 1 hour and 11 minutes;

1 hour = *vinaigrette* flavor development period

Back in the 1960s there was a salad made from common white mushrooms and green peas. It was popular for its freshness, the simplicity of its ingredients, and its low, low calorie count but it wasn't very exciting. The touch of lemon and oil didn't elevate it much; it was really a "diet-day" salad and not a salad recipe that I trotted out for guests. Raw mushrooms are worth revisiting for a salad but with a lot more attention to taste and texture. All of our grocery stores have a selection of mushrooms that makes those common white mushrooms very "yesterday."

SOY – SESAME VINAIGRETTE;

1 tablespoon *extra virgin* olive oil
1 tablespoon *tamari* soy sauce
1 1/2 teaspoons rice wine vinegar
1 garlic clove—halved
1/2 teaspoon *lightly toasted* sesame seeds



1 cup *fresh crimini* mushroom slices—well-trimmed, well-rinsed, and well-dried
1/2 cup *fresh enoki* mushrooms—well-trimmed, well-rinsed, and well-dried
1/2 cup *fresh oyster* mushrooms—small, whole or sliced—well-trimmed, well-rinsed, and well-dried
3 tablespoons *frozen* green peas
2 baby red, sweet bell peppers—cored, seeded, and sliced into rings
3 large, *organic* red radishes—trimmed, well-scrubbed, well-rinsed, halved, and *thinly* sliced
1/2 cup *mesclun*—trimmed, well-rinsed, and well-dried
1/2 cup *arugula*—trimmed, well-rinsed, and well-dried



In a cruet, combine oil, soy sauce, vinegar, garlic clove halves, and *lightly toasted* sesame seed. Shake vigorously. Set aside for 1 hour.

In a salad bowl or on a platter, combine sliced *crimini* mushrooms, *enoki* mushrooms, whole or sliced oyster mushrooms, *frozen* peas, pepper rings, radish slices, *mesclun*, and *arugula*. Toss.

Remove garlic halves from *vinaigrette*.

Serve salad onto salad plates. Pass prepared soy–sesame *vinaigrette*.



Yields 4 servings

Notes: This recipe can be doubled, when required.

Served as a main course salad with a protein-rich dessert, this can really fill the bill for summer menu planning.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 1.1 g.; FAT = 3.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 2.9 g.;
CALORIES = 42; CALORIES FROM FAT = 66%

**ITALIAN BREAD SALAD
WITH MARINATED AND GRILLED VEGETABLES
AND OEUF'S MOLLETS**
Panzanella

TPT - 1 hour and 22 minutes;
1 hour = marination period

As the seasons change, warm days and evenings stretch into cool nights but the temperature at dinnertime can still be too warm to cook the foods that warm us from late fall to early spring. That is when panzanella can be the meal. There is no end to the variations that can be employed; let your family's likes and dislikes be your guide; if you prefer a vegan entrée, omit the eggs and the gorgonzola cheese. Don't worry, your amino acids are still well-complemented. In one of my favorite versions of this classic salad I add oeufs mollets, under-cooked, hard-cooked eggs. They are a classic French substitute for poached eggs. The white is set, allowing for the egg to be peeled, but the yolk is soft. These can be used warm as a garnish or quickly chilled to add to a salad as in the Italian-style bread salad which becomes quite la-de-dah with very little extra effort. This is a wonderful main-course salad.



- 1 medium, ripe tomato—chopped**
- 1/4 cup canned *cannellini* beans—well-drained**
- 1/4 cup frozen baby lima beans**
- 1/8 teaspoon salt**
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste**
- 1 tablespoon *extra virgin* olive oil**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons herb vinegar, of choice**
- Pinch dried oregano—crushed**

- 2 eggs**
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt**
- Ice water**

- 1/2 small yellow summer squash—trimmed, peeled, and chopped into bite-sized pieces**
- 3 small, baby sweet red peppers—trimmed and seeded, *but left whole***
- 1 one-inch-thick Italian red onion slice, cut into large pieces**
- 1 elongated hard roll *or* 3 slices of a French *baguette*—cut into bite-sized pieces**
- Olive oil spray coating**

- 3 cups mixed greens—well washed, trimmed, and torn into bite-sized pieces if too large***

- 8 whole, pitted Greek *Kalamata* olives**
- 1 1/2 tablespoons crumbled *Gorgonzola* cheese**

In a small mixing bowl, combine chopped tomatoes, *cannellini* beans, lima beans, salt, pepper, olive oil, vinegar, and crushed oregano. Toss to expose the vegetables to the seasoning mixture. Place a plate on top of the mixing bowl and allow to marinate at room temperature for at least 1 hour. Stir occasionally.

Set up a steamer over *MEDIUM-HIGH* heat.

Pour 1 tablespoonful of kosher salt into the boiling water.

(The salt will quickly coagulate the albumen if you should have an albumen leak or an explosive crack as the eggs are cooking. It does not affect the taste of the egg nor is it a concern for those on sodium-restricted diets.)

Using a common straight pin or a Swedish egg piercer, pierce the shell of each egg at the round end.

(The hole will go into the air pocket at that end of the egg and relieve the pressure that might cause the egg to crack.)

Place the eggs in the steamer, cover tightly and **allow to steam for only 10 minutes**. Using tongs, transfer the steamed eggs directly into a bowl filled with ice and cold water. Allow the eggs to remain in the ice water until cold—about 15 minutes.

Using a grill pan set over *MEDIUM-HIGH* heat, chopped squash, peppers, chopped onion, and bread pieces. Spray with olive oil and stir-fry until tender and browned. Remove from heat.

When ready to serve, add grilled vegetables and bread to marinated vegetables. Toss. Put greens on a large round platter or into a salad bowl and spoon marinated, grilled vegetable mixture over.

Garnish with olives and crumbled *Gorgonzola* cheese.

Serve at once as a main course salad.



Yields 4 servings

Notes: *Use this as an opportunity to include the tender leaves at the heart of a head of escarole, some young kale leaves, *bok choy* leaves, beet greens, or baby spinach.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 9.1 g.; FAT = 8.5 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 23.8 g.;
CALORIES = 204; CALORIES FROM FAT = 38%

KALE SALAD WITH ROASTED SWEETPOTATOES AND GOAT CHEESE

TPT - 26 minutes

I think I have mentioned before that kale is infinitely less bitter when it is picked after the first frost. Fresh kale makes a beautiful, sweet salad and I am very lucky to have a market that always has a bright green supply of organic kale so when my own garden supply is exhausted for the season, I still have a reliable source for one of our favorite autumn salads. It is the perfect foil for roasted sweetpotatoes, dried cranberries, goat cheese, toasted seeds, and a light, sweet vinaigrette with mustard; all the flavors of autumn in one salad bowl.



1 small sweetpotato—peeled and chopped into 1/4-inch cubes

1 1/2 teaspoons high heat safflower or sunflower oil

1/4 teaspoon salt

SMOKY MUSTARD VINAIGRETTE:

2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lime juice

1/4 teaspoon Dijon mustard with wine

1/4 teaspoon honey

Pinch Spanish smoked paprika, or more to taste

3 cups torn kale—well-rinsed and well-dried

2 tablespoons crumbled goat cheese with honey*
1 tablespoon dried cranberries
2 teaspoons toasted pine nuts (*pignoli*) or pumpkin seeds, if preferred

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

In a roasting pan, combine chopped sweetpotato, safflower oil, and salt. Toss to coat sweetpotato cubes with oil. Roast in preheated 375-degree oven, stirring frequently, until sweetpotato pieces are well-browned. Remove from oven. Set aside until cooled.

In a cruet, combine olive oil, lime juice, mustard, honey, and *smoked* paprika. Shake well. Set dressing aside until ready to serve.

When ready to serve, put kale into a salad bowl or onto a platter. Add dressing. Toss well. Add roasted sweetpotato. Toss well.

Scatter crumbled goat cheese, dried cranberries, and *toasted* pine nuts or pumpkin seeds.

Serve at once.

Yields 4 servings

Note: *Most grocery stores carry several kinds of goat cheese. The mild goat cheese with honey is perfect for this salad.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 2.8 g.; FAT = 5.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 11.0 g.;
CALORIES = 74; CALORIES FROM FAT = 63%

TOSSED GREENS, MANGO, AND CHARRED CORN WITH PASSION FRUIT VINAIGRETTE

TPT - 20 minutes

The nectars available in the international aisle of your grocery store can offer variety to your plans for desserts, beverages, or, as in this case, salad dressings. The sweetness of the dressing perfectly complements the charred corn and mango.

2 ears green (raw) corn—shucked
1 1/2 teaspoons high-heat safflower or sunflower oil

PASSION FRUIT VINAIGRETTE:

1/4 cup pear–passion fruit nectar*
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar or mixed flower vinegar with oregano
[see recipe which follows]
1 small garlic clove
Salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste



5 cups mixed greens—well-rinsed and well-dried

1 mango—peeled and sliced

Preheat a grill pan over *MEDIUM-HIGH* heat.

Brush corn ears with high-heat oil. Char corn on hot grill pan. Allow corn to cool.

Meanwhile, in a cruet, combine pear–passion fruit nectar, olive oil, vinegar, garlic clove, salt, and pepper. Shake vigorously.

Turn greens into a salad bowl. Scatter mango slices over.

Slicing close to the cob, cut large slabs of charred corn from the cobs. Scatter over mango slices.

Remove and discard garlic from dressing.

Serve chilled with prepared *vinaigrette*.

Yields 4 servings

Note: *Other nectars can be substituted.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 2.8 g.; FAT = 8.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 26.7 g.;
CALORIES = 177; CALORIES FROM FAT = 42%

MIXED FLOWER VINEGAR WITH OREGANO

TPT - 1 week and 14 minutes;
1 week = flavor development period

I sincerely think that this is one of the most perfect vinegars I have ever evolved. The flavors are balanced perfectly; there is a subtlety that is exciting without being assertive. And, it is fun to wait for the flowers to be ready to make each year's new batch. Yes, it does border on being a perfect experience and there are few enough of those moments in our lives.

- 2 cups mixed *Borage*, chive, lavender, pansies, and nasturtium flowers—pulled from flower stems, very well-washed, and well-dried**
- 3 *Calendula* flowers—pulled from flower stems, very well-washed, and well-dried**
- Petals of 4 daylilies—well-washed and well-dried**
- 2 four-inch sprigs of Italian oregano leaves *without* flowers—very well-washed and well-dried**
- 2 small thyme flower heads—very well-washed and well-dried**
- 2 four-inch sprigs of Italian oregano *with* flowers—very well-washed and well-dried**
- 1 small garlic clove—peeled**
- 3 1/2 cups rice wine vinegar**



Sterilize a 1-quart bottle or jar.

Pack well-washed and well-dried flowers, sprigs of oregano, and garlic clove into sterilized 1-quart bottle or jar. Pour rice wine vinegar over blossoms and herb sprigs, being sure to cover completely. Cap.

Allow to stand at room temperature in a dark cupboard for 1 week to allow for both flavor and color development.

Sterilize a clear, condiment bottle.

Strain vinegar from flowers and leaves into sterilized condiment bottle.

Store vinegar at cool room temperature away from light.

Yields 3 1/2 cupfuls

Note: This recipe may be doubled or tripled or quadrupled with ease, helpful if you should want to give bottles as gifts.

1/56 SERVING (i. e., per tablespoonful) –
PROTEIN = 0.0 g.; FAT = 0.0 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 0.0 g.;
CALORIES = 0.0; CALORIES FROM FAT = 0%

*If you made the mixed flower vinegar this month,
you may be primed for some other food preservation projects.*

*I gathered together a few easy pickling recipes,
both fruit and vegetable, from my files.
If you drop by next month, we can have a go at pickling.*

Judy

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.

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