

How To Make Your Own Super Satisfying Main Meal Salad

Salads are a great way to blend a variety of ingredients to create a one serving dish in a very short time (with a little advance prep!).

Try this method to create different versions of this versatile dish based on season, available ingredients, and your personal taste preferences.

Base: Build from the Bottom Up

Leafy greens options:

- ❖ Arugula – tender leaves with a little kick, depending on age of the leaves
- ❖ Bok Choy – gut friendly tops and bottom, use the leafy greens in the salad and the whites in a stir fry dish
- ❖ Dandelion greens – leans into a bitter taste, use within 2 days of buying ideally and mix with other tender greens to soften the taste; a great detoxifier for the liver!
- ❖ Kale – different varieties, massage the curly version with olive oil first; cut out the thick stems and use only the softer leaves in salads; if concerned with thyroid health, steam lightly first before using in a cold salad
- ❖ Mustard greens – strong mustard flavor, mix with tender greens to add depth of flavor to the salad
- ❖ Spinach – mild flavor, rinse well if not already pre-washed
- ❖ Swiss Chard – more on the mild side like spinach, cut out the thick inner stack and reserved for a stir-fry
- ❖ Spring greens mix – blend of unique types of lettuce easy to use on their own or to soften more bitter greens
- ❖ Romaine – crisp and refreshing, great for lettuce cups as another option

Shredded vegetables:

- ❖ Brussel sprouts – cut off the rough bottom and shred in a food processor
- ❖ Cabbage – try purple and green varieties; mix together for extra color
- ❖ Carrots – rainbow (purple, white and orange)
- ❖ Parsnips – white, similar taste to carrots with a different nutrient profile

Second layer: Veggie Vegetables

Choose at least two options from this category:

- ❖ Radishes
- ❖ Celery
- ❖ Asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini – lightly steamed
- ❖ Golden or red beets – raw, cooked or fermented
- ❖ Sugar snap peas
- ❖ Cucumber
- ❖ Bell pepper
- ❖ Mushroom
- ❖ Watercress
- ❖ Microgreens
- ❖ Fennel
- ❖ Spring onions

Note: consider adding fermented vegetables to boost natural sources of living probiotics to balance the gut microbiome (Brands: Wild Brine, Farmhouse Culture in Sprouts or Whole Foods)

Third Layer: Starchy Vegetables and or Whole Grains

These add soluble fiber to feel full and encourage regular bowel motility and a satisfying sense of fullness.

- ❖ Hard Winter Squash – acorn, butternut, carnival, delicata, Hubbard, kabocha
- ❖ Root vegetables – kohlrabi, turnips, rutabagas (precook by either pressure cooker/insta-pot or roast)
- ❖ Sweet potato, purple potato, Yukon gold potato

Whole Grains:

- ❖ Quinoa, millet, wild rice, buckwheat – all gluten free; cook in advance in broth and chill in the refrigerator for up to a week or freeze small serving sizes to grab and go later

Fourth Layer: Protein

Choose from quality animal proteins – wild caught fish/seafood, pasture raised poultry, grass fed/finished beef, eggs from pasture raised hens

Choose from plant proteins – organic soy (tempeh/cooked in advance, edamame), whole beans/legumes such as garbanzo beans, pinto beans, black beans, white beans, etc.

Fifth Layer: Health Fats

Ideally start with extra virgin olive oil and add it directly to your base to coat the leafy greens or shredded vegetables to maximize nutrient absorption and then layer in one of the below options:

- ❖ Avocado
- ❖ Sesame seeds
- ❖ Olives
- ❖ Raw seeds (pumpkin, sunflower)
- ❖ Raw nuts (pecans, almonds, walnuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts)

Sixth Layer: Flavor Boosters

These add sweetness and/or a final layer of super nutrient dense plant foods.

Consider any type of seasonal fresh fruit – these are especially nice:

- ❖ Pears
- ❖ Peaches
- ❖ Watermelon
- ❖ Apples
- ❖ Berries

Fresh herbs are worth the extra effort!

- ❖ Cilantro

- ❖ Parsley
- ❖ Basil
- ❖ Mint
- ❖ Dill
- ❖ Chives

Top everything with a homemade dressing or a quality store bought option (Primal Kitchen among others)

Combinations may look like this:

- ❖ EVOO + Balsamic (can be reduced for more intense flavor – try Olives the Best Store online for great options!)
- ❖ Tahini + lemon juice + EVOO + honey
- ❖ Almond butter + lime juice + ginger + white vinegar + coconut aminos or tamari
- ❖ Mustard + red wine vinegar + lemon juice + EVOO + garlic

Try this site for more ideas: <https://www.loveandlemons.com/healthy-salad-dressing-recipes/>