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SALAD IN A JAR

Most important rule: dressing at the bottom, greens at the top.

Keep them as far away from one another as possible. If you do that, your greens will stay crispy and fresh, no problem. Use the resting time to your advantage. Place items that'll soak up and marinade in the dressing as the next layer for the best salad flavor.

Cooked grains, tofu, meats, mushrooms—anything that is spongy and will suck up that yumminess as the jar sits in the fridge.

They key is finding dressings that you really, really love, because that dressing will flavor everything in that jar. Experiment and figure out what works for you and your family.

To make the salads a little more hearty and filling, try adding a protein like chicken, quinoa, beans or cubed tofu. We've had these salads last as long as 10 days in the fridge without getting soggy, yucky or anything but delicious. We haven't tried going longer than that because they are so yummy; they don't last long in our house!

Really jam-pack the jars full. Not only does this give you the most veggies for your space, but it also helps keep things from shifting and moving around (which is particularly helpful if you are packing a jar in a lunch and it happens to tip over on its side). I shove so many greens in that I have to hold them down with one hand while I place the lid on with the other. It should be like a lettuce jack-in-the-box when you open that jar!

We use pint-sized canning jars and they end up making a nice-sized side salad—a pint Mason jar full of soup and a pint Mason jar full of salad would make for a perfect-sized, easy-to-pack workplace lunch (plus, you can just take the lid off the soup and microwave it right in the jar). If you want to go for a big, entree-sized salad, use quart-sized jars. I try to keep the ratio of each jar about half-and-half—half toppings, dressing, grains, proteins and half greens.

There are two ways to eat these guys. You can either dump it all into a bowl—the dressing and toppings fall just beautifully over the greens when you dump—or, if you're short a bowl, you can eat it directly out of the jar. Because they are so full, you might have to eat off a layer or two of greens, and then replace the lid, shake the heck out of it to distribute the dressing, and then dig right in with a fork. It makes a super easy grab-and-go snack.

There are millions of possibilities! This might even be a fun way to get kids excited about eating their veggies. You can use smaller-sized jars (like jelly jars), set up a salad jar bar, and then let them assemble their own delicious, nutrient-packed creations.
Strawberry Spinach Salad with Strawberry-Lime Vinaigrette

This is one of my absolute favorite salads—in a jar or out. The sweet strawberries are a beautiful pairing with the creamy and tangy feta. I mixed up a super quick and easy strawberry-lime vinaigrette to flavor the whole thing. I used protein-packed quinoa and crunchy sunflower seeds, but you could easily sub in your favorite grain and seed.

To make this salad, in the jar, put items in this order:
Strawberry-Lime Vinaigrette (see recipe below—I use about two tablespoons of dressing per pint-sized jar)
Cooked Quinoa
Sliced Strawberries
Sunflower Seeds
Sliced Green Onions
Crumbled Feta
Baby Spinach
Depending on how juicy your strawberries are, you might want to put them down lower in the jar (before the quinoa) to keep them even further away from the spinach.

Strawberry-Lime Vinaigrette
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons strawberry preserves
1 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon mustard
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
Salt and pepper, to taste
Combine all ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Close and shake until emulsified. Makes about four tablespoons of dressing (enough for two-pint-sized jars).
Mexican Chickpea Salad with Chile-Lime Dressing

Oh man, this one is so flavorful and delicious! The salsa really makes this salad shine, so make sure to use something you love. I really like the texture of chickpeas in this salad (and they hold up really well to the dressing) but you could easily sub in black beans, kidney beans or lentils and get the same kind of nutrition and flavor profile.

To make this salad, in the jar, put items in this order:
- Chile-Lime dressing (see recipe below—use about two tablespoons of dressing per pint-sized jar)
- Cooked Brown Rice
- Cooked Chickpeas
- Salsa
- Red Onions
- Halved Grape Tomatoes
- Chopped Cilantro
- Chopped Romaine

Because of the tomatoes and salsa, this salad is a bit “wetter” than others and care should be taken not to tip it or turn it to avoid the romaine getting soggy.

Chile-Lime Dressing

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon dried ground cumin
Pinch red pepper flakes
Salt and pepper, to taste

Combine all ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Close and shake until emulsified. Makes about four tablespoons of dressing (enough for two pint-sized jars).
A Feast for Your Eyes.....

To make this salad, in the jar, put items in this order:
Sesame-Lemon dressing (see recipe below—I use about two tablespoons of dressing per pint-sized jar)
Drained, Pressed and Cubed Extra Firm Tofu
Sliced Red Bell Pepper
Chopped Cucumbers
Sprouted Lentils
Sunflower Seeds
Chopped Parsley
Chopped Romaine
Small cubes of firm tofu act like little protein-packed sponges soaking up all the dressing goodness. Not into tofu? No problem. Shelled edamame would work great as a replacement.

Sesame-Lemon Dressing
1 tablespoon tahini
Pinch of red pepper flakes
1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 clove garlic, minced
Combine all ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Close and shake until emulsified. Makes about four tablespoons of dressing (enough for two-pint-sized jars).
Sunshine Salad with Orange Marmalade Vinaigrette

The original Sunshine Salad recipe is one I made for my friends over at any time Fitness, and I loved it so much that I decided to turn it into a salad-in-a-jar for everyday eating.

To make this salad, in the jar, put items in this order:
Orange Marmalade Vinaigrette (see recipe below—I use about two tablespoons of dressing per pint-sized jar)
Cooked Quinoa
Clementine Wedges
Sliced Red Onions
Sprouted Lentils
Pine Nuts
Chopped Romaine
Baby Spinach

I use fresh clementine wedges, because I always seem to have them kicking around, but you can just as easily use canned mandarin slices—just make sure to drain them well before adding to the jar.

Orange Marmalade Vinaigrette
2 teaspoons orange marmalade
2 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
Pinch red pepper flakes
Salt and pepper, to taste

Combine all ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Close and shake until emulsified. Makes about four tablespoons of dressing (enough for two-pint-sized jars).

• Choose the perfect plate. Selecting the right plate is key to attractive food presentations. Think of yourself as an artist, the plate as your canvas, and the food as your medium. White plates are popular because they create high contrast and provide a neutral background for your colorful creations. Utilize white space by thinking of the rim as your frame, and consider using the rule of thirds to highlight your plate’s focal point(s). When applied to cooking, the rule of thirds prescribes placing the focal point of your dish to either the left or right side of the plate, rather than the center.
• Use moist ingredients as your base. Another rule of thumb is to plate moist or runny ingredients first, as they tend to move during delivery if they aren’t held down by other foods. One way to anchor runny ingredients is by placing other foods on top of them. For example, you can angle sliced meat or vegetables against purees and masked vegetables.
• Place food to create flavor bites. Essentially, flavor bites are forkfuls of food that combine all of the ingredients in your dish into one bite. Creating flavor bites is the perfect accompaniment to creative plating as it pleases both the eye and the taste buds.
• One of the best-kept secrets to beautiful plating is paying close attention to the details. While your focus will obviously be on the protein, considering how the other elements of the plate create color and contrast is also very important.
• Another way to catch your guests’ eyes is to utilize the power of height. While compactly stacking ingredients isn’t as popular as it was 5-10 years ago, creating a tall plate can go a long way towards enhancing visual appeal. You can balance out taller ingredients by leaning long, flat items against them. For example you can plate your steak on top of polenta and lean asparagus spears against them at a 45-degree angle.
• Don’t forget about textures to enhance the dish.
• Asymmetrical shapes are good.
• Always choose edible garnishes. The garnishes should be related to the dish and enhance and complement the flavors of the entrée you have created, not distract from them. Also, never heap garnishes in one corner of the plate. Disperse them thoughtfully in order to add color or texture.
Tools for Food Garnishing and Presentation

The most important tools will be your mind and hands. But a few tools will also be helpful. The list of items is similar to equipment that is used for surgery.

- Kitchen Scissors
- Culinary tweezers in different sizes
- Various knives and scalpels for carving fruits and vegetables
- Choppers for fruits and vegetables
- Molds and rings-variety of forms
- Silicon mat
- Spoons, forceps, needles
- Decorating brushes
- Garnishing Kits
- Plating wedges
- Shavers
- Squeeze bottles

Basic rules for Food Presentation

While there aren’t any hard and fast rules when it comes to “correct” plating, there are several important concepts to keep in mind as you prepare and present you culinary creations.

- Plate should not ever be overloaded with food, but also should not be seemingly empty. Choosing the right size plate wisely means it is big enough to allow your food to stand out, but small enough that your portions don’t look too small.
- It is necessary to leave blank the outer part of the plate along the edge.
- You need to create color contrast on the plate.
- Mix large and small, soft and crunchy, bright and dark colors.
- Use odd number of certain foods like chicken skewers, meatballs, or shrimp. It will look more interesting on the plate.
- Design and create with sauces. Don’t just pour the sauce carelessly all over the plate, though. Instead, think of your squeeze bottle or spoon as a paintbrush, and your sauce as a medium. Then, use them to enhance your plate.

BEST MEXICAN CORN DIałINGREDIENTS
- 3 (11 ounce) cans Mexican whole kernel corn, drained
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 (7 ounce) cans diced green chilies
- 2/3 cup green onion, chopped
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 (8 ounce) containers sour cream

DIRECTIONS
1. In a medium to large bowl, combine sour cream, mayonnaise and cumin.
2. Stir well.
3. Add corn, cheese, chilies, black pepper, and onions to the sour cream mixture.
4. Stir with a wooden spoon (or whatever you have) until all is combined.
5. Cover and chill for 2 hours or overnight. Serve with warm tortilla chips.
Individual Berry Charlottes
Yield: 4-5 individual charlottes

Ingredients:
For the ladyfingers:
3 large eggs, separated
½ cup confectioners' sugar, sifted, plus more for sprinkling
1/3 cup granulated sugar
½ cup all-purpose flour

For the blackberry mousse:
½ cup strained blackberry puree
2 tsp. granulated sugar
½ tsp. gelatin
1½ tsp. cold water
½ cup heavy cream

For the raspberry mousse:
½ cup strained raspberry puree
2 tsp. granulated sugar
½ tsp. gelatin
1½ tsp. cold water
½ cup heavy cream

Fresh berries, for serving

Preheat the oven to 375˚ F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. To make the lady fingers, place the egg whites in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat on medium-high speed until foamy. Gradually add the sifted confectioners' sugar, and continue whipping the egg whites until a stiff, glossy meringue forms. Transfer the meringue mixture to a medium mixing bowl. In the empty mixer bowl, now fitted with the flat beater, combine the egg yolks and granulated sugar. Beat on medium speed until thick and pale yellow. With a spatula, fold the egg yolk mixture into the meringue until smooth and blended, taking care not to deflate the egg whites. Gently fold in the flour until no streaks remain.
Plating Techniques—Follow the Shape of the Plate

Plating is a very subjective area. The plate is to a chef or cook what a canvas is to an artist and like a piece of artwork, the end results often provoke mixed reactions. Styles of food presentation are also very fashion led. Creative chefs tend to lead the way with new plating trends, ideas which eventually become the ‘current style’ in plating which means that plating styles are continually evolving.

So how do you decide how you are going to plate your food? The easiest style is dictated by the shape of the plate you use and then you simply follow that shape. Round plates lend themselves to circles and curves whilst straight lines suit square and rectangular plates.


Transfer the batter to a pastry bag fitted with a plain round tip. Pipe the ladyfingers onto the prepared baking pans, about 3 inches long and 1 inch wide. Additionally, pipe small rounds for the bases of the charlottes (about 2½-3 inches in diameter). Sprinkle additional confectioners’ sugar over the piped ladyfingers. the ladyfingers and cake bases to a wire rack to cool completely. (Bake until light golden, about 10 minutes, rotating the pans halfway through baking. Let cool on the pans 10-15 minutes, and then remove Yield: approximately 36 ladyfingers plus 4 cake bases.)

To make the blackberry mousse, combine the blackberry puree and sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil. While the mixture is heating, combine the gelatin and water in a small bowl to soften. Once the fruit puree reaches a boil, remove from the heat. Stir in the softened gelatin mixture. Let cool to room temperature. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the heavy cream on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form (be careful not to overbeat!) With a spatula, gently fold in the fruit puree until well mixed and no streaks remain.

To assemble the charlottes, place a cake disk inside the bottom of each 3-inch ring mold on a flat plate or baking sheet. Line the edges of the mold with upright ladyfingers, flat sides facing toward the center. With the blackberry mousse in a pastry bag fitted with a large plain round tip, pipe some of the mousse so that it comes approximately halfway up the height of the ladyfingers. Transfer to the freezer to let the mousse set, about 30 minutes.

To make the raspberry mousse, combine the raspberry puree and sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil. While the mixture is heating, combine the gelatin and water in a small bowl to soften. Once the fruit puree reaches a boil, remove from the heat. Stir in the softened gelatin mixture. Let cool to room temperature. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the heavy cream on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form (be careful not to overbeat!) With a spatula, gently fold in the fruit puree until well mixed and no streaks remain.

Fill a pastry bag fitted with a large plain round tip with the raspberry mousse. Pipe a layer of the mousse into the center of the charlottes, leaving at least ½-inch of exposed ladyfingers to act as a rim for the berry topping. Transfer the charlottes to the refrigerator to chill the mousse until ready to serve.

Before serving, gently remove the ring molds from the charlottes. Tie a decorative bow around the outside of each cake. Top with fresh berries and serve chilled.
Pumpkin Pie Cheese Appetizer Recipe

Ingredients:
- Cheddar cheese
- Triscuit Thin Crisps
- Chicken in a Biskit crackers
- Wavy stick crackers (in bag of Chex Mix)
- Whipped cream cheese

Directions:
Assemble your ingredients.
Slice cheese into thick wedges, slightly smaller than your Triscuit Thin Crisps.

Put cream cheese in a pastry bag. Pipe tiny dollops of cream cheese on the Triscuit Thin Crisps, the Chicken in a Biskit crackers and the wavy stick Chex Mix crackers. (You will need to combine two wavy stick Chex Mix crackers to create the top “crust” on each “slice of pie.”) Add a dollop of cream cheese on top of each cheese wedge for the “whipped cream.”

Assemble and accessorize cheese wedges with the crackers to create your pumpkin pie slices.

Appetizer Cheese Board
Every great party starts with one thing: great appetizers. Craft an appetizer cheese board that's perfect for serving at any party, even a Sunday football party.

- The center of our spread is a few cheese favorites: colby, smoked gouda and cold pack cheese. Choose your favorite!
- The key to this cheese board is in the compliments: crackers, good whole-grain mustard, pepperoni, pistachios, dried apricots and cherry tomatoes. Some suggested bites:
  - Crackers, mustard, pepperoni and sharp cheddar cold pack
  - Pistachios, dried apricots and smoked gouda
  - Crackers, cherry tomatoes and colby jack
- Let your guests play! Each ingredient has different flavors and textures—there's tangy, spicy, crunchy and sweet. Encourage them to invent their own mini bites.

Dessert Cheese Board
The best part about entertaining is there is ALWAYS room for dessert. A cheese board is the perfect savory option to serve. Below are some tips for the perfect cheese board:

- Offer a variety of textures and flavors—cheddar is nutty and firm, blue is tangy and crumbly, and brie is earthy and soft.
- Add sweetness from accompaniments: dates, hazelnuts, sliced apples and a high-quality dark chocolate (at least 70%).
- Play around with flavor pairings! Blue, dates and sliced apples are equal parts sweet and tangy. Or try brie, hazelnuts and dark chocolate for a mini bite that's totally decadent.
- Cheddar makes for a great anchor to any cheese board. Luckily, Wisconsin has many of them—ranging from mild and young to more sharp and complex when aged. Pick your favorite, as any cheddar will work well for this cheese board.
- Serve with a dessert wine, like Port. It will pair especially well with your blue cheese.