



A Salad Lover's Guide to Greens

Are you a salad lover? Practically no other dish consistently offers so many vitamins and minerals, fiber and variety. Plus, a well-prepared salad can inspire a main course, or become one. When it comes to making salads, there are some tricks of the trade worth knowing, as we've outlined below.

Buying and Storing

In general, the darker the leaf, the better it is for you. Best example: Romaine lettuce has six times as much vitamin C and eight times as much beta-carotene as iceberg lettuce. Plus, most dark leafy greens offer some vitamin A.

For optimum freshness, greens should be kept cold. Your supermarket should have them displayed in refrigerated or iced racks.

Look over the greens before you buy. The leaves should be bright green and crisp. Watch out for heads with leaves that are wilted, decayed, bruised or brown along the edges. Greens should also have a fresh, clean smell.

Store greens, unwashed, in a perforated plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator for up to one week.

Don't throw the outer leaves away—these are the greenest and most nutritious

Perfect Salad Technique

Gently rinse greens to remove sand or dirt. Soaking greens in a bowl of water can remove vitamin C and other water-soluble vitamins.

When using greens in a salad, ensure maximum crispness by drying the leaves after washing. Use a salad spinner or wrap the leaves in a clean, lint-free dishtowel and refrigerate until ready to use.

For optimum nutrition and flavor, mix a variety of compatible greens: red leaf lettuce and spinach leaves, for example.

Add thinly chopped or sliced carrots, tomatoes, mushrooms, cucumbers or green or yellow onions.

Choose a dressing that complements your salad and accompanying dishes. Be sure the dressing is well chilled before using.

Use dressing sparingly. Pour on too much, and you're left with soggy leaves and an overload of fat. Rule of thumb: Use 1 tablespoon or less per person. To avoid wilted leaves, add dressing just before serving.

Tasteful Extras

For added interest, use a variety of oils in your dressings. Flavored oils—such as walnut, hazelnut, sesame, avocado and virgin olive oil—have the same calorie and fat content as safflower or corn oil. Because of their richer flavor, however, you may end up using less.

While you're at it, add a few flavored vinegars to your pantry. You may want to try balsamic, red wine, tarragon, rosemary or raspberry vinegars.

Fresh or dried herbs—such as basil, tarragon, dill, sage and cilantro—add flavor, but no fat, to dressings. The zest of lemons, limes or oranges makes a nice change of pace.

Mustard can add flavor and a smooth texture to your dressings with a minimum of calories and very little fat.

Green Nutrition

A salad a day might well keep the doctor away, because a diet heavy in greens can help supply your daily intake of several important vitamins and minerals. One cup of shredded green leaf lettuce contains 133 micrograms of vitamin A, which is 15 percent of the 900 micrograms men need each day and 14 percent of the 700 micrograms women should have on a daily basis.

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Making This School Year Your Child's Best Ever

Whatever age your child is, you can help alleviate first-day jitters by helping the student plan for a new school year.

“Make sure those first-day-of-school blues are avoided,” says Melitta Cutright, Ph.D., former communications director for the National PTA and author of “Growing Up Confident: How to Make Your Child’s Early Years Learning Years.”

“You’ll reinforce the importance of school and make the worries of a new school year less traumatic,” Dr. Cutright says.

But remember: The amount of planning help a student wants differs by education level. An elementary school student needs plenty of help, while a middle school student expects a bit more freedom. An older student might not want Mom and Dad to make any fuss, but parents should find ways to stay involved because high school presents more choices; from deciding which classes to take to choosing after-school activities.

Here’s how you can prepare your child for a new school year:

- Two weeks before the school year begins again, start getting your child back in the habit of going to bed, rising and eating meals at set times. All children need time to adjust to school schedules after summer activities.
 - Make a special trip to the store to buy school supplies and let your child pick out a backpack or lunch box.
 - Make a side trip to a clothing store and buy your child a new outfit for the first day, if uniforms are not required.
 - On a calendar, start counting down the days until school begins.
 - Plan a special back-to-school dinner with your child’s help. Rise early and prepare a favorite breakfast on the first day of school.
- If the child will walk to school, walk the route with him or her at least one morning or afternoon. Walk to the bus stop if your child will ride the bus.
 - Go to the school’s open house so your child can meet the teacher and other students in a relaxed setting.

Homework Rules

The real work begins when school starts. It’s a given that children will always hate doing homework no matter what parents say or do. But these suggestions should help with the battle between study and Nintendo.

- Establish a non-negotiable, daily homework time. A child should read or work on a personal project on days no homework is assigned.
- Establish a quiet place for study. Some children do as well on the living-room floor as they do at a desk in the bedroom.
- Ask about assignments and whether the child understands them. Help if necessary, but don’t do the work.
- Always show interest in the child’s education. Don’t ask, “How was school?” You’re likely to get little more than “OK.” Instead, ask about the day’s math lesson or problems on a dreaded test. Know the books being read, the papers being written and the projects being assigned

“Do all that,” Dr. Cutright says, “and you’ll make the school experience more enjoyable for you and your child.”

Familiarity Helps

It’s especially important for a young student to be familiar with new surroundings. Parents often forget how frightening change can be to children. To quell any fears of going to a new school:

- Drive by the school and point it out to your child.
- On another day, take the child to the school and walk around. Play on the playground and look in classrooms and the lunchroom.

