

Savor the Spectrum of Colorful Spring Salads

The weather's warming up, spring is here, and we're all looking to eat a little lighter, a little healthier. Best advice I can give to you is to add color to your plate! The colors of fruits and vegetables used in your menu not only brightens your plate and adds fabulous flavor, but also provides numerous vitamins and antioxidants to your diet. These, in turn protect against cancer and heart disease, boost immune systems and generally defend our bodies against illness. It's Mother Nature's gift to you! Not only rich in vitamins and fiber, the pigments in red and blue vegetables and fruits are the richest in antioxidants, orange and yellow in beta-carotene, dark greens in folic acid. Mother Nature colored her best food brightly so you would pay attention. So, pass on the processed foods and add a little color to your diet. Not only will you enjoy eating more, but the benefits you will reap will be plentiful.

The recipes below will give you a start, but use your creativity and add your favorite things to make it extra special just for you.

NOTE: These salads serve four and each salad serving features three servings of fruits and vegetables plus a protein. Eating well never looked or tasted so good!

Spring Strawberry Citrus Salad

8 Cups	Baby Spinach Leaves or combination of salad Greens and spinach leaves
2 Cups	Strawberries, sliced
2 Cups	Orange Segments, chopped, or 15 oz. can mandarin oranges, drained
1 Cup	Sugar snap peas, asparagus, celery, baby carrots, Or vegetable of choice, cut up
1-2 Cups	Cooked Chicken Breast, cut up bite size
½ Cup	Toasted Pecans or Almonds, halved or chopped
½ Cup	Feta Cheese, crumbled (optional)

Cran Raspberry Vinaigrette

¼ Cup	Cranberry Juice – 100% Juice
¼ Cup	Seedless Raspberry All Fruit or Jam
3 Tab.	Raspberry Vinegar
¼ Cup	Canola Oil
½ Tsp.	Kosher Salt
1/8 Tsp.	Freshly ground pepper

Combine and whisk until smooth or combine in covered jar and shake until well blended. Divide ingredients among four plates and toss with vinaigrette. Any fruits or vegetables can be substituted ---- make your favorite!!

Fiesta Salad

6-8 Cups	Mixed Salad Greens
2 Cups	Tomatoes, Chopped
15 oz.	Can of Black Beans, drained and rinsed well
2 Cups	Frozen Corn kernels, thawed
1-2	Ripe Avocado, chopped
½ Cup	Green Onions, sliced
1 Cup	Bell Pepper, chopped (use orange for color)

1 Cup Queso Blanco, crumbled or cubed Pepper Jack Cheese
2 Cups Cooked Mexican seasoned Chicken, cut into bite size cubes
Can add hot peppers, mango, jicama, etc.

Toasted Cumin-Lime Vinaigrette

1 Tsp. Ground Cumin
6 Tab. Lime Juice, freshly squeezed
3 Tab. Canola Oil
2 Tab. Triple Sec or freshly squeezed Orange Juice
2 Cloves Garlic, minced
½ Tsp. Kosher Salt
¼-1/2 Tsp. Crushed Red Pepper Flakes

Heat the cumin in a small non-stick skillet over low heat for 30 seconds or just until fragrant. Remove from heat. Stir in lime juice and remaining ingredients and whisk well.

Divide all ingredients among four plates and top with vinaigrette. I like to take ¼ cup vinaigrette and toss with tomatoes, beans, corn, avocado, green onions, and peppers and allow to sit a few minutes before adding to the salad.

Although I am sharing two colorful, nutritious salads that you can personalize to your tastes, I am sure you will be creative and come up with some wonderful combinations of your own. Be sure to stop by the Jungle for the freshest in produce and creative additions to your salads as well as the salad tossers, bags, bowls, chopped salad scissors, and much more you will find in the Margie Potts and Pans section of Jungle Jim's.

Happy Spring!

Jungle Jim's Margie Potts