

Salad of the Imagination: New Ideas

Season: All

Serves: 30 tastes in the classroom or 6 at home

We're sure you will have enjoyed making 'Salad of the Imagination' from Book 2, and we hope that it has become a regular addition to your cooking sessions. Because there are so many seasonal possibilities and so many opportunities for experimenting, this revised recipe should provide you with some fresh ideas and techniques to use throughout the year. Use whatever fresh produce is in season at the time, don't forget staples like basil, chives, parsley, mint and thyme, as well as green leaves like rocket, spinach and loads of different lettuces that grow all year round. Some basic items from your pantry will add texture and taste.

Suggestions by season:

- Spring: avocado, carrots, cucumber, radish, snow peas
- Summer: capsicum, celery, corn, green beans, tomatoes, zucchini
- Autumn: capsicum, celeriac (grated, raw), mushrooms, onions, tomatoes
- Winter: beetroot (grated raw), cabbage (sliced thinly), carrot, fennel, peas, snow peas

Equipment:

metric measuring cups and spoons
 clean tea towels
 chopping board
 cook's knife
 bowls – 1 small, 1 large
 whisk
 citrus juicer
 salad spinner
 tongs
 serving platter

Ingredients:

4 cups mixed salad leaves
 2 cups mixed small leaves and soft-leaved herbs
Garnishes and other ingredients such as:
 croutons (plain or garlic-rubbed)
 grated vegetables (beetroot, carrot, celeriac, radish)
 hard-boiled eggs (sliced or chopped)
 raw fruit (apples, citrus, pears)
 seeds (pumpkin, sesame, sunflower)
 shaved or crumbled cheese

For the dressing:

acids (lemon juice, vinegar: you can experiment with different vinegars)
 oils (olive oil is best to start with; buy the best you can afford)
 other flavour ingredients such as honey, mustard and minced garlic
 salt and freshly ground black pepper

What to do:

1. Choose your ingredients, thinking about what is in season, which flavours go together and how they will feel in a salad (it's always nice to have something crunchy along with the soft green leaves).
2. Wash and dry the leaves and herbs gently. Tear or snip them into bite-sized pieces. Remove tough stems.
3. Make the dressing. The most common ratio is 1 part acid (such as lemon juice or vinegar) to 4 parts oil. Combine your acid with your oil in the small bowl. Whisk lightly to combine.
4. Whisk in additions, such as honey, mustard or spices. Add a pinch of salt and pepper, and always TASTE and adjust as you like.
5. Prepare any other ingredients for your salad, such as croutons, seeds, cheese, grated vegetables or hard-boiled eggs. Add them to the large bowl.
6. Tip the salad leaves into the large bowl with the dressing, then very gently turn them in the dressing with tongs or your hands.
7. Serve on platters and scatter with croutons or edible flower garnishes, if using.