

Salad of the Imagination

Season: All

Serves: 30 tastes in the classroom or 6 at home

You'll love making 'Salad of the Imagination' as there are so many possible combinations, and so much experimenting to do. You can use this basic recipe and technique throughout the year, using whatever fresh produce is in season at the time, plus some basic items in your kitchen cupboard. Seasonal staples include:

- Spring: avocado, carrots, cucumber, radish, snowpeas
- 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, snowpeas

And always think about herbs 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.

Equipment:

clean tea towels
chopping board
cook's knife
scissors
large bowl
measuring cups
and spoons
whisk
citrus juicer
tongs
serving platter

Ingredients:

4 cups mixed salad leaves
2 cups mixed small leaves and herbs
Garnishes and other ingredients such as:
croutons (plain or garlic-rubbed
– make your own!)
hard-boiled eggs (sliced, chopped)
raw fruit (apples, oranges, pears)
seeds (pumpkin, sesame, sunflower,
linseed)
vegetable gratings (beetroot, carrot,
celeriac, radish)

For the dressing:

An 'acid' such as lemon juice
or vinegar (you can experiment
with different vinegars)
An oil (olive oil is best to start
with; buy the best you can afford)
Salt and pepper
Other flavour ingredients such as
honey, mustard and minced garlic

What to do:

1. Assemble your ingredients, thinking about what is in season, which flavours go together and how they will feel in a salad (for example, it's always nice to have something crunchy along with the soft green leaves).
2. Prepare the leaves and herbs by washing and drying them gently. Tear or snip big leaves into bite-sized pieces and remove any tough stems.
3. To make the dressing use 1 part 'acid' (such as lemon juice or vinegar) to 4 parts oil (for example 1 tablespoon of vinegar with 4 tablespoons of oil). Whisk together in a large mixing bowl, then mix in your flavour additions, such as honey, mustard or spices. Add a pinch of salt and pepper, and always TASTE and adjust as you like.
4. Prepare any other ingredients for your salad, such as croutons, seeds, grated vegetables or eggs.
5. Tip the leaves into the dressing bowl, then gently turn them in the dressing with tongs or your hands.
6. Serve on a platter and scatter with garnishes, if using.