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Some tasty tips for your salads

Summer is definitely salad season, but there's more to a bowl of refreshing greens than torn up lettuce leaves.

Jenna Bot of Salad Creations on 433 Yonge St. (416-977-2523) offers the following tips and tricks:

■ Design your own salad: Think of a theme like "Canadian" and choose ingredients that suit the theme. You can also think of a recipe for an entree or soup and use those ingredients to turn it into a salad — for example, Buffalo wings, gazpacho, steak and potato.

■ Less is more: Simplify by choosing two ingredients as the main focus.

■ A healthy crunch: Add a handful of nuts to any salad. Jazz up by pan frying (non-

stick) with a drop of honey.

Dressing Rules

Creamy works well on iceberg and romaine salads with few to little ingredients (let the dressing be the focal point).

Vinaigrettes work well on spring mix and spinach. They lightly dress the salad so the ingredients in the salad shine through.

Balsamic vinegar and oil works well, Experiment with different oils and vinegars for different flavour profiles. For extra flavour, add lemon juice or zest, honey, garlic and/or Dijon mustard.

Experiment with seasonal fruits.

Experiment with different starches: Couscous, quinoa, potatoes, leftover pasta, and

tortilla chips.

Use what's in season to make fresh tasty but inexpensive salads with Ontario-grown product.

Experiment with different lettuces: From maché, boston leaf, red leaf, watercress, arugula, and endive, there are hundreds to choose from

JENNA BOT'S GREAT SUMMER SALAD IDEAS:

1 - Orange Spinach Salad: Baby spinach, oranges, almonds, red onions, olive oil, lemon juice, orange juice, honey and salt and pepper. Add fresh herbs like basil or thyme. Make it hearty with salmon.

2 - Roasted Vegetable Salad: Spring mix, artichoke hearts,

roasted red peppers, red onion, roasted zucchini, roasted asparagus, croutons, parmesan cheese crisps.

(NOTE: To make Parmesan cheese crisps, grate fresh Parmesan cheese onto a baking sheet lined with slipmat or parchment paper and bake at 375F (180C) until golden brown and bubbly (about 10 minutes). Garnish two on top of salad.)

Drizzle salad with balsamic vinegar and honey herb and Dijon dressing.

3 - BBQ Chicken Salad: Romaine, mango, roasted red pepper, green pepper, red onion, green onion, and grilled BBQ chicken. Garnish with tortilla chips. Drizzle with sweet onion dressing.

4 - Italian Summer Salad:

Romaine, tomatoes, red onions, carrots, black olives, avocado, croutons and Italian dressing. Add ham or tuna salad to make it hearty.

5 - Grilled Peached and Steak Salad: Mixed greens, grilled steak, grilled peaches, pecans drizzled with olive oil and fresh lime juice.

6 - Peach and Feta Salad: Spring mix, peaches, avocado, bacon and feta cheese drizzled with olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

7 - Summer Fruit Salad: Banana, mango, strawberries, cantaloupe, watermelon and pineapple topped with granola, yogurt sprinkled with cinnamon.

For more information, check out saladcreations.ca.

— Rita Dellontis