



Dressing up Salads

What makes or breaks a great salad? The dressing, of course! There's a wide selection of dressings at the grocers, but it's so easy, economical, and fun to make your own! Crafting dressings enables you to address dietary needs — such as cutting fat, sugar, or sodium — as well as ingredient concerns (no artificial flavors, colorings, or preservatives, for example). With very little practice, you'll be developing dressings to suit your every preference.

Very Basic Dressings

To make a simple vinaigrette dressing, start with two or three parts oil to one part acidic ingredient, plus spices to taste. So easy! Experiment with how much oil you prefer; less will result in a tarter dressing and more will cut back the tartness of the acidic ingredient. From here you can add a myriad of other ingredients for flavor, consistency, and nutrition. Another very basic dressing can be made with parts mayonnaise and sour cream or yogurt. Then simply add equal, smaller amounts of oil and an acidic ingredient (say a tablespoon of each per two cups of your mayo/ yogurt base), and seasonings and a sweetener to taste. To thin the dressing, add milk or buttermilk until it reaches the desired consistency. For a mustardy dressing, simply include a bit of Dijon mustard or mustard powder with your other seasonings.



Oil Options

Once you start making dressings, you'll become aware of the different flavors and fragrances of various oils. Sometimes you may want an oil to play a subtle role, as a backdrop to spices, for example. In this case, canola or another mild vegetable oil is a good choice. Occasionally, the flavor and aroma of the oil — such as a walnut or olive oil — will play a starring role. Other good salad dressing oils include avocado, sunflower, flaxseed, grapeseed, and hazelnut.

Acidic Ingredients

Citrus fruits — lemon, lime, grapefruit and orange juice — make good additions to dressings. And vinegars are traditional. Be sure to try a variety of vinegars for a range of results. Balsamic, white, cider, rice wine and fruit-infused are just some of the possibilities.

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Spices

Just about any spice or spice blend is suitable for salad dressings, so feel free to experiment. Choose according to the particular salad or theme (a Mexican blend for a taco salad, for example, and a dash of tarragon and thyme for a light side salad). There are, of course, traditional spices for traditional salads: tarragon on the tuna, dill with potatoes and caraway with slaw. But be sure to play with the unexpected, too. A pinch of cayenne will perk up those potatoes, and a sprinkling of curry powder will yield a slaw that's unexpected and delicious! Of course, salt and freshly ground pepper are a must in most any dressing.

Other Elements

• To make your dressing creamy, choose among ingredients such as sour cream, yogurt, buttermilk, milk, cream, mayonnaise, avocado, catsup, Dijon mustard, tahini, peanut butter, almond butter, and honey. Of course, some of these will add distinctive taste, and some will render a creamier dressing than others.

• For added flavor and interest, look to flavorings such as soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, wasabi, cheeses, and anchovy paste. Ingredients such as fruits (raspberries, figs), and fresh or dried veggies (onions, chives, garlic, tomatoes, roasted peppers) will also provide distinctive flavor. Some dressing connoisseurs even like to add a little vanilla extract to their concoctions.

• Most dressings benefit from at least a hint of something sweet. Besides white sugar, you can give maple syrup, agave, honey, and brown sugar a try.

• Toasted nuts (walnuts, almonds, pine) and seeds (sesame, pumpkin) give a nice roasted flavor to dressings.



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38 SALAD DRESSINGS



Salad Dressings

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- » Curried Dressing

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Q&A

How long will my homemade dressing keep?



That depends on the ingredients. Dressings with dairy products won't keep as long as those without, for example. But because your homemade dressing won't have the preservatives that commercial dressings contain, they won't keep as long. Store them in the refrigerator, and try to use them up within a week or so. That means you'll want to make smaller rather than larger batches — giving you more opportunity to play in the kitchen!

Some of my favorite dressings call for buttermilk, but I don't always have it on hand. Any suggestions?

It's hard to keep buttermilk on hand unless you use it frequently. For one thing, rarely does a recipe (especially one for dressing) call for large amounts, so you'll have most of it left over. For another, it doesn't keep very long in the refrigerator. Short of making your own buttermilk (you'll need to have heavy cream on hand for that), there are a couple of quick and easy solutions.

Buttermilk powder — which you can buy in bulk — is a great solution. Simply mix 4 tablespoons of the powder with 1 cup of cold water whenever you need buttermilk for your dressings (or baking or other recipes).

Another option is to mix plain milk with an acidic ingredient, such as vinegar or lemon juice. To make one cup, place one tablespoon of the acidic ingredient in a measuring cup, then fill the cup with the milk. Stir gently, then let sit for five minutes. Ready to use!



To read more about salad dressings visit www.frontiercoop.com

add your own twist! Salad Creations



Citrus Avocado Taco Salad Dressing

Here's a quick-fix dressing that's great over taco salad and also substantial enough to serve as a dip with chips.

- ½ cup lemon juice
- 1 cup diced tomatoes
- ½ cup water
- 2 ripe avocados
- 2 tablespoons Frontier Taco Seasoning

In a medium-size mixing bowl, combine lemon juice, tomatoes, and water. Peel and dice avocados, then add to mix along with Taco Seasoning. Gently mash until desired texture is achieved. Makes about 2 cups.

Creamy Poppy Seed Dressing

Use this dressing on fresh greens with citrus and avocado, or on fruit salads.

- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 4 teaspoons honey
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- pinch ground white pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cardamom
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup plain yogurt

Whisk together the lemon juice, vinegar, honey, mustard, salt, pepper, cardamom, and poppy seeds. Whisk in the oil. Whisk in the yogurt. Refrigerate. Makes about 1½ cups.



Curried Dressing

Here's a dressing that works well in potato, chicken, and broccoli salads.

- ½ cup cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ⅛ teaspoon coarse grind black pepper



Blend together the mayonnaise, olive oil, and wine vinegar. Stir in the curry powder, sugar, and salt and pepper. Taste and adjust seasonings.



Tarragon Salad Dressing

A good basic vinaigrette, this dressing can easily be adjusted to accommodate your favorite spices. This recipe makes about 2 cups.

- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- 1½ cups olive oil
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1½ teaspoons honey
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 1½ teaspoons tarragon
- 2 tablespoons parsley
- ⅛ teaspoon garlic powder

Combine all ingredients and blend well. Chill. Set out at room temperature ½ hour before serving, to liquefy oil. Shake well.

