

Create a Salad

The perfect salad balances “good for you” with “good tasting.” The lettuce (or spinach or other green) is the palette on which you, the artist, can create your masterpiece. Just about anything tastes good on a salad—use your imagination and try to include something salty and something sweet, and, of course, your favorite dressing. Add some grilled chicken or fish on top and you’ve got a meal!

Here are some of my favorite salad combinations:

- peeled grapefruit sections, toasted pecans and blue cheese
- bacon pieces, raisins and sunflower seeds
- cucumbers, red onion, olives and feta cheese
- tomatoes, mozzarella and fresh basil leaves torn into small pieces
- garlic croutons and sun-dried tomatoes
- dried cranberries (craisins) and walnuts
- artichoke hearts, roasted bell pepper strips and goat cheese crumbles
- tart apples, candied pecans and

- cubes of brie cheese
- cubed ham, hard-boiled egg and cheddar cheese
- smoked salmon, capers and red onion

Cabbage is another leafy green that begs for flavorful toppings. There are hundreds of recipes for slaw, but this one, developed by Executive Chef Terry Thompson-Anderson for the Texas Peanut Producers Board, has an Asian-style kick to it—plus, it’s quick and easy to make. Chef Thompson-Anderson, author of *Texas on the Plate* and *Cajun-Creole Cooking*, suggests making the dressing the day before serving so that the flavors can meld. She also suggests using Savoy cabbage instead of regular cabbage for its milder flavor, but you may substitute regular cabbage if you like.

Asian-Style Slaw With Peanut Dressing

Texas Peanut Dressing

- 2 large garlic cloves, peeled and trimmed
- 1/4 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey

- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 serrano chilies, seeds and veins removed, roughly chopped (or use Thai chilies)
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 1/3 cup peanut butter
- 1/4 cup peanut oil

Slaw

- 3 cups thinly sliced Savoy cabbage
- 1/3 cup grated carrot
- 6 green onions, thinly sliced, including green tops
- 1/3 cup chopped cilantro leaves
- 1/4 large red pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 small Asian pear, peeled, cored and cut into thin strips
- Red-tipped lettuce leaves for serving
- Chopped honey-roasted peanuts and cilantro leaves for garnish

Begin by making the dressing the day before serving to allow flavors time to meld together. Place the steel blade in work bowl of food processor. With machine running, drop the garlic cloves through the feed tube to mince. Stop machine and scrape down side of bowl. Add all remaining ingredients, except peanut oil. Process until smooth. With machine running, add the peanut oil in a slow, steady stream through the feed tube until all has been added. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

To make the slaw, toss all ingredients except lettuce leaves and garnishes in a bowl. Add enough of the dressing to lightly coat the greens. To serve, place a small red-tipped lettuce leaf on each serving plate and spoon a portion of the slaw in the center. Garnish with a scattering of the honey-roasted peanuts and place two or three cilantro leaves in the center. Serves 4.

Serving size: 1/4 of slaw with dressing. Per serving: 399 calories, 11 protein, 32 grams fat, 25 grams carbohydrates, 429 milligrams sodium, 0 milligrams cholesterol



TEXAS PEANUT PRODUCERS BOARD

The subject for August's recipe contest is **Microwave Cooking**. I know you don't want to stand over a hot stove in August, much less overtax your air conditioner by turning on the oven. August is the time of year to rely on that modern convenience, the microwave. What do you make in yours? Send us your recipes by May 10. The top winner will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook* and a gift pack from Adams Extract. Others whose recipes are published will also receive a gift pack from Adams Extract. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, as well as your co-op affiliation. Send recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You can also fax recipes to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to recipes@texas-ec.org.

When you think "salads," you probably think "green and leafy," but our favorite salad this month is neither. United Cooperative Services member **LINDA BAILEY** sent us her recipe for Cracker Salad, a simple dish that is simply satisfying. She says, "Most of the time, my husband does not like new recipes. He's strictly a meat-and-potatoes man. But I made this recipe for him one night and he just loved it and wanted it again." We do, too! Linda will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook*. She will also receive a gift pack compliments of Adams Extract, as will the other winners whose recipes are published below.

Cracker Salad

1 sleeve saltine crackers
1 large tomato, finely chopped
3 green onions, finely chopped
1 hard-boiled egg, finely chopped
1 1/2 cups mayonnaise
Salt and pepper to taste

In medium-sized bowl, coarsely crush the crackers with your hands (you should have big cracker pieces). Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Season to taste with salt and pepper (not too much salt because the crackers are already

salty). Serve immediately. It will not keep. Serves 6-8.

Serving size: 1 serving spoonful. Per serving: 375 calories, 3 protein, 38 grams fat, 12 grams carbohydrates, 440 milligrams sodium, 41 milligrams cholesterol

Taco Salad

1 head iceberg lettuce
1 avocado, chopped
1 tomato, chopped
1 small can sliced black olives
1 can kidney beans, drained
1 small bottle Catalina salad dressing
1 small bag regular Fritos (not snack-size)
Shredded Monterey Jack cheese

Shred lettuce into large bowl; add avocado, tomato, black olives and kidney beans. Pour dressing over all and mix thoroughly. Add Fritos just before serving and top with cheese. Serves 6-8.

Tester's note: Add cooked, drained ground beef for a heartier salad.

Serving size: 2 cups loosely packed. Per serving: 532 calories, 9 protein, 36 grams fat, 47 grams carbohydrates, 989 milligrams sodium, 9 milligrams cholesterol

ANN ELLEDGE, Nueces EC

Saltine Salad Dressing Mix

15 saltine crackers
2 cups dry parsley
1/2 cup dry minced onion
2 tablespoons dried dill
1/4 cup onion salt
1/4 cup garlic salt
1/4 cup onion powder
1/4 cup garlic powder

Put crackers in food processor and crush; add next 3 ingredients and blend to powder. Dump into bowl and stir in remaining ingredients.

To use, take out 1 tablespoon of mixture and stir into 1 cup mayonnaise and 1 cup buttermilk. Dry mix can be stored up to a year in the fridge. Makes 32 tablespoons of dry mix.

Serving size: 2 tablespoons prepared dressing. Per serving: 100 calories, 1 protein, 11 grams fat, 1 grams carbohydrates, 170 milligrams sodium, 5 milligrams cholesterol

GEORGIA FOYT, Jackson EC

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

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We're looking for the best baked goods from your holiday celebrations. All recipes must be original and the ingredients must include an Adams Extract flavoring. Winners will be announced in our December issue.

Up to three entries are allowed per person. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper and include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your electric cooperative. All entries must be postmarked by September 10, 2005. Send entries to Holiday Baking Contest, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or fax to (512) 486-6254. To enter by e-mail (recipes@texas-ec.org), you must include "Holiday Baking Contest" in the subject line and submit one recipe per e-mail, not an attachment.

For official rules, visit texascoopower.com/bakingcontest.html or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address above.

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