

Dressings for Success Camerota's Cupboard July, 2011

It's salad season! The AICR (American Institute for Cancer research) offers the following tips when choosing commercial bottled salad dressings. Read the labels and beware of the following:

- **Salt:** Aim for a dressing with under 300 mg of sodium per serving.
- **Unhealthy fats:** In particular, avoid "partially hydrogenated" oils.
- **Sweeteners:** Beware of corn syrup and sugars that add calories but not nutrients.

Dr Alan Safdi, our speaker at a recent Prostate Cancer Education Group, sent me the results of recent research suggesting that extensive use of olive oil in cooking and dressings may reduce the risk of stroke, diabetes, hypertension, coronary artery disease, and obesity in older adults.

So it's best to make your own dressing; that way you can control the ingredients and quantities. Tastes better too!

Try a variety of fresh local greens plus whatever other seasonal vegetables (and fruit) you like. Then toss them with one of these dressings for a delicious and successful salad.

Basic Vinaigrette

(Adapted from Mark Bittman's *How to Cook Everything*)

Makes 3/4 cup

You can experiment with this basic recipe by adding fresh herbs in season or whatever will produce the flavor you like to go with the ingredients in the salad. I've reduced the amount of oil and salt in the original to make it less caloric and healthier.

1/4 cup good vinegar, such as sherry, balsamic, or high quality red or white wine vinegar, or to taste

¼ teaspoon salt, or to taste
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard (optional)
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, or to taste
2 teaspoons minced shallots or onion (optional)
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

- Briefly mix the vinegar, salt, and optional mustard with a fork or wire whisk.
- Slowly add the oil in a stream (drop by drop if whisking) until an emulsion forms; or just whisk everything together briefly. Add the remaining oil faster, but still in a stream.
- Taste to adjust salt and add more oil or vinegar if needed. Add the shallots (or onion) if needed. This is best made fresh but will keep, refrigerated, for a few days; bring back to room temperature before using.

Meyer Lemon Vinaigrette **6 servings (2-ounces or ¼ cup each)**

In May I went along for the ride with my husband, Mike Margolis, to a professional conference in Laguna Beach, California. Mike had high praise for a simple spinach salad served at lunch. He described it as “delicious, light, not oily.” When I told the Hotel Laguna’s Executive Chef, Paul Bauer, about this column, he agreed to share his recipe for the salad dressing and to plug our new website on the hotel’s website. Despite its light flavor, it calls for a lot of oil. As in the above recipe taste and tweak until the flavor suits you. You can probably cut the amount of oil in half without affecting the taste. The nutrient analysis is based on the quantities below. If you’re ever in Laguna Beach, a lovely coastal town, stop by for lunch at the Hotel Laguna and say hello to Chef Paul. Try this dressing on a fresh spinach salad.

¼ cup Meyer lemon juice
¼ teaspoon shallot

1½ tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons mild white or champagne vinegar
1 tablespoon honey
1 cup extra virgin olive oil

- Blend all ingredients except oil together. When liquid is smooth slowly drizzle in the olive oil. Blend until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Nutrient Information: Per ¼ cup (4 tablespoons): 353 calories, 0 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 37 g fat (most is unsaturated, the heart healthy type), 0 g dietary fiber, 43 milligrams sodium.

Lemon-Sage Dressing

(From AICR)

Makes 6 servings (1 tbsp each).

The toasted walnuts and fresh sage give this dressing its intensely savory flavor. Serve over fresh greens or drizzle over steamed vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower or carrots.

¼ cup chopped walnuts
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
1-2 fresh sage leaves
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place walnuts on cookie sheet and toast in oven for 12 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven and cool. In blender, combine olive oil, lemon juice and sage. Add walnuts to blender. Puree to desired consistency; season to taste and serve.

Nutrient Information: Per serving: 112 calories; 12 g total fat (1.5 g saturated fat); 1 g carbohydrate; 1 g protein; 0 g dietary fiber; 0 mg sodium.

Tarragon Vinaigrette Dressing

(From Cincinnati Nutrition Council's *More Nutritious Still Delicious*)

Makes 15 tablespoons.

This is a simple year-round dressing using ingredients you may already have in your pantry. Very low in calories too!

¼ cup olive oil

⅔ cup tarragon vinegar

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

¼ teaspoon granulated sugar

½ teaspoon garlic powder

¼ teaspoon dried tarragon

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

- In a small bowl, combine all ingredients. Mix using a wire whisk until blended.
- Refrigerate until ready to use. Stir with a fork or wire whisk just before serving.

Nutrition information per 1 tablespoon: 35 calories; 0 g protein; 0 g carbohydrate; 0 g dietary fiber; 4 g fat; .5 g saturated fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 87 mg sodium