

SALAD FOR DINNER

Salad Greens A to Z



Arugula (also called Rocket or Roquette)

Delicate dark green leaves with a peppery bite; sold in bunches, usually with roots attached, or prewashed in cellobags; bruises easily and can be very sandy, so wash thoroughly in several changes of water before using. Serve alone for a full-flavored salad or add to romaine, Bibb, or Boston lettuces to give a spicy punch.



Belgian Endive

Small, compact head of firm white or pale yellow leaves; should be completely smooth and blemish-free; slightly bitter flavor and crisp texture. One of the few salad greens we routinely cut rather than tear; remove whole leaves from the head and slice crosswise into bite-size pieces. Add to Bibb, Boston, and looseleaf lettuces and watercress; combine with diced apples, blue cheese, and walnuts for an interesting first-course salad.



Bibb Lettuce

Small, compact heads; pale to medium green; soft, buttery outer leaves; inner leaves have surprising crunch and a sweet, mild flavor. Combine with Boston or looseleaf lettuces, romaine, watercress, or endive; great tossed with fresh herbs.



Boston Lettuce

Loose, fluffy head, ranging in color from pale green to red-tipped; similar in texture and flavor to Bibb lettuce, but with softer leaves. Combine with Bibb lettuce, baby spinach, watercress, endive, or romaine.



Cabbage (Green or Red)

Very tight head of smooth, firm leaves; very crisp texture; mild mustard flavor. Shred and use to make coleslaw or toss with romaine or looseleaf lettuces for visual and textural accent.



Chicory (also called Curly Endive)

Loose, feathery head of bright green, bitter leaves; texture is somewhat chewy. Add to bitter green salads or use sparingly to add punch to mild mixed greens; toss with warm bacon dressing.



Frisée

Type of chicory that is milder in flavor than other chicories but with similar feathery leaves; pale green to white in color. Combine with arugula, watercress, or Boston or Bibb lettuces; serve on its own with warm bacon dressing or balsamic vinaigrette.



Iceberg

Large, round, tightly packed head of pale green leaves; very crisp and crunchy, with minimal flavor. Cut into wedges and slather with blue cheese or other creamy dressing; tear into small chunks and toss with Bibb, Boston, or looseleaf lettuces.



Looseleaf lettuces (Red Leaf, Green Leaf)

Ruffled dark red or deep green leaves that grow in big, loose heads; both are versatile and have a soft, yet crunchy texture; green leaf lettuce is crisp and mild; red leaf has an earthier flavor. Pair red leaf with romaine or watercress; pair green leaf with arugula, radicchio, or watercress.



Mesclun (also called Mesclune, Spring Mix, Field Greens)

Mixture of up to 14 different baby greens, generally including spinach, red leaf, oak leaf, lolla rossa, frisée, radicchio, and green leaf; delicate leaves; does not need washing; flavors range from mild to slightly bitter depending on the blend. Great as a delicate salad.



Radicchio

Tight heads of red or deep purple leaves streaked with prominent white ribs; bitter flavor. Cut into ribbons and mix with arugula and endive; red and green leaf, Boston, or Bibb lettuces; or watercress. Adds color to any salad.



Romaine

Long, full heads with stiff, deep green leaves; crisp, crunchy leaves with a mild earthy flavor; also sold in bags of three romaine hearts; tough dry outer leaves should be discarded from full heads. A great all-purpose lettuce; mix with Boston, Bibb, or red leaf lettuces, spinach, watercress, arugula, endive, or radicchio.



Spinach (Flat-Leaf, Baby)

Vibrant green color and earthy flavor shared by all varieties; use tender, deep green flat-leaf or baby spinach for salads; use tough and fibrous curly-leaf spinach for steaming and sautéing; rinse loose spinach thoroughly in several changes of water to remove dirt; all varieties are generally available prewashed in bags. Delicious mixed with arugula, watercress, romaine, or Bibb, Boston, or leaf lettuces.



Watercress

Delicate, dark green leaves with tough, bitter stems that should be removed; refreshing mustard-like flavor similar to arugula; usually sold in bunches, sometimes available prewashed in bags. If buying watercress in bunches, take care to wash thoroughly. Adds flavorful punch and texture to mildly flavored or tender greens such as Bibb or Boston lettuces.