



Turning Over a New Leaf

It's an appetizer. It's a side dish. It's a main course. It's salad, of course, and it offers endless variety. From fresh lettuce to leafy greens to luscious fruits, cold meats and crunchy garnishes, salad has a place on every menu and offers infinite room for improvisation. Don't forget to dress it up! A pungent, sweet or creamy dressing can make or break a salad's success.

Go Green

Every meal is only as good as its foundation. Choosing the right lettuce for your salad creation is tantamount to ensuring its success on your menu. There are hundreds of varieties, but most lettuce falls into one of four main groups:

- **Butterhead:** Usually identified as Boston or Bibb lettuce, its tender leaves and sweet, buttery flavor make it popular in European salads.
- **Looseleaf:** This variety includes delicate green leaf (oak leaf) and red leaf (lollo rosso) lettuces that grow loosely on the stalk and offer mild flavors.
- **Crisphead:** Ever-popular with American diners, these lettuces are best represented by the crisp, juicy Iceberg variety that relies on texture over flavor.
- **Romaine:** Also known as Cos, this lettuce sports long leaves and offers a slightly bitter flavor.



Natural Selections

Creativity can win patrons over, but you also want to give your crowd something familiar. Tap into these lists of the most popular entrée and side salads for some ideas.

ENTRÉE SALADS

1. Chicken
2. Caesar
3. Asian
4. Seafood
5. Taco Salad
6. Cobb
7. Garden
8. Steak
9. Spinach
10. Chef

SIDE SALADS

1. Garden
2. Caesar
3. Cole Slaw
4. House/Signature
5. Mixed Greens
6. Wedge
7. Potato Salad
8. Fruit
9. Pasta
10. Tomato-Based



SOURCE: *Food Beat, Inc.*, November/December 2006

Hail, Caesar!

Caesar Cardini is rumored to have created his world-famous dressing using the only ingredients at hand after a kitchen rush left his pantry nearly bare. The lesson? Don't be afraid to experiment!



Learning how the flavors and textures interact is a must with salad preparation, so experiment! Romaine is perfect for the classic Caesar, while butterhead lettuce pairs well with simple vinaigrettes and ingredients such as Anjou pears and blue cheese or cherry tomatoes and glazed carrots. For a light, summertime salad, try a mixed green dish with different looseleaf varieties, or a cold, crunchy Iceberg with ground beef, green bell pepper, onion, cheese and taco seasoning for a lively fiesta of flavor.

Add a Punch With Fruit

While fruit salad remains one of restaurant-goers' most-ordered side salads, there are some truly creative ways to integrate fruit into appetizer or entrée salads as well. Healthy and flavorful, fruit mixes well with lettuce, leafy greens and nuts—and offers an inventive way to keep guests interested in your salad offerings.

- Chefs don't have to go for the traditional Waldorf salad to work apples into the mix—spinach, apple slices, candied pecans and feta crumbles drizzled with a tangy vinaigrette can be a stand-alone entrée or the perfect start to a multicourse meal.
- Vital to a successful gourmet-style chicken salad, grapes add unexpected—and pleasing—flavor and texture.
- For a sweet garnish, sprinkle on raisins or dried cranberries, apricots or cherries.

Get Nutty

Nuts also make excellent salad toppers. Whether you're serving an Asian-style salad with crumbled peanuts or cashews, a spring mix with pecans or walnuts, or a chicken salad spruced up with almond slivers, the crunch of nuts adds contrasting texture to and intensifies the flavor of almost any salad.

Dress It Up

Although the individual ingredients make a salad come to life, every good salad depends on dressing to hold it together and unify its flavors—and SYSCO offers a wide array of delicious choices, from national favorites such as blue cheese and Italian to inventive alternatives such as SYSCO Peppercorn Parmesan. You can even craft your own: Have fun in the kitchen with oils, spices and roux. Need fresh ideas? Contact your SYSCO Marketing Associate today!