

SALAD DRESSING, FULLY



THE COOKFUL

*Edited by Amy Bowen and Christine Pittman
Brought to you by Stonyfield Organic.*

Salad Dressing, Fully

Spring is in the air. And with it, soon will come the first round of garden fresh produce.

In the early warm season, we see a lot of lettuces so we thought it was a good time to talk about dressing them up. Dressing them up in, well, salad dressing, of course.

In this book we have a bunch of classic dressings for you as well as some creative new ideas, and our usual slew of tips and how tos. We know you're going to love getting creative with your salads this season.

O.K., let's get dressed!

Christine



THE COOKFUL

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Edited by Amy Bowen and Christine Pittman. Designed by [Garnishing Co.](#)

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Salad Dressing Shopping Guide

By Amy Bowen

Let's get ready to make your own salad dressing. Really. It's so simple and will take up your cooking to the level of Are-You-Martha-Stewart? Here's everything you need.

Homemade salad dressing is one of the easiest ways to cook from scratch. You can make it just the way you like it. Keep it simple (lemon, oil and vinegar) or go all out (we have a killer Caesar dressing). And you don't need a lot of fancy equipment or ingredients.

Here's your shopping guide to make a stellar homemade dressing.

A good food processor makes pureeing, chopping and dicing so much easier. you'll never regret the investment.

Blenders are kitchen workhorses. Buy a good one, and you'll be whipping up delicious salad dressings in no time.

Salad Dressing Shopping Guide

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You'll need [a quality set of mixing bowls](#) for blending your ingredients.

[Whisks](#) are needed to combine all those fresh ingredients in your dressings.

We have an excellent Middle Eastern-inspired salad dressing coming up. You can make your own tahini, a sesame seed paste, or [you can buy it](#).

[Mason jars](#) have been the darlings of the rustic weddings and dinner parties. They're perfect for homemade salad dressings. If you really want an A in details, prepare and serve your salads in these pretty containers.

[Vinegar and oil bottles](#) are perfect for presentation too. Put a sprig of your favorite herb into your oil bottle for an added touch.

You need [snazzy salad plates](#) if you're going to all the work of making your own dressing. Oh and [salad tongs](#) and a [salad bowl](#).

Homemade Ranch Dressing with Greek Yogurt

By Christine Pittman

Greek yogurt subs in for sour cream and buttermilk in this healthy homemade ranch dressing. There are tons of fresh herbs in there too. You're going to love this one!

So it's true that you can buy some good dressings at the grocery store. But I tell yah, they're nowhere (nowhere!) near as good as our Homemade Ranch Dressing. Our ranch recipe is packed with bright fresh herbs and once you taste it, you'll never go back to the bottle.

Instead of the usual sour cream and buttermilk found in ranch dressing, we opted for mayonnaise and Greek yogurt. Why? Greek yogurt is healthier than sour cream and we always have it and mayonnaise in the fridge. None of us ever has buttermilk. Do you?

Ranch dressing is super-easy to make at home. How do you do it? Chop up the herbs and then mix them and everything else up in a bowl. Done. Nothing to it.

Cover and refrigerate it after making it. The herb flavors will blend into the creaminess the longer it sits. We recommend letting it hang out in the fridge for at least two hours and then giving it a stir before serving.

Oh, and hey, this dressing is nice and thick. You could even use it as a ranch dip. If you want it thinner, go ahead and drizzle in some milk or water. Just a little at a time and you'll be just fine.



Homemade Ranch Dressing

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Yield: 2 cups

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl.

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cup mayonnaise

1 cup Greek yogurt

1/4 cup finely chopped fresh
chives

1/4 cup finely chopped fresh
dill

1/4 cup finely chopped fresh
parsley

1 Tbsp. white vinegar or
lemon juice

2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. black pepper



How to Make a Vinaigrette

By Christine Pittman

Get our your greens because we've got the perfect classic vinaigrette over here today. With tons of tips and ideas too!

A classic vinaigrette, for dressing a salad, is made of 1 part acid (vinegar or lemon juice, usually) to three parts oil. That gives you a good balanced flavor that isn't too tart or astringent. That's the basics.

GET YOUR ACID IN PLACE

First, measure your acid into a blender, bowl or jar.

FLAVOR IT

Add some seasonings. Go in with salt and pepper for sure. Minced fresh garlic or garlic

How to Make a Vinaigrette

Continued from previous page

powder. You can add some fresh ginger for a more Asian flavor. Fresh or dried herbs of all kinds are great. Basically, any seasoning or flavoring ingredient that you like. Add a little to start. You can always taste it at the end and add more.

EMULSIFIERS

Next, add an emulsifier. This isn't strictly required. You can make a good vinaigrette without one. What does the emulsifier do? It helps to keep the oil and vinegar attached to each other so that the oil isn't just floating on top of the vinegar. You can get a salad dressing to emulsify without adding an emulsifier but it won't stay bound together for as long.

Emulsifier choices:

- + a raw egg or raw egg yolk (if you're worried about the raw aspect, you can buy pasteurized eggs)
- + mustard (Dijon or a whole grain mustard are best)
- + honey
- + maple syrup
- + mayonnaise
- + yogurt

OIL IT UP

Finally, add in your oil. This can be an oil with flavor, like an infused oil or walnut oil or olive oil. Or it can be a basic flavorless oil like grape seed or vegetable oil.

If you're using a blender, start it running and slowly drizzle in the oil. This method tends to stay emulsified and stable for the longest.

If you're using a bowl, get out your whisk. Put the bowl on a kitchen hand towel so that it's less likely to move around. Start whisking the vinegar and then very slowly drizzle in the oil.

If you're using a jar, pour the oil into the jar and put the lid on. Shake it lots.

TASTE TEST

It's time to taste your vinaigrette. But don't dip a spoon in there to taste it. It's going to taste way too strong and awful. Get yourself a salad leaf and dip it. Add more seasonings if needed.

How to Make a Vinaigrette

Continued from previous page

If it's too tart, add some honey or a pinch of sugar. If it's too sweet, a bit more vinegar (you'll need to whisk, shake and blend again).

IF YOUR VINAIGRETTE FEELS LIKE IT'S JUST MISSING SOMETHING...

If it feels like it's just missing something, there are a couple things you can do. If your main acid was a vinegar, adding a tiny squeeze of lemon or lime juice can really brighten it all up. Another ingredient that quickly transforms salad dressing is fish sauce. Just a tiny tiny drip. The dressing won't taste Asian at all. The fish sauce just adds a meatiness. Anchovy paste, just a dab, will do the same thing. Soy sauce works less well but is a good option, as is tomato paste.

There you have it. A perfect classic vinaigrette. We've given you some basic amounts below, but experiment and play around. We know you're going to create some amazing things!

Yield: 1 cup

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1/4 cup red wine vinegar

2 tsp Dijon mustard

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp pepper

3/4 cup olive oil

1. Measure the vinegar, mustard, salt and pepper into a blender, medium bowl or a jar.
2. If you're using a blender, start it running and slowly drizzle in the oil (this method tends to stay emulsified and stable for the longest). If you're using a bowl, get out your whisk. Put the bowl on a kitchen hand towel so that it's less likely to move around. Start whisking the vinegar and then very slowly drizzle in the oil. If you're using a jar, pour the oil into the jar and put the lid on. Shake it.



Tips for a Perfect Salad Dressing

By Amy Bowen

Skip all that artificial garbage in store-bought dressings. You probably already have everything you need to whip up a batch of homemade salad dressing. Check out these tips to make it even easier.

For years, I always bought salad dressings at grocery stores. And I always hated it. It was too sweet. Too sour. Too oily. And just vile (hello fat-free dressings, you should be outlawed).

But then one day I made this beautiful salad. We're talking freshly picked tomatoes, sweet peppers, dark leafy greens, avocado — the works. I couldn't pour on my bottled salad dressing. My salad deserved better. So I made my first-ever vinaigrette. It was basic. Olive oil, lemon juice and balsamic vinegar. But it brought out the flavors of my salad. I now make all my dressings from scratch.

Making homemade dressings is easy too. You can probably make one in the time it takes to open a fresh bottle of store-bought dressing. I've compiled some tips to help you along.

Salad Dressing Tips

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DRESSING YOUR SALAD

Cut out unnecessary steps (and dishes). Make and dress your salad in one bowl. Serve. Just remember to add the dressing at the last minute. We've got an article teaching you how to do this in the pages ahead. But basically, you're going to put the leaves in a bowl and then add the oil to it, then the lemon juice, then the salt and pepper. There are a couple other things but no biggie.

This tip goes with all cooking. Less is more when seasoning a dish, salad dressing included. Taste test as you go, and add only if needed.

Put down the spoon. If you dip a spoon into dressing and taste it, it will taste harsh and bad. Instead, taste test your dressing with a leaf of lettuce. Adjust your dressing as necessary.

You're in the kitchen anyway, so make a double batch of your favorite dressing. Use it to marinate meats, as a raw veggie dip or a base to make a potato or pasta salad.

VINAIGRETTES

Have fun when making vinaigrettes. One of my favorite haunts is a store that specializes in flavored vinegars and oils. I always stock up when I visit. My go-to dressing is combining a lime-infused olive oil with balsamic vinegar. So good. And so fast. There are so many flavored oils and vinegars, why not experiment?

I never think about making my own vinegars and oils until my salad is already in the bowl. Don't be me. Go all gourmet and make your own flavored oils and vinegars.

Stop! Don't throw away that mustard bottle. Even a smidge acts as an emulsifier in a kick-butt vinaigrette. Get out that almost empty mustard bottle, take off the lid, add your ingredients, put the lid on and shake it up. Squeeze onto salads. Brill, right?

The same goes with a dab of jam. It just adds a hint of sweetness in a vinaigrette. Bam!

Lemon juice is uber common when dressing a salad. I seem to always squeeze fresh lemon juice on my salad because ... Well, I'm not really sure why that's my go-to. Then one day, I bought a ton of key limes at a farmers market. I decided to try it on my salad. I was hooked. Try it with almost any citrus — oranges, limes, grapefruit, mandarin oranges.

Salad Dressing Tips

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CREAMY DRESSINGS

I'm always looking to cut down on fat. Salad dressing is not one of those things where you want to go light on ingredients. Always opt for full-fat versions of sour cream, mayonnaise or yogurt. They mix better with other ingredients.

Greek yogurt is a wonderful ingredient that you can use in creamy dressings. It gives you the creaminess you want, but has a ton of protein, which makes it much healthier than traditional bases.

Store your creamy dressings in the refrigerator until 10 minutes before preparing your salad. It's best tasting when served at room temperature.

So your dressing probably thickened as it chilled. No problem. Thin it with a little milk or water.



Which Salad Dressings to Pair with Which Greens

By Amy Bowen

All salad greens are not created equal. At least when it comes to salad dressings. No one wants a salad of overpowering dressing and soggy greens. Learn how to pair greens with dressings here.

Pairing greens and dressings is kind of like wine pairings. The right dressing and green can totally make a salad. A heavy blue cheese dressing can come alive with endive. But a light vinaigrette will disappear against its bitter flavor.

Let's break it down. Here are pairing for 12 of the most popular greens.

Salad Greens

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ICEBERG

Almost any dressing works with iceberg lettuce. Unlike other greens, iceberg is bland, but crispy. So it can hold up under strong-tasting and creamy dressings. It can also work with lighter-flavored dressings (just make sure you add lots of other fresh cold veggies, so you have some substance).

ROMAINE

Romaine is as versatile as iceberg. It goes with any dressing. But it holds a nutritional punch compared to iceberg lettuce. Of course, Caesar dressing is a no-brainer here.

SPINACH

If you look at a bunch of spinach wrong, it will wilt. In general, keep your dressings light. Baby spinach is best served with a basic vinaigrette. Older leaves can be paired with a tad bit of creaminess or fat. And for some reason, spinach and bacon work. So any dressing made with bacon, just do it.

SPRING GREENS

Let's talk about delicate greens. And spring mixes are at the top of the list. Vinaigrettes are best. Anything heavier will result in soggy salads (Ew!).

ARUGULA

This persnickety green will dramatically wilt under thick dressings like ranch or blue cheese. Light vinaigrettes will bring out its peppery flavor while retaining its crispness.

BIBB LETTUCE

Bibb greens are like arugula. In the salad world, this lettuce is dainty and needs delicate care. Again, heavy dressings will not work. Instead go for vinaigrettes. It'll hold up under the dressing just fine.

Salad Greens

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RADICCHIO

This is a good middle-of-the-road green for a good middle-of-the-road dressing. Nothing too light. Nothing too thick. Radicchio pairs well with a mustard-based or ranch dressing.

WATERCRESS

Watercress is another medium-bodied green. It has a peppery flavor that can hold its own against ranch or any fatty dressing.

ENDIVE

OK, endive is made for a thick and creamy dressing like blue cheese. These leaves are heavy and bitter and can withstand something as glorious as a homemade blue cheese dressing. How many greens can brag about that?

FRISÉE

This green tastes bitter, and pairs nicely with a fattier dressing, like thousand island. Heavier vinaigrettes work too. If a dressing has fat and salt, it'll work with frisee.

KALE

Oh, what can I say about one of the trendiness of greens? Kale is rough and sturdy, so a good acidic vinaigrette is a must. Here's a quick science lesson (I'm embracing my inner Bill Nye). Acids, such as lemon juice, break down kale's cellular structure. In other words, it softens the leaves, making it much easier to eat. So mix those raw kale leaves with an acidic dressing and let them sit for a couple of minutes before digging in.

SWISS CHARD

Swiss chard may be thinner than kale, but it is still a tough green. So what do you need? An acidic vinaigrette. It'll soften the leaves and give the salad a nice bite.

O.K., I'm done. Which pairing are you going to try first? I'm totally doing a search for bacon dressing and grabbing some spinach leaves.



How to Make the Best Tossed Salad

By Christine Pittman

Who said tossed salad was boring? Trust me, try this and you'll be calling that person a liar. A total liar! It's the best darned tossed salad ever.

The word on the street is that a well-emulsified salad dressing has the right balance for every mouthful, sticks to lettuce best and is superior in all ways. I'm not going to debate that point but I will say this, when I serve a big bowl of my directly-dressed tossed salad at a dinner party, it all gets eaten up. Every time. That's kinda rare for salad. The only other time that happens is if I serve my homemade Caesar salad. Other than those two, at the end of the night I usually find myself stuffing most of a bowlful of soggy greens down the garbage disposal.

So whether an emulsified dressing is technically better or not, I don't know. What I do know is that everyone loves this directly dressed tossed salad.

What do I mean by directly dressed? It's kind of like when in a restaurant you're given a bottle

Basic Tossed Salad

Continued from previous page

of oil and one of vinegar and you shake them onto your salad. Except, I promise, this is way way better than that. There is going to be tons of flavor going on here and you're going to really love it. Let's do it!



Step 1: Cut a clove of garlic in half and then rub the cut side all over the inside of a medium bowl. Don't skip this step thinking that it doesn't do anything. You're going to be seriously amazed by how much garlic flavor ends up in your salad.



Step 2: Add greens to the bowl. For this, I like a basic spring mix. But any soft mild greens will do. Fill the bowl right up, a good 4 cups of greens.



Step 3: Add some soft herbs to the bowl. I like adding some dill usually. But chives, basil and flat leaf parsley are also great choices. Tear it by hand into small-ish pieces. How much you add is up to you but I usually do about a quarter cup of torn pieces.



Step 4: Add olive oil. You'll need about 2 tablespoons.

Basic Tossed Salad

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Step 5: And lemon juice, about 1 tablespoon. You can use wine vinegar (red or white) but I just don't think it's as good here.



Step 6: Add salt. Coarse salt. It has to be coarse salt. I use coarse kosher salt but coarse sea salt would be great too. Regular table salt will end up kind of grainy and overly salty on the leaves. You'll need about 1/2 teaspoon of nice coarse salt.



Step 7: Add black pepper. Coarse black pepper. Just like with the salt, you don't want fine grains. You'll want to add about 1/4 teaspoon of coarse pepper, just a couple of grinds will do it.



Step 8: Toss gently. I like to use some basic tongs for this.



Step 9: I find that the salad shrinks a bit from the addition of the liquids and tossing. So I add in another handful or two of greens and toss again. Then taste it. Adjust anything you want more of. If there's too much of something, you can add more greens to counter it.



Step 10: And there it is. All ready to eat. I mean it. You're not going to believe how good this is.

Basic Tossed Salad

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Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

1. Rub garlic on salad bowl.
2. Add in spring mix.
3. Add olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Toss to coat.

Ingredients:

1/2 garlic clove
3 cups spring mix
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper, ground



No Egg Caesar Dressing

By Christine Pittman

A garlicky homemade Caesar dressing that uses Greek yogurt instead of eggs. It's creamy and delicious and you won't be able to tell the difference. Pinky swear.

Once, a co-worked of mine (Alana) discovered that her boyfriend (Billy) knew me because of Caesar salad. You see, throughout my formative years my parents owned restaurants. I worked in all of them at one time or another. Each one was different but they all had one thing in common, my mom's insanely delicious Caesar salad.

So one day, Alana was telling Billy that she was addicted to her boss's (my mom's) Caesar salad. That it was THE BEST THING she'd ever eaten and that she ate several servings every shift. He said, "Nope, not possible. My friend's mom makes THE BEST Caesar salad, hands down." He went on to tell her that my mom had a deli in Lockport, Manitoba. Alana was like, "Wait a minute. My boss used to have a deli in Lockport. Is your friend's name Christine? That's her daughter!"

No Egg Caesar Dressing

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Yep! It was me! And the salad really is that good.

Why is it so good? It's all about the dressing. My mom uses a homemade dressing, whizzed up in a blender, with oil and eggs, anchovies, Worcestershire sauce and lots and lots of garlic. She didn't put Parmesan cheese in the dressing, preferring to have lots of it garnishing the top of the salad.

I bet you want me to give you her recipe, right? I can't. It's a family secret. But, I invented my own twist on her version that uses Greek yogurt instead of eggs.

Why? Honestly, I love Caesar dressing so much that I want to eat a ton of it. But the stuff is fattening. By cutting out the eggs and subbing in the yogurt, the fat goes way down and the healthiness goes way up. Isn't yogurt miraculous? Cutting out a lot of the oil helps too.

This healthy Caesar dressing has all the intensely good garlicky flavor of my mom's original but I can dip carrots in it every day without any guilt. Yes! I do that! It makes a fantastic veggie dip. Also a great alternative to mayo on a sandwich or in chicken or salmon salad. What else do I do with it? Toss it with hot cooked pasta as a sauce. Toss it with cold-cooked pasta to make a pasta salad. Dribble a bit on top of a cooked steak or chicken breast. Toss cooked broccoli or cauliflower in it. Really, a batch of this stuff never lasts more than a day or two in my fridge. So now you know why I needed to make it healthier and cut out those eggs and oil.

Turn the page for the recipe! Enjoy!

No Egg Caesar Dressing

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Yield: 1 and 1/4 cups

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

3/4 cup Greek yogurt, such as
Stonyfield Organic Greek
Yogurt

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 tsp. salt

1 anchovy, chopped (or 1/2
tsp. anchovy paste)

1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/4 tsp. black pepper

1/4 tsp. dry mustard powder

1/2 cup vegetable oil

1. Pulse Greek yogurt, minced garlic, salt, anchovy, Worcestershire sauce, black pepper and mustard powder in a blender or food processor. Add oil and pulse 10-15 times to mix it very well.

Lemon Poppy Seed Dressing with Greek Yogurt

By Christine Pittman

You've got to try this lightened up but still totally creamy poppy seed dressing. It's sweet and tangy and oh so creamy.

Earlier I told you all about the homemade Caesar salad dressing that my parents' restaurants were famous for. Well, I think my mom just has a real knack for salad dressings since she was almost as famous for her spinach salad dressing. That one was creamy, bacony, sweet, tangy and served warm over baby spinach leaves. Sooooo addictive.

I can't give you that recipe because it's a family secret. No, really. They'd disown me. But I can give you this riff on it. It's creamy and sweet and tangy and has the addition of poppy seeds and lemon. I love it on a salad of dark greens and fruit, like grapes or strawberries.

Mom mom's original spinach salad dressing was completely mayonnaise-based. I lightened this version up a bit by taking some of the mayo out and replacing it with Greek yogurt. You honestly can't even tell. Super-duper good.



Lemon Poppy Seed Dressing

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Yield: 1 and 1/3 cups

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1/3 cup sugar

2 Tbsp. hot tap water

1/2 cup Greek yogurt

1/2 cup mayonnaise

3 Tbsp. lemon juice

1 Tbsp. canola or grape seed
oil

1 Tbsp. poppy seeds

1/2 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. pepper

1. Dissolve sugar in hot water. Let cool. Stir in yogurt, mayonnaise, lemon juice, oil, poppy seeds, salt and pepper.



Blue Cheese Dressing

By Christine Pittman

A fantastic homemade blue cheese dressing made better than ever with the tang and creaminess of Greek yogurt.

Back when we did [a big series on chicken wings](#), we shared an amazing [Blue Cheese Dip recipe](#) with you. We were amazed by it because none of us likes blue cheese dip and yet we liked that one. Based on the success of that dip, we just had to try our hand at a homemade blue cheese dressing.

This dressing is so so good. It's nice and creamy from some mayo and Greek yogurt and then it has a strong blue cheese flavor that's kind of tamed down by a bit of lemon juice and hot sauce. There's also Worcestershire sauce, onion and garlic powder in there. It's really flavorful. We love it and know you will too.

Blue Cheese Dressing

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Yield: 3/4 cup

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup yogurt

1 oz. blue cheese, crumbled

1 Tbsp. vegetable oil

1 tsp. lemon juice

1/2 tsp. hot sauce

1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/4 tsp. coarse black pepper

1/4 tsp. garlic powder

1/4 tsp. onion powder

1/4 tsp. salt

1. Measure all ingredients into a medium bowl. Whisk until well-combined. Cover and refrigerate until using. The blue cheese flavor will get more pronounced the longer the dressing is in the fridge.



Best Vinaigrette Stir-Ins

By Amy Bowen

Vinaigrettes are a good base salad dressing to master. Then let your creativity take over. You can add almost anything to customize a vinaigrette and make it your own.

There's absolutely, positively no reason to buy a vinaigrette from the store. Ever. They're so easy to make and customize. All you need is our basic recipe from earlier and some creativity. From there, you can create endless combinations and make your own salad dressing.

So how much of an ingredient do you add? Start with 1/2 teaspoon of your stir-in ingredient per 1/3 cup of oil. Add until it meets your flavor preferences. If you add too much of an ingredient, add more oil to balance the flavor.

Here are some flavor combinations to get you started. Who's a rock star chef now?

Best Vinaigrette Stir-Ins

Continued from previous page

HERBS

Any fresh herbs (garden season is almost here). I always add fresh basil and oregano for an Italian vinaigrette. I've also tried lemon juice and fresh dill. Yum. Yum. Yum. Dried herbs work too. A pinch of dried thyme leaves is fantastic on a dressing for a hearty salad and a pinch of dried oregano is just the thing for a Greek feta vinaigrette.

GARLIC AND MINCED SWEET ONIONS

OK, I have an unhealthy obsession with garlic. More than once, my husband has asked what I've got cooking only to realize that the garlic smell was coming from my pores. Ewww. He certainly doesn't complain though. If he did, I wouldn't make him my garlic and onion vinaigrette. Just mince the garlic and onions really fine and add to any vinaigrette. Start with less and do let it sit for awhile after making so that the flavors infuse.

HORSERADISH

I first tried this vinaigrette at a horseradish party. Yes, it's a real thing in west central Minnesota. People have horseradish canning parties. Some grandma added a touch of horseradish to her vinaigrette and served it with basic greens. It was incredible. I almost lost it though as I watched another party goer add heaps of horseradish to his salad. Just give me an industrial-sized bottle of Tums.

HONEY

This is another go-to. Use with a bit of grapefruit juice for a sweet vinaigrette.

LIME AND CILANTRO

This is perfect for any southwest-inspired salad. I've also used it on taco salads with chicken.

BALSAMIC VINEGAR AND BROWN SUGAR

Pair this with a strawberry salad.

Best Vinaigrette Stir-Ins

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CHAMPAGNE VINEGAR AND DIJON MUSTARD

When in doubt make a French vinaigrette. It's effortless. You can also add chives or tarragon for even more flavor.



Italian Dressing

By Christine Pittman

Italian Dressing is just plain classic. Make it at home so you can customize it to your own palate. Then bring on the lettuce!

Store-bought bottled Italian dressing was always one of my favorites. It has just the right balance of tang to richness with a lot of other delicious flavors going on. I decided to try my hand at recreating some of those flavors in my own homemade Italian dressing recipe.

It's not exactly the same as the bottled one. It's lighter. Less goopey. I much prefer this texture. The flavors are great, with oregano, garlic, thyme and a tiny hint of red pepper flakes for a bit of heat. It's a hit for sure.

This makes a very small batch of dressing. That's because it only keeps for a few days at room temperature and you can't really put it in the fridge because the olive oil will solidify. So you just quickly make the little bit that you need for today and then make another batch next time. You can double, triple, quintuple the recipe if you need more though. No worries. Enjoy!

Italian Dressing

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Yield: 1/3 cup

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1/4 cup olive oil

3 Tbsp. white wine vinegar

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

1/2 tsp. basil

1/2 tsp. oregano

1/2 tsp. parsley

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. thyme

1/4 tsp. garlic powder

1/4 tsp. onion powder

1/4 tsp. pepper

A pinch of crushed red
pepper flakes

1. Measure all ingredients into a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Put on lid and shake it really really well. If not serving it immediately, shake well again before serving. Store at room temperature for up to 3 days.



Thousand Island Dressing

By Christine Pittman

Homemade thousand island dressing is great tossed with salad leaves but nothing beats it as the “secret sauce” on your burger. Yesssss. You gotta try it!

I’ll admit that I’m not a huge thousand island dressing fan. Or at least, not a fan when it’s on a salad. But I truly love it on other things, like on a burger or spread onto a ham sandwich. It’s killer. The creamy tang cannot be beat.

It’s a pretty basic mixture made of mayonnaise (sometimes I sub in yogurt to make it healthier), ketchup, sweet pickle relish (or chopped up bread and butter pickles), a few seasonings and a little blast of hot sauce. I think the reason it works well on sandwich-type things is that it has that creamy mayo thing going on and then a touch of sweetness and heat. So it adds a few things without being complicated.

It’s worth noting that thousand island dressing is pretty similar to Marie Rose sauce, sometimes called seafood sauce or cocktail sauce in the UK. This is the stuff that Brits put

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on their shrimp cocktail, thus different from here in North America where we use a mixture of ketchup and horseradish sauce. Ohhhhhh...I just invented brilliance in my head. What if we mixed together the two, like, made the thousand island dressing recipe below and then added horseradish to it? Gotta go make this right now. Bye! Enjoy!

Yield: 3/4 cup

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 cup mayonnaise

2 Tbsp. ketchup

2 Tbsp. sweet pickle relish

1 tsp. apple cider or white
vinegar

1/4 tsp. garlic powder

1/4 tsp. onion powder

2 dashes hot sauce, such as
Tabasco

1. Measure all ingredients into a small bowl and whisk until it is an even pink color.



French Dressing

By Christine Pittman

This homemade French dressing has lots of tang, lots of sweetness and good savory flavors, just like the stuff from the bottle, but way better.

I'll admit that French Dressing is not my favorite. Actually, I don't like it at all. It's somehow too sweet without much other depth. So when we decided to make our own version of French dressing we knew we had to make it better somehow. And we did.

French dressing often has paprika in it, which is partly why it has its distinctive color. We decided to switch out the regular paprika for some [hot Hungarian paprika](#). This stuff is not super spicy but does have way more flavor than regular paprika. What it does in the dressing is balance out some of that sweetness with a touch of heat.

Don't be tempted to use smoked paprika here. Or if you do, only use it for a partial amount. Maybe just 1/4 teaspoon at most and the rest regular paprika or the hotter stuff. If you used the smoked for the full amount it would be way too overpowering.

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The other ingredients in this dressing are mayonnaise, ketchup, oil, cider vinegar and some seasonings. You can definitely swap out the mayonnaise for yogurt. But know that the excessive vinegar will sometimes make it curdle. We found that adding mayonnaise and blending again smoothed it back out.

Yield: 1 cup

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1/4 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup ketchup

2 Tbsp. cider vinegar

1/4 cup granulated sugar

1 Tbsp. hot Hungarian paprika

1/4 tsp. garlic powder

1/4 tsp. onion powder

1/4 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. black pepper

1/2 cup vegetable or grape
seed oil

1. Measure the mayonnaise, ketchup, vinegar, sugar, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, salt and pepper into a blender. Blend until well mixed.
2. Stream in the oil while continuing to blend.



Greek Dressing with Feta

By Christine Pittman

Oh Feta, how we love you! We love you so much that we put you right in this homemade Greek dressing that is perfect on crisp greens and crunchy bell peppers.

Greek salad is one of my favorites. But I kinda go a bit crazy with the feta. In an attempt to curb my feta-zealousness, instead of topping the salad with cheese I have instead started putting it in the dressing. That way, I get a nice feta flavor throughout the salad without so many fat grams. Here's the recipe that I've been making lately.

Greek Dressing with Feta

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Yield: 3/4 cups

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1/4 cup red wine vinegar
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 and 1/2 tsp. oregano
1 tsp. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 tsp. coarse black pepper
1/2 cup olive oil
2 Tbsp. finely crumbled feta
cheese

1. Measure the vinegar, lemon juice, oregano, sugar, salt, garlic powder and pepper into a medium bowl. Whisk constantly while drizzling in the olive oil. Stir in the feta and serve.



2-Ingredient Sweet Balsamic Dressing

By Christine Pittman

This sweet balsamic dressing is so easy, just two ingredients. And it's fat-free and delicious. How on earth is that possible. We don't know but we know that it is!

This is a dressing recipe that my mom gave me years ago. Like at least 12 years ago. I've been making it ever since. The reason that I make it all the time is that 1) It's delicious, 2) It's fat-free and 3) I've memorized it so I don't need to go searching for the ingredient list.

Saying that I memorized it is a bit ridiculous, mind you. It only has two ingredients and they're in equal amounts. Honey and balsamic vinegar. That's it and that's all. Put them in a jar. Put on the lid. Shake it hard. Done.

2-Ingredient Sweet Balsamic Dressing

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It's totally delicious, especially on a salad that has sweet ingredients, like the one above with strawberries and sauteed sugar snap peas. Tooooo good.

Yield: 1/4 cup

1. Measure ingredients into a jar. Put on lid and shake hard until combined.

Prep Time: 2 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 2 minutes

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar

2 Tbsp. honey



Cilantro Tahini Dressing

By Anita Schechter

Add some Middle Eastern flair with a tahini and cilantro salad dressing. Bonus points because it's super easy to whip up.

Let's face it, most of us eat salad to get the dressing, right? But that leaves the question of what kind of dressing you want. Are you a light oil and vinegar lover or are creamy dressings more your style? If thick and creamy is your thing, you should try making your dressings with a tahini base.

Tahini is a Middle Eastern sauce made from sesame paste (think nut butters) that can be found in the international section of most grocery stores. Sometimes you can buy it already prepared, but making your own is easy and allows for much more customization. A classic tahini sauce is made with equal parts sesame paste and water, with the addition of garlic, lemon juice and salt to taste. But adding Greek-style yogurt gives it a wonderful creamy texture and it pairs well with a large variety of spices and herbs.

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Cilantro is as popular in Middle Eastern cuisine, so it goes well with tahini. And I love the fresh, herby taste and smell it adds to fresh vegetables. Serve this on your favorite salad and add some grilled chicken to make it more of a hearty lunch.

Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

1/4 cup Greek-style yogurt
(plain), such as Stonyfield
Organic
1/4 cup sesame paste
1/4 cup water
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 clove garlic, peeled and
chopped
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh
cilantro
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Add the Greek yogurt, sesame paste, water, lemon juice and garlic to a small food processor and puree until smooth.
2. Add the cilantro and pulse a few times to combine.
3. Season with salt and pepper to taste. (Note that the dressing will thicken up in the refrigerator so just thin it out with a little water or lemon juice.)

101 Super Simple Homemade Salad Dressing Recipes

By Nicole Johnson

Need something amazing to shake up your dinner routine? We have 101 recipes to help you do just that. Homemade salad dressings are so easy, you'll wonder why you haven't been making them all along! Thank you so much to [Stonyfield Organic](#) for sponsoring our Salad Dressing series. We love yogurt and we love you guys. MUAH!

These dressings are amazingly easy, and so flavorful. There is nothing like making your own salad dressings at home. Skip the preservatives and the unpronounceable ingredients in the bottled versions, and get creative!

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9. [Homemade Ranch Dressing with Greek Yogurt](#)

Avocado Dressings

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12. [Avocado-lime Salad Dressing](#)
13. [Creamy Avocado Dressing](#)
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Contributors

Many thanks to our writers for this edition of *The Cookful*.



Amy Bowen, editor

Amy admits that she had no clue how to cook until she became the food reporter for a daily newspaper in Minnesota. At 25, she even struggled with figuring out boxed mac and cheese. These days, Amy is a much better cook, thanks to interviewing cooks and chefs for more than 10 years. She even makes four cheese macaroni and cheese with bacon, no boxed mac in sight. Amy is also on the editorial team at The Cookful and is the primary editor for this ebook.



Christine Pittman, editor

» cookthestory.com

Christine is the Founder and Senior Editor of The Cookful. She also blogs at COOKtheSTORY where she specializes in easy healthy homemade recipes. Healthiness aside, she has been known to shred cheese onto a dinner plate, microwave it for 30 seconds, and then eat the messy goop with a spoon.



Nicole Johnson

» orwhateveryoudo.com

Nicole has been blogging for 5 years at orwhateveryoudo.com, when not chasing her 7 kids around or working full time for CoSchedule. She basically lives, breathes, and eats blogging. And cookies. A pasta fanatic and dedicated tomato fan, she occasionally branches out into crazier things like oh, rice and potatoes. She features mostly from scratch cooking with a healthy smattering of easy convenience meals tossed in to keep it real.



Anita Schector

» www.hungrycouplenyc.com

Anita is the voice behind the blog, Hungry Couple. She's a writer, photographer, recipe developer, cook, bottle washer, shaker of creative cocktails and doggie mama. Anita also writes a monthly food column for Parade Magazine and is the on-staff Middle Eastern cuisine expert at About.com Food. She's been known to eat salad with her fingers.

About The Cookful

Do you love to geek-out over food and cooking? Then The Cookful is where you need to be.

We cook and write about one topic at a time, diving in deep to help you cook (and eat!) better than ever. Each topic comes with How-To's, innovative recipes, and a bunch of interesting tidbits so that you can learn all about it. Some topics we've covered are Margaritas, Quick Soups and Popcorn. Head over to [The Cookful](#) to find out what our next topic is and then get ready to go off the deep end with us.



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