Salad of the Imagination

Fresh from the garden: chives, garlic, zucchini
Recipe Source: Stephanie Alexander’s Kitchen Garden Cooking with Kids (Penguin Lantern 2006)

Students love making ‘Salad of the imagination’ and there are so many possible combinations. Many of the extra ingredients listed here are heavier than the salad leaves, which means the extras will tend to sink to the bottom of the bowl. For that reason, it is often better to serve these kinds of salads on a wide shallow platter, then everyone can see the special touches. Always add the dressing and toss the salad well, just before serving.

Suggestions by season:
- Spring: herbs (such as flowering thyme), pine nuts, rocket leaves (arugula)
- Summer: tomatoes, mozzarella, basil, spinach, rocket leaves (arugula)
- Autumn: celeriac, gruyere, parsnip chips
- Winter: spinach, croutons, bacon, beetroot

Equipment:
- large bowl
- scissors
- salad spinner
- clean tea towels
- kitchen paper
- measuring cups and spoons
- small bowl
- whisk
- juicer (optional)
- chopping board
- 1 large knife
- tongs
- salad bowls or platters
- salad servers

Ingredients:
- 4 cups mixed salad leaves from the garden
- 2 cups mixed small leaves and herbs
- garnishes and other ingredients such as:
  - croutons (plain or garlic-rubbed)
  - toasted nuts (pine nuts, walnuts, almonds)
  - toasted seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, linseed)
  - shavings or crumblings of cheese (parmesan, pecorino, pressed ricotta salata, blue cheese, feta, gruyère)
  - chunks of avocado
  - cured fish (anchovies, smoked trout)
  - gratings of vegetables (beetroot, carrot, radish, celeriac)
  - hard-boiled eggs (sliced or chopped)
  - bacon (cooked until crisp, and crumbled)
  - raw fruits (apples, pears, citrus fruits)
  - pickled or preserved products (preserved lemons, pickled plums or cherries)
What to do:

- Assemble your ingredients, thinking about what is in season, which flavours go together and how they will feel in a salad (for example, it's always nice to have something crunchy along with the soft green leaves).

**To prepare the salad leaves and herbs:**

- Fill a large bowl with cold water and tip all the salad leaves and large herbs into the bowl to soak for a few minutes.
- Lift the leaves onto the draining board of the sink. Tip the water into a bucket to be used on the garden.
- Rinse the bowl, then add fresh water and return the leaves to the bowl. Swish the leaves again in clean water, then lift out small handfuls at a time and place them in the salad spinner.
- Put any yellow or slimy leaves in the compost bucket. Pluck any herbs from tough stems and discard the stems.
- Tear any very large leaves into smaller pieces. Working in batches, very gently dry the leaves in the salad spinner. (Reserve any more water that can be used for the garden.)
- Spread out a dry tea towel, and line it with a long piece of kitchen paper. Tip the dried leaves onto the paper and roll up gently into a parcel in the tea towel.
- Keep the rolled parcel of leaves in the refrigerator until needed. Rinse and dry the bowl.

**To make the dressing:**

- To make a dressing, the most common formula is 1 part acid (such as lemon juice or vinegar) to 4 parts oil. (High-quality vinegars are very powerful, so you may need to use less.)
- Combine your acid with your oil in a small bowl. Whisk lightly to combine.
- Whisk in additions, which could include mustard, small amounts of honey or sugar, freshly chopped herbs (such as parsley, tarragon, chervil or mint), toasted spices (such as coriander seeds or cumin seeds), yoghurt.
- Whichever combination you choose, always season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
- Taste the dressing and adjust the flavours as necessary before using.

**To assemble the salad:**

- Prepare any other ingredients for your salad, such as croutons or toasted seeds, cheeses, preserves, grated vegetables or hard-boiled eggs.
- Unwrap the parcel of salad leaves and tip them into the bowl with the dressing, then very gently turn them in the dressing with tongs or your hands.
- Serve on platters and scatter with croutons or edible flower garnishes, if using.
Pumpkin, Silverbeet & Feta Couscous Salad

Fresh from the garden: garlic, ginger, lemons, parsley, pumpkin, silverbeet

Recipe source: Mansfield Primary School

Note: You can substitute sweet potato for pumpkin if pumpkin is not available.

Equipment:
- tea towel
- chopping board
- cook’s knife
- baking tray
- measuring spoons
- large frying pan
- wooden spoon
- measuring jug
- medium saucepan
- 1 large bowl with lid
- 2 small bowls
- zester
- citrus juicer
- fine grater

Ingredients:
- 600 g piece pumpkin or sweet potato, chopped into 1 cm cubes
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 500 ml chicken stock
- 2 cups couscous
- 1 large handful silverbeet, chopped finely
- 1/2 cup sunflower seeds or pepita seeds
- 150 g feta cheese, crumbled

For the dressing:
- 2 lemons, juiced for 1/4 cup lemon juice and zested
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tsp honey
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 cm knob ginger, finely grated
- 1 small handful parsley, finely chopped
- salt
- pepper

What to do:
1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Place chopped pumpkin on the baking tray, drizzle with oil and sprinkle with nutmeg.
3. Roast for about 20 minutes or until tender.
4. Dry-fry the seeds in a large frying pan. Keep a close eye on them and remove when just browning. Set aside.
5. Heat the chicken stock.
6. Place the couscous in a bowl.
7. Pour the boiling chicken stock over the couscous.
8. Cover with a lid and allow to stand for 5 minutes.
9. Stir the shredded silverbeet into the couscous. Cover and stand for another 5 minutes.
10. Crumble the feta into a small bowl.
11. Combine all the dressing ingredients plus salt and pepper to taste.
12. Combine the pumpkin, feta, seeds, couscous and dressing.
13. Toss gently to combine.
Orange Muffins

Makes approx. 16 (muffin cases) in muffin trays

Ingredients:

1 whole orange,
180g melted butter
3 eggs lightly beaten
1 cup caster sugar
1½ cups SR flour

Method:

Preheat oven 180°C
Cut orange into ¼ leaving the skin on and remove seeds
Process orange ¼ till pureed
Pour into a large bowl
Add all of the other ingredients and mix well
Line muffin trays with muffin cases
Spoon or pour into muffin cases
Place in the oven and cook for 20-25 minutes
Remove from oven and place on a cooling rack.
Roasted Spiced Cauliflower

Fresh from the garden: cauliflower, coriander, lemon

Season: Winter/Spring
Serves: 30 tastes in the classroom or 6 at home

Equipment:
- small frying pan
- measuring spoons
- wooden spoon
- mortar and pestle
- tea towel
- chopping board
- cook’s knife
- large bowl
- baking tray
- tongs

Ingredients:
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 tbsp sunflower oil
- 1 long red chilli, deseeded and finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- pinch ground turmeric
- 1 cauliflower, cut into florets
- salt
- pepper
- 1 small handful coriander
- 2 lemons, cut into wedges, to serve

What to do:

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Dry-roast the coriander seeds in a small frying pan, then the cumin seeds.
3. Grind the roasted seeds in a mortar and pestle.
4. Combine the oil, coriander, cumin, chilli, garlic and turmeric in a large bowl.
5. Add the chopped cauliflower.
6. Toss to coat the cauliflower in the spiced oil.
7. Spoon the cauliflower onto a baking tray.
8. Season with salt and pepper.
9. Roast for 30 minutes or until browned and tender, tossing the cauliflower in the spice mixture halfway through the cooking.
10. Serve with coriander and lemon wedges.