

When you hear "salad," you may think of a boring bowl of lettuce and tomatoes. But salad can be so much more! With a few simple additions, it can be a delicious, healthy and inexpensive meal.

Slice up fresh fruit that's in season or on sale - choose a rainbow of colors! Pairing sweet fruits like pear, apple or pomegranate with savory vinaigrettes will bring complexity and flavor to any salad. Dried fruits without added sugars are another super salad ingredient.

FRUITS

GRAINS

Warm or cold cooked whole grains add bulk and satisfaction. Try whole wheat couscous, barley, quinoa, bulgur or wild rice. To save money, look for whole grains in the bulk aisle of your grocery store. Whole wheat pasta is another inexpensive way to bulk up any basic salad.

BUILD A HEALTHIER SALAD

PROTEINS

Add more satisfaction to your salad with skinless poultry like grilled chicken breast or fish like salmon and tuna, which provide omega-3 fatty acids. Mix in a chopped hard-boiled egg or a small amount of cheese. Toss in some chickpeas, kidney, navy or black beans. Unsalted nuts, like peanuts, almonds and walnuts, give your salad extra crunch and a dose of healthy fat. All these protein foods will keep you feeling fuller longer.

QUICK TIP
Choose lower-fat, lower-sodium cheeses such as mozzarella or Swiss.

GREENS

Choose dark, leafy greens like romaine, spinach or arugula. Add color with radicchio, red leaf lettuce or red cabbage. If you have fresh herbs, like basil, thyme, oregano or mint, they add zest and extra nutrients to your salad bowl.

DRESSINGS

With oil, vinegar and spices in your pantry, you are minutes away from a simple, healthy homemade vinaigrette dressing. Jazz it up with tasty ingredients like chopped fresh herbs, a squeeze of citrus juice and diced veggies with lots of flavor, like onions, garlic and scallions. Experiment by adding small amounts of those add-ins to this vinaigrette recipe, taste-testing as you go.

VEGGIES

Raw vegetables like carrots, cucumbers, broccoli and cauliflower add great crunch and color. Roasted veggies like beets, potatoes and squash add terrific flavor and a little bit of sweetness to any main meal salad.

QUICK TIP

Canned and frozen produce are a great addition to any salad. Check labels and choose the options with the lowest amounts of salt and added sugars. Drain, rinse and pat dry to help your greens stay crisp.

VINAIGRETTE RECIPE

Whisk together 1/4 cup olive oil, 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar and 1/4 teaspoon ground mustard. Add a dash or two of black pepper and toss into salad (serves four).