

Chopped Salad

Kathy's Note: Add peach slices, watermelon or melon, or any fruits and vegetables you like. Add hard-boiled eggs or leftover meat, fish or poultry, all chopped into pieces of similar size. Add canned chickpeas, washed and drained. Add za'tar or sumac or cumin to the salad. Add fresh chopped mint instead of, or in addition to, the parsley. This is a salad that adapts well to just about anything.

Ingredients:

2 large ripe tomatoes, cubed or 1 ½ cups cherry tomatoes, cut in half
2 green, red or yellow peppers, cored and cubed
2 cucumbers cut in half lengthwise and into cubes, with or without seeds
2/3 cup chopped fresh parsley, Italian leaf or curly
3 scallions, chopped
1 cup feta cheese, crumbled, or ricotta salata
1/3 cup olive oil
Juice of 1 large lemon
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions:

Gently toss the tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, parsley and scallions. Add the feta cheese, oil and lemon juice, salt and pepper adding more oil or lemon and seasoning to taste. Make about an hour ahead of time. Serve with pita bread or crusty bread slices.

Kale Salad with Raisins and Nuts

Kathy's Note: This simple way to transform raw kale comes from my friend Karen Frillmann. The kale is cut into thin slices—like ribbons—and tossed with sea salt, vinegar, olive oil, raisins and nuts. That's it!

Ingredients:

3 cups raw kale, cored and cut into thin slices or ribbons
Sea salt and pepper, to taste
About ¼ cup olive oil
About 2 to 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar, white balsamic vinegar or apple cider vinegar, or a combination
1/3 cup golden or regular raisins
1/3 cup pine nuts or chopped pecans or walnuts

Instructions:

Toss all the ingredients and let sit for about 30 minutes before serving. The salt and vinegar will "wilt" the kale and soften it.

Serves 4.

Tomato Vegetable Gazpacho

Kathy's Note: Plan on letting the soup chill for at least 2 hours.

Soup ingredients:

3 pounds summer tomatoes, cored and chopped
2 to 3 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
1 cup stale bread (from leftover bread), cut into small cubes
10 large basil leaves
1/3 cup onion or scallion, chopped
1 cup chopped green or red pepper
1 cup chopped cucumber
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 to 2 teaspoon honey, if tomatoes aren't very sweet, optional
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Garnish ingredients:

1 medium tomato or 12 cherry tomatoes, chopped
1 cucumber, chopped
1 red or green pepper, chopped
2 scallions, chopped

Instructions:

Working in batches in the container of a food processor or blender, combine the tomatoes, garlic, bread cubes, basil, onion, pepper, cucumber, oil, vinegar, honey, if using and salt and pepper to taste. Blend until almost smooth. The soup will be chunky. Taste for seasoning and add more oil and vinegar if too thick. Season to taste with more salt, pepper and honey.

Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Serve cold topped with any or all of the garnishes.

Serves 4 to 6.

Cold Cucumber Soup with Mint, Dill and Lemon

From "Notes from a Maine Kitchen" by Kathy Gunst (Down East Books, 2011)

Kathy's Note: On a steamy summer day this is the perfect lunch or dinner. The soup is whirled in a blender or food processor and can be made in less than 15 minutes. Chill for several hours (or overnight) and serve with chopped cucumber, dill and mint and a drizzle of lemon oil.

Ingredients:

1 ½ pounds cucumbers, peeled, seeded and chopped*

¼ cup fresh dill

¼ cup fresh mint

1 cup low fat milk or buttermilk

1 cup sour cream or low-fat plain yogurt

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 tablespoon lemon-flavored olive oil, or 1 tablespoon olive oil plus 1 teaspoon lemon juice, optional

Dash hot pepper sauce

Garnish: 1 cup cucumber (peeled, seeded and finely chopped) mixed with 2 tablespoons finely chopped dill and 2 tablespoons finely chopped mint

Drizzle of lemon olive oil or olive oil mixed with lemon juice, optional

*To seed a cucumber simply cut it in half lengthwise and use a spoon to scoop out the seeds in the middle.

Instructions:

In the container of a food processor or blender add the cucumbers, dill, mint, milk and yogurt and process until blended, but not totally smooth. Add salt and pepper and hot pepper sauce to taste and drizzle in the olive oil (and lemon juice) if using. Place in a bowl or jar and chill for several hours.

Serve ice cold sprinkled with the cucumber-mint-dill mixture and a drizzle of oil.

Makes about 4 cups; serves 4 to 6.

Avocado Cream

Kathy's Note: Spread this on sandwiches, tacos, leftovers and salads

Ingredients:

3 just-ripe avocados

9 tablespoons heavy cream or crème fraîche

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions:

In the container of a food processor whirl the avocados with the cream until smooth. Season to taste. Will keep several hours.

Granny's Icebox Cake (aka Caterpillar Cake)

By Kathy's daughter Emma Rudolph (<http://nevernothungry.com/>)

Emma's Note: Traditionally made with whipped cream, this lightened version substitutes heavy whipped cream with surprisingly uncomplicated coconut whipped cream. It's essential to use full-fat coconut milk, as the recipe will not work with a lower fat content.

Ingredients:

14-ounce can unsweetened, full-fat coconut milk
1 tablespoon raw turbinado sugar, or sweetener of choice
Dash vanilla extract
1 box thin chocolate wafer cookies, such as Nabisco

Instructions:

Place the can of coconut milk in the fridge overnight. After a night of chilling, remove the can from the fridge and flip it upside down. Open the can, and at the top (technically the original bottom of the can) you will find the liquid. Discard the liquid into a bowl for another use. Below the liquid you will find condensed, pulpy coconut cream that's hardened at the bottom of the can. Scoop all the coconut cream into a refrigerated bowl. Whip until fluffy. Incorporate the sugar and vanilla to taste.

Place a cookie on a serving platter and cover the upward-facing side in a thin layer of whipped cream. Place another cookie directly on top of the whipped cream-covered cookie. Continue alternating cookie, then layer of whipped cream, until you are about 8 cookies high. Make multiple stacks until the ingredients are depleted, saving extra whipped cream for topping. Carefully place the stacks on their sides. Cover the horizontal stacks with the remaining whipped cream, or leave them plain and a little jagged, thus resembling a caterpillar. Serve immediately or chill for several hours, loosely covered.

Makes 6 servings.

Summer Berry "Tart" In A Jar

From *"Eat Your Vegetables: Bold Recipes for the Single Cook"* by Joe Yonan.

Joe's Note: Here's why I use those quotation marks: this can't really be a tart because there's no baking. Instead, when it's hot out and I can't be bothered to turn on the oven, I use a cookie (store bought or homemade), crumbled and bound with some honey, as the crust. Instead of cooked pastry cream, it's barely sweetened thick yogurt, topped with

berries. And I build it in a small glass jar or ramekin for ease of preparation and consumption.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon sliced or slivered almonds
1 chocolate cookie, crumbled or smashed (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of crumbs)
1 teaspoon honey
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plain fat-free Greek-style yogurt (may substitute low-fat or whole)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon almond or vanilla extract
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, or a mixture.

Instructions:

Sprinkle the almonds into a small skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, shaking the pan frequently, until the almonds have darkened and become fragrant, just a few minutes. Immediately transfer them to a plate to cool; if you leave them to cool in the pan, they can burn.

In a small bowl, mix the cookie crumbs with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of the honey. Scrape the mixture into a ramekin or squat $\frac{1}{2}$ -pint glass jar, and pack it down evenly to form a crust. In the same bowl, whisk together the yogurt, almond extract, and the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon honey. Spoon it into the ramekin or jar, top with the berries and almonds, and eat.

More Ideas for Tarts in Jars:

Nutty Chocolate Tart:

Base: peanut butter cookie

Yogurt: whisk in cocoa along with honey and vanilla

Topping: toasted chopped peanuts and a drizzle of melted chocolate

Strawberry-Basil Shortcake:

Base: shortbread cookie

Yogurt: whisk in strawberry preserves along with honey and vanilla

Topping: sliced strawberries and chopped basil leaves

Fig and Pine Nut Tart:

Base: Italian pignoli (pine nut) cookies

Yogurt: whisk in a little balsamic vinegar with extra honey (and omit vanilla)

Topping: fresh figs, pine nuts, and a touch of chopped rosemary

Citrus Coconut Tart:

Base: oatmeal cookie

Yogurt: whisk in orange marmalade or lemon curd along with honey (and omit vanilla)

Topping: blood orange sections and toasted coconut flakes