

10.2

Salads

READING PREVIEW

Key Concepts

- Understanding the purpose of salads
- Preparing green salads
- Using other ingredients in salads
- Preparing composed salads

Vocabulary

- appetizer salad
- composed salad
- dessert salad
- main-course salad
- mesclun
- salad
- separate-course salad
- side salad
- tossed salad

“Salads used to be just a side dish. Now, they are the center of attention. Even fast food restaurants are making room for salads on their menus.”

—Cynthia Ranalli
The Culinary Institute
of America

Purpose of Salads

A **salad** is a combination of raw or cooked ingredients, served cold or warm and coated with a salad dressing. Although salads are usually savory, they may also be sweet (as in the case of a fruit salad), or they can contain both savory and sweet elements. In the course of a meal, depending on its ingredients and size, a salad can have one of the following five purposes:

- **Appetizer Salad.** An appetizer salad is designed to whet the appetite before the main course. It could be nothing more than a variety of attractive greens with an extra-virgin olive oil and red-wine vinaigrette. But it also could be a more elaborate salad featuring other foods from the garde manger such as cold meat, fish, seafood, or cheese. In America, green salads are often served as appetizer salads.



FIGURE 10-6  **Side Salad**

A salad can contain many ingredients.

Applying Concepts *Is it possible to add too many ingredients?*



- **Side Salad.** In informal meals, a **side salad** is served to accompany the main dish. If the main dish is heavy, a light crispy green salad might be an ideal side salad. If the main dish is light, a heavier side salad such as a pasta salad or grain salad would be a good choice. In a banquet situation, the side salad should not use ingredients included in the main dish nor should it use ingredients from an earlier appetizer salad.

- **Main-Course Salad.** In some cases, the main course is a salad. When constructing a **main-course salad**, it is important to provide a balanced meal with a protein source (meat, poultry, fish, beans, or eggs) and a variety of vegetables. In America, substantial main-course salads, often with chicken, fish, or meat, have become very popular. The concept of a salad as a main course is not as common in Italy or France.
- **Separate-Course Salad.** In Italy, a green salad often follows the meat or fish course, especially if another type of salad, such as a seafood salad or a salad of preserved meats and pickled vegetables, was used as an appetizer salad. In France, a green salad usually appears as a separate course, after the main course. These **separate-course salads** are usually light, green salads with a simple vinaigrette or a single vegetable such as asparagus, to refresh the appetite and provide a break before dessert. In a banquet situation, a separate-course salad should not use the same ingredients as were used in an appetizer salad or a side salad.
- **Dessert Salad.** Often featuring fruits, nuts, or gelatin, a **dessert salad** is usually served with a sweetened dressing, a citrus-based dressing, or whipped cream.



What are the five purposes of salads?

Green Salads

A green salad can be used as an appetizer salad, a side salad, a main-course salad, or a separate-course salad. Depending on its purpose, a green salad can consist of just one type of green or many different types of greens. Usually a green salad is a **tossed salad**, which means all the ingredients are combined with dressing.

Types of Salad Greens In terms of flavor, salad greens can be divided into three basic types:

- Mild greens
- Spicy greens
- Bitter greens

Basic Types of Salad Greens

Mild Greens	Spicy Greens	Bitter Greens
Iceberg Lettuce, Boston Lettuce, Bibb Lettuce, Mâche, Romaine Lettuce, Baby Spinach	Arugula (also called Rocket), Mustard Leaves, Watercress, Mizuna	Radicchio, Belgian Endive, Dandelion, Escarole, Chicory, Frisée

The type of greens you use depends on the purpose of the salad in the meal. For example, a side salad might best be kept simple so it refreshes the palate and aids in digestion by providing fiber. On the other hand, a green salad that is an appetizer salad is meant to stimulate the appetite. It might include a variety of greens chosen for flavor, color, and texture attributes.

When constructing an appetizer salad, you should aim for a balance of flavors and texture. For example, if using radicchio, which is crispy and bitter, you could mix in mild but crispy greens such as bibb lettuce or Boston lettuce. Then you could add softer, mild greens such as mâche and complete the salad with a little watercress to add a soft, spicy component.

Some kitchens use prepared mixes of salad greens. Sometimes these mixes have a theme but each has a slightly different taste and texture. For example, **mesclun** (MEHS-kluhn) is a French-style mix that often includes baby red romaine, endive, mâche, radicchio, and arugula. An Asian mixture might include tatsoi, bok choy, baby spinach, mustard, mizuna, and other salad greens.

FOCUS ON NUTRITION

Healthy Greens

Some salad greens have greater nutritive value than others. Iceberg lettuce contains a great deal of water and few vitamins and minerals. Spinach and other salad greens that are a deep green usually have more nutritive value.



FIGURE 10-7
Salad with Edible Flowers
 Edible flowers add visual appeal to a salad.

Inferring *Should you ever put inedible flowers on a salad just for effect, planning to take them off before the salad is actually served?*

FIGURE 10-8
Covering Salad Greens
 Cover the cleaned, dried salad greens by placing a damp towel over them before placing them in the refrigerator.

Drawing Conclusions *Why would a restaurant need to have frequent deliveries of salad greens?*

Fresh herbs such as parsley, basil, chives, sorrel, dill, tarragon, cilantro, mint, and chervil are often added to salads as additional flavorings. Certain herbs can serve as the main body of a salad. For example, a Middle Eastern salad uses only parsley as its salad green. Diced tomatoes and green onions are added, and the salad is dressed with olive oil and lemon juice.

Edible flowers are sometimes strewn on top of a salad to provide an interesting visual feature. Edible garden flowers include nasturtiums (nash-TUR-shums), pansies, calendula (cal-EN-dyu-lah), bachelor's buttons, carnations, fuschia (FEW-scha), geraniums, Johnny jump-ups, primroses, roses, sunflowers, and violets.

Edible flowers from herbs are used in the same way as the edible garden flowers. Edible herb flowers include arugula, borage (BORE-age), chives, lavender, mustard, oregano, rosemary, sage, and thyme. Sprouts from beans, grasses, and salad greens are often used in salads as well.

Preparing Greens Because greens have a short storage life, they should be used as soon as possible after they are procured, usually within two or three days. They will keep best if washed shortly before use and dried. Once greens are cut or torn, their cut edges oxidize and discolor quickly. Some salad greens, such as spinach or arugula, may need to be washed several times to eliminate the sandy earth in which these ground-hugging greens are grown. You can store dried greens loosely in a clean container covered with a light, damp towel.



Salad Greens



▲ Iceberg Lettuce

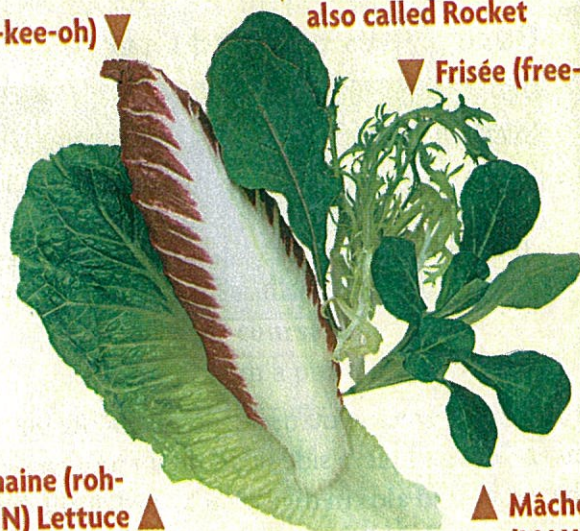


▲ Boston Lettuce



▲ Bibb Lettuce

▼ Radicchio (rah-DEE-kee-oh)



Romaine (roh-MAIN) Lettuce ▲

▼ Arugula (ah-ROO-guh-lah), also called Rocket

▼ Frisée (free-ZAY)



▲ Mizuna (mih-ZOO-nah)

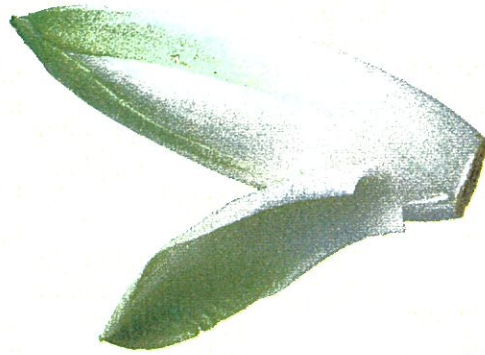


▲ Mustard Leaves (with Flowers)

▲ Mâche (MAHSH), also called Lamb's Lettuce or Corn Salad



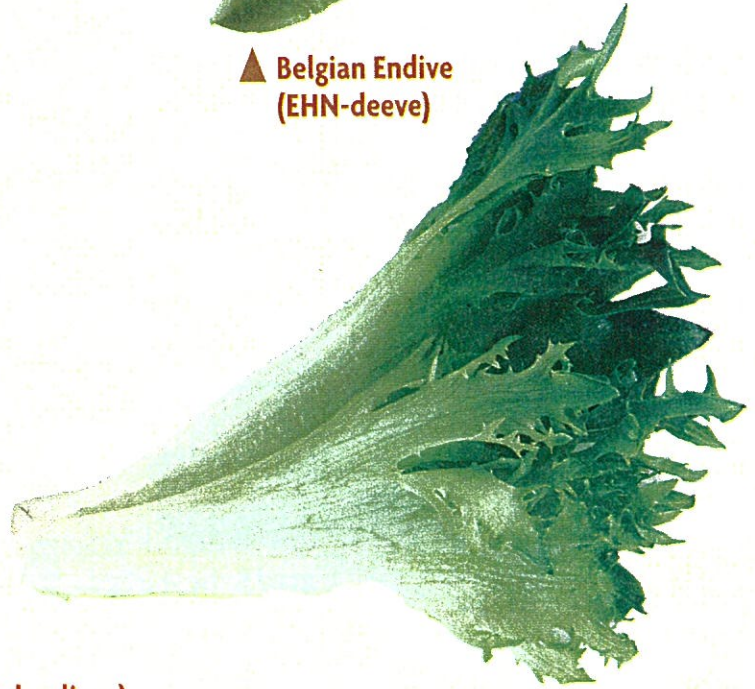
▲ Watercress



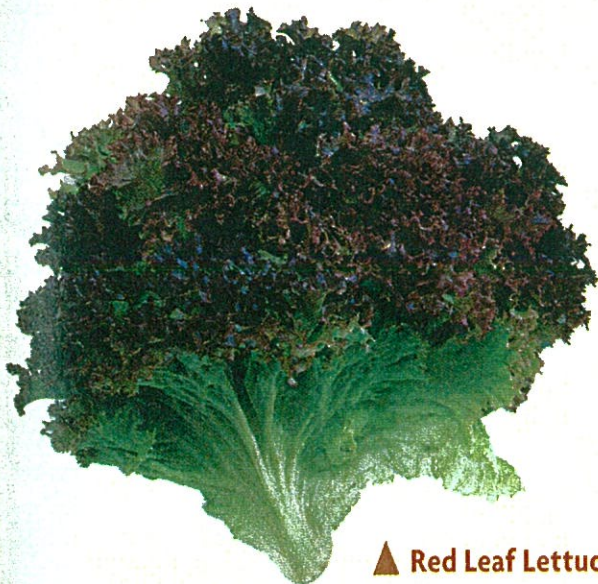
▲ Belgian Endive
(EHN-deeve)



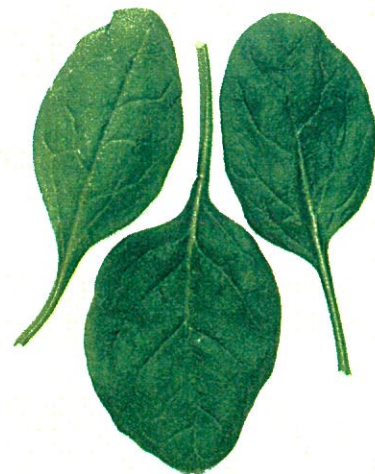
▲ Dandelion (DAN-dee-li-on)



▲ Escarole (ES-kah-roll)



▲ Red Leaf Lettuce



▲ Baby Spinach

BASIC CULINARY SKILLS

Mixed Green Salad

- 1 **Rinse greens** thoroughly in cold running water.



- 2 **Dry completely** in a salad spinner.



- 3 **Tear or cut** greens into bite-sized pieces.
- 4 **Dress and toss well.**



- 5 **Garnish** with ingredients of choice.



See Recipe Card 36,
"Mixed Green Salad."

Greens should be fresh and perky when served. Keep them cool as long as possible before use. Salads should never include wilted leaves or tired sprouts. Dressing should be added at the last minute to ensure that the salad remains crisp.

Matching dressings to green salads is a matter of judgment. Of course, the dressing and the green salad should be compatible, but green salads generally go well with most types of dressings.

Gloved hands are the best utensils for mixing salad components well, but you can also use tongs or large spoons. The dressing should coat the salad ingredients with a light film. A thick or creamy dressing will require more tossing than a vinaigrette. If dressing collects on the bottom of the bowl, there is too much.

Good garnishes make green salads more appealing. Favorite additions to green salads are tomatoes, sprouts, fresh herbs, olives, thinly sliced onions, shredded carrots, cucumbers, mushrooms, and radishes.

CHEF'S TIP

DRY SALAD LEAVES

After rinsing, salad greens should be spun or shaken dry. Excess water in the leaves dilutes the dressing and makes the salad soggy.

They should be fresh and cut into pieces that can be eaten in one bite. Other options are nuts and seeds, shavings of Parmesan cheese, crumbled feta cheese, or sliced hard-cooked eggs. Crisp garnishes such as crumbled bacon or croutons give a boost to green salads. You can make tasty croutons by frying bread cubes in olive oil or by baking seasoned bread cubes in a cool oven.

BASIC CULINARY SKILLS

Croutons

- 1 **Preheat** oven to 300°F.
- 2 **Remove crusts** from stale sliced bread.
- 3 **Cut** into large dice.
- 4 **Toss lightly** with olive oil or melted butter.
- 5 **Sprinkle salt and dried herbs** (if desired) lightly on the bread.
- 6 **Place on baking sheet.**
- 7 **Bake** until lightly browned, about 12 minutes.
- 8 **Remove from oven** and cool.



- 9 **Store** in an airtight container at room temperature.



What are the three types of salad greens?

FOCUS ON NUTRITION

Low Calorie?

Salad is not necessarily a diet food. A large amount of a rich dressing or high-calorie additions to a salad can turn even a low-calorie green appetizer salad into a very high-calorie meal.

Other Salad Ingredients

Many ingredients other than greens can be used in a salad. The choice of other ingredients depends on the purpose of the salad and the other dishes in the meal or on the menu.

For example, it is important to consider the connection of a side salad to the main dish. If the main dish is a protein (meat, poultry, or seafood, for example), you might want to use a side salad that focuses on vegetables or starches. If the main dish is a starch, a side salad might focus on vegetables or proteins.

When thinking through a menu, it is also important to have appetizer salads, side salads, and main salads that appeal to a variety of tastes. A diner who orders a substantial main course, such as pot roast, that focuses on protein may be looking for a light appetizer salad. On the other hand, for someone who wants to eat light but desires some protein, a main-course salad with some protein would be ideal.

You can consider four other types of ingredients when constructing salads:

- Vegetables
- Starches
- Proteins
- Fruits and nuts

Vegetables The predominant ingredient in a salads can be raw or cooked vegetables, such as fennel or beets. Raw or cooked vegetables can also be added to green salads. Popular raw vegetable salads include tomato salad, cole slaw, carrot salad, cucumber salad, artichoke heart salad, fennel salad, and mushroom salad. Popular cooked vegetable salads include boiled or roasted beets, roasted peppers, steamed sugar snap peas, blanched green beans, boiled cauliflower, steamed zucchini, boiled turnips, or boiled potatoes.

Depending on the type of the vegetable and the final desired texture, cooked vegetables for salads are typically roasted, grilled, boiled, blanched, or steamed. Some vegetables, such as cabbage, peas, or sugar snap peas are simply blanched for a cooked vegetable salad. Other vegetables may be cooked through. In some cooked vegetable salads, such as German potato salad, the vegetables should still be warm when dressed so flavors combine. Other vegetables, such as zucchini and eggplant, should be dressed at the last minute to avoid sogginess. A chef needs to be aware of the flavor and final texture required by the recipe.

Some cooked salads combine more than one vegetable. Russian salad, called *insalata russa* (een-sahl-AHT-tah roos-ah) in Italian and *salade russe* (sah-LAHDD rooss) in French, is a combination of boiled potatoes, beets, eggs, capers, and often turnips, carrots, peas, and other vegetables. A Russian salad is dressed with mayonnaise.

Starches Salads can feature starchy components, including bread, grains, pasta, and beans.

CHEF'S TIP

WATERY SALADS

Boiled, steamed, or blanched vegetables should be drained thoroughly and dried. Otherwise, cooking water will dilute the salad dressing.



FIGURE 10-9
Cooked Vegetables in a Salad
Grilled eggplant makes a good addition to a tossed green salad.
Predicting What other grilled vegetables could be substituted for the eggplant?

CHEF'S TIP

SALAD TOMATOES

Some tomato varieties with thick skins and few seeds (plum tomato types) are best in sauces. Large slicing tomatoes or thin-skinned tomatoes, such as cherry or grape tomatoes, are best used raw in salads.

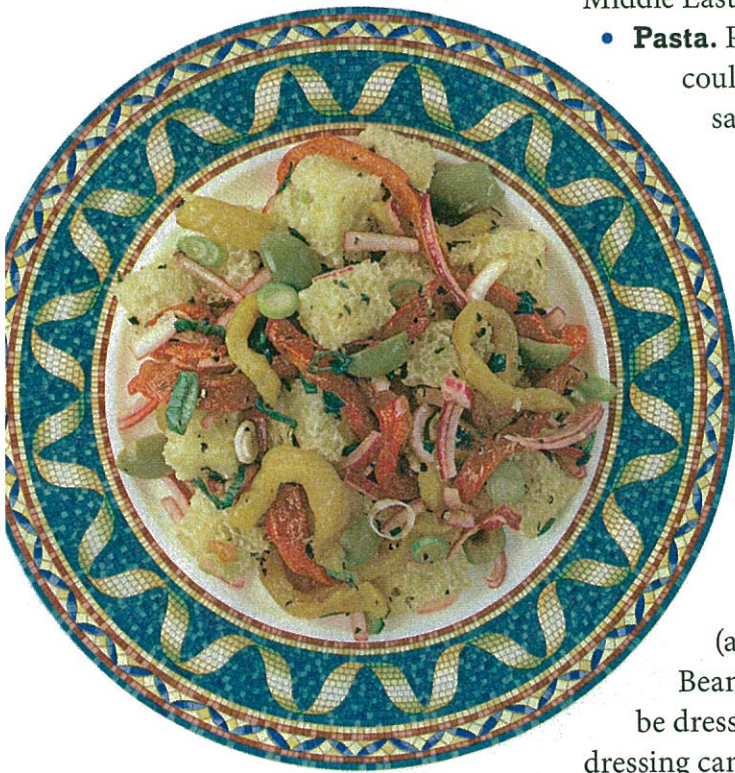


FIGURE 10-10
Starch in a Salad

This Mediterranean salad features chunks of bread with roasted peppers, scallions, and red onion.

Drawing Conclusions What do you think the bread contributes to the texture of this salad?

- **Bread.** Leftover bread is the basis of a number of traditional salads, including panzanella (pahn-zahn-EL-la), from Italy's Tuscany region, which is made from the region's saltless bread and tomatoes. Fattoush (faht-TOOSH), a Middle Eastern salad, is a combination of bread, lettuce, spinach, cucumbers, tomatoes, bell peppers, green onions, cilantro, and mint, dressed with lemon juice, olive oil, and garlic.
- **Grains.** Many kinds of grains, including cracked wheat, rice, and barley, can be used for salads. Grain salads are best made shortly before they are used, because they absorb the salad dressing easily and can become soggy. They also absorb other flavorings quickly. Tabouli (tah-BOO-leh) is an example of a Middle Eastern grain-based salad. It features cracked wheat.
- **Pasta.** Pasta salads are quite popular. A pasta salad could be the traditional macaroni salad, a couscous salad with lemon, mint, onions, and peppers; or even a Japanese salad made with buckwheat pasta and a peanut-based sauce. A pasta salad often becomes bland in storage. Before serving a pasta salad that has been stored, check its seasoning carefully.
- **Beans.** Beans and lentils make delicious and nutritious salads. They are cooked and served cold or at room temperature. Because beans don't become soggy, they are ideal when advanced preparation is necessary. Virtually any kind of bean can be used individually in salads or combined with other beans (as, for example, a traditional three-bean salad). Beans must be cooked until very tender. They should be dressed close to service time because the acid in a dressing can toughen the beans.

Protein Protein sources, such as meat, poultry, seafood, and cheese, make excellent additions to warm or cold salads. In some cases, they are the primary focus of the salad. Meat could be roasted, chicken could be grilled, or shrimp could be boiled. No matter how the protein source is cooked, it should be freshly made.

Because seafood is highly perishable and delicate, it should be freshly cooked for use in a salad. If the protein source is cooked in advanced and chilled, the dressing should be added no more than three or four hours before serving. This prevents excessive absorption of the dressing. Ideally, meats, poultry, or seafood used for salads should be moist and tender to the fork. Dressings add flavor; they should not be relied on to return moisture to overcooked food.

Meat, poultry, and seafood salads are served as an appetizer salad or, in a larger portion, as a main-course salad. Because such salads are substantial, they are not typically used as side salads or separate-course salads.

Traditional American-style chicken and seafood salads use a mayonnaise-based dressing. However, other types of protein-based salads, such as grilled chicken salad with Caesar dressing, are becoming more common. There are endless variations on meat, poultry, and seafood salads. Here are some examples:

- Taco Salad
- Steak and Barley Salad
- Cajun-Style Shrimp Salad
- Thai-Style Beef Salad
- Curried Chicken Salad
- Lobster Salad
- Grilled Salmon Salad
- Greek Lamb Salad with Mint
- Seared Scallop Salad

Fruits and Nuts With the selection of fruits and nuts available today from all over the world, chefs can be highly creative with salads. Once thought of only for dessert salads, fruits are now often featured in appetizer salads and even in main-course salads. An example of an appetizer salad using fruit might be one consisting of pears, blue cheese, a spicy green such as arugula, walnuts, and a rich olive oil without any vinegar. Main-course salads often feature apples or pears. Fruit salads are also sometimes offered on breakfast or brunch menus.

Once cut, fruit deteriorates rapidly. Fruit should be cut close to the salad's serving time. Fruits that turn brown, such as apples and pears, can be placed in a bath of water and lemon juice to prevent discoloration for up to several hours. Lemon juice may create a distraction from the flavors desired in the final salad, however.



FIGURE 10-11
Protein in a Salad

This mayonnaise-based salad includes shrimp, potatoes, peas, carrots, red pepper, and egg.

Drawing Conclusions When would you serve this type of salad?

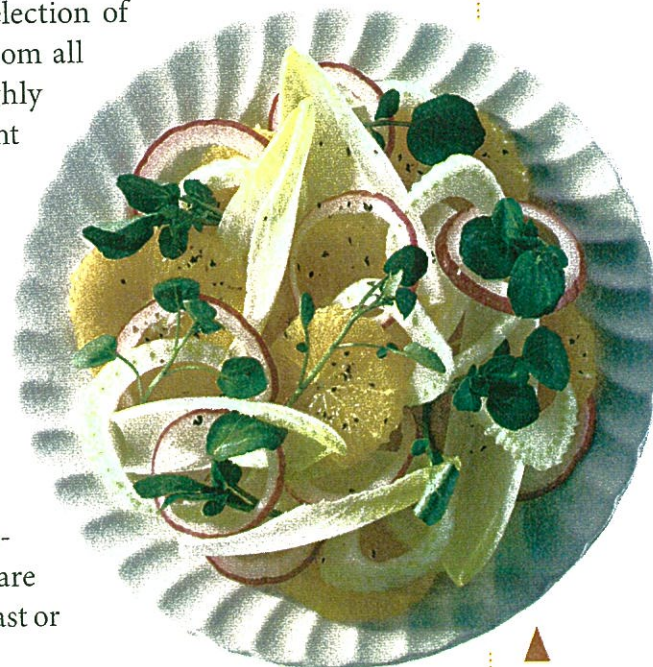


FIGURE 10-12
Fruit in a Salad

The slices of orange are an unexpected complement to the endive, watercress, red onion, and fennel.

Analyzing Information Describe the flavors in this salad and how they balance each other.

 **Reading
Checkpoint**

What are the four other types of ingredients to consider when constructing a salad?

Composed Salads

A **composed salad** is a salad with any combination of ingredients (greens, vegetables, proteins, starches, fruits, or garnishes) that are arranged carefully and artfully on a plate or in a bowl. The entire composed salad can be dressed with one style of dressing, or individual components can be separately dressed with different dressings. The dressing for some or all of the components of a composed salad can be served “on the side”—that is, in a separate container to be applied by the customer.

A composed salad with greens is typically presented as an appetizer salad, a main-course salad, or a separate-course salad. A composed fruit salad can be a dessert course or a main course for breakfast or brunch.

Composed salads present a terrific opportunity for creativity in the garde manger station. Ingredients and garnishes are typically arranged beautifully on a plate or in a bowl, rather than being tossed.

FIGURE 10-13
Composed Salads

French niçoise salad (left) includes tuna, olives, egg, and green beans; Italian Capri salad (right) includes tomato, mozzarella, and basil.

Comparing/Contrasting Describe the differences between these two composed salad presentations.



Preparation of a Composed Salad A composed salad often has four component parts:

- **Main Ingredients.** A composed salad often has one or more main ingredients as its centerpiece. The main ingredient could be roasted vegetables, a grilled chicken breast, sliced grilled steak, sautéed shrimp, or a grilled salmon fish filet.

- **Supporting Ingredients.** The main ingredients are often placed on a bed of greens or shredded vegetables. These supporting ingredients can form a base for the main ingredients. For example, the lettuce in a chef's salad carries the main ingredients of hard-cooked eggs, ham, turkey, and cheese strips. Some composed salads include many supporting ingredients artfully arranged on a plate around the main ingredients.
- **Garnish.** The visual appeal of a composed salad is important. The salad should be attractively garnished with ingredients that are appetizing as well as decorative. Consider what ingredients can help to balance or enhance the other ingredients. Choose garnishes with an eye for texture as well as for flavor and color.
- **Dressing.** The dressing should balance the various flavors in the composed salad and be compatible with all the ingredients. It may be served on the side or placed attractively in an individual container as part of the composition. Alternatively, salads may be dressed immediately before service.

When preparing composed salads, focus on balance and contrasts. Ingredients in a composed salad should be arranged with an eye to design. Think of the balance of forms and shapes as you compose and garnish the salad. Of course, nothing can substitute for the freshness and good flavor of the food on the plate, but making the plate interesting and appetizing adds to the pleasure of the dish. Keep these guidelines in mind:

- **Flavors.** Put together various flavors, but make sure they are compatible. Flavors that fight each other are not usually put together on the same plate.
- **Textures.** Combinations of textures make salads appetizing. Crisply cooked crumbled bacon; soft, creamy goat cheese; mild, crisp bibb lettuce; and a tangy vinaigrette, for example, have texture appeal as well as flavor appeal.
- **Colors.** Use color, such as vibrant yellow bell peppers, the purple of radicchio, or the white of endive, to add interest and appeal.
- **Height.** You can create interest by using height as a design element. Sliced vegetables, for example, can be stacked or layered for visual appeal.



CHEF'S TIP

GARNISHES

The quality of the salad in a restaurant usually provides a little preview of what can be expected from the meal to follow. Garnishes should not be an afterthought.

Examples of Composed Salads Some composed salads are so well established that they are among the most popular ordered at restaurants. Other composed salads may depend on seasonal ingredients or special components for which the kitchen is especially known.

Four Popular Composed Salads

Salad Name	Dressing	Ingredients
Chef's Salad	Vinaigrette	Tossed greens; julienned ham, chicken or turkey; cheese; sliced vegetables; and hard-cooked eggs.
Cobb Salad	French dressing	Lettuce (base) with sliced turkey or chicken breast, avocado slices, cheese strips, hard-cooked eggs, tomato, and bacon. Often garnished with blue cheese.
Caesar Salad, with Grilled Chicken	Caesar dressing (olive oil, wine vinegar, egg yolk, garlic, mustard, sometimes anchovies)	Romaine lettuce (base), sliced grilled chicken (main ingredient), and grated Parmesan cheese. Often garnished with croutons.
Niçoise (nee-SWAHZ) Salad	Red-wine vinaigrette	Tuna (main ingredient), with boiled sliced potatoes, tomato slices, hard-cooked eggs, black olives, anchovies, cooked green beans, and sliced bell peppers.



Reading Checkpoint

What is a composed salad?

10.2 ASSESSMENT

Reviewing Concepts

1. In the course of a meal, what are five purposes of a salad?
2. What are three basic types of salad greens?
3. What ingredients, other than greens, should you consider when constructing salads?
4. What is a composed salad?

Critical Thinking

5. **Comparing/Contrasting** What is the difference between a tossed salad and a composed salad?
6. **Inferring** Why would a dressing for a composed salad often be served separately?
7. **Predicting** In your opinion, does height add interest and appeal to a salad?

TEST KITCHEN

Assemble a collection of as many types of salad greens as you can. Prepare a red-wine vinaigrette. Sample each of the salad greens individually and together, with and without the vinaigrette. Write down your notes about the taste of the various salad greens. Compare your results with classmates.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Descriptive Writing

Research salads from three different countries. Write a standard recipe for your favorite one. Make your recipe and then write a review of your dish.