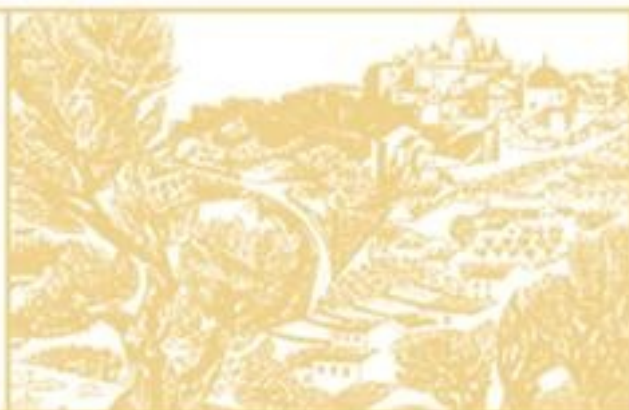


TWELVE MONTHS OF MONASTERY SALADS



200 Divine Recipes for All Seasons



BROTHER VICTOR-ANTOINE D'AVILA-LATOURRETTE

THE HARVARD COMMON PRESS
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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THE HARVARD COMMON PRESS

535 ALBANY STREET

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02118

www.harvardcommonpress.com

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Printed in the United States

The Library of Congress has cataloged the hardcover edition as follows:

D'Avila-Latourrette, Victor-Antoine.

Twelve months of monastery salads : 200 divine recipes for all seasons / Brother Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourrette.

p. cm.

ISBN 1-55832-277-9

1. Vegetarian cookery. 2. Monastic and religious life. I. Title.

TX837.D235 2004

641.8'3—dc22

2003024061

ISBN: 978-1-55832-332-2

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

BOOK DESIGN BY DEBORAH KERNER/DANCING BEARS DESIGN

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY KIM GRANT

TO JEANNE-MARIE AND HOMER BYINGTON
AND MARY JEAN AND JOHN WINKLER,
FOR THEIR FAITHFUL FRIENDSHIP, SUPPORT,
AND LOVE ALL THESE YEARS



A meal, however simple, is a moment of intersection.

Elise Boulding



Acknowledgments

I wish to thank our friends in France and here in the U.S.A., especially my dear cousins Anne-Marie and Bernard Cazenave-Latourrette from Pau, France, who shared some of their favorite salad recipes with me. I also wish to thank Louise Seamster, Aaron Ancel, and Michael Centore, all from Vassar College, who collaborated and helped in so many of the monastery tasks, including at times typing and rearranging the recipes.

Last but not least, I am most grateful to The Harvard Common Press for wanting to do this book in particular to Pam Hoenig, my editor, who worked endless hours to make this book a reality.



Introduction

For the ear tests words, as the palate tastes food.

BOOK OF JOB 34:3

There was a time when both professional chefs and ordinary cooks looked at salads as a secondary dish on the menu, not terribly important to everyday cooking, something added to the meal only for special occasions, such as a feast or celebration. This has changed in the last few decades and we are all the better for it. The great interest that surged in the late sixties in a healthy, fresher, and more natural cuisine has done wonders to expand the scope and value of salad as a unique resource. Salads rich sources of vitamins and minerals, are the prototype of what is considered healthful eating.

Main course salads, which artfully combine vegetables, fruits, seafood, cheese, grains, pasta, and meat, have become favorites during the hot weather months and beyond. People now savor and enjoy salads all year round. We have only to look at the trendiness of salad bars to see this. Some of the reasons salads are so popular are that they are easy to put together, there are endless variations to please every taste and palate, and they seem to always provide a wonderful contrast of flavors, textures, colors, and nuances. There are salads that can be prepared well ahead of time and others that can be quickly arranged at the last minute. If one finds one's fridge full of leftover fruit and vegetables, one has only to think of salad and all these ingredients will find their rightful place in the salad bowl. There is a certain balance, a certain harmony in a well-prepared and -arranged salad, which gives it a unique appeal. All the ingredients seem to blend effortlessly, creating the perfect plate, full of delicacy and wonder.

Salads today are deeply appreciated by all, no matter where they appear in the meal. They can be the perfect starter, an attractive main course, or a delightful in-between or finish to an appetizing meal. I myself put great emphasis on the salad as a main course two or three times a week during the summer months, for besides simplifying the task of food preparation in the kitchen, the salad is a natural answer to a monastic diet that stresses the consumption of vegetables, grains, fruits, and less saturated fats.

Salads, like soups, have always played an integral role in monastic cuisine. Monastic cooking is well known for its simplicity, wholesomeness, sobriety, and basic good taste. These are principles that mark a certain approach to cooking and are reflected in the dishes concocted in monasteries. Both salads and soups are seen as perfect prototypes for these principles and are considered quintessential monastic sorts of foods.



Monastic cooking relies a great deal on the seasonal harvest of our gardens, farms, and orchards. Monks know that nothing can compare with the freshness and excellence of the products grown within the confines of the monastic enclosure. Nothing is so deeply appreciated at the monastic table as a well-arranged, well-balanced salad, the end result of our own cultivation and the thrifty creativity of the monastic kitchen.

The salads presented in this collection tend to be basically vegetarian, thus adhering to the principle of the monastic diet as prescribed in the Rule of St. Benedict. Dairy products and seafood are allowed, and consequently are included in some of the salads you'll find within these covers. The immense variety of salad recipes in this book remains faithful to its monastic inspiration. (There are a few exceptions, like ones calling for luxury items such as caviar, which are included for the benefit of those who don't adhere to a strict monastic diet.) The recipes here exalt the values of health, nutrition, and refinement of taste. A salad, carefully prepared, is always an occasion for celebration.

Bon appétit!

BROTHER VICTOR-ANTOINETTE
SOLEMNITY OF ST. BENEDICT





SALAD BASICS

The immense variety of salad greens now available in our gardens, in the supermarkets, and at local roadside stands can be overwhelming at times. With such diversity to choose from, one hardly knows where to begin. Each of the seasons provides its own harvest of delicious, crisp greens to tempt our appetites. Every season also brings new hybrid varieties, which provide their own intriguing flavors. The true connoisseur or well-trained chef knows that to create a magical salad, one must combine some zesty greens, such as arugula, with some milder ones, such as red oak-leaf lettuce, in order to achieve a delicious harmony of flavors. Mesclun is an example of a perfect blend of flavors, textures and tenderness, hence its rich appeal.

In our small monastery, we cultivate an assortment of greens—about nine or ten of them—all year round, except during the deep winter months. The seeds come from France and the United States and they always provide marvelous results for the monastic table. Here is a list of greens (some are actually red) that I like to mix or include in a salad.

Lolla Rossa: From France, this is available green or red, with a tender, mild flavor. It is perfect served alone or mixed with other greens.

Butterhead lettuce: This lettuce is relatively small, with a loose head and a delicate, buttery taste. The three main types are Bibb (also called limestone), Boston, and buttercrunch.

Romaine lettuce: Particularly appealing because of its crunchiness, it grows easily in the garden and keeps well in the refrigerator. (I usually pick it tender from the garden, before it grows to full size.)

Red oak-leaf lettuce: A tender and colorful addition to the salad bowl, it is easy to grow in the garden, especially during the spring and fall months.

Red leaf lettuce: This is not the same as red oak-leaf. A larger plant, it is commonly found in supermarkets and known for its mild flavor.

Iceberg lettuce: This is very popular because of its crunchy texture, mild flavor, and long life in the refrigerator. I'm not terribly fond of it, though, and we don't cultivate it in our garden or use it in our recipes. I must confess, when we do have it, we feed it to our chickens, who like it very much.

Mesclun: This is a tender mixture of salad greens sown and grown together and harvested early, when they are mild and crisp. Its cultivation originated in Provence, and from there its availability has extended to the four corners of the earth. Mesclun is easy to grow in the garden.

Chicory: This coarse green is very crisp and mostly bitter in taste.

Baby chicory: Also known as frisée, this curly-leaf green is small in size and very popular in France, where it is known as curly endive.

Escarole: This is a broad, leafy form of endive, with a mildly bitter flavor. It is cold and heat resistant in the garden.

Spinach: There are several varieties; I prefer baby spinach for salads because of its tender texture and mild flavor. Spinach can get very sandy, so be sure to wash it thoroughly.

Dandelion greens: Considered a weed by most lawn-loving Americans, dandelion greens are a favorite among Italians. There are several varieties available for cultivation. I particularly like them sautéed and served a bit wilted in a salad.

Watercress: Usually found growing wild next to streams, watercress has a peppery flavor that is particularly appealing in a mixed salad. It is used often as a garnish.

Belgian endive: Called *chicon* in Belgium, this is a favorite among chefs. With a crisp texture

and distinctive bitter taste, it is excellent served alone or mixed with other ingredients in a salad.

Arugula: Called *rocket* in French, it has a spicy, mustard-like flavor that is extremely appealing. We grow two varieties at the monastery: *Arugula salvatica*, a perennial whose seeds were brought by a friend from Venice, Italy, and simple arugula, which is an annual and much milder in flavor.

Mâche: This delightful, tender, mild-flavored green is similar in size to baby spinach. A favorite of the French and Belgians, it grows well in cold climates, often surviving heavy frosts.

Radicchio: A form of red chicory, it is very popular in Italy and among chefs. Shredded long and thin, it is often used to enhance a salad. Unfortunately, because it is not cultivated in the United States and must be imported, it is rather expensive in supermarkets.

Green cabbage: We cultivate both green and Savoy cabbage in our monastery garden and like to toss them in coleslaw and other salads.

Red cabbage: Often used in salads because of its color and crunchy texture, it's a nice addition to the bowl!

USEFUL TIPS FOR SALAD PREPARATION

1. Always choose the freshest ingredients, in particular the greens and other vegetables. Use them promptly, so they retain their original texture and flavor.
2. Wash your greens well. Place them in a salad spinner and spin them dry. Don't let your greens get soggy, or they'll quickly go bad.
3. Add the vinaigrette or salad dressing just before serving the salad; otherwise the vegetables, especially the greens, will begin to wilt. A vinaigrette should always be prepared at the last minute before serving, and one must not hesitate to use one's clean hands for tossing the salad.
4. For a perfect mixed salad, a *salade mélangée*, compose it with a variety of textures, colors, and flavors. Blend all harmoniously!
5. When preparing the greens for a salad, tear them by hand rather than cutting them with a knife, which often causes wilting.
6. Choose quality ingredients to prepare the vinaigrette or salad dressing: extra virgin olive oil, good-quality vinegar—balsamic, wine, sherry, or another vinegar to your liking—fresh spices and herbs, and, whenever possible, sea salt, freshly ground pepper, and French mustard.

TYPES OF SALADS

Salads have many uses, they come in numerous forms and shapes, and they have diverse origins. For the sake of understanding each particular salad, I have created some categories to place them all in a context. The idea of classifying salads gives each one its own niche, its own identity.

Classic international salads: These salads are well known around the world, for example, Indian Curried Lentil Salad ([\[>\]](#)), German Potato Salad ([\[>\]](#)), and Horiatiki Greek Salad ([\[>\]](#)).

Rustic salads: Inspired by the traditional rural cuisines of several countries, they include Pear, Endive, and Brie Salad ([\[>\]](#)), Mushroom and Arugula Salad ([\[>\]](#)), and Two Cabbages Salad ([\[>\]](#)).

Exotic salads: These salads combine sophistication, inventiveness, and refinement, for example

Madagascar Date-Nut Salad ([\[>\]](#)), Mango Salad Piquant ([\[>\]](#)), and Fava Bean Salad, Egyptian Style ([\[>\]](#)).

Creative salads: These include such salads as Spartan Carrot Salad ([\[>\]](#)), Herbed Tofu Salad ([\[>\]](#)), and Transfiguration Salad ([\[>\]](#)), made with wild rice and chickpeas.

Plain and simple mixed salads: Basic everyday recipes, they include Monastery-Style Coleslaw ([\[>\]](#)), Tomato, Onion, and Mozzarella Salad ([\[>\]](#)), and Baby Beet, Potato, and Onion Salad ([\[>\]](#)).

Pasta salads: These are tried and true, right for almost any occasion. Among the many included, try Mint-Flavored Fusilli Salad ([\[>\]](#)), Rotelle in Spicy Napoleon Sauce ([page 141](#)), and St. Basil Macaroni Salad ([\[>\]](#)).

Egg, cheese, and fish salads: For a shot of protein, enjoy Salmon and Avocado Salad ([\[>\]](#)), Pesto-Filled Deviled Eggs ([\[>\]](#)), and Dutch-Style Egg and Cheese Salad ([\[>\]](#)), among many others.

Italian salads: Highlights of the Italian offerings include Arugula and Dandelion Salad with Roasted Pears ([\[>\]](#)), Roasted Sweet Pepper Salad from the Piedmont ([\[>\]](#)), and Artichoke Heart Salad ([\[>\]](#)).

French regional salads: The diversity of French cooking is represented in such dishes as *Salade au Roquefort* ([\[>\]](#)), Zucchini Salad, Basque Style ([\[>\]](#)), and Provençal Mesclun Salad ([\[>\]](#)).

Saints' salads: St. Benedict Salad ([\[>\]](#)), based on rice and cucumber; Regina Salad ([\[>\]](#)), made with lettuce and tomatoes; and St. Cecile Cauliflower Salad ([\[>\]](#)) are just a few of the recipes I have dedicated to saints. You'll find them in the month of their feast day.

Fruit salads: Orange, Apple, and Fennel Salad ([\[>\]](#)), Persimmon and Greens Salad ([\[>\]](#)), and Riviera Cantaloupe Salad ([\[>\]](#)) are refreshing examples of this collection, many of which can be served either as dessert or as part of a delicious breakfast spread.

The best way to know God is to love many things.

Van Gogh





JANUARY

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Bar-Le-Duc Salad [\[>\]](#)

Orange, Apple, and Endive Salad [\[>\]](#)

Caesar Salad

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

Croutons

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 slices whole wheat bread, cut into 1-inch cubes

Salad

- 1 head Boston lettuce, torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 medium-size head romaine lettuce, torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 medium-size red onion, thinly sliced
- ½ cup crumbled French or Danish blue cheese
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Vinaigrette

- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
 - 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
 - 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
 - ¼ teaspoon Tabasco sauce
 - 1 teaspoon Dijon, Meaux, or another French mustard
 - Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 hard-boiled egg (optional), peeled and chopped, for garnish

1. To make the croutons, heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and stir well once. Immediately add the bread cubes and cook, stirring, until they are lightly browned on all sides. Remove the croutons from the skillet and set aside.
2. To assemble the salad, put the greens and onion in a deep salad bowl. Add the blue cheese and Parmesan and toss gently to mix.
3. Whisk the vinaigrette ingredients together in a measuring cup or small bowl until thickened. Pour over the salad and toss gently to coat. Add the croutons and chopped egg, if using, and toss once more. Serve immediately.

Find the journey's end in every step.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Oriental Salad

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

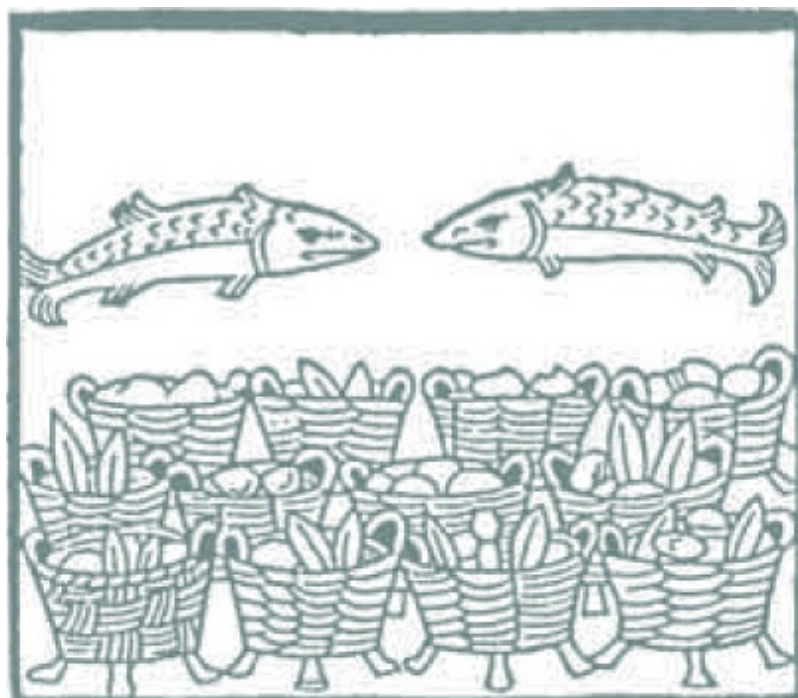
Dressing

- 1/3 cup sunflower oil or another vegetable oil**
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil**
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce**
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**
- 1 teaspoon cider vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon honey**
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste**

Salad

- 1 cup fresh bean sprouts, rinsed with boiling water and patted dry**
- 1 bunch watercress, stems trimmed off, and torn into bite-size pieces**
- 1 head Boston lettuce, torn into bite-size pieces**
- 1 medium-size or large sweet apple, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced**
- 3 scallions, finely chopped**
- Handful of lightly cooked snow peas**
- A few cooked shrimp (optional)**

1. Whisk the dressing ingredients together in a measuring cup or small bowl until thickened. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving to allow the flavors to develop.
2. Put the salad ingredients in a large salad bowl. Just before serving, pour the dressing over everything and toss lightly to coat. Serve immediately.



German Potato Salad

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

Salad

- 10 medium-size red potatoes
- 2 large cucumbers, peeled, quartered lengthwise, seeded, and cubed
- 1 medium-size Vidalia onion, finely chopped
- 1 dill pickle, cubed

Dressing

- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise (store-bought is fine)
 - 2 tablespoons Dijon, Meaux, or another French mustard
 - ½ cup olive oil
 - ¼ cup cider vinegar
 - Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
-
- ⅓ cup finely chopped fresh Italian parsley for garnish

1. To make the salad, cook the potatoes in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until just tender when pierced with a sharp knife; start checking after 10 to 15 minutes of cooking. Do not overcook them. Drain, then rinse under cold running water. Let them stand for a few minute until they cool off. Peel, then slice the potatoes ¼ inch thick and put them in a large salad bowl. Add the cucumber, onion, and pickle and toss lightly so as not to break up the potato slices.
2. Combine the dressing ingredients in a blender and whirl until smooth. Pour over the salad and toss gently to coat everything.
3. Just before serving, sprinkle the chopped parsley over the salad. Serve at room temperature.

He that drinks not wine after salad is in danger to get sick.

English proverb



Japanese Sprout Salad

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

Dressing

- 1/3 cup sunflower oil or another vegetable oil**
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil**
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce**
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar**
- 2 teaspoons honey**

Salad

- 1 pound fresh bean sprouts, rinsed with boiling water and patted dry**
- 4 scallions, finely chopped**
- 1 bunch watercress, stems trimmed off, and torn into bite-size pieces**
- 1 medium-size red bell pepper, seeded and finely chopped or diced**

1. Whisk the dressing ingredients together in a measuring cup or small bowl until thickened. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours to allow the flavors to develop. Whisk once more before using.
2. To assemble the salad, put the bean sprouts in a salad bowl. Add the scallions, watercress, and red bell pepper.
3. Just before serving, pour the dressing over everything and toss lightly to coat. Serve immediately.



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