

Delightful Dressings to Devour

Over these past months I'm noticing that more and more conventional venues are now touting the virtues of plant-based eating. Municipalities are now issuing nutrition policies that will provide access to healthier meals in government cafeterias, schools, jails, and hospitals. (*Santa Clara County Tightening Nutrition Standards* - San Jose Mercury News, Tuesday, February 28, 2012)

Not surprisingly, these nutrition rulings give special focus to green leafy vegetables. As a culture which is somewhat unfamiliar with eating vegetables per se, a common concern is how to make them "more appealing." At the request of a fellow Grey Bear, I take delight in conjuring up some sumptuous ideas on just how you might venture to dress up vegetables, fresh or steamed, and shamelessly devour them.

Question: What did the mayonnaise say to the refrigerator?



Your salad dressings no longer need to sabotage an otherwise splendid medley of vegetables (and fruits) with calorie-dense saturated fats, *inflammatory* omega-6 seed oils, added sugars, or chemically derived flavorings. The following recipes feature *low fat and high fiber plant-based* formulas that will *nutritionally enhance* any salad. I am happy to be part of a culture that is stepping out of the dark and now looking towards 'adding nutrients' ...even in dressings.

Answer: "Close the door! I'm dressing."

"Grandma Minnie, what did you use for salad dressing when you grew up?"

"Vinegar and sugar!"

Dressing One – Sweet Vinegar Dressing

Starting with a vinegar (acid), then adding some sweet orange juice, this recipe will be one that you can continually create from, invoking endless variations on the theme: Sweet Vinegars (sugar-less!).

Stir the following ingredients in a glass jar.

1-2 Tablespoons Balsamic or specialty vinegars (acid)

1/2 cup Lemon or Orange juice (sugar-less sweetener)

1-2 Tablespoons nut butter /non-oil fat (tahini, cashew, almond, peanut)

Choose 1-3 savory herbs: basil, dill, oregano, rosemary, parsley, sage, thyme (or try an herb blend).

Note: Use a 1-3 drops of liquid Stevia (sugarless sweetener), if using lemon juice.



Grandma Minnie - 106 years

"Grandma Minnie, what kind of oils did you have when you were young?"

"We didn't have oils, like we have today. These are relatively new items in the culture. We had bacon fat. Oh, if you were rich back then, you'd have butter for your bread!"

Dressing Two – Sesame Ginger Dressing

This next dressing also starts with some acid (lemon juice) and a sweetener (dates). Don't miss out on trying this one on fresh salads or cooked vegetables (bok choy, asparagus, kale). Blend all ingredients in a food processor or blender adding more water if needed to achieve desired consistency. Next, drizzle away over your greens of all shapes and types.

2/3 cup water	1 teaspoon white miso (salt)	1 clove garlic, pressed
2 Tbsp lemon juice	1/2 cup raw tahini (non oil fat)	Pinch hot pepper flakes
2 dates (sweet)		1 Tablespoon finely grated ginger

Dressing Three – Savory, Creamy Dill Dressing

This rich-tasting, creamy dressing has no added oil. Its creaminess comes from tofu. Process for 1-2 minutes in a blender or food processor, until completely smooth. Stored in a covered container in the refrigerator, this dressing will keep for up to 1 week.

2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice	1 package firm SILKEN Tofu (12.3 ounces)	1 tsp garlic powder, or 2 fresh cloves
3 Tablespoons rice vinegar		½ -1 tsp dried dill weed
1 Tablespoon apple cider vinegar		¼ tsp salt

Optional herb blends: Italian Seasonings, Herbs de Province, Pizza Seasonings
Options to sweeten, if needed: Stevia or Dried Fruit

Dressing Notes for Vegetable Medleys (Hot or Cold)

No dressing: The more variety and color in a bowl of veggies (and fruits), the more probability that it will yield a bouquet of flavors that often needs little, if any dressing! (Grated carrots are a juicy addition.)

One item dressing: Last week I was invited to share a dinner salad with a friend. Her dressing was simply the drizzlings of a fresh squeezed lemon. Perrrfect touch to her vegetable medley.

Never would have thought of these as dressings:

Herb Blends	Citrus / Fruit juices	Vinegars: balsamic, apple cider, specialty vinegars
Vegetable Seasonings	Applesauce	Pureed cooked beans with water or broth, and spices
Tomato Sauce	Salsa	Blend a soup and use it as a dressing

Commercial dressings: When choosing a dressing, try to find one with NO added oil.

Remember that all oils are not naturally occurring substances. You won't find them growing on a tree, shrub, bush, or vine. They are concentrated items and are relatively new to the American diet within the last 60 years.

Seed oils in particular, contain high ratios of *inflammatory* Omega-6 fatty acids (soy, corn, peanut, sunflower, safflower oils) and are notoriously the cause of inflammation in our bodies on a cellular level.

Scientists are now observing that consumption of these oils, as over-delivered in the Standard American Diet (SAD), has provided direct connections with the incidence of numerous chronic disease conditions.

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