
Lettuce 101

Think beyond the basic salad.



4 KINDS OF LETTUCE



Bibb Lettuce

Green or red. Large leaves. Sweet flavor.

Iceberg

Crisp, with high water content. Mild flavor.

Romaine

Long crisp leaves. Mildly bitter flavor.

Loose-Leaf

Cut lettuce, sweet and/or bitter varieties.

Tasting Notes:

There are so many different kinds of lettuce, and they each have their unique signature taste and texture. There are four basic types of lettuce:

Iceberg: light green ball of crisp leaves with lots of water content and crunch. Not a lot of taste so we don't grow this variety. This is best used in combination with other veggies or greens, or can be broken up into a wedge for a wedge salad.

Romaine: longer leaves, crunchy but slightly bitter.

Cut lettuce (loose-leaf): Cut and packaged loosely, they often come in red or green colors.

Bibb Head Lettuce: Small, green, purple, or red heads with wide leaves, a soft texture, and mildly bitter flavor.

Prepping Lettuce:

Lettuce can be dirty, so submerge it in a bowl of cold water, then drain and spin dry. Refresh limp lettuce by plunging it into ice water, then rolling it into a wet roll of paper towel and placing in the fridge for a few hours.

For head and whole loose-leaf lettuce, you should trim them by cutting out the core. Cut out any brown or wilted stems. Tear into smaller pieces if desired.

How to Store Lettuce: **To store:** Romaine lettuce will keep for a week because of its tight head. But loose-leaf and **HIGHLY PERISHABLE! EAT IMMEDIATELY!**

Bibb lettuces should be the first item you eat from your box. You can wash lettuce up to 2 days before you use it. If you decide to wash it first, plunge the leaves into a salad spinner filled with water (or a colander set in a large pot). Swirl the greens to remove the grit.

If you have a salad spinner, be sure to spin the leaves dry (or dry them with a towel) before placing them loosely into a Green Bag or other small plastic bag lined with a dry paper towel to absorb the moisture. Switch out the paper towel every day. Be careful not to pack them in too tightly. You can also store the lettuce right in the salad spinner.

Substitutes:

Spinach, watercress, dandelion greens, radicchio, tatsoi, mizuna, kale, arugula

Best Uses:

Salad

Lettuce wrap

Soups

Bed for grilled fish/steak

Juiced

Rice or noodle bowls

Quiche

Pesto

Lettuce puree



Lettuces cannot grow in the hot temperatures of the summer, as the heat turns their flavor bitter. For this reason you'll only see lettuce in the spring/fall.

Pizza topping

Sandwich topping or BLTs

Braised

Tacos

LETTUCE

Asteraceae

Nutritional Snapshot

- Excellent source of vitamin A, K, C and potassium
- The darker the leaf, the more antioxidants it has
- Good source of folate which is a B vitamin that converts homocysteine into methionine which helps with protein synthesis in the body

Medicinal Uses

- Assists in controlling inflammation, promoting brain health and reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases
- Water-rich which helps to keep the body hydrated
- Red varieties are dense in anthocyanins linked to improving levels of HDL (good) and LDL (bad) cholesterol

Freezing Lettuce:

Not recommended.

DIY Salad Dressings:

If you're going to eat lettuce, you'll need a few homemade salad dressing basics at your fingertips. Always wait until you're ready to eat before dressing the salad. Here are some formulas to get your started.

Basic Vinaigrette:

1/2 c. extra virgin olive oil

3 T. red wine vinegar (or any other vinegar)

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 large shallot, cut into chunks

Combine all the ingredients together and whisk like mad!

For fun variations, play around with adding things like: dried herbs, minced fresh garlic, ginger, Dijon mustard, honey, Parmesan, sour cream or yogurt, seeds, salsa or chutney, dried fruit, pears/apples/peaches, horseradish, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, minced onion.

Ranch Dressing:

1 c. mayonnaise

1 c. buttermilk

1/4 c. buttermilk powder (the secret magic ingredient, found in baking section)

salt and black pepper

1/4 c. chopped fresh chives or parsley

Put the mayo, buttermilk, and buttermilk powder in a medium jar with tight fitting lid. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Add the herbs and shake the daylights out of it! Use immediately or refrigerate for a few days.

Suggested Recipes:

Honey Lemon Vinaigrette on Peach Cucumber

Salad *Adapted from www.RockRecipes.com*

This vinaigrette is great with salads containing summer fruits. Try subbing in strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, or plums.

Ingredients:

For the vinaigrette

3 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

1/2 tsp finely minced lemon zest

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

pinch salt and pepper to season

1 tsp honey

1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme or other fresh herbs

For the salad

Cut loose-leaf lettuce

diced cucumber

slices fresh peach

crisp cooked smoked bacon chopped

Directions:

Whisk together all of the ingredients for the vinaigrette or shake together well in a covered mason jar.

Pour over the assembled salad ingredients, toss and serve immediately.

Lettuce Puree Spread

from www.NativeOfferingFarm.com

This is great as a sandwich spread or for crostini or bruschetta. It makes a good burger or dog relish too.

Ingredients:

8 c. lettuce leaves, washed and dried

1 garlic clove, coarsely chopped

1 small hot pepper, seeded and chopped, or 1/4 t crushed red pepper flakes, or a dash or two hot pepper sauce, optional

3 T extra-virgin olive oil

1 T vinegar (balsamic, white wine, sherry, red wine)

salt and pepper

Directions:

Put the lettuce leaves in a food processor and coarsely chop. Add the garlic and hot pepper and process until the lettuce is finely chopped. Add the olive oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper and process until a puréed consistency is achieved. Or process to your preferred consistency—a textured consistency is good, too. Taste, and add more olive oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, if you think it's necessary.

Stir Fried Romaine Lettuce

from [Healthy World Cuisine](#)

Ingredients:

1 T. canola oil

1 t. ginger, minced

garlic - 3 cloves minced finely

2 bunches romaine lettuce, cut into about 2 inch segments

salt and pepper - to taste

1/2 teaspoon sugar (optional)

1 T. rice wine (or cooking sherry)

1 t. sesame oil

1/2 t. dried chili flakes - (optional)

Directions:

In a wok or frying pan add your canola oil, ginger and garlic and fry about 1 minute until aromatic.

Add the cut and dried romaine lettuce, salt and white pepper , sugar (optional), rice wine and toss quickly. Immediately remove from heat: It is very important that you remove the lettuce from heat while the romaine is just starting to wilt as the heat from the pan will continue to cook the greens. Drizzle over sesame oil and dried chili flakes if desired and toss.

Simple Grilled Romaine Salad

from Amanda Paa

Ingredients:

2 heads of fresh and firm romaine lettuce, cut vertically (you will have 4 halves)

3 tablespoons olive oil

kosher salt, divided

black pepper

one medium lemon, cut in half

fresh parmesan cheese

Directions:

Make sure grates of grill are clean and turn to medium high.

Brush lettuce halves liberally with 1½ tablespoons olive oil, cut side and back side. Then sprinkle each halve with some salt.

Grill for 3 minutes, cut side down, pressing with your tongs to make sure the lettuce gets a good sear. Flip and grill for one or 2 more minutes.

Remove from grill. Sprinkle with more salt and pepper, drizzle with remaining olive oil. Squeeze fresh lemon juice over each half. Top with a tablespoon of parmesan on each halve.

Asian Chicken Lettuce Wraps

Adapted from JoyFoodSunshine.com

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground chicken

1 T peanut oil

½ onion, minced

1 cup red or green pepper, diced

1 8 oz can water chestnuts, drained and minced

For the Sauce:

3 T soy sauce

3 T hoisin sauce

1 T sesame oil

1 T rice vinegar

1 T peanut butter

1 T honey

2 tsp sweet chili sauce

½ tsp garlic powder

¼ tsp powdered ginger

To serve

¼ cup peanuts, crushed.

Bibb lettuce leaves

Directions:

Whisk together sauce ingredients until well combined. If you use a firmer peanut butter you may need to microwave the mixture for 30-60 seconds in order to melt it and ensure everything is well-mixed.

Heat 2 T peanut oil in a frying pan. Once hot, add ground chicken. Cook until some pieces are starting to brown. Add onion and cook for 5 minutes or until the onion is becoming translucent. Add the peppers and water chestnuts and cook about 5 minutes or until peppers are becoming soft. Add sauce and simmer on low heat until the chicken and veggies are evenly coated and everything is heated through.

Serve in lettuce leaves, on top of your favorite Asian salad, or over noodles or rice!