

HEALTHY CHOICES

May 2023

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Serving: Cherokee County

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Try your hand at delicious homemade salad dressings. Yields about 1 cup each.

Classic Ranch Salad Dressing

1/3 cup buttermilk

1/3 cup mayonnaise

2 tablespoons chopped parsley

2 tablespoons chives

1 teaspoon dried dill weed

1/4 teaspoon each salt, black pepper, and garlic powder

Whisk all ingredients together. Refrigerate

Classic Vinaigrette Salad Dressing

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper to taste

1/3 cup olive oil

Whisk all ingredients together. Refrigerate

Honey Mustard Salad Dressing

2 tablespoons each of honey, Dijon mustard, white vinegar

1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper to taste

1/4 cup olive oil

Whisk all ingredients together. Refrigerate



Spring is here and Summer is on the way! With the warmer weather slowly making its way to Kansas, one of my favorite easy meals is a salad!

If you are wanting to keep the cost down and get great flavor, you can shop for seasonal produce to toss in your salads!

Let's create a salad in just 7 easy steps:

1. Choose your base. Your base can be lettuce, salad greens, whole wheat pasta or noodles, brown rice, potatoes or whole grains.

2. Choose one protein. What protein sources do you have left over from other gatherings? Do you have an overwhelming amount of Turkey or Ham left over? Other protein sources could be cooked beans, tofu, ground beef, chicken, fish, pork, hard-boiled eggs, and canned meats and fish.

3. Add in Vegetables. For fresh or Steamed vegetables, aim to incorporate 2 cups worth. For canned vegetables, 1 (15 oz.) can will get the job done! Try using some seasonal vegetables! Some spring and summer salad favorites of mine are all the summer squash and tomatoes!

4. Choose one or more fruits. This step is optional. Some fruits that pair nicely with spring and summer salads could be Strawberries, Blueberries, or Oranges.

5. Choose one or more flavors. This is the step where you get to add in whatever spices and herbs that sounds good to you! Some flavors that you might consider are salt, pepper, oregano, basil, cumin, thyme, rosemary, and sage.

6. Choose one dressing. This step is optional. If desired and/or as necessary, use a fat-free or low-fat dressing to help hold the salad ingredients together, add flavor, and keep the salad from being too dry.

7. Choose one or more toppings. This step is optional. If you want to just add a little extra touch to your salad feel free to add toppings! Some toppings to consider are slivered almonds, chopped walnuts or pecans, grated parmesan, cheddar, or mozzarella cheese.



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May is Mental Health Awareness Month! According to the Mental Health America (MHA) report entitled "The State of Mental Health in America 2023," Kansas is ranked last out of all fifty states and the District of Columbia on how well the state handles mental health needs. This is one of the shocking statistics that sheds light on the state of mental health in our state and why the K-State Research and Extension Stress and Resiliency Team is encouraging others to be proactive in honoring Mental Health Awareness Month.

What could being proactive this month look like? To start, you can check out the resources available from MHA. On their website, they offer two specific worksheet resources with steps you can take to make changes to improve your mental health by:

Shaping your environment. Your home environment can affect your mental health. Take time to think about what you like and dislike about your space. What can you do to improve it? Some suggestions from MHA include starting small, getting rid of unneeded items, personalizing your space, and making your bedroom sleep-friendly.

Opening your mind to the outdoors. According to MHA, "spending time in nature is linked to many positive mental health outcomes, including improved focus, lower stress, and better mood."

These resources (as well as others) can be found online at www.mhanational.org/may. They also offer a free mental health test which can be taken online at www.mhascreening.org.

This article was adapted from an article originally written by the K-State Research and Extension Stress and Resiliency Team. For more information, please contact me at clarawicoff@ksu.edu or 620-365-2242. If you or someone you know is in crisis or seeking emotional support, call or text 988 to connect with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You can also chat with them online at 988lifeline.org. You can also text HOME to 741741 to reach a volunteer Crisis Counselor with the Crisis Text Line.

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