

## Wimpy salad be gone. When snow flies, salad gets substantial. - Chopped Kale and Lentil Winter Salad -

By: *Melissa d'Arabian*      *February 23, 2015*

Eating a salad a day is a habit I adopted a while back to help me automate the eating of raw veggies. Either my lunch or my dinner usually is built around some sort of salad. And I try to stay true to the spirit of healthier eating when I do so. Meaning fried chicken tenders propped on top of a bed of greens doesn't quite cut it.

Of course, salads are easy in summer. We celebrate sun-ripened tomatoes in a caprese salad, or happily pluck juicy strawberries from the field to toss with a bunch of peppery greens. But winter salad? I say enthusiastically: Yes! Grab some hearty, dark leafy greens and let the delicious, healthy eating begin. Unlike their lighter summer counterparts, winter salads tend to be more substantial and filling.

One of my favorite winter salads that manages to feel both energizing and comforting at the same time is this chopped kale and lentil salad. The star is a handy box of steamed precooked lentils. Most grocers carry these alongside the packaged produce. Keep a box in the refrigerator and you'll find a million ways to use those lentils. Add a handful to soups, pasta or quinoa dishes, tuck some into an egg white omelet topped with salsa, or saute some up with brown rice and curry paste.

Looking to save a little cash? It's easy to boil up your own lentils (dry lentils are cheaper). The easiest way to cook dry green lentils is to boil them in ample salted water until al dente, about 12 to 15 minutes. Either way, lentils are a nutritional bargain. Each cup of lentils is packed with folate, 16 grams of fiber and 18 grams of protein.

For this salad, use any hearty green. Kale is ubiquitous this time of year, and it's pretty darn cheap. Toasted walnuts add a nice texture and savory flavor (plus some omega fatty acids), and quick-pickled shallots bring tang. The black truffle salt is my own little treat, so consider it completely optional (though it's completely delicious).

### **CHOPPED KALE AND LENTIL WINTER SALAD**

*Start to finish: 25 minutes      Servings: 6 (as a main)*

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1 large bunch of kale, washed, dried, de-stemmed and chopped (about 4 cups)

2 cups cooked green lentils

3/4 cups walnuts, toasted and roughly chopped

2 small shallots, thinly sliced

2 tablespoons white or apple cider vinegar



1/2 cup boiling water

Kosher salt

1 pear, cored and diced

For the dressing:

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

3 tablespoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

2 tablespoons water

2 tablespoons olive oil

Ground black pepper

1/4 teaspoon black truffle salt (optional)

In a large salad bowl, combine the kale, lentils and walnuts.

Place the shallots in a small bowl, then pour the vinegar and boiling water over them. Add a pinch of salt, then stir and set aside to pickle for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, in another small bowl prepare the dressing. Whisk together the mustard, lemon juice, vinegar and water. Drizzle in the olive and whisk until emulsified. Add pepper and black truffle salt, if using.

Once the shallots have pickled for 5 minutes, add the diced pear, toss for a few seconds, then drain, discarding the liquid. Use paper towels to blot the shallots and pear dry, then add them to the salad bowl. Pour the dressing over the salad, then toss to coat. Drizzle on more olive oil if desired before serving.

Nutrition information per serving: 260 calories; 130 calories from fat (50 percent of total calories); 15 g fat (1.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 26 g carbohydrate; 9 g fiber; 6 g sugar; 10 g protein; 240 mg sodium.

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