



*Recipes for
Sharing –
Dressings that
Do Double Duty*

MEALS À LA MO





Keys to Quick and Healthy Meal Prep

- Use the *Best Quality Ingredients* – ‘nuf said!
- ***Mise en Place!*** If you watch any cooking shows, you’ve heard this phrase. It simply means “Everything in its Place.” Gathering all your ingredients, clean utensils, and equipment before you start cooking saves time and frustration! It’s a great way to focus your mind only on your cooking.

Think of it as “Mindfulness for Your Meal Prep!”

Toasted Sesame-Soy Dressing



Ingredients

¾ cup extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup rice vinegar
2 tsp toasted sesame oil
2 tsp low-sodium soy sauce or tamari
1 tsp honey
2 cloves garlic (crushed)
½ inch fresh ginger, grated
1 scallion, chopped
1 tbl sesame seeds (lightly toasted)

Preparation

In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, sesame oil, and soy sauce. Continue whisking and add honey, garlic, and ginger. Stir in scallion and sesame seeds.

Want to add a protein? Shredded roast chicken, stir-fried shrimp, or glazed tofu are all good choices.

This is the perfect dressing for a beautiful salad of mixed cabbages (red, green, savoy, Napa); shredded carrots, julienned bell pepper, toasted almonds or cashews, and crisp wonton “chips”

Double Duty:
This dressing makes a great dip for steamed or sautéed gyoza!



Good Quality Oils – Tips

Good quality oils, such as Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) or Avocado Oil, contain healthy essential fats.

- ***I like organic, cold pressed EVOO, avocado oil, or walnut oil.***
- ***No two olive oils taste alike – you’ll find nutty, peppery, mild, or even grassy (great with many pasta dishes). The one you choose will change the taste of your dressings and dipping sauces.***
- ***Store cooking oils in dark or opaque bottles – they don’t like light! And, unlike Balsamic Vinegar, olive oils do NOT benefit from age.***

Classic Vinaigrette – Citrus and Honey



Ingredients

¾ cup extra virgin olive oil

¼ cup citrus juice (I like a mixture of
Meyer lemon and blood orange)

1 Tbl honey

Freshly ground pepper

2 Tbl Dijon mustard

Preparation

This dressing is easy to make by simply adding all ingredients to a jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake, Shake, SHAKE! Perfect for a roasted beet salad with lightly toasted walnuts

and goat cheese on a bed of beautiful mixed baby greens. It's also a perfect base for a healthy pan-seared or grilled salmon filet!



Double Duty: Try this dressing on fresh, grilled asparagus topped with chopped, toasted hazelnuts!



What Makes a Classic?

- *The “classic” ratio for a vinaigrette is 3 parts oil to 1 part acid.*
- *Too much oil will make your dressing too heavy (some people even prefer a 2:1 ratio.)*
- *Too much acid will turn your salad sour.*
- *Maybe it’s the name (vinaigrette is the diminutive of the French word *vinaigre*, which means vinegar), but vinaigrettes don’t have to depend on vinegar for their tangy bite – lemon or other citrus juice works just as well.*

To Whisk, Shake, or Blend – that is the question...

- *We all know that oil and water don’t mix – well neither do oil and vinegar/juice... unless they have some help.*
- *When you shake, whisk, or blend your dressing, the oil breaks into small droplets that can be coated by an emulsifier (mustard, egg, mayo, etc.). Now it will play well with the liquid ingredients.*
- *Skip this step and you’ll find an oil slick covering your beautiful greens and a pool of vinegar or lemon juice at the bottom of your salad bowl.*



Ooh Honey, Honey!

Variety is key in choosing a honey to flavor your dressings, just as it is with olive oils.

Even your favorite honey variety can taste different season to season, depending on the amount of rain and sunlight that affect the flowers and plants that attract honey bees.

The quality of the honey makes a difference! Check out Local Bee Keepers and Farmers Markets. Stay away from highly processed honeys. High temperatures in processing can destroy natural nutrients, and some big producers add corn syrup and chemicals to extend shelf life (read the label).

Clover Honey has long been a go-to for cooking and baking with its mild, flowery flavor. But in recent years, it's become easier to find lots of different varieties. I like Blackberry Honey – it's deep, rich, and fruity, and Acacia Honey – the classic, sweet honey in Pooh's Honey Pot– but take time to try several honey varieties and choose the ones you like best. Consider having a “Honey-Tasting” party.

Greek Salad Dressing



Ingredients

2 Tbl lemon juice

6 Tbl extra virgin olive oil

1 clove garlic, crushed

1 tsp dried oregano

¼ tsp salt or nutritional yeast

Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation

In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice and olive oil. Add garlic, oregano, salt, and pepper and continue whisking. Serve over a fresh Greek Salad of tomatoes, cucumbers, red onion, olives, and feta cheese.

This dressing is perfect for marinating roast chicken to accompany the salad.

Double Duty:

So good as a marinade for Roasted Mediterranean Veggies. Simply serve with some hearty whole-grain bread hot from the oven! Like it creamy as a dip for crudites? Add some Greek Yogurt and a dash or two of cumin and coriander.





Some Fresh Thoughts on Freshly Ground Pepper...

Peppercorns are the most widely traded spice in the world!

Got a can of pre-ground pepper in your spice cabinet? Toss it, please! Whole peppercorns protect the rich flavor and nutritional benefits of their spicy oils in the center of the peppercorn. Pre-ground pepper loses its flavor as it oxidizes, becoming gritty, woody, and flavorless.

No need to spend extra money for “gourmet” or specialty peppercorns, but do invest in a good pepper mill/grinder.

Black, green, and white peppercorns all come from the same flowering vine. Black is most pungent. Green is underripe and typically comes in brine or vinegar. White is simply the black peppercorn with the outer layer removed, making it less fiery and more earthy. Pink peppercorns aren't peppercorns at all. They are berries from a South American shrub. They are delicate, so don't try to grind them in a pepper mill (it will be a mess). Simply crush them to release their fruity flavor (great with fish).

Soy Glaze and Wasabi Aioli



For Soy Glaze:

- ½ cup water
- 2TBL rice vinegar
- 3 Tbl low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 TBL brown sugar
- 2 Tbl fresh squeezed orange juice
- 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 Tbl sweet chili sauce
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil

Preparation

1. In a small saucepan, combine all the ingredients for glaze and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from stove and set aside.
2. In small bowl, whisk mayonnaise, crushed garlic, and wasabi powder.
3. Serve with seared ahi and cabbage salad. Spread glaze on plate. Drizzle aioli in lines. Run chopstick through to create design.

For Wasabi Aioli:

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- ½ tsp wasabi powder

Double Duty: The Soy Glaze can be reheated with ½ cup peanut butter to serve with Sesame Noodles. Dilute with water or stock to preferred consistency.





Use Your Noodle

Noodles are comfort food, to be sure. Here, a few quick notes on noodles for your Sesame Noodle Salad:

*Yes, you can use **Capellini** (Angel Hair Pasta) – it holds up well to peanut sauces. I recommend whole wheat pasta.*

***Maifun noodles** are sometimes called rice vermicelli. These delicate rice noodles cook in an instant, so follow package directions carefully. They come in white or brown rice.*

***Lo mein noodles** are made from wheat and egg. They resemble spaghetti noodles and have a nice texture.*

***Soba noodles**, made from buckwheat, bring an earthy, nutty, rich flavor to dishes. I'm a big fan of buckwheat – not really wheat at all, but a grain or pseudocereal (similar to quinoa) that is packed with minerals and antioxidants—provides lots of fiber and is gluten free.*

***Udon noodles** are thick, chewy, and their neutral flavor makes them great to take on the flavor of spices and sauces.*

Caprese Salad – An Italian Classic!



Ingredients

Fresh Tomatoes
Fresh Basil
Fresh Mozzarella
Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Aged Balsamic Vinegar
Salt and
Freshly Ground Pepper to Taste

Preparation

1. There's nothing simpler than a Fresh Caprese Salad. Slice your Tomatoes and Mozzarella; tear off Fresh Basil Leaves, layer and sprinkle with EVOO, Balsamic Vinegar and Salt and Freshly Ground Pepper to taste. **Fresh** is the key to making this salad great.



Double Duty:

The taste of Caprese Salad folded between good bread and grilled is out of this world. Mangia!

Leftover Mediterranean Veggies also make a fantastic panini filling. Just sayin'...



The Perfect Panini

Many people think of bread – good bread – as the ultimate comfort food. Really good breads can be delicious and healthy, too. But, that’s another topic for another time. Let’s talk about the Perfect Panini Bread...

First, consider what you’ll be putting in/on your panini. Will it be packed with drier meats or with juicy veggies (think tomatoes) or pesto?

Most multigrain and Artisan breads will hold up well to drier ingredients.

When your filling will be moist, lean toward sturdier, or denser, breads such as Ciabatta, Focaccia, and thick-cut Sourdough – they can stand up to the heat and the juice.

Stay away from heavily processed, pre-sliced breads – unless you want a soggy mess to clean up. Of course, I’d advise you stay away from these processed breads all the time – they don’t offer much nutritional value or flavor, and that’s what good bread is all about.



Next Month...

*Easy Entertaining (or Simply a
Fantastic Family Meal) Inspired by
Regional Italian and Greek Favorites!*

The Perfect Polenta Party

A Guide to Greek Meze

Sharing good food with wonderful friends
is a great joy.

Let me know if you try any of these
recipes – and share your own recipes and
creative cooking tips for favorites that
warm your heart and home.

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