

Ideation: Stepping outside the salad bowl

Six chefs take a fresh look at ingredients and presentation



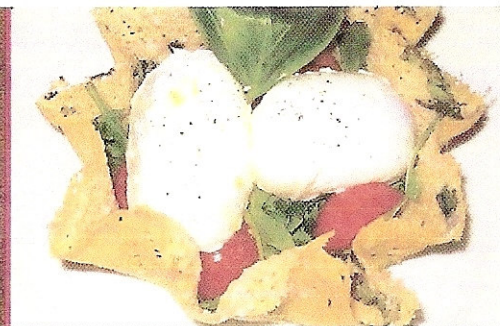
Baja-style salad rolls

The arrival of spring inspired Adam Navidi to go on a roll. "The delicate, garden-fresh romaine and cilantro contrast with the mighty Caesar dressing infused with jalapeños," says the Orange County, California chef. Hass avocados, tomatoes and red onion round out the rolls, which often star at Navidi's catered events.



The Pains house salad

Oceanside guests dining at The Palms in Miami Beach favor the signature house salad for a light lunch—a lively mix of mesclun, veggies and three types of berries. When creating a salad, executive chef Gerd Richter keeps an eye on health, often incorporating Floribbean flavors and tropical accents.



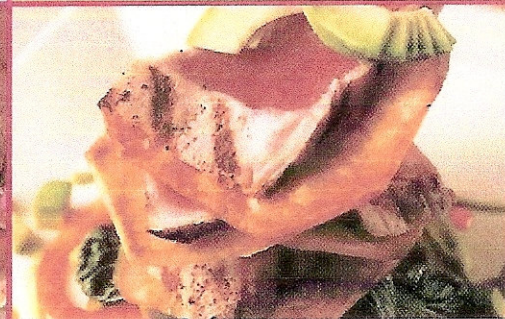
Caprese salad

Alessandro Passante, co-owner of Naima in New York City, hails from the Isle of Capri and his modern Italian menu is peppered with family recipes. For this traditional antipasto, the kitchen shapes a salad bowl from Parmigiano-Reggiano and fills it with arugula, tomatoes and bufala mozzarella. Olive oil is drizzled over all.



Nectarine and venison summer salad

Chef Robbie Lewis of Bacar in San Francisco holds "Outstanding in the Field" events, where dinner is set on a table "between the soil and the sky." This seasonal salad highlights fresh California nectarines, Belgian endive, toasted pistachios and grilled loin of Cervena venison, flavored with rosemary-honey vinaigrette.



Tuna tataki with avocado dressing

Vertical composition makes this salad stand above the crowd at Sushi Samba, the 7-location Japanese-Latin fusion concept. A base of tatsoi, hearts of palm, bell peppers and avocado is followed by boniato chips, yuzu-marinated yellowfin tuna, avocado slices and a citrusy avocado dressing.



Spago BLT salad

Eric Klein, executive chef at Spago in Las Vegas, came up with the idea of a BLT for the baby iceberg lettuce he sources from a California farmer. "The classic flavors of bacon, lettuce and tomato work so well in a salad," he says. Heirloom cherry tomatoes and a pepperoncini vinaigrette enriched with sour cream pump it up.

Where the greens are going

ENTREE SALADS ARE ONE OF THE MOST RAPIDLY GROWING menu categories. The item currently appears at 72 percent of U.S. restaurants tracked by Datassential MenuTrends DIRECT, which collects information from 5,700 menus. Chicken is the number one protein to top a bed of greens (87 percent), with turkey a distant second (28 percent). Tuna, bacon and shrimp follow closely behind.

