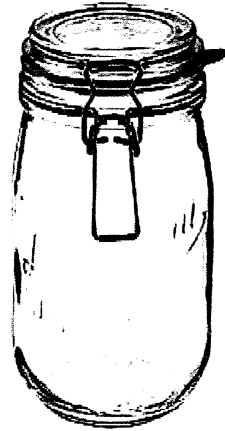


What's In Your Jar?

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2017 KAFCE Lesson

Leaders Guide & Members Handout.

Educational Goals:

- Gain ideas on planning and preparing nutritional meals in advance.
- Learn which foods adapt well to jar salads.
- Learn how to prepare ingredients and pack a jar salad.
- Review food preparation, food safety, and food storage methods.

Community Action:

- Have members bring their favorite salad recipes and talk about how it could be adapted to a jar salad.
- Plan a fun workshop for working parents and others who frequently have to pack a lunch.
- Have a scavenger hunt at the local super-market for foods that are colorful, have soft or crunchy textures, and are interesting.
- Have a display at a health fair or local fair promoting nutritious, economical and convenient jar salads.

Have you ever played the game where you try to guess how many jelly beans are in a jar? It turns out that there are about as many fun uses for a canning jar as there were candies inside. These wonderful jars, originally used for preserving home grown vegetables and fruits, have been re-purposed to do everything from storing dried beans and grains, to serving as the perfect gift container in which the ingredients for cakes, breads, soups and other treats can be layered inside. Oatmeal blends, fruit smoothies . . . so many things can be easily packed, stored, and toted in a canning jar.

You may have heard of the latest trend, packing **fresh salads in a jar**. Not only are these salads colorful, flavorful, and nutritious, but they make it easier to plan meals ahead of time, and cleaning the glass jar is a snap! The only problem you will have is deciding what salad concoction is your favorite. Just guess how many combinations of healthy foods we can include in our **"Salad in a Jar!"**

Grab a wide-mouthed jar!

Any canning jar can be used, but wide-mouthed jars are the easiest for layering the salad into the jars and shaking them out later. Pint-sized jars are great for individual side salads of mostly greens with a few "extra" salad toppings. Use quart-sized jars for meal-size dinner salads that have extra veggies and salad goodies. Two-quart jars (or larger) will hold multiple servings. Just make sure your jar is clean and dry.

Fill Your Jar – Bottoms Up!!

Ideally, your salad will be a healthy mix of colors, textures, and flavors. The secret to the perfect jar salad is to put things in the jar in the correct order.

The bottom is where you want to place the dressing and other wet or heavy ingredients. Start with one to three tablespoons of your favorite homemade or purchased salad dressing. Note that the vinaigrette dressings are usually more stable than creamy style dressings over longer storage periods.

Depending on which ingredients you want closest to your dressing, pack in layers of veggies and/or protein foods. Chunky vegetables like chopped carrots, sweet peppers, cauliflower, cucumbers, and celery add color, crunch, and interest to your salad. Protein foods include canned beans, cooked whole grains, nuts, and chopped meats. These food layers act as moisture barriers to keep the more delicate greens from wilting.

A layer of softer foods such as corn, peas, strawberries, blueberries, or crumbled cheese can be added in at this point.

The top part of the jar is where you want your lettuce, spinach, kale, and other salad greens. Pack the greens tightly to help them stay fresh.

Lastly, you could add a small amount of seeds, nuts, crumbled bacon, or other salad toppings. These are the fixings you want to stay dry until just before you eat the salad. Now, screw the lid on tightly and refrigerate until you are ready to enjoy!!



Serving Your Jar Salad

When ready to eat, just unscrew the lid, turn your canning jar over and shake the salad into a bowl. Enjoy feasting on your fresh healthy lunch!

Salad Jar Suggestions . . .

With so many fresh, cooked, dried, and even frozen food options, you can have a new salad combination every day. For the best success:

- Drain fresh, cooked, and canned foods well to eliminate excess moisture. Too much moisture causes the greens to get soggy.
- Gather your ingredients and make enough jar salads for the week ahead.
- Salad dressings can be omitted from the jar; just add when you are ready to eat.
- Foods that shouldn't touch the dressing go higher in the jar; foods that brown after cutting go next to the dressing.
- The salad does not have to have leafy greens, try a pasta or fruit salad.
- Cheese, proteins, soft fruits and some vegetables may do better when added in to the top of the jar the morning you plan to eat your salad.
- This is a convenient way to use up leftovers.

Sample Ingredient List:

Salad greens: *spinach, romaine lettuce, arugula, kale, leaf lettuce, chard, alfalfa sprouts*

Fresh vegetables: *avocado, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, onion, cherry tomatoes, radishes, snap peas, sweet peppers, shredded zucchini or zucchini noodles*

Frozen vegetables: *corn, peas, peg corn*

Cooked + cooled whole grains: *quinoa, pastas, farro, couscous*

Canned beans: *black, kidney, garbanzo*

Soft foods: *apple chunks, avocado, blueberries, mandarin oranges, pears, pineapple, strawberries, grated cheeses, crumble feta, blue cheese*

Dried foods: *cranberries, mango, papaya, raisins*

Protein foods: *beans, chickpeas, chicken, roast beef, shrimp, tuna, turkey, almonds, walnuts, nuts*

Salad toppings: *ramen noodles, croutons, nuts, sunflower seeds, bacon bits, edible flowers*

What Will You Put In Your Jar?

You really don't need a recipe, but I have included a few to get you started. Be creative and have fun!

Geeky Greek Salad (serves one)

2 - 3 T. Spicy Lemon Vinaigrette (below)
1/2 cup garbanzo beans
1/2 cup grape tomato halves
1/3 cup cucumber slices
2 T. chopped red onion
2 T. chopped scallions
2 t. black olive slices
3 - 4 T. feta cheese crumbled

Place vinaigrette in bottom of a pint-size jar; add garbanzo beans, then layers of tomatoes, cucumbers, red onions, scallions, olives and feta. Pack ingredients well, adding more to the top of the jar, if needed. Seal and refrigerate.

Spicy Lemon Vinaigrette:

2 T. fresh lemon juice
Zest of 1 lemon
1/4 - 1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes
3 T. olive oil

Whisk all ingredients together and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Spinach, Blueberries and Corn Salad

3 - 4 T. Spicy Lemon Vinaigrette
1/4 cup diced red onion
1 cup cucumber slices
1 cup frozen corn, thawed
1 cup fresh blueberries
1 - 2 cups baby spinach

Place dressing in the bottom of a wide-mouth quart jar; top with red onion, cucumbers, corn, blueberries and spinach, in that order. Pack tightly. Seal and refrigerate until needed. Serves 2.

Chicken & Spinach Salad Jars

8 ounces cooked chicken breast, chopped
2 cups red grapes, halved
1/3 cup walnuts, roughly chopped
1/3 cup shaved Asiago cheese
4 cups (or more) baby spinach, roughly torn
2 T. sunflower seeds

For the Mustard-Thyme Vinaigrette:

5 teaspoons red wine vinegar
5 teaspoons country Dijon mustard
3/4 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Mustard-Thyme Vinaigrette In small bowl, whisk together vinegar, mustard, thyme, salt and pepper. While whisking, add in oil till well-blended.

Divide vinaigrette equally among 4 pint-sized or 2 quart-sized canning jars. Divide chicken over dressing. Layer in remaining ingredients, ending with sunflower seeds, tightly pack spinach to fill jar. Top with lids and refrigerate up to 4 days. To serve, pour onto plate or bowl, stir and enjoy. Yield: 4 jars

Spinach and Avocado Salad

Add your favorite vinaigrette dressing to bottom of the jar, then fill jar in this order: avocado slices, baby tomatoes, cucumber slices, and crumbled goat cheese. Pack in spinach and top with dried cranberries for sweetness.

Zucchini "Pasta" Salad

Get your hands on a spiralizer and make noodles out of raw zucchini for this salad. Try a creamy dressing this time adding it to the jar first, then the zucchini noodles. Finish filling with yellow peppers, peas, tomatoes, black olives and feta cheese. Add fresh greens on top if desired.

More Salad in a Jar Recipes:

Simple Mason Jar Salad

Dressing Ingredients:

3 T. raw almond butter
1 T. unseasoned rice wine vinegar
1/8 tsp. salt
1 T. maple syrup
2 t. toasted sesame oil

3 cups mixed greens
1 stalk celery, diced
2-3 radishes, thinly sliced
1/4 green apple, thinly sliced and soaked in salted water to prevent browning
1/3 cup walnuts

For the Dressing: Combine all ingredients in a tightly sealed container and shake until emulsified.

For the Salad:

Pour 2 T. of dressing in the bottom of a jar. Working from the bottom up, layer the apples, radishes, celery, and walnuts. Pack in the greens and seal the jar. Refrigerate until ready to eat. Keeps 3-4 days. When ready to eat, pour the contents of the jar into a large bowl. If the dressing has thickened up and will not easily pour out of the jar, add a tablespoon of warm water, seal the jar, and shake to thin out the dressing before adding to the salad. Toss the salad with the dressing and enjoy!



Asian Greens Salad

3 -4 T. Honey Lime Vinaigrette (below)
1/2 sweet red bell pepper, diced
2 - 3 cups baby spinach or baby kale
1 - 2 T. chopped scallions
1/2 cup alfalfa sprouts
1/2 cup edamame
1/4 cup crushed ramen noodles, (omit spice packet)

Place vinaigrette in bottom of wide-mouthed quart jar; add remaining ingredients in order listed, topping the jar with the ramen noodles. Seal jar tightly and refrigerate until ready to serve. To serve, open jar and pour into serving bowl, toss to combine dressing with all ingredients. Serves 1.

Honey Lime Vinaigrette

3 T. olive oil
1 T. honey
Zest of 1 lime
1 T. fresh lime juice

Whisk all ingredients together and season to taste with salt and pepper.

References and Recipes:

The Hearth Fire Series #1, "Someone's in the Kitchen . . . Cooking for One or Two"

Blogs:

"Perfect Salad in a Jar", thekitchen.com

"18 Healthy Mason Jar Salads", buzzfeed.com

"Canning Jar Salads", by Chef Alli, [Kansas Living](http://KansasLivingmagazine.com) magazine, (Kansas Farm Bureau), Spring 2016, Vol. 26, No. 3, pgs 9-11

More ideas in the book, *Mason Jar Salads and More, 50 Layered Lunches to Grab & Go;*
by Julia Mirabella

Lesson reviewed by Anna Schremmer, Phillips-Rooks Extension District FACS agent