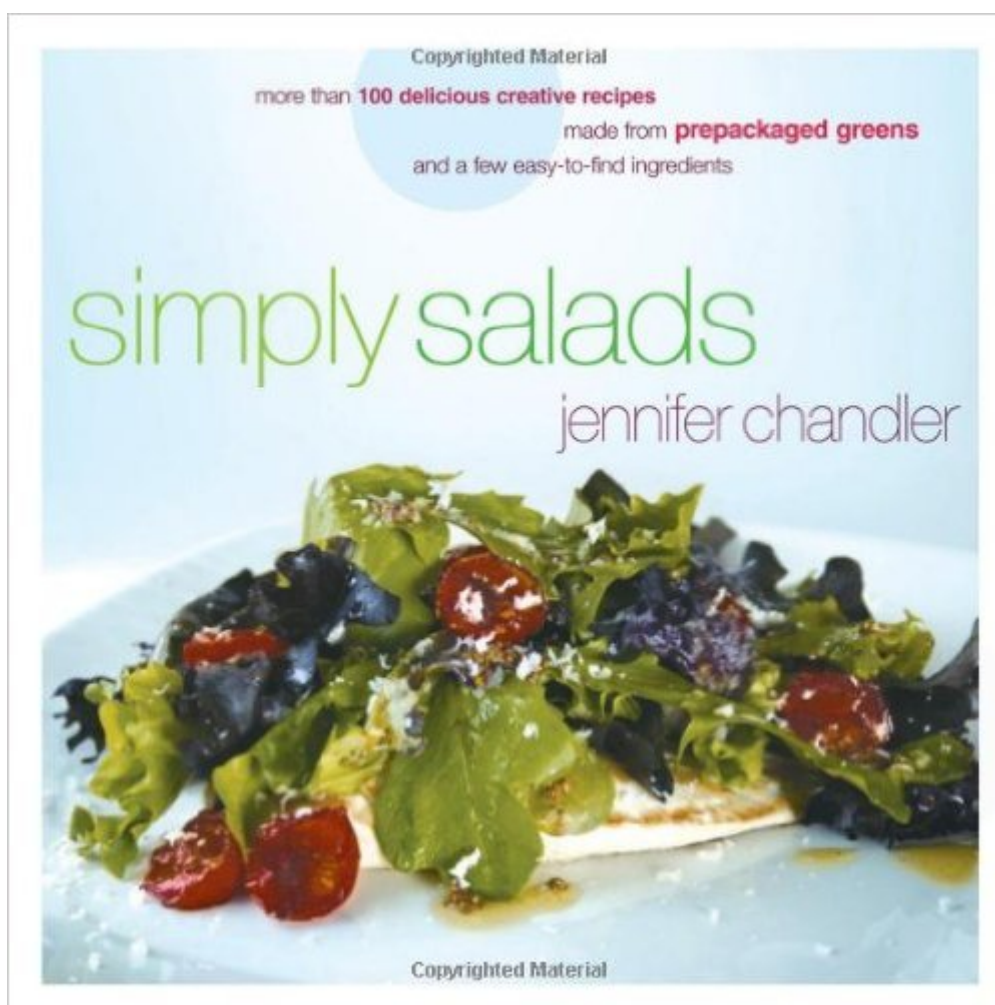


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# Simply Salads: More Than 100 Delicious Creative Recipes Made From Prepackaged Greens And A Few Easy-to-Find Ingredients



## Synopsis

From bag to table, healthy salads have never been easier. You've always known that eating green could be healthy, and now it's easier than ever. With the abundance of supermarket selections of prepackaged greens, you can create a restaurant-style salad along with a fabulous dressing in your own kitchen. Before bagged blends, a salad with four different types of lettuces was unheard of. Now there are more than fifty different combinations of lettuces, packaged in just the right size, from which to choose. Think beyond iceberg and romaine. The more than one hundred salads and dressings in *Simply Salads* are colorful, gourmet, and surprisingly simple to prepare. Whether you're looking for the perfect complement to a main dish or you want a salad that can stand as an entrée, you'll find the perfect salad, including such winners as: Asian Salad with Ginger Dressing and Wasabi Peas (page 4) Jalapeño Chicken Salad with Avocado Dressing (page 40) Crawfish Salad with Spicy Cajun Remoulade (page 106) Cheese Tortellini Salad with Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette (page 172) Memphis Mustard Cole Slaw (page 223)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I purchased this cookbook based on the other reviews on ; it is absolutely worth it! There are at least 100 recipes and then if you use mix and match variations you could easily have 100 more. Each recipe comes with a color photo as well as a dressing suggestion. Ms. Chandler offers homemade dressing recipes but you could buy a bottled version if you don't want to make your own. But they are so simple to make and quite a bit healthier (no added preservatives, MSG, etc) that you'll find

your self just making dressing from now on. Many of the salads are complete meals just by adding a meat (she has chapters devoted to chicken, beef, seafood and pork) plus vegetarian options by adding beans, chickpeas, fruit etc. There's a great 7 layer salad that is to die for. Overall a great cookbook, nice photos, great recipes. Well worth it. Also, a great gift for someone trying to lead a healthier lifestyle by eating and using truly fresh ingredients.

'Simply Salads' by relative newcomer writer, Jennifer Chandler, is based on a simple and very attractive premise of using cut, cleaned, and bagged greens from your grocers' refrigerated produce section. I am not a great fan of these bagged goods, except for the single variety packs of spinach, arugula, and the like. And, since I am known for excessive nit-picking, let me say at the outset that this is a first rate cookbook resource for someone who really likes salads. For those people, especially people with at least three or four people to feed at a sitting who do not have a lot of time to shop for and prep the individual greens, this is a superb premise, and Ms. Chandler pulls it off with very few gotchas. The biggest question regarding these packaged greens, of course, is whether to trust the 'pre-washed' claim, especially in light of the recent vegetable borne food contamination on spinach and onions. I was firmly in the camp, even before this news, of thoroughly washing all greens, sometimes several times (for spinach especially), and I was backed up in this view by no less than Emeril Lagasse who, on a show a few years back, gave a scolding look to the notion of using unwashed greens, regardless of the packaging. The author tends to believe the packagers' claim of effective pre-washing. I would recommend washing and spinning dry, regardless of how big the 'prewashed' blurbs are on the package. I warmed up to Ms. Chandler's book when I saw her list of recommend kitchen tools and pantry items. These lists seem to be done by every Tom, Dick and Harry cookbook writer, and many are unnecessarily long for the 'cook because I have to' working parent. Ms. Chandler's list is just about right. The only things I would add would be bacon, eggs, and buttermilk to the refrigerator list, with the understanding that you will be making buttermilk based dressings at least once a week (and buttermilk is an ingredient in many of the more popular dressings in this book). The fact that Ms. Chandler assumes you will be making your own dressings, and provides dressing recipes for each salad was the part of the book that really won me over. It also points out that this book is NOT just about speed, as many of the recipes take far longer than the famous '30 Minute Meal' rubric of Ms. R. R. The point of the bagged greens is also not primarily about economy. If anything, it's about shopping time and convenience and avoiding waste. Buying arugula, radicchio, and escarole to create a Mediterranean salad generally leads to having a whole lot of one or two of the ingredients left over. So, while the prepackaged greens may be a bit more

expensive than buying them individually, there is less waste. But, as my experience with cooking for only two tells me, buying 10 oz of the packaged greens will not guarantee no waste, especially if your co-diner is finicky, and can't stand the thought of eating the same salad two days in a row. And, many greens do go downhill very quickly. So, the value of this book is far greater for those of you feeding four or more at a sitting compared to those of us who feed only one or ourselves other. Once you buy into Ms. Chandler's premise, the biggest selling point of the book is the fact that our Jenny recreates virtually every major popular salad known to modern man, from the pre-packaged greens and the homemade dressings. And, most (but not all) of the recipes come very, very close to their classic ethnic sources. In the 100 recipes, there are recipes for Caesar's salad (classic and nuovo), Cobb's salad, Caprese salad, Panzanella salad, tuna Nicoise salad, antipasti salad, wilted spinach salad, pasta salads, many slaws, and a few potato salads. In addition, there are several saladized versions of classic dishes, such as a blt salad (didn't I tell you that you will need bacon on hand), a pulled pork bbq salad, and a southern fried chicken salad. While the author wisely makes no strong claims about all these salads' being especially healthy, it is relatively easy to see that a blt salad (with no bread) is healthier than the classic sandwich from which it is derived. It is important to note that a large number of these salads, especially those in the poultry, meat, seafood, and 'starches' (beans, grains, rice, & pasta) chapters are excellent single dish main courses. And, even if you have lots of time to cook, single dish main meals still make a lot of sense because you don't have to juggle getting three different courses to the table at the same time, while still piping hot. You do need to realize, however, that the prep and cooking times or setup requirements for the proteins in many of these dishes can be extensive. Several chicken dishes, for example, specify grilling the chicken. Were Ms. C. to bring out a second edition of this book, I would suggest she provide alternate instructions on either baking or broiling the chicken (Ina Garten is especially good at quick and easy baked chicken recipes.) Similarly, there is practically no way one will be able to make true barbecued pulled pork in less than a few hours. I would also suggest that Ms. C. specify one or more brand names for her salad mixes, and indicate which of these are available from organic farms. My only other reservation about the book is that in spite of her blurb on the cover which says '...and a few easy-to-find ingredients...' there are some ingredients which may require a visit to a speciality market, such as wasabi peas, logs of goat cheese, and Maytag blue cheese. A good megamart such as Wegmans will certainly have all these items, but Wegmans is only in the Northeast US.

I love an exotic salad. I collect specialty cookbooks. Ergo, "Simply Salads" is now an integral part of

my collection. Not without good reason! Right on the cover, Jennifer Chandler announces that her cookbook contains "more than 100 delicious creative recipes made from prepackaged greens and a few easy-to-find ingredients." My goodness, who could ask for more, but I did. I wanted proof. Let's walk through the book. (When I get a new cookbook, I start at the beginning and leaf through every single page, stopping at certain recipes to read for difficulty and ingredients. Oh my, but I want to try so many recipes from this book.) This introductory chapter displays all the packaged greens, a standard list of kitchen aids needed, and pantry items. The first recipe is "Steakhouse Wedge Salad" and what a gorgeous photo (Every single recipe has a close-up photo of the salad). By the way, each recipe comes with a homemade dressing, but, of course, store-bought can be used. Here's a Wilted Spinach Salad with mushrooms and an egg-based dressing. The book is arranged by categories of salads. The two recipes above come from the Greens chapter. Others are the various meats, Fruit, then Beans, Grains, Rice & Pasta, next Slaws, and the additional Dressings chapter. Let's continue our flip-through: Grilled Romaine with mandarin orange slices and toasted almonds with a green goddess dressing. Does it look great! Black and Blue Chicken Salad (Bleu cheese and blackened chicken), Prosciutto and Melon Salad, Beef Tenderloin Salad with Horseradish Dressing (yogurt, sour cream, horseradish, and mayonnaise--sounds heavenly, yes?), and Grilled Lamb and Tabbouleh Salad for a Middle Eastern flavor. Try this one: Seared Salmon over Mixed Greens (Spring Mix, feta crumbles, dried cranberries, and candied pecans with a Raspberry Vinaigrette. Isn't this a wow?) Or two of my favorite ingredients: Butter Lettuce with Smoked Salmon, capers, and Dill with Lemon Vinaigrette. From the Vegetable chapter: Warm Fingerling Potato Salad (you gotta love fingerlings), the fabulous Caprese Salad (tomato, fresh mozzarella, and basil with balsamic vinaigrette), Meze-in-a-Minute Platter--you will love this (Romaine lettuce, tabbouleh, hummus, dolmas [stuffed grape leaves], black olives, and tiny pita wedges. So many of these salads are so summery. My personal favorite (and that was a difficult choice) is Mango, Avocado, and Cilantro Salad made with Spring Mix and chopped red onions. Just think of those flavors and textures. I wonder if I threw in a few boiled shrimp? This fruit chapter offers so many tempting recipes: Orange and Fennel Salad, Watermelon and Arugula with feta and toasted pine nuts, Arugula with figs, pancetta, goat cheese. With summer coming, a book like this, with choices and ingredients acquired ahead, coming home from work and making any of these divine salads will make your evening fresh and refreshing. Feed the kids hot dogs and put on a movie in the den. If the husband insists on meat, grill a chicken breast. Now you can have a relaxing meal on the patio with a bottle of wine or chilled tea. Let your day unwind with "simply salads."

In all fairness this book might be perfect for one who is looking for "easy." The problem with this book for me was there were no unique or new ideas. This is not a book for a cook looking for new and interesting. This is a book for a non cook putting a meal together with shortcuts. And that may be perfect, it depends what you are looking for.

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