

Whole Grain Salad with Fresh Herbs

Yield: 4-5 Servings

INGREDIENTS:

Main Ingredients (prepare the night before):

2 cups cooked whole grains (quinoa, brown rice, wheat or spelt berries)*

1 pound green beans (or broccoli or cauliflower or zucchini)

1 pound (large box) mushrooms

Dressing:

Your favorite salad dressing, or this vinaigrette:

2 T olive oil

¼ cup balsamic vinegar

1 clove garlic, crushed but not minced (unless you *really* like garlic)

1 to 3 teaspoons prepared mustard

¼ tsp cumin, pepper, and salt

1 to 3 T of lemon juice

Toppings:

First, you'll want baby greens, spinach, or lettuce to line bowl, then . . .

Fresh herbs (chopped) to taste: basil, oregano, chives, cilantro, chives, dill, sage, or thyme (not all at once)! See what you have growing in you herb garden, and use those first.

Chopped fresh tomatoes, cucumber, sweet onion, green pepper, jicama, grated carrot, or your favorite vegetables.

For protein: cooked meat, crumbled cheese, or garbanzo beans



DIRECTIONS:

Cook grains as directed on package. While the grains are cooking, prepare the salad dressing in a large bowl with a lid. Then, wash green vegetable and mushrooms, and cut into bite-sized pieces. Cook vegetables in the microwave for 3 to four minutes, removing them promptly and tipping them into the bowl, with the small amount of juice that is in the pan (1/4 cup or less). (The grains will absorb this juice and it adds flavor. If you end up with a lot of veggie water, you can save it in the freezer for stock later on.) Place the (drained) grains and the barely-cooked veggies into the big bowl with the salad dressing, mix thoroughly, and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, stir everything and taste to see if it needs more salt or vinegar.

SERVE:

Line serving bowl with baby greens, placing a layer in the bottom of the bowl. Spoon grain mixture over that, topping with chopped fresh vegetables and herbs. Sprinkle with protein source. When I make this for a potluck, I toss it together at the last minute.

* Buckwheat groats can be used, but remember they are strong flavored! I'd suggest a dill/buttermilk dressing to go with buckwheat, and perhaps cooked beets as one topping.

Note: This salad tastes fantastic with almost any dressing. It's a very versatile recipe, so don't hesitate to fiddle around and try other ingredients. It's best if you can let it sit overnight at first, and it keeps for at least a week in the fridge.

Recipe from Celia Beamish, UF/IFAS Extension Polk County Master Gardener.

To learn more about growing fresh vegetables and herbs in central Florida, download the guide to [Herbs in the Florida Garden](#) and the [Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide](#).

For more information, contact UF/IFAS Extension Polk County at (863) 519-1041 or visit us online at <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/polk>. The Plant Clinic is open Monday-Friday, 9:00 am-4:00 pm to answer your gardening and landscaping questions. Visit us in person, give us a call, or email us at polkmg@ifas.ufl.edu.

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