



## Try new greens for your salad

**I always used to use romaine lettuce for salads, but recently I switched to a spring mix and I love it. What can you tell me about other types of greens for fresh salads?**

This is a great time of year to start exploring a wider variety of fresh greens. If you're adventurous, you can even plant a few varieties and grow your own — leafy greens are cool-season crops and thrive in early and mid-spring.

But even if you're not interested in developing a green thumb, exploring new types of lettuce can add variety and interest to your salads.

Iceberg lettuce is still the most widely available and most popular type of lettuce. It's not hard to see why: It tends to last longer in the refrigerator than other types of lettuce, and adds a good crunch to the salad bowl. But it has few nutrients compared to other types of lettuce and leafy greens, so your body will thank you to add darker greens to the mix. A darker color indicates a more nutritious choice.

You can find detailed information about different types of greens around the web. In particular, Colorado State University Extension and the Produce for Better Health Foundation's "Fruit and Veggies: More Matters" website offer tips on flavor, nutrition and

storage. Links to both can be found at <http://bit.ly/lettuceinfo>.

Here are some tidbits gathered from those sites:

- Watercress has a spicy flavor and is good in salads and on sandwiches. Choose green leaves without any yellow areas or slippery stems.

- Radicchio has maroon or purple leaves with white veins that form into a loosely wrapped cabbage-like head. Its flavor is bittersweet.

- Baby bok choy has a crunchy, celery-like texture and a mild flavor.

- Arugula has a peppery flavor. Choose young, fresh leaves.

- Red leaf lettuce is similar to romaine lettuce, but is higher in antioxidants and offers color and interest to a salad.

- Escarole's flavor varies — lighter-colored portions are mild, but the darker portions of the leaves can be bitter.

- Spinach is always a good addition to a salad. Choose young or baby leaves. Savoy spinach has curly leaves but offers the same benefits.

Also, Colorado State University Extension recommends rinsing lettuce under cold water just before using rather than before storage to reduce risk of spoilage and bacterial growth on the leaves.

*Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, and the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or [filipic.3@osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@osu.edu).*



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**Editor:**

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