



Media Release

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THE SUPER SALADS

HERB SALAD DRESSINGS INCREASE THE ANTIOXIDANT CAPACITY OF A SIMPLE SALAD

Nothing beats a light and nutritious salad during the hot summer months and now there is an even better reason to make the salad a summer diet staple. A new study from Australia's Southern Cross University (SCU) has reported that salad dressings made with herbs and spices can more than double the antioxidant content of your regular salad *and* boost your daily nutritional intake in the process.

The SCU research project tested three different types of salad dressings; Greek, Italian and Thai-Style, with the antioxidant levels of the salads and the dressings tested both before the herbs were added to the dressings and after. To ensure consistency of the antioxidant content of the herbs and spices, Gourmet Garden fresh herb pastes were used in testing.

The results of the study showed that once the herbs were added to the Greek salad dressing, the antioxidant rating nearly trebled, the Italian dressing more than doubled and the Thai dressing almost doubled the antioxidant content of the simple, three vegetable salad (as seen in table 1 and figure 2).

This nutrient additive effect is known as "antioxidant networking" and is a new field in nutrition science. Food networking looks at how foods, like herbs and spices act synergistically with other foods to dramatically increase the antioxidant value and enhance the health-related properties of a meal.

The three types of salad dressings tested were Italian, Greek and Thai with ingredients listed below. The base salad was made up of iceberg lettuce, Lebanese cucumbers and Romano tomatoes.

- *Italian - Olive Oil, Red Wine Vinegar, Gourmet Garden Garlic, Basil, Parsley and Oregano*
- *Greek - Olive Oil, Lemon Juice, Gourmet Garden Garlic, Rosemary, Oregano and Mint*
- *Thai - Peanut Oil, Sesame Oil, Lime Juice, Sugar, Fish Sauce, Gourmet Garden Garlic, Chilli, Ginger and Lemon Grass.*

Leading Australian dietitian, Karen Inge APD, who worked closely with SCU, has reported that the results of the study show that even a small quantity of herbs and spices added to a salad can make an enormous difference to the meal's overall antioxidant capacity and could have significant health benefits.

“In terms of nutrition and good health, this study is ground breaking. I was really amazed by the results, These findings should encourage us all to make small changes to our food preparation, that will make significant differences to the nutritional benefits of a meal,” said Karen Inge.

“The key is to ensure your diet includes as much plant food as possible, liberally flavoured with the tastes and fragrances of antioxidant rich herbs and spices and a healthy oil.”

Salads are always a great meal option during the summer, especially when it comes to maintaining a healthy and balanced diet and Karen suggests mixing up your own dressings with the delicious flavours of herbs and spices.

“It’s all about making healthy food taste great. Looking after our body doesn’t mean missing out on delicious foods that we all enjoy. That’s the important factor.”

Karen, together with the makers of Gourmet Garden, have used this new research to come up with some simple, healthy and most importantly, tasty salad suggestions, to give you that much desired nutritional boost we are all looking for.

- An Aussie summer is simply not complete without the necessary addition of seafood to the diet. Try a Prawn salad with an Italian dressing using olive oil, red wine vinegar and Gourmet Garden Garlic, Basil, Parsley and Oregano.
- For a more Mediterranean style, mix up a Greek salad by simply combining tomatoes, sliced cucumber, sliced capsicum, onion, olives and low fat feta cheese with an easy dressing of olive oil, lemon juice and Gourmet Garden Garlic, Rosemary, Oregano and Mint.
- Nothing beats the fresh flavour of Thailand, so why not try a Thai Beef salad by throwing together some barbequed lean steak, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, red onion and baby rocket leaves. Whisk together peanut and sesame oil, with fish sauce, sugar, limejuice and Gourmet Garden Chilli, Ginger and Lemon Grass.

With these three simple salad dressings, your options are endless in devising the perfect summer salad with further great recipe suggestions available from www.gourmetgarden.com

As if anyone needed another reason to eat a tasty and healthy salad, the flavour and nutritional boost gained from the addition of herb rich dressings, only adds further to their appeal.

Using herbs and spices in your cooking has never been so easy with Gourmet Garden’s herbs in a tube, giving you the taste of fresh herbs and spices everyday. They are chopped and ready to use, straight from the fridge and are available at leading supermarkets.

For recipes, images or further information on the SCU study please contact Anna Wallin or Siena Dixon at IRPR on telephone 02 9360 1166 awallin@irpr.com.au or sdixon@irpr.com.au

(This work was commissioned by Gourmet Garden and undertaken at Southern Cross University.)

Table 1

Salad dressings made with Fresh Herb pastes (Gourmet Garden) have higher antioxidant capacity than dressings without herbs and spices (Table 1).

Salad Type	ORAC (umol TE/g)	
Base Salad	3.2	0
& Italian Dressing	3.7	NS
& Herb Italian Dressing 138% increase	7.6	138% increase
& Greek Dressing	3.4	NS
& Herb Greek Dressing 181% increase	9	181% increase
& Thai Dressing	3.7	NS
& Herb Spice Thai Dressing 97% increase	6.3	97% increase

Figure 2: Antioxidant Capacity of Salad Dressings

