

**02/25/09 - Move over Meatloaf ? Salad is Center Stage Tonight**

**When it comes to salads most of us think of that little dish that comes with lettuce, some veggies, cheese and dressing we have before our main meal. Others see that big salad bar with all the fixings. These are not the only ways to enjoy a salad anymore. Why not make your next salad the main course of your meal.**

**Salads have come a long way now that more of us are trying to eat healthy. Main course salads have become a hit and people are finding ways to make these salads a delightful treat. They're simple to throw together and can fill up any stomach ? no matter how big it might be.**

**These main course salads can be served in many different ways. Use a salad plate or a pretty, decorative salad bowl. Taco salad bowls are also a great base for your salads. You can find them in almost any grocery store and they don't have to be filled with just taco fillings. Pita bread or taco shells can also be used to make a great main course salad base.**

**Most main course salads start with lettuce. Whether you're fixing a vegetable salad or a meat enhanced salad, lettuce is the perfect filler. On the other hand if you're making a pasta salad with some shrimp or tuna you can still use lettuce leave as a bed for the salad.**

**Go ahead and add those veggies to your main course salad. Cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, onions and mushrooms are the perfect main course salad enhancers. The more fresh veggies you can pack in the better. You can't go wrong when it comes to vegetables and if they taste good to you, throw them in.**

Lettuce and veggies aren't enough to fill the really hungry stomachs. Chopped, sliced or diced meats such as pork, beef or chicken can be added to your salads to make them tastier and more filling as well. Turkey, ham or seafood such as shrimp can also be a great addition. Additions such as meat and eggs will give your salad some added protein and will enhance the flavor as well.

Don't forget those toppers. Nuts, seeds, bacon bits and croutons are always a hit when it comes to creating a salad. Your main course salad should be no exception. Add some cheese and sliced hard boiled eggs for even more substance to your salad.

Main course salads can be made with Mexican or Asian fixings as well. Add some chow mien noodles and more to give the salad an Oriental flare. Don't forget your dressing. There are a vast amount of flavorful dressings available these days to top any great salad.

Salads don't have to be what was once known as rabbit food anymore. Have fun creating your main course salads and remember to let your taste buds and health consciousness lead the way.