

Dressy Dressings

By Laura Kurella

One item many of us take for granted is salad dressing, which is easy because it comes in a bottle and so many brands make so many different versions. However, it is surprising what a difference a freshly-made salad dressing can make in both a salad and for use in other things like dressing up condiments and use as an ingredient in recipes. Peeking at some recent statistics*, the most popular flavor in bottled/prepared salad dressings in the United States this year is ranch.

While this is no surprise, it was surprising (for me) to see that family favorites appeared much lower on the statistician's list.

In fact, my favorite, creamy garlic, ranked sixteenth, and it came in behind poppyseed (15th), French (9th), and even Bleu cheese, which crossed people's palates in sixth place.

With "other" Italian (2nd), and Caesar (3rd) rounding out the top three, I pondered the possibilities behind these, "plain to the palate" picks. Perhaps people simply don't take chances on bottled dressings, and just buy what they know they will eat, especially given their price.

Perhaps it's due to the inconsistency in flavor between bottled dressings, as well. I know I have had some doozies that I wished I'd never bought, making me to feel as though I was playing "spin the bottle" and crossing my fingers I would end up with something we'd like! Taking these variable into account, it seems to make more sense why all the more complex, extra-flavor dressings appear much lower on the list of preferred flavors in bottle dressings.

Fear of flavor failure may be what's behind why we do or do not choose what we do.

That said, I have found a way to avoid all this fear, and that is by simply making

all your favorite flavored dressings from scratch!

Fresh-made dressings not only offer oh-so-much-more flavor, but also the opportunity to make them healthier by selecting quality ingredients – even what salt – which in the end will also provide you with a top-shelf dressing that is more economically-priced to boot! Since there are so many flavors we all love I'll cut this column short so there's extra room for more recipes, including my all-time favorite, Glorious Creamy Garlic Dressing/Dip which, thanks to a loose-lipped maitre d', comes direct from a famous Chicago restaurant.

It's so good that my husband, who ate nothing but ranch, suddenly switched when he got a taste this garlic dressing-Enjoy!

Glorious Creamy Garlic Dressing/Dip

Prep time: 5 minutes; Rest time: 3 days; Total time: 3 days and 5 minutes; Yield: 2 2/3 cups.
2 cups sour cream
2/3 cup olive oil-based mayonnaise (or gourmet -below)
1 teaspoon garlic powder (or to taste)
1/8 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
2-1/2 tablespoons cane sugar
Un-refined mineral salt, to taste
Black pepper, to taste
Mix all ingredients together in an appropriate size bowl, stirring well. The dressing's flavor improves with age. Do NOT use it for at least 3 days! Keeps for a month if refrigerated in a covered preferably glass (mason) jar.

Rich 'n' Rewarding Ranch Dressing/Dip

Prep time: 5 minutes; Rest time: 2 hours; Total time: 2 hours and 5 minutes; Yield: 2 1/4 cups.
1 1/2 cups full fat sour cream
3/4 cup buttermilk
1 tablespoon dried parsley
1 1/2 teaspoons garlic powder
1 tablespoon plus 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon un-refined

mineral sea salt
1 teaspoon black pepper

In a quart mason jar, combine all ingredients then stir. Dressing will be runny at first, but will thicken after being refrigerated for a couple of hours.

Incredible Italian Dressing/Dip

Prep Time: 10 minutes; Total Time: 10 minutes; Yield: 12 servings
4 tablespoons of cane sugar
1 tablespoon hot water
1/3 cup white vinegar
1/3 cup water
1/3 cup olive oil
3 tablespoons Romano cheese grated
2 tablespoons pasteurized raw egg, beaten
1 teaspoon un-refined mineral sea salt
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 clove garlic, minced
1/8 teaspoon dried oregano
1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
In a cup, combine 4 tablespoons of sugar and 1 tablespoon water. Microwave for 20 seconds, stir. In the bowl of a blender or food processor, combine sugar water with all remaining ingredients. Blend / process ingredients until chili flakes become tiny specks. Transfer to a glass mason jar or other covered container. Refrigerate for at least one hour before serving.

Unbelievable Bleu Cheese Dressing/Dip

Prep time: 10 minutes; Total time: 10 minutes; Yield: 1 1/2 cups dressing/dip.
4 ounces young, tender bleu cheese (Gorgonzola, Roquefort, Stilton),
1/4 cup Gourmet mayonnaise (recipe below)
1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
1/4 cup cultured buttermilk
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
4 ounces aged, crumbly bleu cheese (Roquefort, Stilton or Gorgonzola)
un-refined mineral salt, to taste
freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 tablespoon heavy cream
In a blender, combine the young bleu



Salad dressings made from scratch amp up both freshness and flavor in every salad you serve!

Photographer: Laura Kurella

cheese, mayonnaise, yogurt, buttermilk and lemon juice. Blend until smooth. Pour into a serving dish. Crumble in the aged bleu cheese and add salt and pepper, to taste. Stir gently, but well, to combine. If thicker than desired, add more heavy cream, stirring in a little at a time until it is the right consistency. Serve at room temperature or chilled. Store the unused dressing, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Gourmet Mayonnaise

Prep time: 10-15 minutes; Total time: 10-15 minutes; Yield: About 1 cup.

2 teaspoons white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1/4 teaspoon unrefined mineral sea salt
2 large pasteurized egg yolks
1 cup grapeseed oil, or other mild-flavored oil

In the cup of a blender, combine vinegar, lemon juice, mustard, salt and egg yolks. Blend at high speed until smooth. Reduce speed to low, and while blender is running, remove center cap in lid to begin drizzling in the oil very, very thin stream and very, very slowly. DO NOT RUSH! Properly emulsifying the egg yolk with the oil

is what makes mayonnaise, otherwise you will just get muck. Drizzling the oil in at the proper speed/quantity should take 8-10 minutes, and produce a mayonnaise that is thick and creamy. Use the mayonnaise to make the Unbelievable Bleu Cheese Dressing/Dip immediately. Store the unused portion in a tightly-covered container in the refrigerator for no more than one week.

Quick 'n' Creamy Caesar Dressing

Prep time: 5 minutes; Total time: 5 minutes; Yield: About 1 cup (8 servings).
6 cloves garlic, finely minced

Juice of 2 lemons, about 1/4 cup
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil, or avocado oil
cracked pepper, optional, to taste
In a bowl, combine lemon juice, mustard, and garlic and stir to combine. Add olive oil and whisk until an emulsion forms. Stir in cracked pepper, if using, and refrigerate in an air tight container
Alternately, in a blender: In the cup of a blender, combine all ingredients then puree on high speed until a thick emulsion forms. Refrigerate in an air tight container