

Jerusalem Salad

Brightly colored, fresh, healthy, and absolutely delicious salads are abundant in the Middle East. It has been argued that “Jerusalem Salad” is the most ubiquitous of them all. Because it is so common and so loved, everyone has their own name for it and their own way of making this simple dish.

In their groundbreaking work, *Jerusalem: A Cookbook*, Jewish chef Yotam Ottolenghi and Palestinian chef Sami Tamimi explore the cuisine of their hometown—with its diverse Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities. Ottolenghi and Tamimi explain, “It is impossible to count the number of cultures and subcultures residing in this city. Jerusalem is an intricate, convoluted mosaic of peoples. It is therefore very tempting to say there isn’t such a thing as a local cuisine. However, if you take a step back and look at the greater picture, there are some typical elements that are easily identifiable in most local cuisines and crop up throughout the city. Everybody, absolutely everybody, uses chopped cucumber and tomatoes to create an Arab salad or an Israeli salad, depending on point of view.”

Arab Salad, Israeli Salad, Jerusalem Salad --- there are many names for and countless versions of this versatile recipe. The basic ingredients are tomato, cucumber, bell pepper, olive oil, parsley, salt and pepper. Feel free to add radish, mint, carrots, substitute lime for lemon and whatever other fresh ingredients you like. You can even add garbanzo beans and/or some feta cheese for a serving of protein.

Points of view differ regarding whether the vegetables should be finely diced (like a pico de gallo) or chopped into larger, rougher chunks. It is up to you! Try it both ways and decide which way you like it best.

This recipe is also a great base for a plethora of other delicious salad dishes. Fattoush and Greek Salad are two that immediately come to mind. In addition to the recipe for Jerusalem Salad below, please also check out the recipe for Fattoush- a Lebanese bread salad on our website.

Jerusalem Salad

6 servings

For the salad:

5 cucumbers

1 bell pepper (any color is fine)

5 fresh medium tomatoes

1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt

1/4 cup minced red onions

For the dressing:

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Juice of 1 lemon

3 tablespoons minced parsley, reserve one tablespoon for garnish

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Dice the cucumbers, bell pepper, tomatoes, and the red onion and place in a large bowl. Whisk together the extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons minced parsley, and salt and pepper to taste and when you are ready to serve the salad, whisk again and toss with the vegetables. Garnish with the reserved tablespoon of minced parsley. Serve immediately.