

Garden Greens with Grilled Peaches, Spicy Georgia Pecans and Chevre



Serves 8
Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Cooking Time: 14 minutes

Be sure the grill is brushed clean of any meat or poultry drippings before grilling the peaches for this sweet-and-savory salad.

1 teaspoon chili powder
 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 1 teaspoon sugar
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/8 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
 4 tablespoons light olive oil
 1 1/4 cups Georgia pecan halves
 4 large (8-ounce each) firm, ripe peaches
 Vegetable oil cooking spray
 8 cups mixed salad greens
 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
 6 ounces chevre (fresh goat cheese), crumbled

In a small bowl, combine chili powder, cumin, 1/2 teaspoon sugar, 1/4 teaspoon salt and the cayenne; set aside. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add pecans and heat, stirring occasionally, until crisp—about 5 minutes. Stir in spice mixture and mix to evenly coat pecans. Cook 2 minutes. Turn pecans out onto paper towel to cool. (Nuts can be prepared several days ahead and kept in an airtight container.)

Heat grill to medium-low heat. Cut peaches lengthwise to make thick wedges. Coat grill rack with vegetable oil cooking spray. Grill peach wedges on one side 3 to 5 minutes or just until lightly browned and a bit tender. Remove to large plate.

To serve, toss the salad greens with vinegar, the remaining 3 tablespoons oil, 1/2 teaspoon sugar and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Divide greens among serving plates; top each salad with several peach wedges. Divide spiced pecans and the chevre among salads and serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving: protein: 7g; fat: 23g; saturated fat: 5g; carbohydrate: 19g; fiber: 4g; sodium: 217 mg; cholesterol: 10mg; calories: 329.

Mediterranean Pecan Chicken Salad



Serves 8
Preparation Time: 25 minutes
Cooking Time: 15 - 20 minutes

An easy, but hearty, one-dish meal for warm weather appetites, this salad features chicken and rice with crunchy pecans and Mediterranean seasonings.

6 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 1 3/4 pounds total)
 Salt and pepper
 8 medium tomatoes, cut into thin wedges (about 2 pounds)
 1 cup chopped fresh basil
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 2 large cloves garlic, minced
 6 cups cooked saffron-flavored rice
 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons chopped Georgia pecans
 4 cups mixed salad greens

Heat oven to 400° F or grill to medium-high heat. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Roast or grill chicken just until cooked through, about 15 to 20 minutes. Set aside to cool. Meanwhile, combine tomatoes, basil, olive oil, lemon juice and garlic in large bowl. Let stand at room temperature 20 minutes.

Slice chicken crosswise into 1/2-inch thick strips. Add chicken, rice and 1 cup pecans to tomato mixture and mix well. Mound salad in center of large serving platter; surround with salad greens and garnish with remaining 2 tablespoons pecans. Serve promptly or refrigerate until serving.

Nutrition information per serving: protein: 29g; fat: 17g; saturated fat: 2g; carbohydrate: 40g; fiber: 5g; sodium: 581 mg; cholesterol: 57mg; calories: 426.

Serving Pecans

Georgia pecans can be tossed into a salad raw or toasted. When toasting, bake in a 300° oven for 15 minutes or cook in a skillet over medium heat for 8 to 10 minutes, until slightly darkened and fragrant. Stir the pecans occasionally for an even color.

Asparagus and Roasted Pepper Salad with Georgia Pecans



Serves 8 - 10
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 2 minutes

A generous sprinkle of Georgia pecans gives this vegetable-rich salad a hearty crunch and more complex flavor without any fuss.

40 thin asparagus spears
 2 (12 ounce) jars roasted peppers, preferably red and yellow mixed, drained
 1 1/3 cups chopped toasted Georgia pecans
 1/2 cup chopped fresh basil leaves
 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 2 teaspoons sherry or wine vinegar
 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 1/2 pound mixed salad greens

Break off tough ends of asparagus. Heat 1 inch of water to boiling in a deep skillet. Add asparagus and cook two minutes to blanch. Drain and transfer asparagus to bowl of ice water to quickly chill. Drain and set aside or wrap and refrigerate until serving.

In a medium bowl, stir together peppers, pecans and basil. In a small bowl, whisk together lemon juice, vinegar, mustard and salt to blend; whisk in oil to make dressing. To serve, mound salad greens in center of serving platter; arrange asparagus in two clusters on opposite sides of greens. Spoon pecan mixture over greens and asparagus; drizzle dressing over all.

Nutrition information per serving: protein: 6g; fat: 25 g; saturated fat: 3g; carbohydrate: 19g; fiber: 6g; sodium: 263 mg; cholesterol: 0; calories: 324.

Healthy Salads in a Nutshell

The Georgia Pecan Commission offers these tips for creating healthier salads:

- **Use dark leafy greens**, such as baby field greens, Boston lettuce, romaine and spinach (the darker the greens, the more nutrient-dense the salad).
- **Add fresh fruits and raw vegetables**, especially cantaloupe, strawberries, baby corn, broccoli, cherry tomatoes and carrots – all loaded with vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and fiber.
- **Cut back on the dressing** – one ladle can add up to 400 calories (opt for the low-calorie dressings, the ones with thinner consistencies).
- **Toss in protein-rich foods like Georgia pecans**, which will provide an extra six grams of unsaturated fat per one-ounce tablespoon (recent studies show that just a handful –or 3/4 cup – of pecans may help decrease LDL cholesterol).

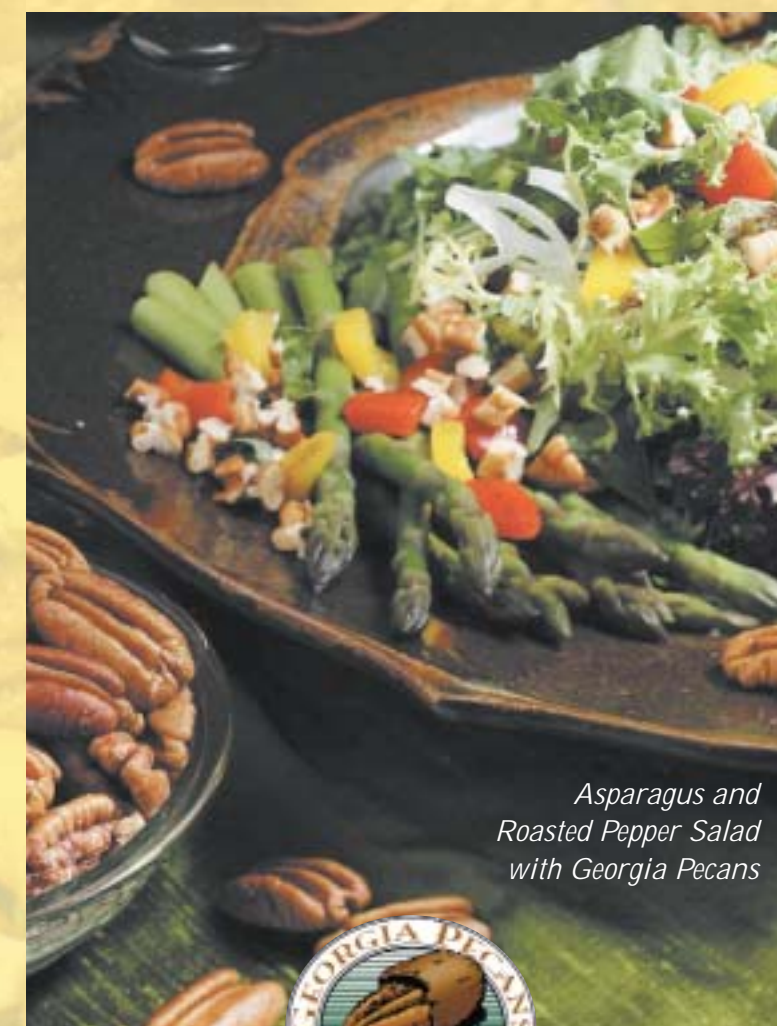


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Toss It Together...

Salad Celebrations

WITH GEORGIA PECANS



Asparagus and Roasted Pepper Salad with Georgia Pecans



WHEN THE FIRST WARM DAY OF THE SEASON ARRIVES, SO DOES OPPORTUNITY:

This is the time for easy entertaining. And whether it's a spring or summer holiday, a weekend picnic, or a simple outdoor get-together, Georgia pecans provide the perfect ingredient for crowd-pleasing recipes and celebrations.

During warm weather months, the menu requirements are nearly always the same—irresistible food that's plentiful, interesting and easy to prepare. An assortment of salads fits the bill perfectly, especially when built around hearty ingredients such as Georgia pecans.

Pecans offer an instant crunch and rich flavor that can turn even the simplest salad into a substantial dish. Best of all, pecan flavor and texture works with everything: savory or sweet salads, tossed or composed mixtures; main dish salads or simple sides. Beyond the familiar bowl of leafy greens, the category of salad options these days is vast, and many of them feature a generous handful of Georgia pecans.



Besides the unique flavor, that handful of pecans also boosts the healthy quotient of salads by adding the right kind of fat to recipes, one which studies show helps lower harmful LDL cholesterol levels. Wholesome, delicious and ready-to-use, there's no doubt that Georgia pecans are one of the stars in the cook's constellation of wonderful salad ingredients for any warm weather celebration.

Asian Duck Salad with Pecans



Serves 8 - 10
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 20 minutes

If duck breast is unavailable, try boneless, skinless chicken thighs.

<i>Ginger Dressing:</i>	<i>Salad:</i>
1/4 cup Balsamic vinegar	4 teaspoons vegetable oil
1/4 cup vegetable oil	4 skinless duck breasts (4 ounces each)
3 tablespoons soy sauce	1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons honey	2 bunches (6 ounces each) watercress
2 tablespoons grated peeled fresh ginger	2 large carrots, peeled
4 small cloves garlic, chopped	1 1/4 cups toasted Georgia pecan halves
2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil	1/4 cup minced radish, red part only (optional)

Prepare Dressing: In a blender or small food processor, combine all Ginger Dressing ingredients; mix until garlic is very finely chopped and ingredients are well blended. Set aside while preparing salad.

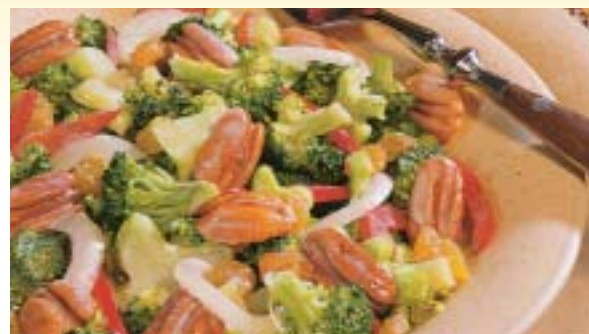
Heat 2 teaspoons oil in medium skillet over high heat. Sprinkle duck breasts with salt. When oil is hot but not yet smoking, add two duck breasts. Reduce heat to medium-high and cook until well browned—about 5 minutes; turn duck breasts and cook until browned on other side but pink in the middle—about 4 to 5 minutes longer. Transfer duck to cutting board and let rest 5 minutes. Repeat with remaining 2 teaspoons oil and duck breasts.

Meanwhile, remove and discard tough stems from watercress. Cut carrots into thin match-stick size sticks and combine with watercress. Toss salad mixture with half the Ginger Dressing. Mix remaining dressing with the pecans.

To serve, thinly slice duck and divide among eight or ten serving plates, fanning slices. Arrange watercress mixture in a small mound on each plate and spoon pecans on top. If desired, sprinkle with radish to garnish.

Nutrition information per serving: protein: 13g; fat: 17g; saturated fat: 3g; carbohydrate: 8g; fiber: 2g; sodium: 424mg; cholesterol: 44mg; calories: 234.

Broccoli, Sweet Onion and Georgia Pecan Salad



Serves 10
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Only lightly dressed, the vegetables and pecans in this salad retain their healthfulness and fresh flavor.

2 large bunches broccoli, tough stem ends removed
 1 cup Georgia pecan halves
 1/4 cup white wine or rice vinegar
 2 tablespoons sugar
 1 teaspoon soy sauce
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 2 tablespoons vegetable oil or light olive oil
 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
 1 cup thinly sliced Vidalia or other sweet onion
 1 small red bell pepper, cut in matchstick-size strips
 1/2 cup raisins

Separate broccoli flowerets from tender stalks. Cut stalks crosswise into thin coins. Bring a 2-quart saucepan half filled with lightly salted water to a boil. Add flowerets and coins and cook for 30 seconds. Drain and immerse broccoli in bowl of ice water to stop the cooking. Drain well and chill broccoli. Meanwhile toast pecan halves on a baking sheet in 300° F oven for 12 to 15 minutes or until slightly darkened and fragrant.

To make dressing, whisk vinegar and sugar together in a medium bowl to dissolve sugar. Stir in soy sauce, garlic and black pepper. Whisk in oil and mayonnaise until blended. Set aside.

Just before serving, combine chilled broccoli, onion slices, pepper matchsticks and raisins in large serving bowl. Coarsely chop pecans and add half of them to mixture. Pour dressing over salad mixture and toss to coat. Scatter remaining pecans on top and serve.

Nutrition information per serving: protein: 4g; fat: 13g; saturated fat: 1g; carbohydrate: 18g; fiber: 4g; sodium: 176mg; cholesterol: 1mg; calories: 191.

Hoppin' John Salad with Toasted Pecans



Serves 12
Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Cooking Time: 35 minutes

Though classic Hoppin' John—a mixture of black-eyed peas, ham and rice—is traditionally served for New Year's Day in the South, this room-temperature meatless salad version of the classic is just right for summer buffets where it can be a side dish to grilled foods or blend easily with other salads.

1 tablespoon olive oil
 2 sweet yellow or red onions, finely chopped
 2 red bell peppers, seeded and chopped
 2 green bell peppers, seeded and chopped
 2 cans (14-ounce) whole tomatoes, drained and chopped
 5 cloves garlic, minced
 2 cups raw long-grain white rice
 4 cups reduced-fat, reduce sodium chicken broth
 6 cups thawed frozen or drained canned black-eyed peas
 1 teaspoon salt or to taste
 1/4 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
 1 1/2 cups chopped green onions
 1 cup chopped toasted Georgia pecans
 Freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a large saucepot, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and peppers; cook, stirring, until softened—about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes and garlic; cook 5 minutes. Stir in rice, then chicken broth. Heat mixture to a simmer. Add black-eyed peas, salt and cayenne pepper. Cover and simmer over low heat for 20 minutes or until liquid has been absorbed. Uncover and cool to room temperature.

To serve, mound rice and bean mixture on serving plates and shower with green onions, toasted pecans and black pepper.

Nutrition information per serving: protein: 13g; fat: 9g; saturated fat: 1g; carbohydrate: 56g; fiber: 10g; sodium: 795 mg; cholesterol: 0mg; calories: 352.

Pasta Salad with Green Beans, Georgia Pecans and Prosciutto

Serves 12
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 25 minutes

A combination of sweet, salty, and crunchy ingredients makes this pasta salad deliciously satisfying.

3 tablespoons olive oil
 2 large onions, chopped
 1 pound green beans, preferably thin variety such as haricot vert
 1 pound dried pasta, such as penne, pipette, or farfalle
 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1 1/2 cups chopped Georgia pecans
 1 cup chopped fresh basil
 1/2 pound prosciutto, cut in thin slivers
 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano cheese
 Freshly grated black pepper

In a large deep skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and sauté 10 minutes, stirring often. Meanwhile, fill a large pot 3/4 full with salted water; heat to boiling. Add green beans and simmer 25 minutes. Remove beans with slotted spoon to skillet with onion. Return water to a boil and add pasta, cooking for time directed on packaging.

Meanwhile, sauté onion and green beans, adding garlic and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cook 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in pecans, basil and prosciutto.

Drain cooked pasta well and stir into skillet with grated cheese. Season with black pepper and serve.

Nutrition information per serving: protein: 12g; fat: 7g; saturated fat: 2g; carbohydrate: 37g; fiber: 4g; sodium: 443 mg; cholesterol: 12mg; calories: 457.

Storing Pecans

Georgia pecans are perishable. If stored properly, pecans stay fresh for year-round use. For best results, refrigerate shelled pecans in airtight containers for up to nine months or freeze in zipper-lock freezer bags for up to two years. Store unshelled pecans in airtight containers in a cool, dry place for three to six months.