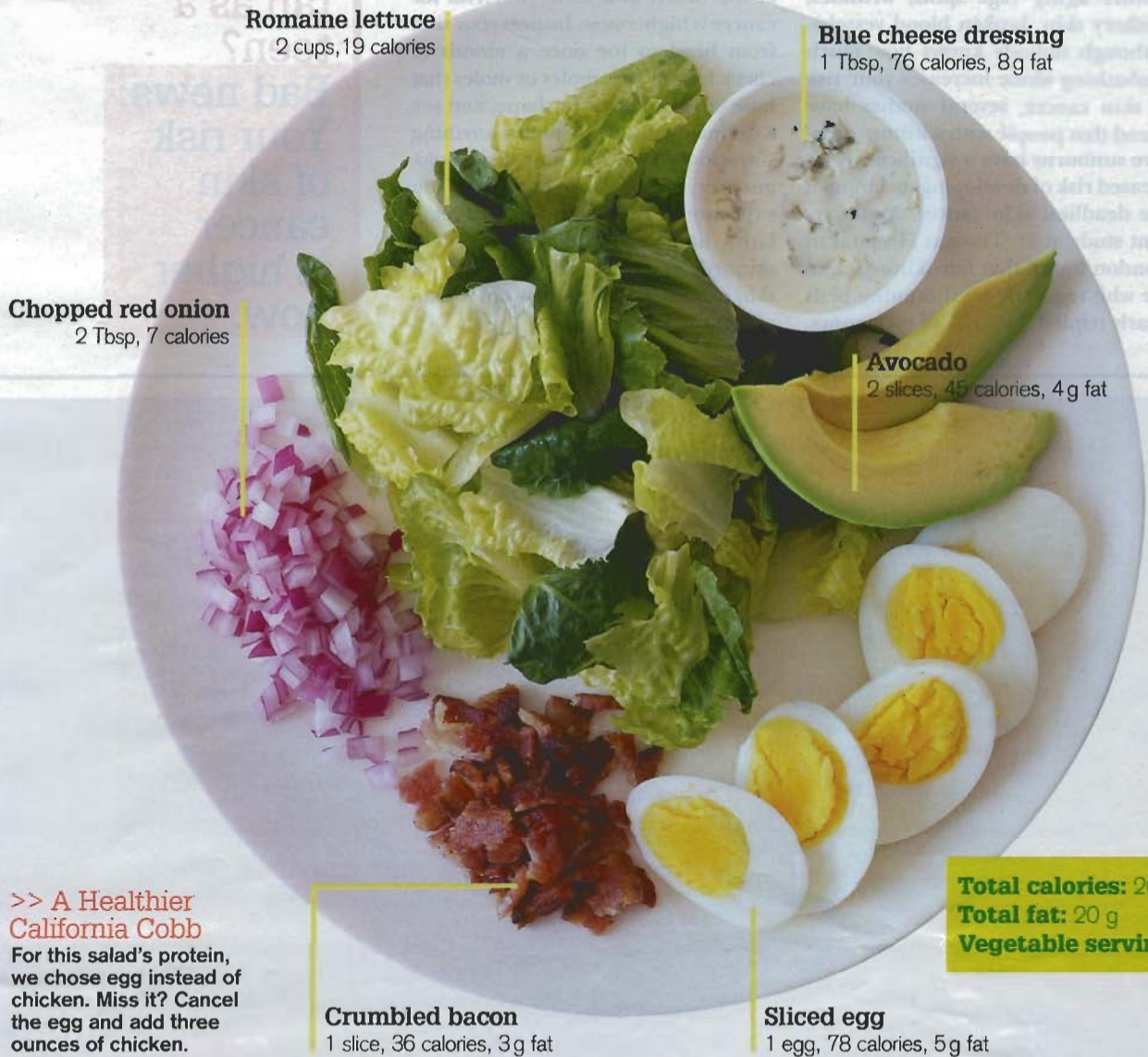


Build a Better Salad

Sure, a salad seems like a healthy meal, but add creamy dressings, cheese, meat, nuts, and croutons and you might as well have a Big Mac. Here, the healthiest toppings, the smartest splurges, plus satisfying combos that are as nutritious as they are delicious. by Christina Orlovsky



Romaine lettuce
2 cups, 19 calories

Blue cheese dressing
1 Tbsp, 76 calories, 8g fat

Chopped red onion
2 Tbsp, 7 calories

Avocado
2 slices, 45 calories, 4g fat

>> **A Healthier California Cobb**
For this salad's protein, we chose egg instead of chicken. Miss it? Cancel the egg and add three ounces of chicken.

Crumbled bacon
1 slice, 36 calories, 3g fat

Sliced egg
1 egg, 78 calories, 5g fat

Total calories: 261
Total fat: 20 g
Vegetable servings: 2

WHETHER YOU GET A SALAD tossed at a deli for lunch or make yours at home, these combos prove you don't have to sacrifice taste to have a meal a nutritionist would be proud of. Each salad packs in at least one delicious treat and contains a balance of protein, vegetables, and fat. Plus, by eating a salad for lunch, you're squeezing in at least two of your recommended three to five daily vegetable servings. Take that, chicken sandwich!

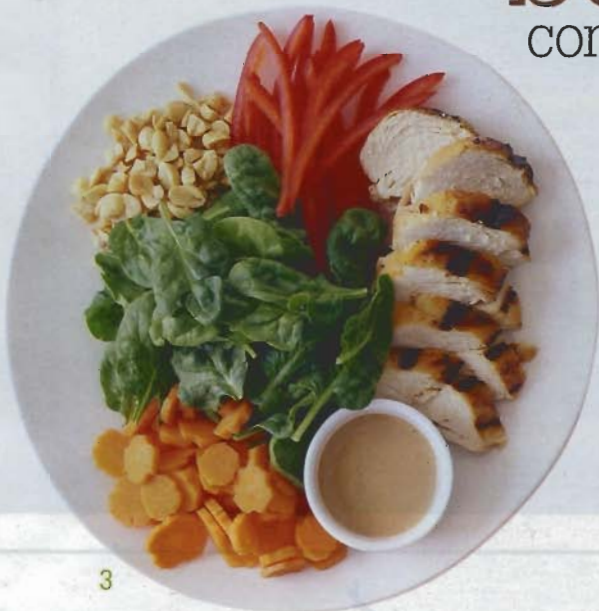


1



2

the best combos



3



4

1. Under the Sea

Thanks to the avocado and ranch dressing, you won't miss the mayo that often drenches—and destroys nutrition-wise—many seafood salads.

2 cups **baby spinach**: 14 calories
 2 oz **shrimp** (about five shrimp): 56 calories, 1 g fat
 2 oz **crabmeat**: 49 calories, 1 g fat
 2 slices **avocado**: 45 calories, 4 g fat
 ½ cup diced **tomatoes**: 16 calories
 1 Tbsp **ranch dressing**: 90 calories, 9 g fat

Total calories: 270
Total fat: 15 g
Vegetable servings: 3

2. Hold-the-Taco Tex-Mex

If sour cream's not a must for you, trade it for 2 Tbsp guacamole. It has roughly the same amount of fat, but it's the heart-protecting kind.

2 cups **romaine**: 19 calories
 2 cups **lean ground beef**: 225 calories, 18 g fat
 ½ **tortilla**, baked, cut in strips: 109 calories, 3 g fat
 2 Tbsp **low-fat sour cream**: 40 calories, 4 g fat
 1 oz **low-fat cheddar cheese**: 50 calories, 2 g fat
 1 Tbsp **Catalina dressing**: 70 calories, 6 g fat

Total calories: 513
Total fat: 33 g
Vegetable servings: 2

3. Asian Fusion

If you order an Asian salad at a restaurant, ask them to hold the crispy noodles. You'll save a zillion calories—well, maybe not a zillion, but you get the idea.

2 cups **baby spinach**: 14 calories
 3 oz **grilled chicken**: 141 calories, 3 g fat
 ½ cup sliced **carrots**: 26 calories
 ½ cup sliced **red bell pepper**: 9 calories
 1 oz **peanuts**: 161 calories, 14 g fat
 1 Tbsp **sesame dressing**: 23 calories, 1 g fat

Total calories: 374
Total fat: 18 g
Vegetable servings: 3

4. Meat-Lover's Delight

We used just an ounce of ham, compared with two ounces of turkey. The reason: Ham has nearly twice the fat and calories of turkey.

2 cups **romaine**: 19 calories
 2 oz **smoked turkey**: 60 calories, 2 g fat
 1 oz **ham**: 68 calories, 5 g fat
 1 oz **Jarlsberg cheese**: 95 calories, 7 g fat
 ½ cup diced **tomatoes**: 16 calories
 1 Tbsp **French dressing**: 65 calories, 6 g fat

Total calories: 323
Total fat: 20 g
Vegetable servings: 3

pick just one, please!

Every salad deserves a bit of a splurge. The key: Add just a single treat topping per salad, otherwise you risk undoing all the good a salad meal can do you, says Lisa Young, Ph.D., author of *The Portion Teller*. Try one of these:



Full-fat cheddar cheese

1 oz: 114 calories, 9 g fat
For a cheesy taste with fewer calories, try an ounce of crumbled feta (76 calories, 6 g fat).



Bacon

1 slice: 36 calories, 3 g fat
If one slice isn't enough for you, opt for turkey bacon; two slices have only 40 calories and 2 g fat.



Croutons

28 croutons: 116 calories, 2 g fat
Make your own—it's easy! Cut day-old French bread into cubes, brush with olive oil, season to taste, and bake about 15 minutes (or until browned) at 400°F.



Nuts

1 oz: 166 calories, 14 g fat
To get the most flavor for the fewest calories, chop nuts into very small pieces before sprinkling over your salad.



Chickpeas

½ cup: 143 calories, 2 g fat
These guys are full of protein, so you probably don't need any meat on your salad with them.

FACT: A restaurant Caesar salad with chicken can have as much as 660 calories and 46 g fat—more than that of a Quarter Pounder With Cheese (510 calories, 26 g fat).

salad dressing 101

The average woman pours up to five tablespoons of dressing on her salad, says Gayle Reichler, R.D., chef and author of *Gayle's Feel-Good Foods*. What you really need: about a fifth of what you're pouring—just one tablespoon.

To make that tablespoon do the taste job for you, pour it into the bottom of a large mixing bowl, then add your ingredients, little by little, mixing frequently. "You will use less dressing, yet every bite will be coated," says Moore. Or make your own dressing. "My clients love my favorite heart-healthy dressing and it couldn't be easier," says Tallmadge. "Combine one tablespoon of olive oil with one or two tablespoons of freshly squeezed lemon juice; add salt and pepper to taste."



FOUR INGREDIENTS TO SKIP

You say you'll eat light and just hit the salad bar? Watch out. Although you'll probably find all 10 of the healthiest ingredients listed on the previous page somewhere on the bar, they may be trapped in a minefield of fatty, nutrient-void choices. Here are four salad bar selections that may seem healthy but, in fact, can devastate a plate. Pass 'em by as often as you can.

Tuna salad (½ cup): 192 calories, 9 g fat

"So many women think eating tuna salad is better than eating roast beef," says Reichler. "It's not—the fatty mayonnaise cancels out tuna's healthiness."

Marinated vegetables (½ cup): 60 calories, 4 g fat

But they're just vegetables, you say? Vegetables that have been sitting in oil all day! If you really want them, at least drain excess oil out with a slotted spoon before putting the veggies on your plate.

Olives (1 oz): 71 calories, 7 g fat

Ten little Greek olives contain 7 grams of fat! Redeeming value: The fat is the heart-healthy kind, so a few olives are okay, says Reichler; a large spoonful is not.

Dried fruit (cranberries; ½ cup): 195 calories, 0 g fat

The calories add up fast because the sugar in fruit is condensed into such a small bite. Example: A dried apricot can have up to 20 calories; if you instead enjoy a juicy fresh one, it has just 15.