MODERN MOCKTAILS:
a summer essential

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FAST SUMMER LOOK FIXES

5 PLACES TO BURY
your nose in a book

bayou city

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Ice cream as big as your head and 50+ other cool things to do this summer in the Bayou City.

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Art *Attack*

From fine art to science to history, Houston's museums and galleries have got you covered.

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Field of **Greens**

Want the perfect antidote to beat the Houston heat? The answer is a crisp, cool salad.

BY BETSY DENSON

Nothing's better on a hot summer day than a hearty and refreshing salad. If you're looking for goodness in a bowl, these five contenders are no wilting flowers. Full of personality, bold flavors and fresh unexpected ingredients, these salads will put a skip in your step all throughout the dog days of summer.



Monica Pope's Sparrow Bar + Cookshop combines the oil from cooking with champagne vinegar to make the dressing for the Armenian eggplant salad.

MARK LIPCZYNSKI

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Monica Pope of the Sparrow Bar + Cookshop (3701 Travis St.) is known for switching it up with her culinary offerings. Her salads are no exception. The Armenian eggplant salad is a Pope favorite.

"I love it because the olive oil we cook the eggplant in becomes the oil in the vinaigrette when we add champagne vinegar to the cold caramelized chunks," she says.

The cinnamon, cooked yellow onions and fresh parsley leaves only add to the scrumptiousness. Eggplants are in the same family as tomatoes and chili peppers, and thrive in Houston's humid climate. So if you can't get to Sparrow, here's hoping you have some in your garden.

INTERNATIONAL FLAIR

The inspiration for the Lebanese Chicken Fattoush Salad found at all Barnaby's locations comes from the Levantine bread salad that is a staple in the Middle East. This version has been on the menu at Barnaby's for about three years and combines romaine lettuce with grilled chicken breast, campari tomatoes, Kalamata olives and English cucumbers, along with fresh mint, parsley and cilantro. The pita chips, which are mixed in with the salad, and the feta cheese are both must-haves along with a cumin vinaigrette. Sumac, a plant ground into a red spice (commonly used as a preservative in ancient times) is sprinkled on top for a lemony pièce de résistance.

A CARNIVORE'S DELIGHT

Sometimes people from a big state have a big appetite. Owner Addie D'Agostino at Relish Fine Foods (3951 San Felipe) says the Texas State Salad is one of their most popular salads, "especially among the men since it is rather filling."

They use a generous portion of marinated grilled flank steak, Hass avocados, fresh black bean salsa, queso fresco and top it with a spicy cilantro ranch, all made in house.

"We felt that we had to put an item on



our menu that pays homage to our Tex-Mex background here in Houston," D'Agostino says. "It is a nice change from a normal taco salad seen at most restaurants in town."

HEALTHY, BUT HARDY

With such an awesome name, you know the Bad Ass Vedge at Canyon Creek (6603 Westcott St.) has got to be good. And it is. Quinoa, roasted seasonal vegetables, avocado, toasted almonds and cranberries are topped with a warm mustard vinaigrette. Diners can add grilled salmon, Gulf shrimp or chicken.

Shakti, the food and beverage director at the Creek restaurants since the first one opened in 2002, got the inspiration for the dish on a yoga sabbatical a few years back.

"I was looking at a lot of old world grains," she says. "The salad started with the quinoa."

It's a hit with the health-conscious, who come by after a run at Memorial Park and kick back with the Bad Ass and a beer.

SALAD AND A SHOW

Cavatore's Italian Restaurant (2120 Ella Blvd.) has been doing a tableside Caesar salad, made for 30 years by tenured busboys who are trained in the art of the Caesar. They memorize the recipe and make it all with just a fork and a spoon at your table.

"It's not the ingredients," says manager Armando Ayala. "It's how you put it together."

They start with a wooden bowl cured with olive oil and sprinkled with pepper. Then come the garlic, anchovies, spicy mustard, Tabasco, Worcestershire sauce, vinaigrette and olive oil with some Parmesan on top.

cravings

scan these pages with Layar to to get the salad must-haves.

turn over a new leaf

Elevate your own salad with these must-have products.



1. SEEDS OF INSPIRATION

Get a jump on your summer salad by planting now. John Gardener at Buchanan's Native Plants suggests a couple of exotic options like the lemon cucumber or shiso, otherwise known as Japanese basil. **$1.99 per pack. 611 E. 11th St. 713-861-5702, buchanansplants.com**



2. GO NATURAL

Monica Pope says that serving your salad in wooden bowls is a simple way to elevate your presentation. Bering's offers the spare, but elegant Nambé Anvil salad bowl with servers, which perch on the bowl's rim when not in use. **$175. Two Houston locations. berings.com**



3. SALAD COCKTAIL

Pope also makes the point that a salad is all about the balance of ingredients, a cocktail of sorts. Why not serve it that way in Williams-Sonoma's organic, individually blown glass compote bowls with footed base in blue or green? **$43.95. 4060 Westheimer. 713-212-0346, williams-sonoma.com**



4. IT'S A TOSS UP

These futuristic Dexas Salad Hands from Sur La Table ensure a no-slip salad experience. A switch up from acrylic or metal tongs, you can use them with salads or pasta, and they're dishwasher safe to boot. **$10. 1996 W. Gray St. 713-533-0400, surlatable.com**



5. SPICE IT UP

Barnaby's uses sumac in its Lebanese Chicken Fattoush Salad and there's no reason why you can't as well. Stop in at Penzey's Spices for sumac and other spices. The Kind Heart 8 Jar Spices set is a nice starter and has recipes to go with them. **$7.99, half-cup jar of sumac; $34.95, eight-jar set. 516 W. 19th St. 713-862-6777, penzeys.com**