



I always gain weight in the summer. I guess it's because my event schedule is not as busy, and likely because I'm spending more time on the couch with my sweet kitty Belle, binge watching *The Blacklist*, and *Poldark* and *Victoria*. Yep. The couch is most certainly the culprit.

Earlier this month, my husband Vince spent a week at Myrtle Beach with his brothers and I stayed home to catch up on paperwork and piddle around the house. While Vince was gone, I dined on frozen turkey pot pies (Marie Callender's are the *best*), microwaved nachos smothered with cheddar cheese and taco sauce, Publix's fried chicken tenders dipped in buffalo wing sauce and blue cheese dressing and other "healthy" stuff like that. By the end of the week my bathroom scale was screaming in pain when I stepped on it. So, I decided to get back on track and get rid of those pesky pounds before things totally got out of hand. I love salads, but I'm also a carnivore. I can easily forgo desserts if I can fill up on protein. My challenge was to come up with a selection of healthy and filling salads that included enough protein to be as satisfying as a complete meal. As it turns out, it was pretty easy. The photos are from salads that I made for myself before and after Vince's Myrtle Beach excursion. They were beyond delicious and really pretty simple to throw together. The recipes this week are mostly for the vinaigrettes, chili, condiments and toppings. You can increase or decrease the salad ingredients to serve one or to serve twenty. We're blessed with the best of the best summer fruits and vegetables in the Lowcountry. Take the time to slice, dice and chop. It's worth it. I promise.

Greek Chicken Salad (above)

Substitute fried chicken tenders from the deli if you don't feel like cooking.

For the vinaigrette:

¼ cup olive oil

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

½ teaspoon garlic salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

¼ teaspoon sugar

Place all ingredients in a small jar and shake to mix. Set aside until ready to serve.

For the tzatziki sauce:

Greek yogurt

English cucumber

Dried dill weed

Place yogurt in a bowl. Peel cucumber, remove seeds and dice into small pieces. Fold cucumber into the yogurt. Season to taste with dill weed. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Store leftover tzatziki in the refrigerator for up with 5 days.

For the salad:

Chicken breast tenders

Green leaf lettuce, chopped or torn

English cucumber, sliced

Grape tomatoes, sliced

Red onion, thinly sliced

Kalamata olives

Pepperoncini peppers, sliced

Capers, drained

Feta cheese, crumbled

Cut chicken tenders into bite-sized pieces. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat and add a couple of tablespoons of the vinaigrette to the pan. Saute chicken pieces until chicken is cooked through and juices run clear. Season with salt and pepper. Place salad greens on a plate; dress lightly with prepared vinaigrette. Top with sliced cucumber, grape tomatoes and red onion. Add chicken pieces, olives, peppers, capers, and feta cheese. Serve with tzatziki sauce on the side.



Chili Cheeseburger Salad

You've gotta have a cooked hamburger to pull this salad off. I had a leftover grilled burger in the fridge from dinner the night before. I warmed it in the microwave. It was great.

For the chili:

1 pound lean ground beef

1 tablespoon chili powder

1 teaspoon smoked paprika

1 teaspoon cumin

1 teaspoon oregano

1 teaspoon brown sugar

½ teaspoon onion powder

½ teaspoon garlic powder

Red pepper flakes, to taste

1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes

1 cup beef broth

1/3 cup ketchup

Salt and pepper, to taste

Brown the ground beef in a pan; drain well on paper towels and return to pan. Add all of the seasonings; mix well to combine. Add tomatoes, beef broth and ketchup. Heat over medium heat and then simmer for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Freeze leftovers for up to 3 months.

For the salad:

Hamburger patty, cooked to taste

Green leaf lettuce, chopped

Red onion, chopped

Sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

Medium tomato, sliced

Salt and pepper, to taste

Sliced pickled jalapenos

Bottled ranch or blue cheese dressing

Place lettuce and red onion on a dinner plate. Add cooked hamburger. Top hamburger with hot chili and cheddar cheese. Garnish with tomato; season with salt and pepper. Top with jalapeno slices. Serve with bottled salad dressing.



Grilled Summer Salad with Fresh Fruit

Grill the peaches (halved, skin on, pit removed) while you're cooking the meat. Peaches cook quickly and are delicious served warm or cold.

For the beef:

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar • 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice • 1 tablespoon dijon mustard • 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce • 2 cloves garlic, minced • ½ teaspoon dried oregano • ½ teaspoon dried basil • ½ teaspoon dried thyme • ½ teaspoon paprika • ¼ cup olive oil

1 (2 to 3-pound) London broil or flank steak

Combine balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, garlic, and spices. Whisk in olive oil. Place meat in a gallon-sized zip-lock bag. Pour marinade over meat. Marinate in the refrigerator for 12 to 48 hours. (The longer the meat marinates, the more tender it will be.) To cook, remove the meat from the marinade and let it come to room temperature. Preheat grill to high heat. Turn the grill down to medium high or let coals cool down before you put the meat on. Turn the meat about every 6 minutes. (Cooking time will depend on how hot the grill is and

the size of your meat. The meat will continue to cook as it rests so it's best to remove it from the grill when it's a bit underdone.) When the meat reaches an internal temperature of 130 degrees, remove from the grill and let rest for 10-15 minutes. Cut meat into thin slices across the grain.

For the salad:

Green leaf lettuce, chopped

Grilled peaches, sliced

Grape tomatoes, quartered lengthwise

Red onion, diced

Bacon, cooked and crumbled

Strawberries, sliced

Blueberries

Sliced almonds, toasted

Bottled balsamic dressing

Place lettuce on a plate. Add grilled slices of steak. Top with grilled peaches, tomatoes, red onion, bacon, strawberries and blueberries. Garnish with sliced almonds. Dress with bottled balsamic vinaigrette.



Lady's Island Shrimp Salad with Brown Sugar Vinaigrette

I love this vinaigrette! Besides being super easy to make, it's fabulous on fruit salads.

For the vinaigrette:

1/3 cup balsamic vinegar

2/3 cup brown sugar

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Place all ingredients in a clean jar and shake to mix. Shake again just before serving. Store

leftover vinaigrette in the refrigerator for up to 10 days.

For the salad:

Shrimp, peeled and deveined

Green leaf lettuce, chopped

Red onion, thinly sliced

Bacon, cooked and crumbled

Boiled egg, sliced

Grape tomatoes, quartered lengthwise

Gouda cheese, shredded

Grill, saute or boil shrimp; season with salt and pepper. Place salad greens on a plate. Top with Warm shrimp, red onion, bacon, boiled egg, grape tomatoes, and shredded cheese. Dress with brown sugar vinaigrette.

Chicken Enchilada Salad

