

## SHOP LIKE A PRO SALAD

No need to settle for a plate of floppy lettuce or tomatoes that look better than they taste – here are five things to perk up a salad, plus a quick recipe for each

**1** Lucy's zesty mayo dressing has a good punchy caper flavour that would rescue any under-flavoured tomato salad or add personality to iceberg lettuce. Use it on **barbecued courgettes**; toss them in the dressing hot off the grill and then add a handful of shredded **mint** and **basil** for a summer side dish. (£6, lucyscreatings.co.uk)



**2** Add a meaty edge to couscous salads, pepperonata or mixed leaves by snipping over Spanish smoking chorizo. Blanch **green beans** then cool, add **rocket**, halved **cherry tomatoes** and chopped **chorizo**. Dress with vinaigrette. (Unearthed; £199, widely available)



**3** Pepperonica peppers stuffed with feta and myzithra add bite and fragrance to salads and work well mixed in with pasta salad or char-grilled veg. Halve the **peppers** and scatter over shaved **fennel**, **cucumber** and chopped **chives**. Dress with **olive oil** and **lemon**. (Olives et al £5.50/230g, widely available)



**4** A decent crouton takes a leaf salad from limp to interesting – try Waitrose multigrain croutons with mixed whole seeds. Toss with **mixed leaves**, **chicken**, and **tarragon**. Dress with a mix of **mayo**, **mustard**, **tarragon** and **tarragon vinegar**. (£1/100g, Waitrose)



**5** A handful of smoked marcona almonds adds a sophisticated edge. Toss with chopped **dried apricots** and sliced **spring onions** in a pan with some **butter** and stir through left over **couscous** along with some cooked **chickpeas** and chopped **coriander**. (£5.49/140g, melburvandappleton.co.uk)



## CUPBOARD LOVE HONEY

Five ways to use that jar...

■ **HONEY FRIENDS** Whisk 6 egg whites to stiff peaks and sift over 75g plain flour, 200g icing sugar and 140g ground almonds. Add 200g melted butter and 2 tbsp runny honey. Fold together. Spoon into 12 buttered friand or muffin tins. Bake at 200C/180C/gas 6 for 18-20 minutes, or until they are risen and springy. Warm 4 tbsp runny honey and spoon a little over each friand.

■ **HOMEMADE GRANOLA** Melt 60g butter with 70ml honey and ½ tsp vanilla extract. Mix in 200g of your favourite nuts or seeds (e.g. chopped hazelnuts and pumpkin seeds) and 250g rolled oats. Spread in a roasting tray and bake for 20 minutes at 160C/140C fan/gas 3 until golden. When cool, add 150g dried fruit and store in an airtight container.

■ **HONEYED CARROTS** Peel some carrots and cut in half lengthways. Boil for 3-4 minutes. Drain. Put 3 tbsp runny honey and a large knob of butter in a roasting tin and heat in a 190C/170C fan/gas 5 oven for 3 minutes. Tip in the carrots, coating completely, and roast for 30 minutes until golden.

■ **HONEY AND MUSTARD MARINADE** Mix 3 tbsp clear runny honey, 4 tbsp soy sauce, 2 tbsp wholegrain mustard and ½ tsp toasted sesame seeds. Use to coat chicken or ribs before cooking.

■ **HONEY AND GINGER PLUMS** Pour 3 tsp ginger wine (or ginger ale) and 2 tsp clear honey into a saucepan and stir over a low heat until the honey has dissolved. Add halved plums, mix gently, cover and simmer. Stew for 5-10 minutes until tender. Serve warm with Greek yoghurt.



## WHAT SOMMELIERS DRINK AT HOME HIDALGO 'LA GITANA' MANZANILLA NV SHERRY

Rupert Taylor, head sommelier at The Boundary (theboundary.co.uk)

Wine should always have a sense of place. This classic dry sherry makes me think back to a great holiday last summer in Jerez with a couple of mates who weren't at all interested in sherry. Now they are completely converted, and most likely have a bottle in their fridges, too. This is perfect as an aperitif with almonds and olives, but works well with shellfish too. I wish people weren't nervous about sherry – some of our favourite flavours are acquired tastes so it's worth persevering. When it clicks you'll discover that some of the world's most delicious wines are also some of the most inexpensive. (£8.49, Tesco, Waitrose, Majestic)



## SOMMELIER SPEAK DECANTING

Whet with the candle under the bottle to cast light into the wine, and the flurry of napkins, this can sometimes seem like an act of showmanship by a sommelier determined to intimidate. However if you have invested in Chateau Swanik 1982, then the gentle pouring of the wine out of the bottle will clarify it and free it from the natural sediment that settles out of the wine over time. With a young wine, vigorous decanting – allowing oxygen to come into contact with the wine as you splash it into a jug – helps soften the wine a little. If you then pour it back in the original bottle before serving, that's 'double decanting'.

