

Eat the "Get Rich" Way - Pack a Tasty Salad in a Jar!

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Can you "get rich" from food? It's possible, when "getting rich" applies to your health. Nutrient-rich or nutrient-dense foods offer health benefits with relatively few calories.

"Nutrient dense" means that the nutrition in a food has not been diluted by calories from added solid fats, sugars, and sodium. Lots of food choices - vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat milk and milk products, and lean meats and poultry -- are nutrient-dense foods, provided they are prepared without adding solid fats or sugars. Here are some examples of these "get rich" food choices:

- ‡ Dark green leafy lettuce or spinach for salads, sandwiches, wraps
- ‡ Hummus and veggies instead of chips and dip
- ‡ Whole-grain breads and crackers
- ‡ Beans (any color!) added to soups, stews, burritos, or scrambled eggs; sprinkled in salads and blended with spices for great spreads or dips
- ‡ Water, tea, or non-fat milk with meals. Fruit-infused water is a refreshing change from plain water. Soda pop is a classic "empty calorie" nutrient-poor beverage.

Here's a recipe for a Layered Salad that will make you and your family "rich" with tasty, healthy food. Serve this layered salad in a bowl for your family, OR carry it as lunch in a jar.

Before you get started on the recipe, here's a secret to packing a perfect jar salad:

1. Dressing goes in first, so salad ingredients don't get soggy.
2. Add a grain, protein, and chunky vegetables.
3. Add the cheese, nuts, and dried fruit.
4. Leafy greens go in last and stay dry.

When jar is emptied, greens go in the salad bowl first, when you turn the jar over and unload it into the bowl to eat.

Layered Black Bean and Spinach Salad -- Makes 6 servings



- 6 tablespoons olive or canola oil
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar (or use your choice of vinegar)
- 1 tablespoon prepared mustard
- 12 cups baby spinach leaves, stems removed, loosely packed
- 3 cups halved cherry or grape tomatoes
- 1 medium yellow or red bell pepper, seeded, cut into quarters and thinly sliced
- 2 15-ounce cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 medium avocado, peeled, pitted, and sliced into ½-inch pieces

1. In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, vinegar, and mustard. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
2. In a deep, clear glass bowl, layer the salad: 6 cups of spinach leaves, 1½ cups of tomatoes, ½ of the yellow or red bell pepper, ½ of the beans, and ½ cup shredded cheese. Repeat.
3. Refrigerate. Add the avocado just before serving. To serve, pass the salad around the table, followed by the dressing.