

Crave-Worthy Caesar Salad

An authentic Caesar salad is all about crisp, chilled romaine hearts served with homemade creamy dressing and croutons. It is quick, simple, and bursting with flavor!

Today, I will share with you how to make a Caesar salad from scratch! Everything from the dressing to the croutons. Once you try this, you'll never want the store-bought dressing and croutons again!

The classic lettuce to use is Romain lettuce. Romaine has a crispy, mild, sweet flavor. Instead of using Romaine lettuce, I recommend using Romaine hearts because they are crisper than the outer leaves. Pick the youngest, crunchiest romaine heads you can find. Romaine lettuce is an excellent source of vitamin A and vitamin K. It is also a good source of folate.

Rinse the lettuce, remove dirt or unwanted particles on the leaves, and thoroughly dry. Only use the pale green and yellow inner leaves for the salad. Cut the fresh romaine lettuce or hearts into roughly 1 ½-inch pieces. Keep the lettuce cold in the refrigerator.

Parmigiano Reggiano is traditionally used when making a Caesar salad. I suggest using imported Parmigiano-Reggiano from Italy. Parmigiano Reggiano's flavor, texture, and complexity are hard to beat and worth seeking out over domestic Parmesan cheese. You can slice it or purchase it pre-shaved.

If you're trying to eat more greens, having a fresh batch of croutons around is a great motivator to toss together a quick salad. Croutons are easy to make with just two main ingredients and basic seasonings. For the best croutons, seek out a flavorful, crusty loaf of bread. You'll also need melted butter or olive oil, pepper, salt, and garlic powder. The fat helps the bread develop golden, crisp edges, and the seasonings amp up the flavor.

Preheat the oven to 400°F and line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Place a paper towel on a plate and set it aside.

Slice the bread into ¾-inch cubes using a serrated knife, or use your fingers to tear the bread into pieces gently. Three cups of cubed bread will be needed.

On a baking sheet, place the cubed bread. Drizzle with ¼ cup olive oil or melted butter and sprinkle with 1 teaspoon garlic powder, ¾ teaspoon salt, and black pepper to taste. Toss the bread gently until it's lightly coated, then arrange it in a single layer on the baking sheet.

Bake, tossing every 5 minutes, for about 15 minutes, until the croutons turn golden brown but still are chewy in the center. Once the croutons are golden brown, remove them from the oven, transfer them to the lined plate, and let the excess oil be absorbed. Let cool.

Croutons are best enjoyed within a few hours of baking. They can be kept in a sealed bag for several days at room temperature.

Who doesn't love a rich and creamy Caesar salad dressing? Though most people buy Caesar salad dressing in a bottle, homemade is easy to make and tastes much better than store-bought bottled dressing. Traditional Caesar salad dressing calls for raw egg yolks. Many people prefer a

mayonnaise-based recipe because it still contains pasteurized egg yolks and the needed oil. Instead of whole anchovies, I use anchovy paste.

Now it's time to put it all together to create a Caesar salad. Add the lettuce, cheese, and croutons in a large mixing bowl. Pour the dressing around the bowl on the inside. Mix the salad thoroughly, ensuring every leaf is coated with dressing and serve.

Once the dressing is mixed in, Caesar salad is meant to be eaten. However, it can be made in advance if the lettuce, dressing, cheese, and croutons are stored separately and covered in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Caesar salad makes a great addition to dinner or enjoyed as a meal with grilled chicken or protein of choice.