

Do you remember a time when salads were simple? Lettuce, tomato, and maybe a few shredded carrots. Simply labeled a “house salad”, these once traditional appetizers have evolved into signature entrees. Loaded with toppings, salads today have so many options to choose from. One of my favorites is “hearts of palm.”

Hearts of palm, also known as “squash cabbage”, is a delicious, crunchy vegetable harvested from the center of the cabbage palm tree. Though it resembles white asparagus, the flavor is much more delicate. Rich in protein, high in fiber, and low in fat, it is an obvious choice to accompany just about any type of salad. Usually boiled and processed before consumption, it is highly perishable yet boasts a wide array of unique health and nutrient benefits.

It is rare for a vegetable to be high in protein, but this one is, so it can easily be used as a substitute for meat in just about any meal. Proteins are essential to our diet and come in many varieties, but not all are created equal. Some proteins are of “higher” quality than others and that has a lot to do with their makeup. Put simply, proteins are composed of both essential and non-essential amino acids. Essential amino acids must be consumed in the diet, whereas non-essential ones are made by the body. As you might guess, it is not easy to find a food that contains each and every one of the essential amino acids, but surprisingly this amazing vegetable really delivers. High in potassium and B6, it also plays an important role in heart health because potassium helps trigger your heart to release blood to the rest of your body and maintains blood pressure. In fact, just one serving of hearts of palm provides over 60% of your recommended daily intake of Vitamin B-6.

Trying to describe its flavor is difficult, but I find that it satisfies my craving for salt, probably from the brining process. But for those of you who watch your salt intake, don't worry, it's not too high, just around 100 mg per serving. Try out some of these recipe ideas if you want to work this amazing and versatile vegetable into your diet.

## **Cress Salad**

This refreshing salad combines hearts of palm with watercress, tomatoes, salty olives, and juicy navel oranges.

## **Low Fat Dip**

Canned hearts of palm blended with olive oil, lime zest, and garlic.

## **Caribbean Salad**

Three whole navel oranges added to tomatoes, watercress, and yummy hearts of palms dressed with a cilantro vinaigrette made with 1 Tablespoon red wine vinegar, 2 teaspoons honey, ½ cup of olive oil, ⅓ cup cilantro leaves, 1 Tablespoon of shallots, and 3 Tablespoons of lemon juice.

## **Brazilian Salad**

Two cans of hearts of palm sliced in rounds, 1 large avocado, ½ cup of sweet onion, 1 cup of yellow cherry tomatoes, a whole squeezed lime and lime zest, ¼ cup of parsley. Toss with 2 Tablespoons of mayo and 2 Tablespoons of canola oil and a taste of salt and pepper.

## **Meal Reheating Instructions:**

Home delivered meals should be eaten immediately or refrigerated to avoid spoilage.

For best results

1. Reheat meals in the original packaging
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
3. Place meal on a cookie sheet
4. Reheat FROZEN meals  
30 minutes  
REFRIGERATED meals  
15 minutes  
Or until the internal temperature is at least 165 degrees.

For highest quality meals, we do not recommend microwave reheating.