

17 SATURDAY
DECEMBER 2016

TRY THIS FILLING AND SATISFYING SALAD FOR YOUR WINTER - BLAHS

By Melissa D'arabian

Winter is upon us. I live in San Diego, and let's be honest: The notion of us slogging through a frigid few months awaiting spring's thaw is ridiculous. Yet, I'm cold. It's chilly and cloudy and yes, sometimes, even rainy.

We all spend more time inside the minute sweater becomes jacket-weather. And when the indoor winter-blahs get to me, I turn toward my first line of defense to get out of my funk: my diet. When I'm in a slump, I immediately consider what I am eating. I stop processed sugar, and focus on getting an extra dose of veggies, protein, fiber and healthy fats filled with brain-and-heart-healthy Omegas.

This salad is that dose. It's filled with high-protein Brussels sprouts as that the main green (1 cup of Brussels sprouts has about as much protein as an egg white) coupled with nutrient-rich dark

green kale. Also in the salad are a bunch of crunchy healthy goodies like walnuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, hemp hearts and even flax seed. The varied textures make this dish super satisfying. A little cooked quinoa means that even ground flaxseed and hemp hearts will fit right in without a grainy mouth-feel. And a handful of pomegranate seeds add just the right amount of tart and sweet, rounding out the flavors perfectly. The whole salad is tossed with an avocado ranch dressing that is whipped up in a jiffy in the blender, so even the creamy fatty dressing is a nutritious ally.

It's a gorgeous salad - beautiful to behold and to eat. Sure, add a few ounces of poached or roasted salmon if you want more omegas and protein, but honestly this salad is filling and satisfying all on its own, with 16 grams of protein per serving even in its totally meatless state. Take that, Monday. Take that, winter.

WINTER SALAD WITH AVOCADO RANCH DRESSING

Ingredients

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Servings: 4

2 cups Brussels sprouts, stem end trimmed

2 cups thin slices of Lacinato kale

1 cup cooked quinoa

1/4 cup raw walnuts, chopped

3 tablespoons of raw sunflower seeds

1/2 cup toasted pumpkin seeds (pepitas)

3 tablespoons of raw hemp hearts (hemp seeds)

3 tablespoons of milled flaxseed (flaxmeal)

1/2 cup halved grape tomatoes

1/2 cup pomegranate seeds (also called arils)

1/4 cup chopped cilantro

Dressing:

1/2 large avocado

1/2 cup lowfat buttermilk

2 tablespoons prepared salsa

2 tablespoons lime juice (or lemon juice)

1/4 cup water

1 tablespoon minced shallot

1/2 cup roughly chopped cilantro

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon pepper

Preparation

Slice the Brussels sprouts very thinly with a sharp knife, or run them through a food processor fitted with a slicing blade. You will have about 3 cups of sliced sprouts when done. Mix the sprouts and sliced kale in a large bowl. Add the remaining salad ingredients and toss. In a blender, mix all the dressing ingredients until smooth and creamy. Add an additional tablespoon or two of water if too thick. Pour half the dressing over the salad and toss well. Add more dressing if desired. Serve. - AP

NOTE: Feel free to swap out nuts and seeds for your favorites.