

IN THE KITCHEN WITH *LeeAnn*



# Salad & Poolside Dips

I love salads. I could eat a "green salad" every single day. My carnivorous husband can take them or leave them, so I don't have them as often as I would like.

When I prepare a salad, I like to put "everything but the kitchen sink" in it. My husband likes lettuce, toma-

to and cheese. If I venture out and add some other ingredients, when I am doing the dishes I see a little pile of vegetables left in the bottom of his salad bowl.

More often than not, I am asked to bring the salad for luncheons, dinner parties or supper club dinners with friends and family. Apparently, most folks are like me and like lots of different ingredients.

I prepare my own homemade salad dressing, which really adds to the salad. They are so easy to prepare and really add to the quality of the salad. I prepare them in Mason jars and store them in the fridge.

Salads can become boring if you let them. Whether they are a side or a main dish meal, try to be creative. Try varieties of lettuce as your base for the salad: Iceberg, Romaine, spinach and leaf

lettuce are all great mixers. As far as vegetables go, give these a try: carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, radishes, cucumbers, mushrooms, blanched yellow squash and asparagus. Color is also important. Don't forget green, orange, red, and yellow bell peppers. Purple onions are a great change from white or green onions. Tomatoes aren't just red anymore. Give those red, orange and yellow cherry tomatoes a try. Not only do they look pretty, but give that salad an extra zing.

Canned vegetables can also be additions from your pantry: green beans, corn, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, artichoke hearts, chickpeas, black and stuffed olives. Cheese makes a great addition to your salad. Sharp or mild cheddar, Swiss, Mozzarella, feta or blue cheese can add a unique flavor.

Adding a meat to your salad can actually create a meal. Grilled or baked chicken slices, salami, shrimp, turkey, ham, and bacon are just a few ideas that can turn your side dish into a main course.

If you really want to get fancy, add some nuts and seeds. Sunflower seeds, almonds, pecans, walnuts and cashews can all be added for that extra crunch.

Don't forget those croutons. After you have added your favorite ingredients to personalize your own salad, sit back and enjoy.

Every year, we host the Flemming family for the 4th. The crowd could be anywhere from 20 - 40. We gather at the pool about 2:00 for the kiddos to swim. A variety of dips are served before we have a BBQ at 6:00. These are 3 of the dips I plan to serve. Hope you will give them a try. Thanks for reading.

**PEPPER JELLY DIP**  
 1 (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened  
 ¼ cup mayonnaise  
 2 tsp. Dijon mustard  
 1 tsp. Worcestershire  
 ¼ tsp. ground red pepper  
 1/3 cup thinly sliced green onions  
 4 oz. grated sharp Cheddar cheese  
 ½ cup pepper jelly  
 Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix cream cheese, mayonnaise, mustard Worcestershire, and pepper; stirring until smooth. Stir in green onions and cheddar cheese; spread into a pie plate or baking dish. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Place jelly with a small amount of water into a microwave-safe dish; stir until smooth. Cook for 200-20 seconds and spread over cheese dip right from oven.

\*You can use red or green pepper jelly. For the 4th I use the red pepper jelly to go with the red and blue

## \*New Chief

(Continued from page 1.) Simmons also is an emergency medical technician, has worked with the Holmes County School District for over a decade and owns a consulting business in the county. He is also a member of the board that oversees the Dr. Arenia C. Mallory Community Health Center, which has seven locations across Holmes, Leflore and Madison counties.

The last permanent police chief in Lexington was Charles Henderson, whom the board let go in January when the Department of Public Safety suspended his law enforcement certification.

After Henderson, the Board of Aldermen appointed interim chief Robert Kirklin, who left less than a month later. Kirklin previously worked for and retired from Lexington police and came out of retirement for the interim role. The board then appointed Gee as interim.

Henderson's departure also happened around the time when the Board of Aldermen voted to adopt police reforms recommended by the U.S. Department of Justice. Those reforms were based on a 2023 pattern and practice investigation that found constitutional violations and a practice of jailing people for unpaid fines without determining if they could pay them.

Simmons said he is working closely with the mayor and the board to implement the DOJ recommendations.

Years earlier, residents alleged Lexington police used discriminatory policing practices, excessive force and retaliation against critics. Some of those actions resulted in lawsuits, including one filed by the legal organization JULIAN.

**POOLSIDE DIP**  
 1 can sliced black olives, drained  
 2 small cans green chiles, drained  
 1 tomato, diced  
 8 oz. grated sharp cheddar cheese  
 (0.6 oz) pkg. Zesty Italian dressing mix  
 ¼ cup vinegar  
 3 Tbsp. water  
 ½ cup olive oil  
 Combine all ingredients; mix well to make sure everything is evenly coated. Refrigerate and serve with crackers or tortilla chips

**BEST SUMMER DIP**  
 1 (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened  
 16 oz. sour cream  
 1 can chopped Ro-Tel, drained



As adults, we all can look back on our lives and find people or moments that will forever be etched into our memories. Some of them will not only forever be remembered, but they are the ones that changed the trajectory of our lives. It may be the death of a loved one, an illness, or a tragedy, but these periods moved us to places we would have never otherwise gone. Thankfully some of these events were good as well. For instance, I can remember my first time fishing at the lake and my first time sitting in a tree stand waiting on a deer. Both became part of the foundation of these articles that I have written for 24 years and the ministry they birthed. But the real life-changing event came without excitement. In fact, without one small gesture, it would have been quickly forgotten. It didn't come from anything that was special or anyone that was fa-

mous. But it is the one thing that changed my life forever. And it is the one thing I continue to go back to, to offer to others who may need that same life change as I did.

It happened one evening as I was preparing to speak at a wild game dinner, 18 years ago, this month. The event was small and held outdoors. About an hour before that event, two men drove up in an older van. I remember a couple of things about their arrival. First, as I noticed the interior of the van, it looked like they were living out of it. I don't think they were, but it looked like it. And secondly, as I noticed the appearance of these two guys, it looked like they were living out of the van. Lol. There was nothing special about our encounter. But for some reason I noticed their kindness. After a few introductions, they handed me a thin paperback book and invited me to read it. I thanked them, tossed the book in my truck, and went on with my business. I don't know how long after that, that I decided to pick up that book, but when I began to read, I couldn't put it down. It changed my life because it showed me that God had already freed me from the responsibility of trying to live the Christian life in my own strength. It explained how Paul came to the end of his efforts to keep the law so that he could simply trust Christ to live His life through him. In essence, it broke the grip that legalism had on me and showed me what grace really was, and how it was not only responsible for my salvation, but also for any spiritual growth I will ever experience. My job was not to produce the life of Christ. My job was simply to bring myself to the Source. Since that time, I have shared that message across the country, looking for others like me who have grown tired of their inability to live the Christian life by their own efforts. Looking for others who need someone to fire them from the job they were never qualified to do. So, happy anniversary to me! Eighteen years ago, two ordinary men handed me a little book, and God used it to change everything. "It's for freedom, that Christ has set you free." ~Paul

\*Lee Ann Fleming is a Holmes County native, food columnist and has garnered fame for her recipes featured in the film, *The Help*. Fleming can be reached at [lafkitchen@hughes.net](mailto:lafkitchen@hughes.net).

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 Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 23 years.

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