

Lopez-Style Cactus Salad

Recipe by Emanuel Lopez

Cooking Time: 20 minutes
Servings: 6



Ingredients

- 5 nopales de-spined and diced (if you're using fresh, you can use a pinch of baking soda)
- 2 carrots peeled and cut horizontally
- head of cauliflower, sliced to bite sized pieces
- 5 roma tomatoes, diced
- head of garlic, peeled and thinly sliced
- ¾ purple onion julienned and halved
- ½ cup lemon juice
- pickled jalapenos (about 2 whole jalapenos and some juice)
- 5 Tb olive oil
- 1 cup crumbled cotija
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- 1 tsp Mexican oregano
- vegetable oil
- fine grain salt

Directions

1. **Stir fry 1** - After the vegetables are prepared, set them aside. On a hot non-stick pan, stir fry* the garlic, carrots and onion. Add a large pinch of salt. This is a quick process; it is meant only to crisp the edges. Stir fry for approximately 30 seconds. **Vegetable oil is used when olive oil is cooked it loses major nutritional value.*
2. **Stir fry 2** - Add the cauliflower and red bell pepper to crisp its edges and absorb the flavor of the garlic. This is also done in about approximately 35 seconds as to not overcook the veggies. Set them aside in the medium bowl.
3. **Nopales** - While the pan is still hot, add the nopales and another large pinch of salt. If the nopales are fresh add a small pinch of baking soda.* Continue for about a minute and a half to get rid of its slime and give texture to the cactus. **Nopales can be bought pre-diced in jars. Adding baking soda to fresh nopales when cooking helps preserve their bright green color.*
4. Rinse the cactus under cold running water until the slime is almost removed and add to the large mixing bowl.

5. **Final mix** – Mix all your ingredients including pickled ginger in your large bowl, season to taste with remaining ingredients of your choice (lemon juice, pickled chilis, olive oil, cotija, cilantro, oregano and sesame oil), plate, serve, and enjoy. Garnish with sliced dragon fruit.

About Emanuel Lopez

My name is Emanuel (Manny) Lopez, I'm 17 years old and I was born and raised in Las Vegas Nevada. My father and mother were always in the kitchen cooking up a storm so it was only natural for me to pick up a skill or two. I enjoy the independence that came along with cooking and being part of Mojave High School's culinary program was a great place for me to show off my knack for cooking.

The cactus salad I made was chosen both because it's part of my heritage as a Latino, and because it's one of the first dishes I ever had to make on my own outside the house. My independence and skill really shone through this dish.

I started helping around the kitchen when I was 7. Peeling onions and making quesadillas were the only reasons I was in the kitchen but as I grew older the dishes became more elaborate and soon I would find myself preparing a plethora of dishes.

Food means a lot to me. My dad worked 25 years in the foodservice industry and even became a corporate trainer. I'm proud of his accomplishments and he has inspired me to always hold onto my ties to cooking. I wish that by the time I'm his age I can cook wonderful meals for my family.