

I have chosen three very easy recipes to share although there is quite a bit of slicing and chopping involved. A good sharp knife makes the job easier. Top tip from my son Aidan who is the chef in Greys – don't put your chopping knives in the dishwasher, it will blunt them!

Nacho Dip

Ingredients.

1 packet cream cheese

3 Tbsp mayonnaise

Diced red, green and yellow peppers

½ bunch of scallions sliced

Grated cheddar cheese

1 jar salsa (I like the hot one)

Large bag tortilla chips

Beat the cream cheese and mayonnaise together until smooth and well combined. Put this mixture in the bottom of a shallow dish (a pasta bowl is ideal) and smooth the top.

Open the salsa and pour the whole jar over the cream cheese/mayo. mixture.

Layer the rest of the veg. on top and finish with the grated cheddar.

Open the tortilla chips and start scooping up the dip.

WARNING! Can be messy to eat so have some napkins handy.

Layered Salad

This recipe was given to me by Leigh Henderson. It is great party food as you don't need a knife and fork to eat it, everything is chopped up! The quantities given make a party sized salad – I use half the quantity for us.

Ingredients.

1 iceberg lettuce
6 hardboiled eggs chopped
4oz grated cheese
4oz frozen peas
2 crunchy apples cored and chopped
8oz grilled streaky bacon chopped
1 bunch scallions chopped
Mayonnaise

Cut the lettuce in half and slice thinly. Place in the bottom of a large serving bowl.

Place the remaining ingredients in layers on top of the lettuce.

Thinly slice the remaining half iceberg lettuce and place on top of the layers.

Cover the whole of the last layer with mayonnaise, probably most of a small jar!

Cover with clingfilm and refrigerate until needed.

Just before serving toss the whole salad together until everything is really well mixed up.

Halloumi and Watermelon Bulghur Salad.

This is one of my favourite salads, really tangy and full of fresh herbs. Asda in Ballyclare don't usually have bulghur wheat in stock. I buy it in Tesco or Sainsburys. If you have difficulty sourcing it you could substitute couscous for the bulghur.

Ingredients.

200g bulghur wheat.

50g pumpkin seeds.

3Tbsp olive oil

250g pack halloumi, cut into 10-12 slices

1 cucumber, halved lengthways, seeds scooped out with a spoon and cut into chunks.

Large bunch of fresh herbs chopped. I like basil, mint, coriander and parsley.

Zest and juice of 2 lemons.

Watermelon. If you don't want to buy a whole watermelon Asda usually have wee snack packs for sale. Three or four of those will be plenty.

Place the bulghur wheat in a heatproof bowl and season with salt and pepper. Add boiling water- just enough to cover the wheat. Cover with clingfilm and set aside.

Heat a frying pan and toast the pumpkin seeds. They will crackle and pop! Tip them into a dish and return the pan to the stove.

Heat a drizzle of olive oil and fry the halloumi slices for 2-3 minutes each side. I think they look like pieces of potato bread! Set the halloumi aside.

Unwrap the bulghur wheat- it should have absorbed all the water. If it hasn't, just drain off the excess.

Add the remaining oil, the cucumber, herbs, lemon zest and juice, watermelon and pumpkin seeds and toss well. Transfer to a serving platter and arrange the halloumi slices on top. Sprinkle some fresh herb leaves over the top for a cheffy flourish!