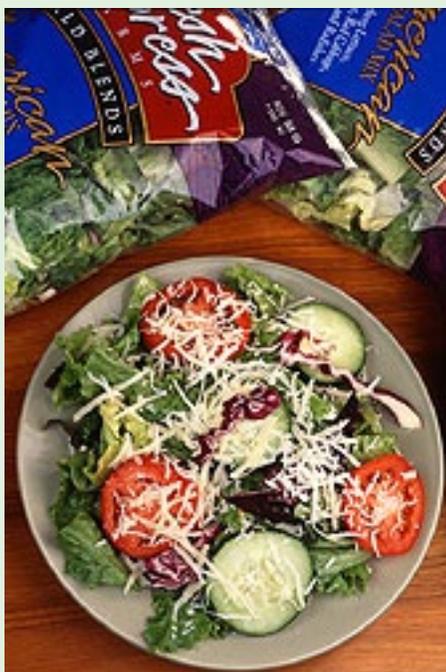


# Did You Know?



We all know salads are good for us, even if we don't always eat enough vegetables. But did you know that ARS has played a leading role in making sure that there are plenty of high-quality lettuces of different colors and types available for your favorite salad?

As part of its extensive lettuce breeding program,

ARS scientists have developed many disease-resistant lettuce varieties. Lettuce is susceptible to many viruses and other pathogens that cause wilts, dieback, and other diseases. Helping U.S. farmers fight back against these diseases is even more crucial when you consider that nearly all the lettuce consumed in the United States is produced domestically. In fact, two states—California and Arizona—produce more than 90 percent of the country's commercial lettuce.

ARS researchers at Salinas, CA, have led the way in making sure your favorite lettuce makes it to the salad spinner. For example, they've developed iceberg lettuce breeding lines that are resistant to the viruses that cause "lettuce big vein" and lettuce mosaic. These viruses can cause major losses in fields with susceptible varieties.

ARS researchers in Salinas have released three new leafy lettuce breeding lines with resistance to corky root, a serious bacterial disease of lettuce. And they've developed seven new iceberg lettuce breeding lines with resistance to bacterial leaf spot, which causes major problems in California. In spite of all the interesting, colorful, and diverse lettuce types we see in the stores, iceberg lettuce is still the most popular lettuce eaten in America.

ARS researchers in Salinas have also come up with the world's first leafminer-resistant green leaf lettuce. Leafminers are flies that lay eggs on lettuce leaves. The larvae that hatch from the eggs then bore into the lettuce, causing extensive leaf damage if left unchecked.

So the next time you bite into a crunchy lettuce salad, you'll know that ARS researchers played a role in making it happen.

### Did you know that...

- U.S. production of fresh head lettuce in 2010 was 5.4 million pounds?
- U.S. per capita consumption of lettuce in 2010 was 17 pounds?

Source: [USDA Economic Research Service](#)

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