

## Pomegranate Ensalada de Noche Buena

Eight to sixteen romaine lettuce leaves, (the number depends upon the size of the leaves and the size of the salad bowl) washed, dried in a salad spinner or by shaking the water off them into the sink, and arranged around the sides of a large bowl with the stems in the center

Dressing: juice of one orange and one lemon, mixed with 4 T. liquid honey

All of the seeds of a medium to large pomegranate

All of the sections of two navel oranges, cut into bite-sized pieces

One large jicama, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces

One small can of mild green chiles, diced

One small sweet Bermuda or Maui onion, peeled and diced

4 ounces of soft (not tough) dried fruit, diced (papaya spears, apricots, mango, peach, pear, etc.)

The smaller inner leaves of the romaine head you used to line the salad bowl, washed, dried and sliced or torn into bite sized pieces. Use more lettuce if you like.

Lightly toss together all of the ingredients except the big romaine leaves lining the salad bowl. Pour the tossed salad into the romaine lined bowl and serve immediately.

I love the combination of contrasting flavors in the recipe above. However, as folk traditions often do, Ensalada de Noche Buena varies from household to household. I have seen a wide variety of ingredients used, including the following:

- Roasted peanuts or pinenuts, sprinkled whole on top and/or chopped and mixed into the salad
- Peeled, cored, chopped apples
- Peeled, sliced beets, steamed and chilled
- Mayonnaise thinned with fruit juice
- Peeled, sliced ripe bananas
- Fresh pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into bite sized pieces
- Stick sugarcane, peeled and cut into bite sized pieces

I encourage you to invent your own Ensalada de Noche Buena based on what is most easily available and pleasing to your palate.