

## **CWA of NSW Product of the Week**

### **Romaine or Cos lettuce**

Commonly known in Australia as Cos, it is a variety of lettuce (*Lactuca sativa* L. var. *longifolia*) that grows in a tall head of sturdy leaves with firm ribs down their centres. Unlike most lettuces, it is tolerant of heat. The thick ribs, especially on the older outer leaves, should have a milky fluid that gives the cos lettuce the typically fine-bitter herb taste.

This lettuce is a common salad green and is the usual lettuce used in Caesar salad. Romaine lettuce is commonly used in Middle Eastern cuisine. It may also be cooked. It grows best in temperate regions in Australia mostly found in Victoria where Cos is the second largest lettuce variety grown.

Cos lettuce is an excellent source of vitamin K, folate and molybdenum. It is also a good source of dietary fibre, manganese, potassium, copper, and iron, and vitamins biotin, vitamin B1 and vitamin C.

It is suggested that the Caesar Salad was invented in the 1924 in Mexico by Caesar Cardini. A Caesar salad is a salad of romaine (cos) lettuce and croutons dressed with parmesan cheese, lemon juice, olive oil, egg, Worcestershire sauce, anchovies, garlic, and black pepper. Whilst the original and more traditional recipes for this dish used raw eggs in the dressing many current recipes do not.

### **Quick Caesar Salad**

(Serves 2)

2 tablespoons mayonnaise

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

2 tablespoons grated Parmesan, plus more, shaved, for serving

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Salt and black pepper

1/2 head cos lettuce, torn into pieces (about 6 cups)

1 cup croutons (These can be made by lightly baking sourdough bread in the oven about 20min)

### **Method:**

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, lemon juice, Parmesan, mustard and ¼ teaspoon each of salt and pepper.
2. Add the lettuce and toss to coat. Top with croutons, and additional shaved Parmesan, if desired.
3. To make the sourdough croutons, toss 1 cup of 1 inch cubes crustless sourdough bread with 4 tablespoons olive oil. Spread the bread cubes on a flat tray lined with baking paper and bake at 200°F for 20 to 25 minutes until lightly golden.