



Nine No Cook (mostly) Summer Salads



In the heat of summer, we want something cool and refreshing. Cold dark winter nights and the comforting slow braised meats and savory soups are now far behind us. The time of sweltering nights, rocking chairs on the porch and slowly turning ceiling fans are ahead of, if not already upon us.

This is also a time of the garden bounty, which often starts slowly and can cascade into a torrent of produce. If you have had a garden, you might be familiar with the sudden onslaught of tomatoes and zucchini, to the point you are trying to give it away as fast as you can harvest. The days of kitchen counters piled high with vegetables awaiting their turn in the canner are fast approaching.

This small collection of summer salads recipes make use of that fresh produce, and are, for the most part, cooking free. They will not only help you use up that produce, but will also help take the heat off.

Many of these salads may have started as a side dish, but in the heat of summer, are perfect as a main course. Combine two or three on a plate as a multi-salad main! I have included a few dips, which, when combined with sliced vegetables and some bread, can be a satisfying snack or meal in their own right.

There is no need to be a slave to the recipes, adjust, and adapt to your tastes and make it your own!

Stay cool, and as always, Eat Well & Keep Digging!



Chopped Salad

Also known as a Cobb salad, I have also heard this referred to as a garbage salad, though no one would refuse it. If arranged artfully, it can make for a very impressive presentation. Make a big one for a party! This recipe is very adaptable and the quantities are more suggestion than hard and fast rule.

Ingredients:

1 small head romaine (or any lettuce) chopped - about 3 cups
1 hardboiled egg peeled and quartered lengthwise
2 strips cooked bacon rough chopped
5-6 cherry tomatoes halved
2 oz cheddar (or whatever is your favorite) cheese shredded or in cubes. Crumbled blue cheese is great!
1 small avocado seeded peeled and diced (a splash of lemon juice after cubing will keep it from browning)
3 green onions sliced thin, including a few inches of the green stem
¼-cup black olives roughly chopped

Optional ingredients:

Fresh mozzarella
Tuna packed in oil,
Left over grilled vegetables
Leftover grilled meat
Mushrooms, fresh or marinated
Marinated artichoke hearts
Fresh, grilled or pickled sweet peppers.
Chopped celery
Sliced red onion

Directions:

Place Romaine into a shallow serving bowl.
Arrange the other ingredients in stripes across the lettuce. Try not to repeat colors side by side.
For a large salad, I will arrange it in a sunburst pattern from the center out to the side of the bowl. It is both spectacular as well as delicious.

Serve with dressing on the side; if you dress it before service, any leftovers are likely to be soggy.



Cowboy Caviar

This is a great salad for a picnic or BBQ. Serve a big portion for a main course! With creamy beans, crunchy vegetables, a little heat, and tangy dressing, this salad has a little something for everyone. Serve cold or at room temperature.

Ingredients:

One 15 oz can each of drained and rinsed,

- Light red kidney beans,
- Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
- black-eyed peas,
- black beans,
- whole sweet corn

2 cloves garlic finely minced

1 medium red onion finely diced

1 red sweet bell pepper finely diced

2 stalks celery finely diced

2 jalapeno peppers halved, seeded and finely diced (optional)

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

¼ cup red wine vinegar

1 tablespoon prepared mustard

1 fist sized bunch of cilantro, roughly chopped (if you don't like cilantro use flat leafed parsley)

Salt & pepper to taste.



Directions:

In a small bowl whisk together vinegar and mustard, slowly drizzle in olive oil while whisking continuously – set aside.

In a large bowl combine remaining ingredients except salt and pepper. Toss evenly.

Add dressing a little at a time and gently toss until desired “wetness”

Season with salt and pepper.

Taste to check seasonings – re-season if necessary

Refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight to let flavors marry.

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Broccoli Cauliflower Salad

When my daughters were very young, I would often get take-away fried chicken for dinner at a little deli nearby. I would usually pick up this salad as a side dish and they loved it so much, I started making it myself. The girls are grown now, but I still make this!

A mixture of flavors and textures, this simple salad is refreshing as well as visually appealing. You may use a food processor to cut up the broccoli and cauliflower, but be very careful not to over process the ingredients, you want light and feathery broccoli and cauliflower, not paste. You could omit the bacon and cheese to satisfy vegetarian and vegan desires. But the smoky chewy bacon is a good counter point to the sweet dressing.

Ingredients:

Roughly equal amounts of cauliflower and broccoli florets very finely minced. – about 1.5 – 2 cups each
½ cup red onion very finely diced
½ cup finely diced sweet red pepper
½ cup shredded cheddar cheese.
3 slices cooked bacon, chopped fine
Cole slaw dressing (see recipe on page 12)
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Combine all ingredients except dressing in a large bowl. Mix well. Add dressing a little at a time stirring between additions until desired consistency.
Taste and add salt and pepper as needed
Chill for at least an hour, up to overnight.

* Note, as the salad chills, it will release more moisture. You can always add more dressing before service, but it is difficult to remove it!



Beet, Orange and Red Onion Salad

I have grown more fond of beets as time goes on. From oven roasted tiny jewels, to Beet Ginger relish, I love the earthy flavor and beautiful colors.

This recipe is a classic! Try it as a sophisticated starter, or with some crusty bread as a light meal. In this case less is more!

Ingredients:

Beets cooked and sliced – canned (drained and patted dry) beets will work if you choose not to cook.

2 Oranges

Red Onion

Olive oil

Red wine vinegar

Salt and pepper to taste



Directions:

Put the cooked beets in a bowl; add a pinch of salt and a splash of the vinegar. Toss very gently so as not to break them.

Cut the ends off the oranges and cut the peels off lengthwise. Slice peeled oranges about as thick as the beets.

Slice the red onions into thin rings. I used a mandolin instead of a knife.

Assemble the salad by putting down a layer of sliced beets, followed by a layer of orange slices topped by a pinch of salt, grind of black pepper, dash of vinegar and dribble of olive oil. Add a layer of the sliced onions.

Repeat. Top with a little more olive oil if you choose.



Southwest “Tabouleh”

Tabouleh (also tabouli) is a traditional Mediterranean grain salad. Bulgur, parsley and mint form the basis of this hearty salad. By substituting cilantro for the parsley and mint, and adding minced spicy jalapeño (use Serrano if you want more heat) this salad takes on a decidedly southwestern flair. It will last for several days in the refrigerator and hours on a buffet table.

Ingredients:

1 cup bulgur

Boiling water

3 cloves garlic finely diced (you can use less...)

1 tsp salt

¼ cup lemon juice (fresh is always better)

½ cup olive oil

1 small cucumber peeled, seeded and diced

2 jalapeño peppers seeded and finely diced

½ cup cooked rinsed garbanzo beans

1 - 2 cups packed chopped cilantro

1 cup halved grape tomatoes

½ cup red onion, finely diced OR 5-6 scallions minced. Use both the green and white part if using scallions

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Put bulgur wheat in medium large bowl.

Add enough boiling water to cover wheat. Stir, cover and let stand until bulgur is tender – about 30 minutes. Drain.

Mix lemon juice and olive oil, whisk to combine

Add salt, garlic and a little bit of the lemon juice/olive oil mixture to the cooked bulgur.

Toss together – add enough dressing to moisten but you do not want it soggy.

Mix well and cover – At this point bulgur mixture may be chilled for up to 24 hours.

30 minutes before serving add remaining ingredients and mix well.

Taste and adjust salt and pepper as needed.



Walleye Ceviche

Walleye is a mild, firm fresh water fish. Ceviche is a Latin American dish normally made with saltwater fish. But walleye works wonderfully here. Ceviche uses acid rather than heat to cook the fish. Use the absolute freshest fish you can, preferably something you caught the same day. Serve with corn chips or crackers, or in a martini glass for an elegant appetizer.

Ingredients:

1 lb. walleye filet
8 oz. lemon juice
1 Tablespoon salt
2 cups Pico de Gallo (see page 9)

Directions

Slice fillets into very small pieces.
Marinate in the lemon juice and salt for at least 4 hours in medium bowl (over night in fridge is good).
Drain and lightly rinse fish.
Mix fish with Pico de Gallo





Pico De Gallo –Fresh salsa

The Beak of the Rooster – this sharp fresh salsa is a staple in my kitchen during the summer when tomatoes are at their peak. I wouldn't make this in the winter when the tomatoes are a pale excuse compared to their summer cousins. Use this up quickly – it doesn't store well.

Ingredients:

1 large red onion roughly chopped
2 Serrano chilies – stemmed, halved, and seeded roughly chopped – You could use jalapeno or habanero if you want less or extra heat respectively
4 ripe medium tomatoes roughly chopped – about 2 cups
1/3 cup lime juice + extra for adjusting
1 tablespoon vinegar
1/2 cup cilantro leaves chopped
Salt to taste

Directions:

In a food processor pulse garlic and chilies until finely chopped but not liquefied
Add tomatoes and onion – pulse until chopped
Add lime juice, vinegar and cilantro - pulse until blended.
Add more lime juice if needed to correct consistency
Season to taste with salt.

Serve with chips or as a bright fresh sauce on scrambled eggs, omelets, or grilled meats.



Hummus

This popular dip/spread is easy to make and good for you! The only reason to buy it is if you are in dire need and do not have time to make it yourself.

Chickpeas are super economical in dry form and just a little more expensive in canned form. Also known as ceci or chickpeas, they are all delicious and a good source of fiber and protein.

If made by hand using a masher or a potato ricer, the finished product will be a bit more rustic than using a food processor. I do not recommend using a blender. I have burnt out two making this.

Delicious as a snack with bread, pita, crackers or raw vegetables, it is also super as a sandwich spread instead of mayo!

Ingredients (basic):

2 cups cooked garbanzo beans (or 1 15.5 oz can drained and rinsed)
¼ cup tahini (sesame paste/butter)
¼ - ½ cup Olive oil (extra for serving)
1 – 2 Tablespoons Lemon juice
Salt and Pepper to taste

Possible add-ins:

Roasted Garlic (or raw if you like it hot)
Caramelized onion
Roasted red pepper

Directions:

Place cooked, drained, and rinsed beans in food processor.
Add Tahini.
Pulse until mealy.
Add lemon juice, pulse a few more times.
With processor running, slowly add olive oil until you reach desired texture. (You may have to stop and scrape down sides.)
Traditionally this can be rather thin; I like it a bit thicker.
Add any add-ins (if any) and pulse to incorporate.

Place hummus in a shallow dish, dress with a little more olive oil. Serve with pita, crackers or crudité.



Watermelon, Feta, and Basil Salad with Balsamic Glaze

Of all the foods I associate with summer, other than vine ripe tomatoes, watermelon takes the prize. Crisp, sweet, running off your chin juicy, sitting on the back porch spitting seeds.... nothing brings me back to childhood summers like watermelon.

This salad is super simple and you can modify it anyway you'd like. The title of the recipe says it all in terms of the ingredient list. If you do not have balsamic glaze you could make some by cooking down balsamic vinegar until thick.

Cut the watermelon however, you would like, crumble some feta, thinly slice the red onion, and make a chiffonade of basil.



Add a drizzle of glaze on the plate and assemble.

Garnish with whole basil leaf.

This was refreshing and elegant. Crisp watermelon, the salty tang of feta, the sharp bite of red onion, all pulled together by the silky sweetness of the balsamic glaze. The watermelon could have been darker red, but you never can tell what will be inside!

A great starter or a tasty light snack. Make this salad this summer!



Quick Cole Slaw Dressing

This sweet and tangy dressing is perfect for slaw. It is not too thick but is still satisfying.

Ingredients:

1 cup Mayonnaise
2 tablespoons vinegar + extra if needed.
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Put mayonnaise in a bowl.
Add vinegar and sugar.
Whisk until smooth, adding more vinegar if desired
Whisk in sugar and mustard until smooth
Add salt and pepper as desired.

Makes about 1.25 cups