



SCOTT PEACOCK'S  
**chopped  
salad**

TOSS YOUR OLD IDEAS ABOUT MIXED GREENS. CHEF SCOTT PEACOCK SHOWS YOU HOW TO BUILD A NEW STYLE OF SALAD FROM THE DRESSING UP.

Even though the name sounds aggressive, a chopped salad is a *gently* tossed mix of crunchy bite-size vegetables and crisp lettuce.

“It’s easy to wreck a gorgeous head of lettuce,” says Scott, “but it’s just as easy to work with it so you preserve its flavor and crisp texture.”

The secret is to use a light touch when washing the lettuce and when mixing it with the chopped vegetables. (His step-by-step handling tips are on *page 193*.)

Every great salad deserves a great dressing, and to make sure the fresh flavor of the vegetables comes through, Scott uses just four ingredients for the dressing. It owes its silky texture to *crème fraîche* (pronounced *krehm FRESH*), which is a tangy cousin of sour cream.

## the ideal chopped salad

IS A BLEND OF THE FRESHEST, MOST COLORFUL INGREDIENTS THE PRODUCE AISLE OR FARMER'S MARKET HAS TO OFFER.



### INGREDIENTS

#### DRESSING

- 2 to 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ lemon
- 1 7- to 8-oz. carton crème fraîche\* or sour cream

#### SALAD

- 2 hearts romaine lettuce
- 2 ears fresh corn, kernels cut from cob
- 4 oz. green beans, trimmed and cut in 2-inch lengths
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cucumber, seeded and chopped
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh chives
- Maldon sea salt,\*\* other sea salt, or salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 avocado, halved, seeded, peeled, and cut into chunks
- 6 slices bacon, crisp-cooked and chopped

\*To make your own crème fraîche, in a jar or bowl stir together 1 cup heavy cream and 2 tablespoons buttermilk. Cover and let stand at room temperature, out of direct sunlight, for 12–36 hours, until thickened. Refrigerate up to 1 week.

\*\*Scott prefers Maldon brand sea salt from England, [maldonsalt.co.uk](http://maldonsalt.co.uk), for its pure flavor and light texture. “It’s like snowflakes,” he says. The salt is available online at [seasalt.com](http://seasalt.com) or at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).



**PREPARE DRESSING** Peel garlic, split lengthwise, and remove any green germ or interior sprout. “Otherwise you can get a sour flavor,” says Scott. Finely chop the garlic with a generous sprinkling of kosher salt. “The salt absorbs the oils released from the garlic and helps with the next step.” Hold knife with blade facing away from you; repeatedly rub garlic and salt together with flat of the blade to work it into a fine paste. Transfer mashed garlic to a small bowl. Squeeze lemon over garlic, catching seeds with your fingers. Stir in an additional sprinkling of salt. Allow to stand 10 to 15 minutes so lemon can tame the garlic—“raw garlic can cause indigestion,” Scott says. Whisk in crème fraîche and season with salt and a few grinds of black pepper. To give flavors time to develop, refrigerate for 1 hour. The dressing keeps in the refrigerator up to 3 days.



**PREPARE LETTUCE** “Good lettuce is critical to the salad,” says Scott, “so look for heads that are free of browning or bruising, and they should be firm to the touch.” Wash lettuce *gently*, submerging in a large bowl or well-scrubbed kitchen sink. “Lettuce needs plenty of water to move about in,” he says. “Work in small batches so you don’t crush it.” After lifting lettuce from water, allow to drain well. (“Or you can spin *slowly* in small batches in a salad spinner,” he says. “Fast spinning can bruise the lettuce.” Lettuce needs to be crisp and thoroughly dry or the dressing won’t coat properly, so arrange leaves in a single layer on clean, absorbent kitchen towels or paper towels. Cover with a second clean towel, then *gently* roll up jelly-roll-style and slide into a large plastic bag and refrigerate. Just before using, cut into bite-size pieces.

## AMERICAN CLASSICS food



**PREPARE VEGETABLES** “Ingredients are personal and vary with the cook and the season,” Scott says, “but pick the freshest, best-looking produce at your market and you can’t go wrong.” Cook corn and green beans in a large amount of rapidly boiling, lightly salted water for 1 to 3 minutes. Drain and submerge in lightly salted ice water to stop the cooking. Drain, and spread on kitchen towels or paper towels. “If the vegetables are wet, you’ll get a milky salad,” Scott says. For best-looking avocado do not scoop flesh from skin. Instead, remove skin from the avocado by gently peeling it away in strips.



**COMBINE VEGETABLES AND DRESSING** In a very large salad bowl combine corn, beans, cherry tomatoes, and cucumber. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and half the chives. Add two or three spoonfuls of dressing and toss gently, then sample. “It’s important to taste the dressed vegetables so they have the right amount of salt, pepper, and chives before adding the lettuce,” Scott says.



**FINAL TOSS** Once vegetables are coated, add lettuce to bowl. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and most of the remaining chives. “Chives and the proper seasoning really make the salad sing.” Add an additional drizzle of dressing. Gather vegetables from bottom of the bowl and lift up and over the lettuce. Repeat until ingredients are just mixed, adding additional dressing as necessary to coat. Just before serving, add the avocado and bacon. “Adding avocado too soon turns it into guacamole,” Scott says. Top servings with additional chives. **MAKES 8 SERVINGS.**

**EACH SERVING** 175 cal, 13 g fat, 29 mg chol, 330 mg sodium, 13 g carbo, 3 g fiber, 5 g pro.



Want to learn more? For additional how-to photos, and to watch chef Scott Peacock demonstrate this recipe and others, go to [bhg.com/americanclassics](http://bhg.com/americanclassics). And now you can watch Scott on the Better television show on 60 TV stations around the country; for a list of stations and times, go to [bettertv.com](http://bettertv.com).