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Chop Salad with Corn, Snap Peas, and Bacon

From *Tom's Big Dinners* by Tom Douglas
Makes 6 to 8 servings

I love chop salads because you can change them to suit your whim or the season.

Substitute diced salami for the bacon, or diced Gouda for the Parmesan. Add a handful of diced celery, or some cooked garbanzo beans. Just keep in mind that everything should be cut into small pieces and the vegetables should dominate more than the lettuce.

For the Mustard Vinaigrette

- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 9 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

- ½ pound sliced bacon
- 6 ounces (1½ cups) sugar snap peas, strings removed, cut in half on the diagonal
- 1½ cups corn kernels, cut from the cobs (about 2 ears)
- ½ head romaine, cored, washed and dried, tough outer leaves discarded
- 1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded, and cut into ¼ inch dice
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and grated
- ½ medium red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ¼ inch dice
- ½ bunch radishes, thinly sliced (about ½ cup)
- ½ bunch green onions, thinly sliced (about ¾ cup)
- ½ pint basket cherry tomatoes, stemmed, and cut in half
- 1 cup basil leaves (about 1 ounce), cut into thin strips
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

To make the mustard vinaigrette, combine the vinegar, lemon juice, mustard, and garlic in a bowl. Gradually whisk in the oil until emulsified. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

In a skillet over medium heat, fry the bacon until crisp and drain on paper towels, discarding the fat (or reserve for another use). Chop the bacon and set aside.

Bring a saucepan of lightly salted water to a boil and set up a bowl of ice water. Set a strainer filled with the snap

peas into the saucepan and cook for a minute or two. Remove the snap peas and immediately plunge them into the bowl of ice water. Put the corn in the strainer and put it into the saucepan of boiling water for a minute or two. Remove the corn and plunge it into the ice water with the peas. Drain the corn and peas and set aside.

Chop the romaine leaves and place them in a large bowl. (You should have about 4 cups chopped leaves.) Add the peas, corn, cucumber, carrot, red pepper, radishes, green onions, tomatoes, and basil to the bowl, then toss with enough vinaigrette to lightly coat everything. Add the Parmesan, toss again, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

To serve, mound the salad on a large platter and sprinkle the bacon over the top.

A Step ahead

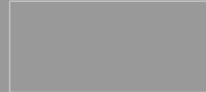
You can fry and chop the bacon early in the day and store it in the refrigerator. Reheat it for a few minutes in a 400° oven until warm. You can make the vinaigrette a few days ahead and store it, covered, in the refrigerator. You can prepare all the vegetables several hours ahead and keep them covered and refrigerated. But chop the lettuce, slice the basil, and toss the salad at the last minute.

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