

# Questa Del Rio News

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## Complete Meals: Summer Salads

By ELIZABETH BRUNAZZI

I spent the summer working in France and have enjoyed an array of ample complete meal salads, or salades composées in French, inspired by different cuisines in the southwestern and southern regions of France. One features rice and corn and hails from the Camargue vicinity, home of the French “cowboys” with their celebrated white horses and black bulls.

These salads are not our idea of a dieter’s dream! Some are what we could call hearty fare. They can, however, be modified by lightening ingredients to taste, without sacrificing flavor. Salads invite personal invention. Most of these salads should be served warm or at room temperature, never ice cold, as is often the case with salad fare in the United States. As the weather changes and we move from hotter weather into cooler periods, they make excellent transitional meals that can be enjoyed year-round, depending on availability of ingredients.

### Landaise Salad

(from the Landes region,  
southwestern France)

#### Ingredients:

1 C smoked duck breast, or breast of smoked chicken or turkey.\*

1/4 C crustless white bread, chopped into cubes

1/4 C walnuts (pecans can be happily substituted)

3/4 C red or green curly lettuce

8 ripe cherry tomatoes

Dressing:

1 large shallot, finely diced

1 t Dijon mustard

3 t sherry or white wine vinegar

1 t honey

5 T light extra virgin olive oil

1 T chopped chives

#### Method:

Preheat oven to 425F

Put sliced breast in a roasting tray and cook for about 10 minutes, or until crisp

If including gizzards, fry in hot oil crisp

Combine all ingredients and whisk together

Remove duck and gizzards. Reserve fat. Turn the oven down to 325F and heat fat. Turn bread cubes over in the fat, and toast chopped nuts on the other side of the tray.

Cut the breast into medium shreds. Slice the gizzards into medium pieces.

Put greens, tomatoes, nuts, and croutons in a large bowl and toss with the dressing.

Divide over four plates. Arrange meat over the greens.

Serve immediately, warm to room temperature.

\* Sliced duck or chicken gizzards, lightly salted and refrigerated overnight, then poached in duck or chicken fat, are often added to this recipe, with excellent results.

### Aveyron Salade

(From the Aveyron region,  
southwestern France)

#### Ingredients:

2-1/2 C cherry tomatoes

1 clove garlic

Drizzle of extra virgin olive oil

5 T walnuts (or pecans)

3 large handfuls baby spinach

Large handful basil leaves

1 C chopped thick sliced bacon

1/2 C Roquefort cheese

Vinaigrette:

2 T sherry or white wine vinegar

4 T light olive oil

#### Method:

Heat oven to 230F. Place tomatoes and crushed garlic in a roasting pan. Season with oil and roast for about 15 minutes. Toast the nuts until glossy, about 10 minutes. Chop roughly. Set tomatoes, garlic and nuts aside in the fridge.

Toss spinach and basil together in a large bowl and season lightly.

Heat a small amount of oil, about 1 T, and simmer the bacon for 3–4 minutes until lightly browned.

Stir dressing ingredients in with the bacon. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat, cool, and pour over salad greens, toss again to wilt slightly. Add remaining ingredients, tomatoes, garlic, cheese and nuts, reserving some Roquefort crumbs and nuts for the topping.

Toss again and remove to plates. Serve immediately. Warm or room temperature.

Camargue Salad (Southern France, Land of the French “Cowboys”)



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**Ingredients:**

1 C white or red rice  
1 small zucchini  
1 small eggplant  
1 red bell pepper  
1 onion  
2 cloves garlic  
3/4 C corn, preferably fresh cut off the cob  
1 C peeled tomatoes, cherry or plum  
Drizzle of extra virgin olive oil to taste  
Pinch of cayenne pepper  
Salt and coarse ground pepper to taste

**Method:**

Cook rice according to your preferred method. Do not rinse. Place in a large salad bowl.

Wash and peel zucchini. Cut into finely chopped pieces.

Cut and seed eggplant. Cut into finely chopped pieces.

Cut pepper into finely chopped pieces.

Slice tomatoes.

In a skillet, heat olive oil and simmer minced garlic and onions. Add eggplant and zucchini. Season with cayenne, pepper and salt, to taste.

Add tomatoes and corn and continue simmering for about 10 minutes on low heat, covered.

Remove all. Let rest and cool. Add to the rice and toss gently. Serve immediately, warm, room temperature or cold, depending on conditions.



## Country Salad

(Multiple regions and versions)

**Ingredients:**

Large Bowl of Salad Greens, your choice of lettuce  
2-1/2 lbs potatoes, small white potatoes recommended  
3/4 C thick sliced bacon, chopped into small chunks  
1/2 C cheese, emmental, gruyère or comté, or more to taste  
1 C fresh cream (recommended: half sour cream, half whole cream)  
4 eggs  
2T chopped fresh chives  
Salt, Pepper, to taste

**Method:**

Rinse potatoes. Boil in salted water for 10-15 minutes. Drain, peel and chop into small chunks.

Dice cheese into small chunks.

Simmer bacon in a skillet for several minutes.

Poach eggs until whites are quite firm, and the yolks still soft.

Wash, drain, dry salad greens and distribute on plates.

Add layers of potatoes, eggs, cheese, and bacon.

Mix cream and chives, salt and pepper to taste. Serve sauce separately as an accompaniment.

Serve immediately. Warm or room temperature.

Enjoy!

  
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