



*“I’m going to show you the most romantic way to wash salad.”*

#### SUBCHAPTERS

A French-Inspired Mesclun

Greens for Sautéing

A Salad-Washing Ritual

#### CHAPTER REVIEW

Mesclun is a Provençal word that describes a mix of salad greens and herbs. Alice brought seeds back from France and planted her entire backyard with lettuces in order to recreate the mesclun salads she’d had in Provence and could not find in the US. She started putting the mesclun salad on Chez Panisse’s menu and promoting the French tradition that a salad goes with every meal.

Other garden greens such as kale, chard, and arugula are easy to grow. A few plants of dinosaur kale or Russian kale will repeatedly yield enough for you to make a serving or two of greens simply sautéed in olive oil and garlic. Alice uses the arugula plant at every stage of its growth: she incorporates the raw small, tender arugula, or “rocket,” into salads, pounds the more mature leaves into a pesto, and sprinkles its peppery white flowers over salads.

#### RECIPES

### MESCLUN SALAD

ADAPTED FROM *Fanny in France*, PAGE 153

6 SERVINGS

For the mesclun mix, combine delicate lettuces and herbs, including rocket, chervil, and frisée, for a variety of textures and flavors. In cool seasons, add hardier leaves of varieties such as chicories and radicchios, if you like.

6 generous handfuls mesclun mix, washed and dried

4 tablespoons vinaigrette\*

Sea salt

Fresh-ground black pepper

When ready to serve, put the lettuce in a wide salad bowl. Pour half of the vinaigrette over the salad leaves and toss gently to coat, using your hands. The leaves should be lightly coated with dressing so they glisten. Taste the salad. If you need to, pour additional dressing over the salad and toss again. Add salt and pepper, if needed. Sprinkle the salad with the petals of the edible flowers, if you have them. Eat immediately.

\*Refer to Chapter 5: A Well-Stocked Pantry for vinaigrette recipe and variations.

## PREPARING A BEAUTIFUL SALAD

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### WASHING AND DRYING LETTUCES

FROM *In the Green Kitchen*, PAGE 11

To wash lettuce, fill a large basin with cold water—your kitchen sink or a large bowl. Before washing heads of lettuce, remove any damaged outer leaves and cut off the stem ends. Separate the leaves, dropping them into the water, and swish them around with your hands. Leave the lettuce in the water a minute or two to let any dirt or sand settle to the bottom, then lift the leaves out of the water and put into a colander to drain. If the lettuce is still gritty, change the water and wash again.

Dry the lettuce thoroughly. If the leaves are wet, the dressing won't stick and its flavor will be diluted. Put the leaves into a salad spinner in small batches, no more than half full at a time, and spin the leaves dry. Empty the water from the spinner after each batch. Lay the leaves out in a single layer on a clean dish towel and roll the towel up. (If you don't have a salad spinner, drain the lettuce in a colander before layering the leaves between towels and rolling the towels up.) Refrigerate until you are ready to dress and serve the salad.

#### LEARN MORE

♦ For more about lettuces and salad greens, read “Tender Leaves” on pages 35–50 in *The Art of Simple Food II*.

