

FOOD52

Beef Chopped Salad

By lastnightsdinner

Editors' Comments: Beef and blue cheese are always a great combo. And when you throw potatoes, tomatoes, peppery greens and homemade pickled onions and garlic croutons into the mix, how can we say no? While it has many different components, we love the way this salad came together; all of the vegetables and the meat end up coated in a slightly creamy combination of dressing and blue cheese. Lastnightsdinner saves time (and an extra bowl) by using the same mixture of red wine, sherry vinegar and olive oil to marinate the steak and serve as the dressing for the salad. The onions (we used shallots), which pickle gently in salt, sherry vinegar and juniper berries while you prepare the rest of the salad, contribute subtle acidity and sweetness. Lastnightsdinner calls for bottom round, which is relatively inexpensive but has excellent flavor with a tender bite. To make our garlic croutons, we rubbed two thick slices of stale country bread with a clove of garlic, cut the bread into 1-inch cubes and toasted these in the oven at 350°F for about ten minutes. -A&M

This is a dish that will satisfy even the heartiest appetite. It's meat, potatoes and salad, all in one bowl, and the components are chopped so it's easy to eat - no knife necessary. I use bottom round, a cut that is both flavorful and inexpensive. This cut can be tough if not treated properly, but a winery marinade enhances its beefy flavor and helps to tenderize the meat.

Serves 4 Beef Chopped Salad:

- 1/4 cup dry red wine
- 1/4 cup Sherry vinegar
- kosher or sea salt
- cracked black pepper
- 1/3 cup plus 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped garlic
- 1/2 pound bottom round, about 1 1/2 inches thick (we buy grass-fed)
- 1 cup waxy potato, cut into 1/2- to 1-inch chunks
- 1 cup halved small cherry or grape tomatoes
- 1/4 pound firm blue cheese, such as Maytag Blue, cut into 1/2- to 1-inch chunks
- 4 cups young arugula or spinach leaves
- 1 cup chunky garlic croutons, homemade or store-bought
- Quick Pickled Red Onions (recipe follows)

1. In a large measuring cup, combine the wine, Sherry vinegar, 1 teaspoon of salt and 2 teaspoons of pepper, whisking to dissolve the salt. Whisk in the 1/3 cup of olive oil until emulsified.
2. Set aside 1/4 cup of this mixture, then pour the remainder over the beef in a glass container or zip-top plastic bag.

3. Add the chopped garlic and refrigerate, allowing the meat to marinate at least one hour.
4. Pour the reserved red wine mixture into a large salad bowl.
5. Boil the potato cubes in salted water until just tender. Drain the potatoes and while they are still warm, add them to the salad bowl and toss with the dressing.
6. Remove the meat from the marinade and allow it to come to room temperature before searing. Discard the marinade.
7. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
8. Add a teaspoon of oil to an iron skillet, using a small basting brush to distribute evenly, and heat over medium heat until the oil is almost smoking.
9. Pat the meat completely dry with paper towels, add to the hot pan and sear until it is well browned on all sides (1-2 minutes per side), then transfer the skillet to the oven.
10. Allow the meat to cook 6-8 minutes, turning it halfway through, until the internal temperature reaches 130-135 degrees for medium rare.
11. Remove the beef from the skillet, place on a plate and tent loosely with foil, allowing it to rest for 10 minutes.
12. Chop the beef into ½- to 1-inch chunks and add to the salad bowl.
13. Add the tomatoes, blue cheese, greens and croutons and toss gently to combine.
14. Serve in deep bowls, scattering pickled onions over the top and grinding on additional black pepper at the table.

Quick Pickled Red Onions:

- 1 teaspoon kosher or pickling salt
 - 1 teaspoon juniper berries
 - 1/4 cup Sherry vinegar
 - 1/4 cup water
 - 1/2 cup small, young red onion or shallots, peeled and sliced into thin rings
1. Combine salt, juniper berries and Sherry vinegar in a small bowl, whisking to dissolve the salt.
 2. Add the water and the sliced onions and let sit at room temperature for one hour.
 3. Use right away, or store in their brine in the refrigerator. These stay good for at least a few days, and are great on salads, sandwiches and burgers or as an accompaniment to grilled meats.