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Three-Day Slaw
Serves 8

1 cup cider vinegar
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1 teaspoon celery seeds
1-1/2 teaspoons salt
1 cup corn or vegetable oil
1 small head green cabbage, shredded
1 small white onion, halved and thinly sliced
1 red bell pepper, sliced thinly
1 cup shredded, peeled carrot

In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine the vinegar, sugar, mustard, celery seeds, and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat and add the oil. Cool until just warm to the touch, about 30 minutes.

In a large bowl or re-sealable food bag storage, combine the cabbage, onion, bell pepper, and carrot. Pour the warm dressing over the cabbage mixture. Cover and marinate for 8 hours, refrigerated, or up to three days.

Notes:

- Celery seeds are harvested from smallage, a marsh plant that produces the seed during the second year of its growth, not from the more familiar celery found in the produce department.
- Dry mustard has a little aroma, but when the enzyme myrosinase that's in it comes in contact with liquid, a sharp aroma is released. So, although it may not smell like much, it grants a pungent bite once moistened.
- To freshen the flavor of this slaw or change it during its long run, stir in an apple cut into matchsticks or thinly sliced fennel bulb and orange segments.

House Party Weekend

The first week of August, in the east-central red-clay hill country of Mississippi, the Neshoba County Fair kicks off. It's known far and wide as the "Giant House Party," and the fairgrounds are transformed into a bustling, albeit temporary, city complete with a post office and even its own zip code. Hundreds of two-story cabins consisting mostly of bunkhouse-style sleeping quarters, a kitchen, and a porch encircle a racetrack where camptown harness races are hotly contested. The pavilion in the square provides a platform for political rivals to give further with florid oratory. Children and old-timers alike visit from house to house, from sunup to way past sundown during Fair Week, stopping in for a bite here and a drink there.

This slaw will keep well for three or more days. It is great to have on hand throughout a weekend of houseguests.