



BLT Salad with Bacon-Garlic Croutons and Peppercorn Ranch Dressing

Makes 4 entrée salads

Ingredients:

12 oz. smoked bacon,
thick-sliced
(about 12 slices)
6 cups fresh greens
4 red, ripe tomatoes
2 avocados
1/2 lemon, squeezed
(use the other half for
the dressing)

***Bacon-Garlic
Croutons***

4 slices bread
2 cloves garlic
2 Tbsp bacon grease
Pinch of salt

Peppercorn Dressing

1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup milk
1/2 lemon, squeezed
2 scallions, thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1/8 tsp Kosher salt
2 tsp coarsely ground
black pepper

Directions:

1. COOK the bacon strips until just crispy, on the stovetop with a grill pan, or in the oven. Allow the bacon to drain and cool by removing the strips from the pan and placing on a paper towel-lined platter. Reserve 2-3 tablespoons of the rendered bacon grease for making the croutons.
2. PREPARE the dressing by combining the sour cream, mayonnaise, milk, lemon juice, scallions, salt, and crushed garlic in a bowl and whisk until smooth. GRIND a generous amount of coarsely ground pepper, about 2 teaspoons, and whisk again. Refrigerate until ready to dress the salad.
3. WASH and SPIN-DRY the salad greens. Keep chilled in the refrigerator until ready to assemble the salad.
4. PREPARE the tomato by slicing them into 3/4-inch cubes – a nicely sized bite. Set aside in a bowl allowing excess juices to settle at the bottom.
5. HALVE the avocados and similarly cube the flesh into 1/2-inch cubes. Squeeze a half a lemon over the cubes and gently toss. Set aside.
6. CUBE 4 slices of bread into 1/2-inch cubes. HEAT a large skillet or sauté pan over medium heat. DRIZZLE in 2 tablespoons of the rendered bacon fat. When hot, ADD the garlic and bread cubes, salt and sauté until the surfaces begin to turn a nice golden brown, tossing along the way.
7. ASSEMBLE the salads starting with a bed of fresh greens on the plate, topped by a ladle of salad dressing. Generously mound the tomato and avocado cubes in the center, top with plenty of crumbled bacon, and a handful of bacon-ized croutons.