

Southwestern Chopped Salad with Barbecue-Ranch Dressing

Recipe source: [Entertain the Possibilities](#)

The beauty of this salad is its adaptability, so please take this information with a grain of salt and make your own judgements about the types and quantities of ingredients to use. No matter what, it's probably going to be great!



INGREDIENTS:

For the Barbecue-Ranch dressing:

- 2 parts ranch dressing to 1 part barbecue sauce. Homemade or store-bought, either way tastes delicious.

For the Salad:

- 3 tablespoons canola oil, divided
- $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast, chopped into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice
- 2 tablespoons dried chili powder, divided
- 2 teaspoons cumin (or to taste)
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder (or to taste)
- 2 medium bell peppers, any color, cut into thin, vertical slices
- 1 large yellow onion, cut into thin, vertical slices
- Salt & pepper
- 2 medium heads lettuce, washed and dried (I use romaine, and other kinds are fine too)

NOTE: For a traditional chopped salad, the lettuce would be chopped into smallish pieces too. I prefer to tear the lettuce leaves into pieces – still bite-sized but less uniform than chopping.

- 1 15 oz. can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 ears fresh corn, shucked
- 2 ripe tomatoes, chopped into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice

NOTE: Feel free to add or substitute vegetables to taste. Jicama and avocado would be good.

- Pickled jalapeño slices, optional

- Tortilla chips, optional
- Shredded or crumbled cheese, optional

DIRECTIONS:

- Make the dressing first, so the flavors have time to blend. Combine ranch dressing and barbecue sauce in a bowl and mix together until well-blended and smooth. The recommended ratio is 2 parts ranch dressing to 1 part barbecue sauce, but you can make adjustments to suit your own taste. Chill, covered, in the fridge until time to serve.
- Heat 1 ½ tablespoons of canola oil in a skillet over medium-high heat.
- Sprinkle 1 tablespoon chili powder and all of the cumin and garlic over the diced chicken breast. Toss to coat.
- Add chicken to skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, until chicken is cooked through, about 7-8 minutes.
- Remove chicken from pan and set aside to cool.
- Wipe out the skillet with a paper towel, add the remaining 1 ½ tablespoons of canola oil and heat over medium-high heat.
- Add sliced peppers and onions to the skillet along with a generous pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened and nicely browned, about 5-6 minutes.
- Remove onions and peppers from skillet, blot on a paper towel, and set aside to cool.
- Meanwhile, prepare the lettuce, either chopping or tearing it into bite-sized pieces. Spread lettuce evenly on a platter.
- Toss black beans with remaining 1 tablespoon chili powder. Set aside.
- Remove kernels from fresh, shucked corn with a sharp knife. Set aside.
- Now it's time to assemble the salad. Determine your layout before starting to place the toppings. Creating even rows is a traditional approach, although you could try a hub and spokes design to mix things up a little.
- Place the ingredients on top of the lettuce in the pattern of your choosing.
- Sprinkle extra ingredients on top to taste, such as pickled jalapeño slices, crumbled tortilla chips, shredded cheese such as Monterey jack or sharp cheddar, or crumbled Mexican cheese such as queso fresco or cotija.
- Add a few spoonfuls of barbecue-ranch dressing on top of the salad and serve the rest on the side.

Serve and enjoy!