

Wedge Salad with Bacon, Avocado and Buttermilk Dressing



A Varied Wedge

A wedge salad is ripe for experimentation. To the buttermilk dressing, Velardo suggests adding soft herbs like tarragon, chervil or basil, or stirring in crumbled blue cheese or a few dashes of hot sauce. Instead of pairing the iceberg with bacon, avocado and tomatoes, substitute hard-cooked eggs, roasted peppers, olives and canned tuna for a Niçoise-style salad. Velardo also uses buttermilk dressing as a marinade for fried chicken (soaking the chicken in the mixture overnight, refrigerated, then breading and frying it), surrounding a piece of cooked salmon, and as a topping for a baked potato.

More Milk

Pro tip: Buttermilk is often sold in larger containers, meaning you'll have a surplus after making the dressing. Buttermilk can be frozen, however, so Velardo suggests pouring measured amounts into plastic freezer storage bags. The next time you need buttermilk, the packets can be quickly defrosted in a bowl of warm water.



YIELD 2 servings (plus leftover dressing)

INGREDIENTS

Dressing

Buttermilk, ½ cup
Sour cream, ¼ cup
Mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon
Fresh lemon juice, 1 tablespoon plus 1½ teaspoons
Red wine vinegar, 1 tablespoon plus 1½ teaspoons
Dijon mustard, ½ teaspoon
Large garlic clove, 1 (finely grated on a Microplane-style grater)
Fresh chives, ½ bunch (finely chopped; about ¼ cup)
Granulated sugar, ⅛ teaspoon
Kosher salt, ½ teaspoon
Freshly ground black pepper, ¼ teaspoon

Salad

Bacon, 4 thick-cut strips (preferably Vermont applewood-smoked bacon cut crosswise into ½-inch-thick strips)
Iceberg lettuce, ½ head (cored and halved lengthwise)
Cherry tomatoes, 1 cup (halved)
Medium beefsteak tomato, 1 (cored and sliced into wedges)
Small red onion, ¼ (thinly sliced lengthwise)
Ripe Hass avocado, ½ (pitted and chopped)
Gorgonzola cheese, 2 ounces (crumbled; optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Make the dressing: In a medium bowl, whisk together the:

- Buttermilk
- Sour cream
- Mayonnaise
- Lemon juice
- Red wine vinegar
- Dijon mustard
- Grated garlic
- Finely chopped chives
- Granulated sugar
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

2. Cook the bacon: In a medium skillet set over medium heat, add the:

- Bacon strips

Cook the bacon, using the metal spatula to stir it often, until the bacon is browned and crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon to a paper-towel-lined plate and set aside.

3. Assemble the salad: Divide among two plates the:

- Iceberg wedges
- Halved cherry tomatoes
- Beefsteak tomato wedges
- Sliced red onion
- Chopped avocado
- Crumbled Gorgonzola (if using)

Divide the dressing over the two plates. Serve sprinkled with the:

- Crispy bacon