



**BARBARA McCLELLAN**

## It's always a good time for salad

**W**ell, all I can say is we have come a long way in culinary parlance in the past 25 years (if I said 50 years, too many of you would not have a reference point — in other words, you are young!)

I love to go to grocery stores (all right, I know that is a sign of weirdness). I rarely have or take the time just to look at new products, unless I am using a coupon for a new item. However, just recently I happened to take a glance at all the packaged fresh salads and vegetables in the refrigerated cases. I could not believe all the choices. Yes, we are paying for the labor involved in washing and preparing these vegetables; sometimes time is more valuable than money.

Also, if you check carefully, sometimes the packaged salad items are less expensive than the bulk vegetables (if bought by weight, remember, you pay for some amount of waste in stems, shells, etc.)

All of this is to say that after many years of not buying packaged salad items, I do buy some now. Since our lettuce in the garden has “gone to seed,” and we once again are having to buy romaine (my favorite) and other types of lettuce, I have begun to look more carefully at the packaged kinds.

The recipes today all call for the packaged items mentioned above.

The first is from my dear friend, Elizabeth Perdomo. She is a fellow gardener, and we trade out tending each others gardens when either of us is out of town.

### Elizabeth's Wilted (or not) Spinach Salad

1 tablespoon olive oil  
2 bags (5 ounces each) baby spinach  
1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
Coarse salt and ground pepper

In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add spinach; cook, tossing often, just until wilted, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and vinegar; season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

To serve with uncooked spinach, just put the spinach and tomatoes in a salad bowl. Mix all remaining ingredients, and pour over spinach and tomatoes. Makes 4 servings.

While we are still in a salad mode (which we appear to be today), here is another quick and easy basic salad recipe with variations.

### Green Salad with Parmesan Vinaigrette

1/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan (there really is a difference in this and the pre-grated)  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar  
1/2 teaspoon finely chopped garlic  
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
8 cups mixed salad greens (as mentioned, I prefer Romaine, or fresh spring greens) bagged  
Place dressing ingredients in a jar, and shake until well mixed, or whisk together in a bowl. Toss with salad greens and serve. Makes about 4 servings.

Variations: substitute feta for parmesan, and add sliced cucumbers and fresh tomatoes.

Try these with your salads.

### Garlic-Cheese mini Biscuits

2 cups biscuit mix  
1/2 cup grated Sharp Cheddar  
Two-thirds cup milk  
4 tablespoons butter  
One-fourth teaspoon garlic powder  
Parsley flakes, if desired  
Mix together the biscuit mix, cheese and milk. Pour into greased (or sprayed) mini muffin pans (makes about 24). Bake at 450 degrees for 7-8 minutes. While the biscuits are baking, melt butter and add garlic powder. When biscuits are golden brown, remove from oven, and brush garlic-butter over biscuits. Top with parsley flakes, if desired. Serve hot.

Barbara Richardson McClellan is a longtime food columnist and has written three self-published cookbooks. Her column appears in the Longview News-Journal's Taste section each Wednesday. Write her at bayrm@hiilne.net or in the care of the Longview News-Journal, P.O. Box 1792, Longview, TX 75606.

# Corn smut? Tastes great and good for you



Claudio Cruz/AP Photo

Huitlacoche is weighed in a food market in Mexico City. For years, scientists have assumed the corn fungus long-savored in Mexico had nutritional values similar to those of the corn on which it grew. Test results show it's packed with unique proteins, minerals and other nutritional goodies.

BY MARTHA MENDOZA  
Associated Press

IRAPUATO, Mexico — It's now an established scientific fact: Smut is GOOD for you. Corn smut, that is.

For years, scientists have assumed huitlacoche (WEET-LA-KO-CHEE) — a gnarly, gray-black corn fungus long-savored in Mexico — had nutritional values similar to those of the corn on which it grew. But test results just published in the journal Food Chemistry reveal an infection that U.S. farmers and crop scientists have spent millions trying to eradicate is packed with unique proteins, minerals and other nutritional goodies.

And here's a bonus: agro-economists have found it can sell for more than the corn it ruins.

“We had no idea huitlacoche could actually synthesize significant nutrients that don't even exist in corn,” says Octavio Paredes-Lopez, one of Mexico's leading food scientists.

“Who cares about the nutritional value? The flavors are amazing!” said Steve Sando, a grinning Napa Valley epicurean whose booming Rancho Gordo specialty food company grows and sells heirloom beans, corn and other indigenous “New World” ingredients.

He launched an expedition in Mexico in mid-April, researching the possibilities of adding huitlacoche to his product line in the lucrative, gourmet-haven of Northern California.

When huitlacoche attacks corn, the insidious-looking pustules that bubble up don't just force the husk to explode, it

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# The joys of garlic and soy

April is the month to celebrate the foods that some local experts say can help maintain good health and well-being

BY GLENN EVANS  
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**Editor's note:** Although some cultures and medical professionals accept garlic and soybeans as having the medicinal properties mentioned in this story, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not.

**T**he National Soybean Research Laboratory reports an acre of soybeans produces 82,368 crayons.

Children have been known to take a nibble of their atomic tangerine, but that's not the way to get your recommended daily allowance of soybean — especially during National Soybean Month.

The healthful soybean shared its month with good 'ole garlic, which borrowed the spotlight for National Garlic Day on April 19.

“I regularly recommend that my clients consume garlic in order to help them recover from illness or to maintain good health,” said Danielle Heard, a certified holistic health counselor and natural whole foods chef in Longview. “I have seen remarkable results when I prepare healing foods containing garlic for people who are ill.”

Garlic's antibacterial and antiviral properties help ward off colds and protect against parasites, Heard said.

“It is also extremely helpful in maintaining a healthy respiratory and digestive system and aids in the prevention of cancer,” she said.

The American Cancer Society's website says garlic is being researched as a preventative, “however, there is not enough evidence at this time to support eating large amounts of garlic or taking garlic supplements for cancer prevention,” it says.

The Food and Drug Administration does not support the claim that garlic wards off colds or aids in digestion.

Garlic also does not appear to be manufactured into crayons or anything else kids tend to put in their mouths.

That errant, childhood nibbling illustrates what experts on soybean nutrition said for this story: most soybeans are genetically modified and do not carry the banner for soybean nutrition.

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Kevin Green/News-Journal Photo

Danielle Heard holds a bowl of guacamole that she made with garlic. Heard is a certified holistic health counselor and natural whole foods chef in Longview.



Heard adds garlic to her guacamole. “I have seen remarkable results when I prepare healing foods containing garlic for people who are ill,” she says.

Kevin Green  
News-Journal Photo

## Farmers needed for opening of downtown market

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Organizers for the Historic Longview Farmers' Market are seeking farmers and vendors to participate May 15 when the market launches.

The city of Longview has agreed to allow Historic Longview Farmers' Market to operate in downtown Longview on property once belonging to Kelly Plow Company. Vice President Danielle Heard said the group wants to showcase locally grown, sustainable foods.

The market is not associated with Longview Partnership's downtown market, held each Friday at the corner of Methvin and Green streets.

For information, call Heard toll-free at (866) 330-5421 or visit [www.historiclongviewfarmersmarket.com](http://www.historiclongviewfarmersmarket.com).

# Food Network spawns edgy, young Cooking Channel

BY MICHAEL HILL  
Associated Press

There's more food TV than ever to chew on — shows featuring barbecue tips, chef smackdowns, easy Italian dishes, sailor-mouthed kitchen bosses, diner dispatches and cakes that look like race cars.

Want more? Or maybe the better question is, need more? The Food Network is betting on it.

The Cooking Channel debuts next month and, like its well-established sister chan-

nel, it will offer 24-7 food programming. Executives with Scripps Networks Interactive, which owns both channels, say the Cooking Channel will have a different flavor, one with more emphasis on international cuisines, drinks, food culture and advanced cooking techniques.

One executive likened the relationship between the two channels to a major movie studio and its indie-spirited niche film division.

“The tone and the style and the feel that we're going for is

a little grittier, a little younger, a little more contemporary,” said Bruce Seidel, the new channel's senior vice president for programming and production.

The Cooking Channel will offer a stew of shows new, old and imported, starting May 31. Under a co-production deal, some shows on Food Network Canada will air later on the Cooking Channel.

The channel also will rerun shows of pre-cable pioneers Julia Child and the Galloping Gourmet (a.k.a. Graham Kerr).