

## **Samantha's Caesar Salad**

*from In **Our Grandmothers' Kitchens***

### *Ingredients:*

#### *for the croutons:*

2 cups cubed French or Italian bread (slightly stale bread is best, but use what you have!)  
a splash or two of extra-virgin olive oil  
a dash of sea salt

#### *for the dressing and salad:*

1 large head romaine lettuce  
2 cloves garlic, slightly crushed  
2 eggs, as fresh as possible (pasteurized are best, but I can never find them)  
4 anchovies, cut into small pieces  
1 splash Worcestershire sauce  
1 pinch salt  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 small handfuls freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
lots of freshly ground pepper

### *Instructions:*

First, make the croutons. (This may be done the day before you make the salad.) Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a medium cast-iron skillet (8 to 10 inches) place just enough oil to cover the bottom. Toss in the bread cubes. Splash in a tiny bit more oil, and stir to coat the cubes as well as you can.

Bake the oiled croutons until they turn golden brown, 20 to 30 minutes, tossing them every 5 minutes or so. Remove the croutons from the oven, toss on the salt, and allow them to cool completely. If you don't plan to use them immediately, store them in a plastic bag or a tin until you need them.

For the salad wash and trim the romaine. You should have pieces that are easy to eat but still substantial looking. Rub the garlic pieces on the inside of a wooden salad bowl to spread their oil; then discard the garlic.

Bring the eggs to room temperature by placing them in warm water for a few minutes. Drain them, and pour boiling water over them. Allow the eggs to sit for 1 minute; then drain them again and immediately bathe them in cold water to cool them off. This is called coddling the eggs lightly.

Separate the egg yolks from the whites, and discard the whites. Set the yolks aside briefly.

Place the anchovies in the salad bowl and mash them with a fork or a pestle. Use a fork to whisk in the egg yolks, followed by the lemon juice and the Worcestershire sauce. Continue to whisk for 2 to 3 minutes; then add the salt. Add the oil, a few drops at a time, whisking constantly, followed by the first handful of cheese.

Toss in the lettuce leaves, and top them with the pepper and the rest of the cheese. Add the croutons, toss, and serve. Serves 4.