

Home Cooking Chronicles: Summer slaw

BY BRIAN MEDFORD

Growing up, I imagined what superhero power I'd want as an adult: invisibility; ripping through shirts when I got angry; or activating my wonder twin power and transforming into a shark while my twin transformed into a tidal wave. Unfortunately, my superpower turned out to be the unparalleled ability to stick my foot in my mouth. It's not what I was hoping for.

I was recently invited to a barbecue. The sheer anticipation of it made my pulse race. I'm that person. I arrived early, looking forward to brisket, pulled pork or ribs. What I saw instead were cheeseburgers and hot dogs. I was confused.

While I have nothing against either of them (I fully expect cheeseburgers to lead to my eventual demise), cheeseburgers and hotdogs do not translate into barbecue.

To a Southerner, having a barbecue means you're actually barbecuing something. It's always big meat and almost always there's sauce: vinegar-based, ketchup-based, Alabama mayo-based or mustard-based. Anything else means you're having a cookout.

Unable to control myself, I told my host, "This is a cookout, not a barbecue."

Inset foot. I'm confident my host's initial thought was "What a freaking ingrate. This is his first and last time at my house."

Pacific Northwesterners often comment to me that Southerners are "so nice." I've tried to clarify that Southerners are not nice, we're polite. There is a difference. During the cookout, I was neither.

The only redeeming element to this story is I didn't show up empty-handed. I brought a lovely slaw. I had imagined it piled beside some pulled pork — but I'm flexible.

This slaw is South Carolina Dijon mustard style, which is my favorite. It's crunchy, tangy and mayo-free.

Since the world will not change for me, I am trying to change for it. This slaw is perfect served beside some big and saucy barbecued meat or on a "barbecued" cheeseburger.



This summer slaw features cabbage, carrots, scallions and other tasty ingredients.

Summer Slaw

You can use a mandolin to shred your veggies wafer thin, however it's my most feared kitchen tool. Generally, I prefer not to visit the emergency room when making slaw. A sharp chef's knife works just fine. You can use red or green cabbage, or a combo. Just no mayo, please.

Ingredients

- One small head of cabbage, shredded (about 1 pound)
- Two carrots, peeled and shredded (about 1 cup)
- Four scallions, finely chopped
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar (or substitute honey)
- ¼ cup neutral vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon celery seed
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ¾ teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- A pinch or two of red chili flakes

Preparation

Combine the cabbage, carrots and scallions in a large bowl. Whisk together the vinegar, sugar, oil, Dijon, dry mustard, celery seed, salt, pepper and pepper flakes (if using) in a small bowl. Pour the dressing over the cabbage mixture. Toss to coat let set in the fridge for 15 minutes, then serve.

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