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Cook with a purpose.*

The Art of a World-Class Salad

Seared Wild Sockeye Salmon & Garden Vegetables

REPLICABLE

UNCOMPLICATED

I used to hate salad. Bored me to no end — tasteless, unsatisfying, and did I mention boring? In 2007, when Mrs. Potts started eating cleaner, she started building salads on top of salads. A week in, I asked her the obvious question: "Are we going to eat salads EVERY night?" Her answer: "Absolutely."

For a long time after that, we ate two different meals — I made mine, she made hers. Eighteen years ago I was still addicted to sugar and carbs, my brain hijacked by a lot of poor food, and I had no idea how good a salad could actually be. I was slowly poisoning myself, one bite at a time.

Then I started learning about food — a process that isn't always easy, or fun, but is always worth it. Today I load salads up with real flavor. They're beautifully nutritious, genuinely satisfying, and solidly fat-adapted friendly. This one was an accidental discovery I've now made twice — and it earns its place in the rotation for good.





INGREDIENTS (SERVES 2)

- 2 cups red & green leaf lettuce, chopped (~90g total)
- 80g English cucumber, seeded, thinly sliced
- 2 large radishes, thinly sliced
- 30g red bell pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 small–medium heirloom tomato, thinly sliced
- 4 golden or red cherry tomatoes, halved
- 40g red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp rice wine vinegar, divided
- 2 tbsp black sesame oil, divided
- Sea salt, high quality, a light sprinkling (< ¼ tsp)
- 8 oz wild-caught sockeye salmon, skin removed
- Kosher salt, for dry-brining the salmon
- Optional: Furikake flakes, for garnish (not pictured, but excellent here)

EQUIPMENT

- Rimmed sheet pan or small roasting dish
- Parchment paper (or a light coat of oil on the pan)
- Broiler-capable oven
- Chef's knife & cutting board
- Mandoline or sharp knife for thin, even vegetable slicing
- Large serving platter or plate

A note on sourcing: this is a one-plate argument for buying the farm and the fisherman first. Wild-caught sockeye carries a deeper color and firmer, fattier flesh than farmed — and it's worth seeking out specifically as "sockeye," not just "salmon."

A note on the pepper: this version is built with red bell, and it's a good, clean choice — documented as executed. But since this cook, I've developed a real preference for cubanelle here instead. Thinner-walled, less sweet, and it lets the vinegar read cleaner without red bell's sugar competing for attention. Worth trying if you can find one.





METHOD

1. Build the base.

Spread the chopped lettuce evenly across a large plate or serving platter. Arrange the cucumber, radish, bell pepper, heirloom tomato, cherry tomatoes, and red onion on top, working from the center out to the perimeter.

2. Dress once, before the protein.

Drizzle 1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar and 1 tablespoon black sesame oil evenly over the vegetables. Finish with a light sprinkling of sea salt — less than ¼ teaspoon.

3. Dry-brine and roast the salmon.

Dry-brine the sockeye with kosher salt. Roast at 350°F for about 5 minutes, then finish under the broiler for 2 minutes to set the top. Watch it closely — the difference between perfect and overcooked is measured in seconds, not minutes.

A WORD ABOUT SALMON

I highly recommend wild-caught salmon — and purposely undercooking it. You want it almost raw in the center. If your salmon was frozen at any point, you aren't running the parasite risk that raw or rare fish otherwise carries. Wild-caught also has a completely different texture than farmed. My best advice: use wild-caught salmon.

4. Flake and plate.

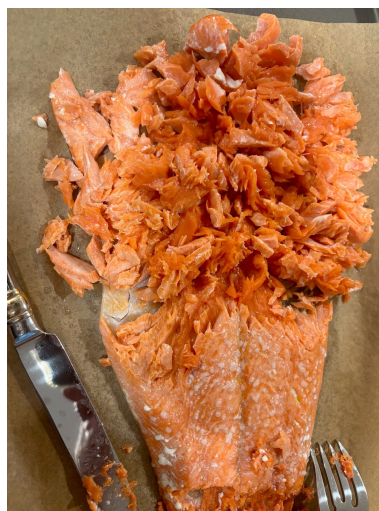
"Chip" the roasted salmon into flaky pieces and scatter it over the dressed salad.

5. Dress again.

Finish with a second pass: 1 more tablespoon rice wine vinegar and 1 tablespoon black sesame oil over the top.

6. Serve.

Add Furikake here if you have it — it wasn't used in this version, but it belongs. Serves 2 as a full, satisfying plate.



Dry-brined sockeye, pre-roast — and after roasting and broiling.





NUTRITION (PER SERVING — SERVES 2)

MACRO	GRAMS	% OF CALORIES
Calories	351 kcal	
Protein	27 g	31%
Fat	22 g	57%
Carbohydrate	11 g	12%

Macro percentages sum to 100% of total calories. Figures are approximate, calculated from standard USDA nutrient values for wild sockeye salmon and the vegetables listed — actual values will vary with exact cuts and brands.

KEY NUTRIENTS BEYOND MACROS

- Omega-3s (EPA + DHA): ~1.5–2 g — wild sockeye is one of the richest whole-food sources available.
- Selenium: ~60–70% DV — supports thyroid function and antioxidant defense.
- Vitamin D: ~50–60% DV — unusually high for a whole food; another point in wild salmon's favor.
- Choline: ~15% DV — modest here, but present; an underappreciated nutrient worth tracking across the day.
- Vitamin C: ~15–20% DV — from the bell pepper, tomato, and radish.
- Potassium: ~15% DV — supports electrolyte balance, particularly relevant for anyone fat-adapted.

AN HONEST NOTE

This isn't a zero-carb plate — the vegetables carry roughly 11g of carbohydrate per serving, which puts it squarely in fat-adapted territory rather than strict ketosis. That's by design: real vegetables, eaten whole, aren't something to fear on this way of eating. If you're tracking closely, this is a good example of what "low-carb" looks like on a real plate, not a spreadsheet.

WINE PAIRING

This is a dish that screams for wine — white or rosé. Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, or Pinot Blanc are the lean, high-acid picks I'd reach for first. It would be unfair to rule out Chardonnay, though — stylistically, a higher-acid, cooler-climate expression works best here. Rosé would be such a great addition to this meal too. A bold Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot isn't where my mind goes with this plate, but at the end of the day, it's what you like that matters — these are preferences, not commands.

APPROXIMATE COST

Total recipe: ~\$16–\$19, driven mainly by the wild sockeye (~\$12–\$14 for 8 oz). Produce runs another ~\$4–\$5. That puts this at roughly \$8–\$9.50 per serving — restaurant-quality, at a fraction of the price.

