

A GUITAR CRAFT COURSE • SUMMER 2026

The Guitar Craft @
**CAMP
CARAVAN**
COOKBOOK

The meals we shared, to make at home

Guitar Craft @ Camp Caravan • July 17–26 • 21 recipes

Welcome Home from Camp

This little cookbook gathers the dishes that came out of the Guitar Craft @ Camp Caravan kitchen over ten days in July — the dals and chowders, the big shareable salads, the noodles and the desserts. It is meant to be splattered, dog-eared, and cooked from.

Every recipe here has been scaled down from camp quantities to comfortable home portions — most serve about four, with the bigger salads and soups feeding six. Quantities are a starting point, not a rule; season to your own taste, just as the kitchen did.

A few notes: garlic “cloves” stand in for the kitchen’s garlic cubes; where a recipe leaned on canned tomatoes, fresh work beautifully in summer; and the two ganaches — one classic, one vegan — are here so everyone gets a sweet ending. At the back you’ll find *Salad Craft* — a short essay on making a salad the Guitar Craft way, from whatever the day delivered.



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BREAKFAST

Overnight Oats with Yogurt

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 2 cups water (or milk of choice)
- 1 cup plain yogurt
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 3 tbsp maple syrup

METHOD

- 1 In a bowl or jar, stir together the rolled oats, water (or milk), yogurt, salt, and cinnamon.
- 2 Drizzle in the maple syrup and stir until evenly combined.
- 3 Cover and refrigerate overnight, or at least 6 hours, until the oats are soft and creamy.
- 4 In the morning, stir well and loosen with a splash of water or milk if needed. Top with fresh fruit, nuts, or granola and serve cold.

NOTES

MAINS

Creamy Mung Dal with Spinach

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup moong dal (split yellow mung beans)
- 3 cups water
- 1 tbsp turmeric
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp high-heat oil
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 tbsp desi chili (or to taste)
- 1 bunch spinach, chopped
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- 1 lemon

METHOD

- 1 Rinse the moong dal under running water until the water runs clear.
- 2 In a large pot, combine the dal, water, turmeric, and salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer about 30 minutes, until the dal is soft.
- 3 In a separate pan, heat the oil. Add the cumin seeds and let them splutter.
- 4 Add the ginger and desi chili and sauté for a minute.
- 5 Add the cooked dal to the pan and mix well.
- 6 Stir in the spinach and garam masala. Cook until the spinach wilts.
- 7 Simmer another 5 minutes. (For a richer dal, stir in a splash of cream.)
- 8 Garnish with chopped cilantro and a squeeze of lemon juice before serving. Serve hot with rice or naan.

NOTES

MAINS

Gobhi Moong Dal Khichari

Serves 4–5

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup basmati rice
- 1 head cauliflower, cut into florets
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup moong dal
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fresh green peas
- 7 cups water
- 4 tbsp high-heat oil (or ghee)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp asafetida (hing) powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp grated ginger
- 1 tbsp desi chili (or green chilies, to taste)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ tbsp turmeric
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp butter or ghee, to finish

METHOD

- 1 Clean, wash, soak, and drain the basmati rice.
- 2 Have the cauliflower and asafetida ready by the stove. Heat 4 tbsp ghee or oil in a heavy 4–5 quart saucepan over high heat. When hot but not smoking, stir in the ginger, chili, and cumin seeds. Fry until the cumin seeds turn brown (this happens in seconds).
- 3 Quickly add the asafetida, then immediately add the cauliflower. Turn it about with a spoon, frying 4–5 minutes until slightly browned and partially cooked. Stir in the rice and dal and fry about 1 minute.
- 4 Pour in the peas, water, and turmeric and bring to a full boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low, partially cover, and cook slowly, stirring occasionally, 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, until the rice and dal are soft and the mixture has the consistency of oatmeal. (If using frozen peas, add them in the last 5 minutes.) As it thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. Before serving, stir in the salt and 1 tsp butter or ghee.

NOTES

MAINS

Cool Soba Noodles with Sweet Soy Broth

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 10 oz dried soba noodles
- 1 package instant dashi
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup soy sauce
- 6 tbsp mirin
- 2 tbsp sake
- 2 tsp sugar
- 4 tbsp dried shiitake mushrooms
- 4 tsp wasabi powder
- 4 scallions, sliced (green parts)
- 1 sheet nori seaweed

METHOD

- 1 Combine 4 cups water, dashi, soy sauce, mirin, sake, and sugar in a bowl. Whisk until the dashi and sugar dissolve; set aside. (Add the dried shiitake to the broth to soften and infuse.)
- 2 Bring 4 quarts of water to a boil in a large saucepan. Add the soba noodles and cook until tender, about 6 minutes. Drain in a colander, rinse with cold water until cool, and drain again.
- 3 Combine the wasabi powder with 1 tbsp water in a small bowl and stir. Let stand about 6 minutes, until it forms a thick paste. Using your finger, form 4 small balls.
- 4 To serve, divide the noodles among 4 bowls and ladle the broth over them. Arrange the wasabi balls, scallion greens, and nori on top. Using chopsticks, dissolve the wasabi balls into the broth (do not eat whole). Serve at once.

NOTES

MAINS

Baked Tofu

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 packages (14–16 oz each) firm or extra-firm tofu
- 4 tbsp soy sauce (or tamari)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 4 tbsp cornstarch

METHOD

- 1 Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 400°F.
- 2 Remove excess moisture from the tofu by placing it between two clean kitchen towels on a cutting board, then setting something heavy on top (such as a cast-iron skillet). Let drain at least 10 minutes.
- 3 In a medium bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, oil, and garlic and onion powders. Cut the pressed tofu into $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 1-inch cubes. Add the tofu to the bowl and toss to coat evenly. Sprinkle the cornstarch over and toss until it is no longer powdery and has adhered to the tofu.
- 4 Lightly oil a metal baking sheet and arrange the tofu in a single layer. Bake 25 to 30 minutes, flipping halfway through with a thin metal spatula, until browned and crispy at the edges. Cool about 3 minutes before eating (they will be very hot). Use immediately, or cool completely and store in an airtight container in the fridge up to 5 days.

NOTES

MAINS

Chinese Stir-Fried Tomatoes and Eggs

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 12 eggs
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine (or dry sherry)
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 2 tsp sugar
- 4 tbsp ketchup
- 1½ lbs fresh tomatoes (about 4–5), or 2 cans (14 oz) tomatoes
- 4 tbsp vegetable oil, divided
- 6 scallions, chopped (whites and greens separated)
- 2 tsp minced ginger

METHOD

- 1 In a mixing bowl, beat the eggs well with 1 tsp salt, the sesame oil, and rice wine. In a small bowl, stir together the cornstarch and 2 tbsp water until smooth, then stir in the sugar and ketchup.
- 2 If using fresh tomatoes, core and cut them into ½-inch wedges.
- 3 Heat a wide nonstick skillet over high heat with 3 tbsp of the vegetable oil. When it shimmers, add most of the scallions (saving some to garnish). Cook, stirring, until very aromatic, about 20 seconds. Add the eggs and cook, stirring well, until just set but still runny, about 45 seconds. Pour the eggs back into the bowl and wipe out the pan.
- 4 Reheat the pan over high heat with the remaining 1 tbsp oil. When hot, add the ginger and cook until aromatic, about 15 seconds. Add the tomatoes and salt to taste; cook, stirring occasionally, until the flesh softens but still holds shape and the juices begin to form a sauce, 2 to 3 minutes. (If using canned tomatoes, add the juice as well and cook about 4 minutes to reduce.)
- 5 Reduce the heat to medium. Stir the cornstarch-ketchup mixture, then stir it into the pan. Cook, stirring, until the sauce returns to a boil and thickens. Taste and adjust with salt, sugar, or more ketchup — you want a savory, tart-sweet sauce. Stir the eggs to break up the curds, then return them to the pan. Cook, stirring, a few seconds to finish. Top with the reserved scallions and serve with steamed rice.

NOTES

MAINS

Creamy Polenta with Mushroom Ragout

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup cornmeal (polenta)
- 4 cups water
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp butter
- 2 cups mushrooms, sliced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup vegetable broth
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 bunch spinach

METHOD

- 1 In a medium saucepan, bring the water to a boil. Add the cornmeal gradually, whisking constantly to avoid lumps.
- 2 Reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes, until thick and creamy.
- 3 Stir in the salt and butter until combined. Remove from the heat and cover to keep warm.
- 4 In a separate pan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and sauté until translucent.
- 5 Add the mushrooms and spinach and cook until they release their juices and begin to brown.
- 6 Pour in the vegetable broth and thyme and simmer about 10 minutes, until the mushrooms are tender.
- 7 Serve the creamy polenta topped with the mushroom ragout, sprinkled with Parmesan and seasoned with black pepper.

NOTES

MAINS

Broccoli Rabe Pesto Pasta

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb farfalle (bowtie pasta)
- 2 heads broccoli rabe
- 2 cloves garlic
- ½ cup shelled walnuts
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan, plus more to serve
- 1 lemon
- ½ cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

- 1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
- 2 Add the broccoli rabe and garlic cloves and cook until the broccoli rabe is a vibrant green, 60 to 90 seconds. Using tongs or a slotted spoon, transfer the broccoli rabe and garlic to a bowl, rinse with cold water, and strain. Leave the water in the pot and turn off the heat.
- 3 Add 1 cup of the broccoli rabe and all the garlic to a food processor and blend until broken into very small pieces, about 1 minute, scraping down as needed. Add the walnuts, ¾ cup of the Parmesan, half the lemon juice, and a pinch each of salt and pepper; blend into a thick paste. With the processor on low, slowly add the olive oil, blending until silky and smooth. Taste and adjust seasoning, then set aside.
- 4 Bring the water back to a boil and cook the pasta until al dente, reserving 1 cup of pasta water before draining. Off the heat, add the pasta, pesto, remaining broccoli rabe, remaining lemon juice, and ¼ cup Parmesan, along with a splash of pasta water. Stir, adding more pasta water as needed, until a silky sauce coats the pasta. Adjust seasoning and serve with more grated Parmesan.

NOTES

MAINS

Chole (Chickpea Curry)

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups dried chickpeas (kala channa), soaked overnight
- Water, to cook (about 4 cups), plus 1 cup cooking liquid reserved
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 pinch desi chili (or 1 dried chile)
- 1 tbsp finely grated fresh ginger
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 1½ tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tbsp turmeric
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tbsp amchoor (dried mango) powder
- 1 tsp fine salt
- 2 pinches garam masala
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro, for garnish
- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- 2 tbsp butter, ghee, or oil

METHOD

- 1 In a 6-quart Instant Pot or multicooker, combine the chickpeas, water (enough to cover), and bay leaf. Secure the lid and close the pressure valve. Cook on HIGH pressure 30 minutes, then release the pressure manually. The chickpeas should be tender but hold their shape; if too firm, pressure cook another 5 to 10 minutes as needed.
- 2 Drain the chickpeas, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid; discard the bay leaf. Transfer ⅓ cup of the chickpeas to a bowl and mash to a coarse paste.
- 3 Set the cooker to Sauté (medium). Once hot, melt the butter or ghee (or add oil). Add the chile and ginger and cook, stirring, until lightly browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the coriander, paprika, turmeric, and cayenne and cook, stirring, until fragrant, 30 seconds. Add the tomato paste and cook, stirring, until the mixture slightly darkens, 1 to 2 minutes. If anything threatens to burn, lower the heat and/or add a splash of water.
- 4 Add the whole and mashed chickpeas, reserved cooking liquid, amchoor powder, and salt. Stir to combine, reduce the heat to low, and cook until the liquid thickens, 1 to 2 minutes.
- 5 Transfer to bowls, sprinkle with garam masala and cilantro, drizzle with more melted butter/ghee or oil, and serve hot with lime wedges for squeezing over.

NOTES

Vegan Corn and Tomato Chowder

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups corn
- 1 can (14 oz) tomatoes, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 bunch cilantro, for garnish
- 1 lime

METHOD

- 1 Heat a large pot over medium heat and add a splash of oil.
- 2 Add the onion and garlic and sauté until fragrant.
- 3 Add the corn and tomatoes and stir well.
- 4 Pour in the vegetable broth and coconut milk and bring to a simmer.
- 5 Season with paprika, cumin, salt, and black pepper.
- 6 Let the chowder simmer about 15–20 minutes.
- 7 Taste and adjust the seasoning. Serve hot, garnished with fresh cilantro and a squeeze of lime.

NOTES

Tuscan Bread and Tomato Soup (Pappa al Pomodoro)

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus more to serve
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 can (28 oz) chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 pinch sugar
- 1 pinch crushed red pepper
- 1 loaf stale ciabatta or country bread (about $\frac{3}{4}$ lb), cubed
- 2 tbsp torn fresh basil
- Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

- 1 Heat 2 tbsp of the oil in a large, heavy soup pot over medium-low heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until tender, about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, pulse the tomatoes in a food processor until coarsely blended.
- 2 Add the garlic to the pot and cook, stirring, about a minute until fragrant. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, sugar, crushed red pepper, salt, and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes have cooked down, about 10 minutes.
- 3 Stir the bread cubes into the tomatoes. Add 4 cups water, half the basil, and salt to taste. Increase the heat and simmer, stirring and mashing the bread, about 10 minutes, until the soup is thick. Stir in the remaining basil and adjust the seasoning. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature with the remaining olive oil drizzled over each serving. Top with shaved Parmesan if desired.

NOTES

Corn Chowder with Potatoes

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups corn
- 1 lb potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 bunch cilantro, for garnish
- 1 lime
- 2 tsp butter

METHOD

- 1 Heat the butter in a large pot over medium heat.
- 2 Add the onion and garlic and sauté until fragrant.
- 3 Add the potatoes and the vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until the potatoes are tender.
- 4 Add the corn, coconut milk, paprika, cumin, and black pepper. Stir well.
- 5 Let the chowder simmer another 10–15 minutes to let the flavors meld.
- 6 Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 7 Serve hot, garnished with chopped cilantro and a squeeze of fresh lime.

NOTES

SALADS

Simple Summer Green Salad

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package (about 10 oz) mixed greens
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cucumber, sliced
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 bunch basil, torn
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

METHOD

- 1 Wash the mixed greens thoroughly and place them in a large salad bowl.
- 2 Add the halved cherry tomatoes.
- 3 Add the sliced cucumber.
- 4 Thinly slice the red onion and scatter it over the salad.
- 5 In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, red wine vinegar, salt, and pepper to make the dressing.
- 6 Drizzle the dressing over the salad and toss gently to combine.
- 7 Tear the basil and scatter over the top. Serve immediately.

NOTES

SALADS

Roasted Eggplant and Chickpea Salad

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups cooked chickpeas
- 2 medium eggplants
- 2 red bell peppers
- 1 head of garlic
- 1 bunch fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

METHOD

- 1 Prepare the chickpeas: if using dried, soak overnight, then boil until tender. Or use canned chickpeas for convenience. For a smoother texture, remove the skins.
- 2 Roast the vegetables: preheat the oven to 430°F (220°C). Place the whole eggplants, red bell peppers, and garlic on a baking sheet. Roast about 35–40 minutes, until the skins are charred and the vegetables are soft.
- 3 Let the roasted vegetables cool slightly, then peel off the skins. Chop the eggplant and peppers to a mashed, spread-like texture. Squeeze the garlic cloves from their skins and mash.
- 4 In a large bowl, combine the chickpeas, roasted vegetables, and parsley. Add the mashed garlic and mix well.
- 5 Drizzle with olive oil, season with salt and black pepper, and mix thoroughly. Enjoy with toasted bread or on its own.

NOTES

SALADS

Tomato and Corn Salad with Chickpeas and Black Salt

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups corn
- 1 can (14 oz) tomatoes, diced (or 2 cups fresh, diced)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cooked chickpeas
- 1 tsp black salt (kala namak), to taste

METHOD

- 1 Drain and rinse the chickpeas.
- 2 In a large bowl, combine the corn, diced tomatoes, and chickpeas.
- 3 Sprinkle black salt over the salad to taste.
- 4 Gently toss until well combined.
- 5 Serve as a refreshing side dish or light meal.

NOTES

SALADS

Panzanella Salad

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package (about ½ lb) bread loaf, cubed
- 1 can (14 oz) tomatoes, drained and chopped (or 3 fresh, chopped)
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 1 bunch basil, torn
- 3 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 oz raisins

METHOD

- 1 Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
- 2 Cut the bread into cubes and place on a baking sheet. Drizzle with 2 tbsp of the olive oil and toss to coat.
- 3 Bake about 10–15 minutes, until golden and crispy. Remove and let cool.
- 4 In a large bowl, combine the tomatoes, red onion, cucumber, basil, and raisins.
- 5 Add the toasted bread cubes.
- 6 In a small bowl, whisk together the remaining olive oil, red wine vinegar, salt, and pepper.
- 7 Pour the dressing over the salad and toss to combine.
- 8 Let sit 15–20 minutes before serving so the flavors meld.

NOTES

SALADS

Black Bean and Corn Salad

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups corn
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- 1 lime
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

METHOD

- 1 Rinse and drain the black beans and corn.
- 2 Dice the red bell pepper and red onion.
- 3 Chop the cilantro.
- 4 In a large bowl, combine the black beans, corn, bell pepper, onion, and cilantro.
- 5 In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, red wine vinegar, salt, and pepper.
- 6 Pour the dressing over the salad and toss gently to combine.
- 7 Squeeze the lime over the salad before serving. Serve chilled.

NOTES

SALADS

Caprese Salad

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz fresh mozzarella cheese
- 4 medium ripe tomatoes
- Fresh basil leaves (about 1 bunch)
- 4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

METHOD

- 1 Slice the mozzarella into rounds.
- 2 Slice the tomatoes into rounds.
- 3 Arrange the mozzarella and tomato slices on a serving plate, alternating them.
- 4 Place a basil leaf on each slice of mozzarella.
- 5 Drizzle olive oil over the salad.
- 6 Sprinkle with balsamic vinegar.
- 7 Season with salt and black pepper. Serve and enjoy.

NOTES

DESSERTS

Lemon Posset

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 3 lemons (for zest and juice), plus extra whole lemons if serving in lemon shells
- Flaky sea salt, to finish

METHOD

- 1 Zest and juice 2 lemons. Measure out 2 tsp zest and 4 tbsp juice; set aside separately. (Optional: for a lemon-cup presentation, hollow out 6 lemon halves and arrange them cut-side up in a muffin tin.)
- 2 In a small saucepan, stir together the cream, sugar, and 2 tsp lemon zest. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves. Reduce to medium-low and gently simmer, stirring, until slightly reduced, about 4 minutes.
- 3 Set a fine-mesh strainer over a heatproof measuring cup and pour the cream mixture through; discard the solids. Stir in the 4 tbsp lemon juice and let stand until it begins to thicken slightly, about 2 minutes. Pour into ramekins (or the prepared lemon halves), filling almost to the top. Chill, uncovered, until set, at least 3 hours or up to 24 hours. To serve, top each with lemon zest and a little flaky sea salt.

NOTES

DESSERTS

Simple Chocolate Ganache

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz (225 g) dark 70% chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 cup (240 ml) heavy cream

METHOD

- 1 Place the finely chopped chocolate in a heatproof bowl. Smaller pieces melt more evenly.
- 2 Heat the heavy cream in a small saucepan over medium heat until just simmering (small bubbles at the edges). Do not boil.
- 3 Pour the hot cream over the chocolate and let sit undisturbed for 2 minutes to soften the chocolate.
- 4 Whisk gently from the center outward until completely smooth and glossy.
- 5 Let cool at room temperature 15–20 minutes for a pourable consistency, or refrigerate 45–60 minutes to thicken for spreading or rolling into truffles.

NOTES

DESSERTS

Vegan Chocolate Ganache

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

- 225 g dark chocolate (70%+, dairy-free verified), finely chopped
- $\frac{4}{5}$ cup full-fat coconut cream (not coconut milk)
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp flaky sea salt, plus more to finish

METHOD

- 1 Prep the chocolate: finely chop the dark chocolate and place it in a heatproof bowl. Smaller pieces melt more evenly — avoid large chunks.
- 2 Heat the coconut cream: pour the coconut cream into a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisk to smooth out any solids, then heat until just simmering — small bubbles at the edges. Do not boil.
- 3 Combine: pour the hot coconut cream over the chopped chocolate. Let sit undisturbed for 2 minutes to soften.
- 4 Emulsify: add the vanilla extract and flaky sea salt, then whisk gently from the center outward until completely smooth and glossy.
- 5 Rest and serve: cool at room temperature 15–20 minutes for a pourable consistency, or refrigerate 45–60 minutes to thicken for spreading or rolling into truffles.

NOTES

The Available and the Possible

Making a salad in the Guitar Craft kitchen

The available is our point of departure; the possible is our aim

Begin where you are

There is no recipe here, and that is the point. A recipe assumes you already know, before you look, what you will find. In this kitchen you rarely do. The crate holds whatever the day delivered: a surplus of cucumbers, three kinds of leaf going soft at the edges, a bunch of herbs someone bought on impulse, the good half of yesterday's fennel. The salad you are about to make does not yet exist. You will find it by attending to what is actually in front of you.

So begin by looking. Lay everything out where you can see it at once. Handle it. Smell the herbs, tear a leaf, taste the tomato — is it sweet, or watery and in need of help? Attention comes before invention. You cannot make something of what you have not noticed.

A form to improvise over

Freedom without form is only noise. A guitarist improvises over a shape; a cook improvises over a structure. A salad, beneath its endless variety, is almost always the same small architecture:

- **A base** — leaves, or shaved and grated things, or a grain to give it body.
- **Contrast** — because a salad lives in tension. Crisp against tender, sweet against sharp, rich against fresh. The dull salad is the one where everything agrees.
- **A few voices** — something bright and raw, something with weight, something that crunches, a herb to lift it, and one clear accent of acid, salt or heat to bring the whole into focus.

You do not need all of these every time; you need enough of them, in balance. Honour sufficiency. The salad that tries to hold everything in the kitchen usually tastes of nothing in particular.

The dressing is the tuning

Whatever else changes, the dressing is the through-line that makes the parts agree — so keep the ratio in your hands and never reach for a book. Roughly three parts oil to one part acid (lemon, vinegar, whatever is sharp and good), a real pinch of salt, and something small to bind and round it: a little mustard, a touch of honey, a smear of crushed garlic. Whisk until it thickens and holds. Then taste it on a leaf, not off the spoon — a dressing that is perfect alone is usually too loud on the plate.

Creativity is choosing

Here is the part that cannot be written down, only practiced. To create is not to add; it is to choose. The courage of a good salad lives as much in what you leave out as in what you put in. Trust your palate — it knows more than you think, and it sharpens every time you ask it. Make the unlikely pairing: strawberry with black pepper, mint with cucumber, orange with olive. Some will fail; keep the failures quiet and learn from them, and now and then one becomes the thing people remember. Restraint, too, is an act of imagination. Three ingredients chosen well and dressed with care are worth more than nine thrown together in hope.

Taste, adjust, taste again

Season in layers, not all at once, and taste at every layer. The salad will tell you what it lacks: flat wants salt or acid; harsh wants fat or a little sweetness; dull wants a herb, or heat, or simply more contrast. This is not fussing — it is listening. The work is finished not when you run out of ideas but when the bowl stops asking for anything.

Then give it away

Dress the leaves at the last moment so they arrive alive, not wilted. Serve generously and without ceremony. It was never really yours; you were only the one paying attention on its behalf. Perfect your craft, and give it away — and tomorrow, when the crate holds something entirely different, begin again where you are.

The Improviser's Toolkit

A grid for when you're staring into the walk-in. Pull one or two from each row that speaks; leave the rest.

Base	mixed leaves · shaved cabbage or fennel · grated carrot or beet · cooked grains · torn soft herbs
Crunch	cucumber · radish · toasted nuts & seeds · croutons · raw snap peas · celery
Sweet	ripe tomato · roasted squash · apple, orange or berries · caramelised onion · fresh corn
Sharp	lemon · vinegar · pickles · citrus segments · sumac · a spoon of capers
Rich	good olive oil · cheese · avocado · nuts · a soft-boiled egg
Lift	basil · mint · parsley · cilantro · dill · chives
Accent (a little)	chilli · garlic · flaky salt · mustard · black pepper · a little honey

Dressing to keep in your hands: 3 oil : 1 acid + salt + a binder (mustard, honey or garlic). Whisk to hold. Taste on a leaf.

Pantry & Provisions

A few good things on the Guitar Craft table came from independent makers — here's where to find them.

Bola Granola

bolagranola.com

The morning granola — the “Barely Sweet” blend — served alongside the yogurt and overnight oats.

“Barely Sweet” Granola

Boho Chocolate

bohochocolate.com

Presence exercise chocolate: a flight of 70% single-origin bars, each from a different growing region.

70% Belize Single-Origin

70% Bolivia Single-Origin

70% Ecuador Single-Origin

70% Ghana Single-Origin

70% Guatemala Single-Origin

70% Madagascar Single-Origin

70% Peru Single-Origin

70% Philippines Single-Origin

With thanks to the makers whose craft rounded out the table.