

There are as many versions of this famous salad as there are cooks who make it. The dressing is not only the common denominator between versions, but it really makes the salad. Here is my version, which can also be made with shrimp or lobster.

CRAB LOUIS SALAD

LOUIS DRESSING

1½ cups (360 ml) mayonnaise

⅓ cup (75 ml) chili sauce, preferably Heinz

3 tablespoons finely chopped green onion, including some green tops

3 tablespoons finely chopped green bell peppers

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

2 teaspoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

Kosher salt

Cayenne pepper

CRAB SALAD

1 small head Bibb or Boston lettuce, leaves torn into bite-sized pieces

3 small, ripe avocados, preferably Hass, halved, pitted, and peeled

1½ pounds (680 g) cooked lump Dungeness crabmeat, picked over for shell (pages 117–118)

2 firm, ripe tomatoes, cut into 6 wedges each

3 large hard-boiled eggs (page 344), cut lengthwise into quarters

1 Kirby or Persian cucumber, cut into large dice

6 lemon wedges, for serving

To make the dressing, in a small bowl, combine the mayonnaise, chili sauce, green onion, bell pepper, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, parsley, salt, and cayenne pepper and whisk to blend. Season to taste with salt and cayenne. Set aside, or cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

To make the salad, divide the lettuce among 6 salad plates. Top each with an avocado half, then spoon the crabmeat into the avocado cavities, dividing it equally. Arrange the tomatoes, eggs, and cucumber around the avocado attractively. Top each salad with a heaping tablespoon of dressing and garnish with a lemon wedge or two. Pass the remaining dressing for guests to add if they desire. **SERVES 6**

CRAB LOUIS

The origin of Crab Louis has lots of entries. Because of where Dungeness resides, the Northwest—from San Francisco to Vancouver—was its birthplace, probably sometime around the mid-nineteenth century.

Refrigerated railcars made both crab and fresh produce more widely available. And by the early twentieth century, crab with lettuce and other veggies and ingredients made it a delicious luxury dish all over the country. An article in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* from the 1950s declared, “A trip to Seattle without a feast of crab à la Louis is like Paris without the Eiffel Tower.”

Crab Louis (pronounced *loo-ey*) first appeared in *The Neighborhood Cookbook*, by the Portland Council of Jewish Women, in 1912. It called for simple ingredients: lettuce, hard-boiled eggs, as well as shredded crab meat. The most important part, however, was the Louis dressing. Not just plain mayonnaise, but a zesty, pink concoction that also included ketchup, lemon, chile sauce, and more.

Many claim to having invented it, but James Beard, who ate it growing up in Portland, brought it to national attention.

