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Potato Chip & Chive Omelet

aux chips et ciboulette

Serves 2

This omelet is on the menu at Lazare, the classic French restaurant that Michelin-starred chef Éric Frechon runs within Paris's Saint-Lazare train station. As is the fashion in modern brasseries, Lazare features a *semainier*, a roster of seven dishes each available one day a week—a clever way to build anticipation, as well as encourage customers to come back again and again, until their collection is complete.

Thursday is *lapin à la casserole* (braised rabbit), Friday is *brandade de morue* (salt cod gratin), and come Saturday, the kitchen is ready to roll out potato chip omelets to eager diners and their offspring. I imagine I don't have to sell you too hard on the idea of this dish. (I had you at "potato chip," right?) It's an easy one to make at home, and the perfect use for the crushed bits of chips at the bottom of the bag. (A recipe tester who shall remain anonymous said it was excellent hangover food.)

4 large eggs

About 1 cup somewhat crushed salted potato chips (2½ ounces/70 g)

3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives

1 teaspoon dried garlic flakes

1 teaspoon unsalted butter or olive oil

Salad greens lightly dressed with *Bistro Vinaigrette* (page 54/*Recipe Follows*), for serving

In a medium bowl, beat the eggs lightly with a fork. In a second bowl, combine the potato chips, chives, and garlic flakes. Stir half into the eggs.



In a medium skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. When it foams, add the eggs. Cook the eggs for 2 minutes, then sprinkle the remaining chips over the surface. Cook for 1 more minute, or until the omelet is cooked to your taste. I like mine still a little runny in the middle. Fold the omelet in two and slide onto a serving plate. Serve immediately, before the chips lose their crunch, with a side of salad greens.

Notes:

This recipe halves easily. This works best with thicker chips, and you can play around with different flavors. No salt is added to the eggs, as potato chips are typically salty. Adjust the seasoning if you are using low-salt chips.

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BISTRO VINAIGRETTE

La vinaigrette des bistros

Many foreigners recount, with moist eyes, the epiphany they experienced upon tasting their first green salad in Paris. Such vivacity, such zest in these few forkfuls of green! It has to do with the freshness of the lettuce, but the real secret lies in the dressing, a deceptively simple combination of mustard, vinegar, and oil that coats greens with a silky film and complements their flavor without obliterating it.

Making vinaigrette is a skill acquired early in France. Most cooks just whisk it right in the salad bowl, without measuring, until the consistency is the right shade of creamy, dipping the tip of a finger to taste and adjust. This, however, is my recipe.

Use good wine vinegar—red or white—and strong Dijon mustard. But the real kicker is the oil: Tempted as you are to use your best olive oil, it is too assertive; the classic French vinaigrette is made with a milder oil, such as sunflower seed or grapeseed. Also key is the layer of flavor provided by the shallot.



A final word of advice (almost done, I promise): Dry your greens carefully so the dressing will cling to them. I do as my mother has done for decades: After taking the leaves out of the salad spinner, I roll them in a clean kitchen towel to absorb extra moisture. You can put this bundle straight in the fridge; it keeps for up to a day.

Makes about 2/3 cup (160 ml); 1 tablespoon dresses 2 cups of greens

1 tablespoon finely diced shallot

½ teaspoon fine sea salt

2 tablespoons wine vinegar, red or white

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

6 tablespoons neutral oil, such as sunflower seed, grapeseed, or canola

Freshly ground pepper (white if available)

In a medium bowl, combine the shallot, salt, and vinegar with a wooden spoon. Let rest for 10 minutes to take the edge off the shallot.

Stir in the mustard. Pour in the oil slowly, stirring all the while to create an emulsion. Sprinkle generously with pepper. Taste and adjust the seasoning. The dressing can be prepared a few hours ahead. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Leftover vinaigrette keeps for up to 1 week in the fridge, in a glass jar with a tight lid.



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