

Roasted Pear and Pomegranate Salad

Serves 6. Prep time: 30 minutes.

Ingredients

2 pears, cored and sliced into
6 wedges each
6 ounces mixed salad greens
1/3 cup dried cranberries
1/3 cup toasted walnuts,
coarsely chopped
4 ounces bleu cheese, crumbled
2 ounces fresh
pomegranate seeds
1/4 cup olive oil
1/3 cup bottled pomegranate juice
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons maple syrup
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

Preheat the broiler. Place the pear wedges skin-side down on an oiled sheet pan or cookie sheet with a rim.

Whisk the dressing ingredients together in a small bowl. Brush the pear slices with a little of the dressing. Set remaining dressing aside. Broil the pears for 6-10 minutes, just until they begin to soften and caramelize. Remove from oven and cool to room temperature.

In a large bowl toss the greens, dried cranberries and toasted walnuts with 1/3 cup of the dressing. Divide equally onto 6 plates. Top each salad with 2 pear wedges, an ounce of bleu cheese and a few pomegranate seeds.

Rustic Artichoke Spinach Dip

Serves 6. Prep time: 20 minutes.

Ingredients

½ cup canned or marinated artichoke hearts, drained
2 cups fresh spinach, washed
1 green onion
½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon pickled jalapeño peppers
3 tablespoons roasted red peppers, drained and diced
⅓ cup mayonnaise
2 teaspoons lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

Mince the artichoke hearts, spinach, jalapeño pepper and green onion. Place them into a mixing bowl, add the Parmesan cheese, mayonnaise, lemon juice and roasted red peppers, then fold the ingredients together with a spatula. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Spicy Collard Greens

Serves 6. Prep time: 30 minutes.

Ingredients

- 2 large bunches collard greens, stems removed, chopped into 2-inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- ½ red bell pepper, chopped
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, chopped
- 1 jalapeño pepper, chopped
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin

Preparation

Bring a large stockpot three-quarters full of salted water to a boil. Add the chopped collard greens and cook for 3-4 minutes. Remove from heat, drain, and squeeze out any excess water. In a skillet, sauté the bell pepper, garlic and jalapeño pepper with the 3 tablespoons of olive oil until just tender, and then add salt and spices to taste. Toss the sautéed vegetables and spices with the drained collards and serve.

Goat Cheese Walnut Crostini

Makes 12-16 canapés. Prep time: 20 minutes.

Ingredients

7-ounce log of chevre coated with herbs
1 baguette
¼ cup balsamic vinaigrette
½ cup walnut pieces, toasted

Preparation

Turn on boiler or preheat oven to 400° F. Lay the walnuts on a sheet pan and lightly toast. Set aside.

Slice the baguette into 12 to 16 slices, about ½-inch thick. Lay slices on a baking sheet and lightly brown on one side in the broiler or oven. Once the bread is browned, turn over the slices and drizzle the top of each with the vinaigrette.

Slice the goat cheese into 12 to 16 rounds, about ¼-inch thick, and place a slice on each piece of bread. Broil for about 3 minutes (or bake for 10 minutes) until the goat cheese begins to brown. Remove from oven.

Arrange on a platter, sprinkle with toasted, gently crushed walnuts and drizzle with additional vinaigrette. Garnish with fresh chopped herbs or pomegranate seeds.