

Chopped Spring Salad

Kathy's Note: A colorful, bright spring salad.

Serves 4.

Ingredients:

2 cups green, red, or yellow peppers, cored and chopped into 1/2-inch cubes
2 medium cucumbers, chopped into 1/2-inch cubes
6 small tomatoes, cored and chopped into 1/2-inch cubes, or 12 cherry tomatoes cut in half
1 cup leftover crusty bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
4 scallions, chopped
1 cup feta cheese, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
10 large basil leaves, cut into thin ribbon slices
4 anchovies

Dressing:

Salt and pepper
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 scallion, very finely chopped
1 tablespoon thinly sliced fresh basil
1/4 cup white or red wine vinegar
1/2 cup olive oil
1 tablespoon anchovy oil

Instructions:

In a large bowl or plate, arrange the peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, bread, scallions, feta and basil. Drape the anchovies, if using, over the top in two "X's."

Make the dressing: in a small bowl mix the salt, pepper, mustard, scallions, basil, vinegar, olive oil and anchovy oil if using. Taste for seasoning.

Gently pour half the dressing on top and serve the remaining dressing on the side.

Asparagus Salad with Hard Boiled Egg and Chive Vinaigrette

Kathy's Note: Do you like fat juicy asparagus or elegant thin stalks? The choice is yours. Here the asparagus are steamed and then topped with a finely chopped hard-boiled egg and a simple chive vinaigrette. You can also grill the asparagus or roast them in a 400 degree oven. This is a gorgeous spring salad, perfect for the holidays or any day.

Serves 4.

Ingredients:

2 hard-boiled eggs

1 pound asparagus, ends removed and bottom half peeled

The Chive Vinaigrette:

1 1/2 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard

3 tablespoons minced fresh chives

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 1/2 tablespoons white or red wine vinegar

1/3 cup olive oil

Fresh chive and chive flowers for garnish, optional

Instructions:

Place eggs in cold water, bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 6 minutes. Remove from heat and let sit 6 minutes. Drain under cold running water. Peel. Push the cooled eggs through a fine mesh sieve and set aside.

Bring a large saucepan of water to boil. Cook the asparagus until almost tender but not soft, about 6 minutes. Immediately drain and place in ice cold water. Cool and drain again.

Make the vinaigrette: in a small bowl mix the mustard, salt, pepper and chives. Add the vinegar and then the oil. Taste for seasoning.

Place asparagus in the center of a serving plate. Top with the minced eggs and spoon a few tablespoons of the vinaigrette on top. Serve the remaining vinaigrette on the side. Garnish with fresh chives and chive flowers.

Farro Salad with Radishes, Green Olives, and Roasted Garlic

Kathy's Note: Farro is a type of whole grain wheat with a nutty texture. Here it's cooked and tossed with briny green pitted olives, slightly spicy spring radishes, and sweet roasted cloves garlic. Serve with crusty bread.

Serves 4 to 6.

Ingredients:

1 cup farro
4 cloves garlic, peeled and left whole
1/3 cup olive oil
1/3 cup lemon juice
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup radishes, thinly sliced
1 cup green or black olives, pitted and thinly sliced

Instructions:

Mix farro and 2 cups water and salt in saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cook about 20 minutes, or until the farro tastes cooked but not mushy; it should still have a bite. Drain.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Place garlic and 1 1/2 tablespoons oil in a small skillet and roast on the middle shelf for about 12 minutes or until tender.

Add the farro to a bowl and mix with the radishes, olives, roasted garlic and oil from the skillet, olive oil, lemon juice and add salt and pepper to taste.

Spring Roasted Asparagus Salad with Sautéed Ramps and Fava Beans

Serves 4.

Ingredients:

1 pound asparagus, ends trimmed
1/4 cup tablespoon olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 pound fava beans
1/2 pound ramps (wild leeks) or scallions, ends trimmed, cleaned and thoroughly dried
1 tablespoon minced fresh chives
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Place the asparagus in a small roasting pan or on a sheet of foil and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast for about 15 to 22 minutes, or until the asparagus are almost tender. Remove and let cool.

Peel the fava beans and place in a small pot. Cover with boiling water and cook over high heat for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and drain in a small colander. Rinse under cold water. Peel the fava beans again, and slip out the bright green bean.

In a small skillet heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over high heat. Add the ramps and cook, stirring once or twice, for 5 minutes, or until the leaves are puffed up and the scallion lie bulb is softened. Remove.

Place asparagus on a large plate. Sprinkle the fava beans on top and add the warm ramps on top. Drizzle the remaining olive oil, chives, and the vinegar on top and season with salt and pepper.