

A robust winter salad can break the monotony of root vegetables and mash. This roasted pear over crisp greens salad with a sprinkling of seeds makes a lovely starter. We recently served this salad to a group of sixty, and it was so simple to do for a large group, but its taste and presentation make it special. It is shown here with a light Crème Fraîche dressing, but is also very good served with a Balsamic Maple Dressing.

Roasted Pear Salad with Pumpkin Seeds & Chèvre

Serves 4

Ingredients

2 Bartlett pears, just ripe

Olive oil

Salt & pepper

Romaine lettuce

1/3 c roasted pumpkin seeds

4 oz Chèvre or soft Blue Cheese

Crème Fraîche dressing or Maple Balsamic Vinaigrette (both recipes follow)

Directions

Preheat oven to 325°

Roast the pumpkin seeds:

Put the pumpkin seeds on a small parchment lined baking sheet, and drizzle with a tiny bit of oil (about 1/2 t). Toss with your fingers, and lightly season them if desired.

Cook for 10 - 12 minutes, tossing occasionally.

Remove from oven and reserve.

Increase oven temperature to 400°

Cut the pears in half, lengthwise.

Pull the stem gently towards the center of one half, pulling up the threads of the core.

Using a teaspoon, gently scoop out the round core, which will still be attached to the threads.

On the other half of the pear, push the teaspoon gently along under the threads towards the core, freeing the threads.

Scoop that half's core out.

Thinly pare off the peel, removing the blossom at the end.

Crosscut each pear, slightly on the diagonal into 1/4" slices, leaving the pear shape intact.

Using a spatula, lift the pears to a parchment lined baking dish or sheet.

Baste with olive oil, and season with salt & pepper

Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until lightly browned, and the slices are just starting to pull away from each other.

Let the pears rest on the baking sheet for up to 2 hours at room temperature.

To serve:

Trim, and halve lengthwise, a small head of romaine lettuce.

Crosscut into 1/2" pieces, and wash. Spin dry or blot dry with a cloth.

Divide the lettuce between four salad plates.

Using a spatula move one pear half to each plate.

Slightly fan each pear half once it's in place on the lettuce.

Scatter a quarter of the cheese around the pear on each plate.

Sprinkle each salad with a portion of the roasted pumpkin seeds.

Drizzle with the dressing of your choice, and serve.

Dressings:

Crème Fraîche Dressing with Chèvre

1/3 c Crème Fraîche

1 1/2 T white wine vinegar

1 oz / 55 gr crumbled chèvre or blue cheese

Salt and freshly ground pepper

Whisk together, or pulse a couple of times in a small processor.

Store covered in the fridge for up to 5 days.

Maple Balsamic Vinaigrette

1 Garlic clove, pressed

1 T maple syrup

1 T Balsamic vinegar

1 T Red wine vinegar

1 t Dijon

1/4 olive oil

salt

Whisk together until emulsified.

Store covered in the fridge for up to a week.