



SPINACH & CITRUS SALAD WITH ROASTED SHIITAKE MUSHROOM VINAIGRETTE



Not only is this recipe a hit, but also, because of its food synergy, it is absolutely a home run. Food synergy is basically a dish's ability to go beyond tasting great. By strategically combining certain components and specific ingredients, you are able to tap into a greater potential health effect because of their powerful interactions. Food synergy has the ability to not only create positive health effects, but it can also negate any unwanted side effects from another food or food component.

YIELD:

6 servings

RECIPE TYPE:

Starter, Lunch

RECIPE CATEGORY:

Cheap Seats

INGREDIENTS:

ROASTED SHIITAKE VINAIGRETTE

1 medium shallot
1 medium garlic head
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
½ cup grape seed oil
½ cup red wine vinegar
1 ½ teaspoons light brown sugar
¾ teaspoons whole grain Dijon mustard
Pinch of salt and pepper to taste
Smoked Shiitake Mushrooms Bits
½ pounds shiitake mushrooms, de-stemmed and sliced thinly
½ cup grape seed oil
pinch of fine grind smoked salt to taste

SALAD

1 pound (16 ounces) spinach, stemmed, washed, and dried
5 clementines or tangerines, supremed
½ cup slivered almonds

STEP 1

Preheat oven to 350°F.

STEP 2

Prepare two large piece of aluminum foil, one for the garlic and one for the shallot. Fold each in half – be sure it is large enough to fully wrap around the head of garlic and the shallot.

STEP 3

Cut the head of garlic in half (around the horizon). Pour about 1 tablespoon of olive oil in between the 2 halves of garlic with a pinch of salt. Close the head back on itself and wrap it in the foil, making sure it is sealed on all sides.

STEP 4

Repeat (step 3) for the shallot (except remove the outer skin so you are only left with what is edible).

STEP 5

Place the wrapped garlic and shallot on a roasting pan and roast in oven for at least 45 minutes. After 45 minutes, check on both the shallot and the garlic cloves—the cloves should be softened, but not too browned.

STEP 6

Stand and let cool. Once cooled, turn out the roasted cloves of garlic and the shallot into a blender or a food processor. Blend garlic and shallots with red wine vinegar, grapes oil, brown sugar, and whole grain Dijon mustard.

Season with salt and pepper to taste and set aside in separate dish.

STEP 7

Increase oven temperature to 400°F. Line a sheet tray with parchment paper.

STEP 8

Gently toss sliced mushrooms in the grape seed oil and season with generous pinches of smoked salt. Lay the mushrooms out onto the sheet tray and roast in the oven for about 20 minutes or until crispy and browned. Set aside to cool.

STEP 9

Gently fold in roasted shiitake mushrooms into the vinaigrette.

STEP 10

Place spinach in a large serving bowl and top with clementines. Sprinkle slivered almonds over the top. Lightly drizzle the dressing over the salad. Serve immediately.

STEP 11

You Did It, High Five Friend!

NOTES & VARIATIONS:

Smoke Salt: If you use course smoke salt, use a season grinder to assist you in grinding it to a fine texture.

Tastes like Bacon: The roasted mushrooms are a great vegetarian substitute for "bacon bits."

NUTRITION INFORMATION:

In this recipe we are able to tap into the synergistic nature of citrus (clementine) and spinach; and spinach and healthy fats (grape seed oil and almonds). Citrus is known for its detoxification properties and as a cancer inhibitor. The phytochemical carotenoid, found in spinach, also has strong cancer fighting properties and has also been found to combat heart disease. Alone, each are pretty amazing, but together they make a powerhouse team. The vitamin C in citrus fruits helps to increase iron absorption from plant sources like spinach. This dish is ideal for those who have low iron levels. The healthy fats (grape seed oil and almonds) have been known to increase the absorption and the potency of the fat-soluble vitamins and phytochemicals (Vitamin A, D, E, K and carotenoids), which lower inflammation. If that wasn't good enough, the triple threat of the citrus (Vitamin C), the almonds (Vitamin E), and the spinach (Beta Carotene) have been found to help to lower LDL oxidation.

