



PASTA WITH FISH, FENNEL AND CHILLI

Serves 2

Ingredients

Drizzle extra-virgin olive oil, plus a good glug
 1 clove garlic, grated
 1 bulb fennel, herby tops removed and reserved
 ½ leek, sliced thinly, washed well, drain
 Pinch salt
 2 fresh fish fillets, scaled and pinboned (gurnard, red cod, monk fish)
 1 lemon, zested
 Splash white wine
 Freshly ground black pepper
 1 red chili, seeds removed and finely chopped
 Fresh pasta – spaghetti, linguine

Method

Put the drizzle of olive oil into a hot, thick-bottomed, high-sided pan. Grate in the garlic and fennel and soften, then add the leek, saute, but do not brown. Add the salt then lay the fish fillets, skin side up, on top. Sprinkle with the lemon zest, and pour in a little white wine to stop everything frying, and to start stewing. Put in a good glug of olive oil, some pepper and the chilli. Turn the heat down and add the juice from 1/2 the lemon and some fennel tops.

Meanwhile cook the pasta in boiling, salted water until al dente or as directed on the packet.

Gently toss the pasta and sauce together, check the seasoning and serve with a drizzle of olive oil on top and some more fennel tops.

Fennel is high in vitamins A and E, calcium and potassium. Fennel and ginger make a good digestive tea -steep the fresh leaves with a bit of sliced ginger for 5 minutes in boiling water, and enjoy!

WATERCRESS AND PEAR SALAD WITH TOASTED HAZELNUTS AND BLUE CHEESE

This salad is perfectly in season and gathered from the many producers at the Otago Farmers Market. Serves 4

Ingredients

500g watercress, large stalks removed 3 fresh, firm pears
 100g good quality blue cheese 50 hazelnuts (toasted and skins removed)
 1 red onion, diced finely

Dressing

½ tsp fresh lemon juice 1 tsp sherry or apple cider vinegar
 ½ tsp runny honey

3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil or good quality rapeseed
 Pinch sea salt flakes and grind or two of black pepper

Method

Make the dressing first by adding all the ingredients together in a small bowl and whisk together to combine; it is vital that you taste the dressing as it needs to have an appealing balance of flavour verses acidity. Adjust if necessary.

Pick through the watercress, discarding the long, sinewy stalks and any leaves that are wilted or squashed. Place the leaves into a large bowl along with the finely diced red onion and toasted hazelnuts.

Cut the pear in half and then in half again and remove the core, slice into medium size wedges and add to the salad. Crumble in the blue cheese, season lightly with a little sea salt flakes and a grind of pepper (it is important to season your salad as you would vegetables). Drizzle over half the dressing and toss lightly with your fingertips so every leaf, pear, nut and cheese gets evenly coated with dressing. If your salad is looking a little dry add more dressing, but don't drown it.

Serve immediately as the watercress will wilt almost instantly.



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WATERCRESS AND CHEESE SCONES Makes 8

Ingredients

200g self-raising wholemeal flour
100g self-raising plain flour
100g butter, cubed
Pinch cayenne pepper
½ tsp salt
30g cheddar cheese, grated
20g blue cheese, crumbled
85g watercress, chopped
1 cup milk (approx.)

Method

Preheat oven 200C.

Sift the flour and salt together and rub in the butter.

Stir in the cheese and chopped watercress and bind with enough milk to form a soft dough, just remember with scones that they don't require a lot of handling.

Roll out on a floured board until about 3cm. Cut into 6cm circles using a pastry cutter.

Bake in preheated oven until risen and golden brown (about 15 minutes).

Delicious simply with butter, or served alongside soup.

PEAR BREAD

Makes 2 medium size loaf tins or 1x 20cm ring tin.

Ingredients

3 cups white flour
¼ tsp baking powder
1 tsp ground cinnamon
3 eggs, lightly beaten
100g butter, softened, or ¾ cup vegetable oil
2 to 4 pears firm, ripe pears, depending on size (you'll need 2 grated cups total, but I don't recommend you grate them until you are about to use them, as they go brown)
2 tsp vanilla extract

1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
1 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
2 cups sugar

Method

Preheat your oven to 175°C and lightly grease and flour a 20cm ring tin or two medium size loaf tins.

Combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon in a large mixing bowl, and stir with a fork to mix everything well. If you're using nuts, scoop out about ¼ cup of the flour mixture and combine it in a small bowl with the chopped walnuts, stirring and tossing to coat the nuts with the flour.

Peel and core pears, then grate them. You'll want two grated cups total; set them briefly aside. In a medium bowl, combine the butter or oil, eggs, sugar, grated pear, nuts (if using), and vanilla, and stir to mix everything well.

Scrape the pear mixture into the flour mixture and stir just until the flour disappears and the batter is evenly moistened.

Quickly scrape the batter into the prepared pans and bake at 175°C for 60 to 70 minutes, or until the bread is handsomely browned and firm on top and a wooden skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean.

Cool the bread in the pan on a wire rack or folded kitchen towel for about 10 minutes. Then turn it out onto a plate or a wire rack to cool completely, top side up.

Thanks to the following vendors for their fantastic produce



JUDGE ROCK WINES – wine

ISLAND STREAM HAZELS – selection of hazelnuts and hazelnut products

JANEFIELD HYDROPONICS AND PAEONIES – fresh watercress

HARWARDEN ORGANICS – pears

BRYDONE ORGANICS – fennel

SUNRISE BAKERY – fresh baked goods

WHITESTONE CHEESE – cheese

MIA PASTA – pasta

EDMONDS FRESH FISH – fish

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