

Simple Spring Green Salad from *Urban Sacred Garden*



Spring has sprung and is mostly gone, at least for those of us in the South. The heat came early this year, beaming down in wonderful rays of sunshine and warming us in the glow. Salads and cool meals become choice cuisine in the heat of the year. This salad is loaded with Spring Greens, has a lemony dressing for a little zing, and melds a couple types of Italian cheese for a salty complement. It is simple and delicious.

Yield: 4 Individual Salads, About 8-10 Cups

INGREDIENTS

15 Slender Asparagus Stalks, coarsely chopped
7 Cups Baby Spinach (chop if leaves are too large)
1/4 Cup Fresh Basil Leaves, coarsely chopped
1 1/2 Cups Pea Shoots, coarsely chopped
3 Persian (or other small variety) Cucumbers, sliced
12 Small Mozzarella Balls, halved
1/2 Cup Parmesan Cheese, shaved
Some additions for protein if you want to make your salad your meal:

4 Hard Boiled Eggs, chopped (optional)
2 Grilled Chicken Breast, chopped (optional)

DRESSING

Juice from 1 Lemon
2 Tbsp White Balsamic Vinegar or White Wine Vinegar
3 Tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 Tbsp Coarse Ground Dijon Mustard
1/2 Tsp Fresh Ginger, minced
Freshly Ground Sea Salt
Freshly Ground Black Pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Bring about 3 cups of water to a boil in a small sauce pan. Once boiling, add chopped Asparagus and blanch for 1-2 minutes. Remove from heat, drain in a colander and rinse with cold water until Asparagus is at room temperature.
2. While Asparagus is being prepared in a large bowl toss together washed Spinach, Basil and Pea Shoots. Layer Cucumbers, Mozzarella, Parmesan and cooked Asparagus over the top (add Eggs and/or Chicken is desired).
3. FOR DRESSING: In a small pitcher or mixing bowl whisk together Lemon Juice, Vinegar, Olive Oil, Mustard, Ginger, Salt and Pepper. Taste and continue adding Salt and Pepper until the flavor balances out. It will take more salt than you would expect to balance out the tart flavor of the lemon and vinegar. If in doubt, add more salt. You will start to taste the flavor shift.
4. Divide salad into individual bowls, drizzle with dressing, and top with a little freshly ground pepper. Enjoy!