

Salt and Serenity

Halloumi, Arugula and Strawberry Salad

Serves 4 as an appetizer salad

The strawberries in this salad are oven dried which concentrates the berry flavour. They're chewy, with a plump, juicy consistency, making them utterly addictive. I learned this method of drying them from Bon Appetit's new website, [healthyish](#).

1 pound strawberries, hulled, halved, quartered if large
2 tablespoons raw sugar or granulated sugar
½ cup hazelnuts
2 tablespoons sherry or red wine vinegar
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
½ teaspoon honey
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 green onions, thinly sliced on the diagonal
½ cup fresh mint leaves
1 box (5 ounces) washed arugula
250 grams Halloumi, sliced into ½ inch thick slices
Mike's hot honey for drizzling (optional)

1. Toss strawberries and sugar in a large bowl and let sit until berries start to release their juices, 25–30 minutes.
2. While strawberries are macerating, toast hazelnuts. Preheat oven to 325°F with rack in middle. Toast hazelnuts on a small baking sheet until centers are golden, about 15 minutes. Transfer hazelnuts to a Tupperware container and secure lid very well. Shake the heck out of the container until the skins have fallen off the hazelnuts. Open container and remove skinned hazelnuts. Discard skins. Let hazelnuts cool completely and then coarsely chop and set aside.
3. Lower oven temperature to 200°F. Spread out berries on a rimmed baking sheet lined with a nonstick baking mat (silpat sheet) and bake, rotating baking sheet about every 30 minutes, until berries are darkened in color and dried out around the edges but still slightly juicy in the center, 3–3½ hours. Let cool on baking sheet. **Do ahead:** Berries can be dried 1 week ahead. Cover and chill.
4. Whisk together vinegar, mustard, honey and salt. Slowly drizzle in olive oil and whisk until emulsified.

5. Toss arugula with half the dressing and taste for seasoning. Add salt and pepper and more dressing if needed. Arrange on a large serving platter. Scatter strawberries, green onion and mint over arugula.

6. Heat a 10-inch non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Add Halloumi slices to dry pan (no need for oil) and cook for 1-2 minutes until first side is golden brown. Flip Halloumi and brown second side. Drizzle fried Halloumi with Mike's hot honey, if using.

7. Arrange fried Halloumi around edge of serving platter. Scatter hazelnuts over salad and serve.