

# Salt and Serenity

## Roasted Butternut Squash and Kale Salad with Sumac Vinaigrette

Inspired by a similar salad I ate and adored at Mudtown Flats Restaurant in Owen Sound.

Serves 4

### Salad:

2 bunches (about 1 pound) black kale (also known as (also known as Lacinato, Dinosaur or Tuscan kale), center ribs removed, and leaves sliced into thin julienne strips. You will end up with about 8 cups of julienned kale.

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 small butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced into 1/2 inch cubes

2 Tablespoons olive oil

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/8 teaspoon black pepper

1/3 cup walnut halves, toasted and coarsely chopped

1/4 cup pumpkin seeds, toasted

1/4 cup golden raisins

4 ounces feta cheese, (preferably Bulgarian or Macedonian if you can find it), diced into 1/2 inch cubes

### Dressing:

1 small clove garlic, minced fine or grated on microplane grater

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon honey

3 Tablespoons apple cider vinegar

1 teaspoon sumac

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/8 teaspoon black pepper

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

1. In a large mixing bowl, toss kale with 1 teaspoon of salt and massage the salt into the kale for a minute or two. This will break down the cell walls of the kale and make it much more tender and delicious. Let sit for about 45 minutes. Rinse kale well to get rid of the salt and then dry it in a salad spinner. Set kale aside.
2. Preheat oven to 400°F. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss cubed squash with 2 tablespoons olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast for 25-30 minutes, until squash is golden brown and beginning to get crispy. Set squash aside.
3. Make dressing: Place all the ingredients, except for the olive oil, into a blender. Mix for about 30 seconds until everything is combined. Keep blender on medium speed and slowly drizzle in olive oil. Turn up speed to high and blend until dressing is thick and well emulsified. You could also make dressing in a bowl with a whisk.
4. Mix about 1/2 the dressing into the kale. Taste to see if you need more. Any leftover dressing keeps well in fridge for 2 weeks. Place on a large serving platter. Scatter the squash, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, raisins and feta over the top and serve.

You can make the salad several hours in advance and let sit at room temperature before serving.

Treating raw kale this way makes it less tough and much tastier. Put chopped kale leaves in a colander and sprinkle with salt. “Massage” the salt into the leaves to start the process of breaking down the cell walls; let stand for up to an hour. Rinse and dry before dressing. Mark Bittman