

Grilled Peach and Arugula Salad with Basil Vinaigrette

This recipe calls for basil oil, which takes about 5 minutes to make and is worth the effort. (recipe below) It really makes this a very special salad. If you don't want to make the basil oil, just use regular extra virgin olive oil and garnish the salad with some fresh julienned basil leaves.

Serves 4 for lunch

1/3 cup hazelnuts
4 Tablespoons champagne or white wine vinegar
1 Tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal Kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/2 cup basil oil (recipe below)
4-6 ripe peaches, halved and pits removed
1 tablespoon olive oil
142 grams (8 loosely packed cups) washed and dried arugula
400 grams fresh mozzarella, or buffalo mozzarella cheese, torn into 1-inch chunks
1 teaspoon flaky sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Toast hazelnuts: Preheat the oven to 350°F. Place the hazelnuts on a baking sheet, and bake for about 5 minutes, or until fragrant. Place toasted hazelnuts into a Tupperware container and secure lid tightly. Shake the container vigorously for a few minutes. This will loosen the skins. Open the container, remove skinned hazelnuts and discard skins. Set aside to cool. Chop coarsely.

Make dressing: Place vinegar, honey, salt and pepper in a small mason jar. Secure lid and shake well. Add basil oil and shake again.

Grill Peaches: Rub cut surfaces of peaches with olive oil. In a grill pan or on the BBQ, place oiled peach halves, cut side down, and grill over medium heat for about 2-3 minutes, until warmed through and slightly soft. Slice each peach half into 3 wedges.

Assemble salad: Mix arugula with 2 Tablespoons of the dressing. Arrange arugula on a large serving platter or wooden board. Arrange peaches and mozzarella over the arugula. Scatter hazelnuts, flaky sea salt and pepper over salad. Serve with extra dressing on the side.

Basil Oil

1. Place 1/2 cup basil leaves, (loosely packed in measuring cup) and 1 cup extra virgin olive oil in a high-speed blender. Blend on high for 10 to 30 seconds. Transfer to a small saucepan and bring to a simmer. Gently simmer the oil for 1 minute to set the color.
2. Pour the oil into a fine mesh strainer, set over a bowl and lined with cheesecloth. Allow to drain for 5 minutes. Transfer to glass jar and allow to cool. Once cooled, it can be stored the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.