

GRILLED FENNEL, FIG & PEAR SALAD with HERBED RICOTTA & HAZELNUTS

This autumn salad has a great deal of taste complexity, without being complicated to make. It can serve as a starter, or can be served after a main course, or alongside a little roasted chicken, pork or beef, can be a part of the main dish itself.

Serves 4

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Herbed Ricotta:

- ½ 500 g tub ricotta cheese (low fat is fine)
- ¼ cup chopped Italian parsley
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh chives
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh basil
- 1 tsp finely grated orange zest
- salt & pepper

Salad:

- ½ fennel bulb, cut into ½-inch slices
- 2 Bartlett pears, cut into wedges and cored
- 1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- salt & pepper
- 3 cups mache, Boston lettuce or other delicate salad green
- ½ cup chopped radicchio
- 4-6 fresh figs, cut in half
- ½ cup lightly toasted hazelnuts, chopped
- 1 ½ Tbsp avocado or extra virgin olive oil
- 1 ½ Tbsp sherry vinegar or white wine vinegar
- salt & pepper

For the herbed ricotta, stir all of the ingredients together and season to taste. Chill until ready to serve.

For the salad, toss the sliced fennel and pear wedges in 1 Tbsp of olive oil and season lightly. Grill the fennel and pears over medium-high heat, until lightly charred and slightly softened, about 3 minutes on each side. The fennel and pear can be served warm or at room temperature.

Arrange the salad greens on a platter or individual plates. Arrange the grilled fennel and pear on top and sprinkle with the toasted hazelnuts.

Top with dollops of the herbed ricotta and drizzle the avocado or olive oil and vinegar on the salad. Season lightly and serve.

