

FOUR WAYS WITH BITTER LEAVES

PUNTARELLE ALLA ROMANA

1 head of Puntarelle
1 tin anchovy fillets, drained of their oil
1 small clove of garlic
2 tbsp sherry vinegar
6-8tbsp extra virgin olive oil
Juice half a lemon
a pinch of salt

Peel back the outer leaves from the puntarelle and roughly chop the green leaves (discarding the thick white stalk). The remaining puntarelle should resemble a cluster of thick knobby green bulbs. (She is a pretty little thing). Separate the bulbs as best you can and finely slice into strips. Add the chopped leaves and sliced puntarelle into a large bowl of iced water weighting it down with a plate to ensure everything stays submerged. Then chill in the fridge for at least two hours or until the punatarelle has slightly curled.

For the dressing, place the remaining ingredients into a high speed blender such as a Nutribullet and blend until smooth. Taste for seasoning adding more olive oil or lemon. It should be a sharp but creamy dressing.

Drain the puntarelle and pat dry using a clean tea towel taking care to remove as much water as you can. Toss in a large bowl with the dressing and enjoy.

CHICORY AND SUNFLOWER SEED SALAD WITH CORIANDER AND FENNEL SEED VINIAGRETTE

Serves 4

4 heads red chicory
1 tsp whole coriander seeds
½ tsp fennel seeds
50g sunflower seeds
4 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 tbsp honey
Pinch of salt
30g grated Grana Padano or Parmesan

Lightly toast the coriander and fennel seeds in a dry frying pan over a medium heat until they begin to smell fragrant. Remove and crush gently with a pestle and mortar.

Then toast the sunflower seeds in the same pan until they smell nutty and turn golden. Transfer to a plate.

Wash and separate the chicory leaves.

In a large bowl, combine the olive oil, vinegar, honey and salt together. Whisk in the coriander and fennel seeds. Add the chicory leaves and sunflower seeds and toss to combine.

Transfer to a serving plate or bowl. Grate over the Grana Padano and serve.

CHICORY PEAR AND HAZELNUT SALAD

Serves 4

50g blanched hazelnuts
6 heads of chicory
1 ripe but firm pear
Roughly 50g Grana Padano

For the dressing

4 tbsp of olive oil
2 tbsp of muscatel vinegar
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 heaped tbsp of honey
1/2 tsp of cinnamon

Toast the hazelnuts in an oven preheated to 180 degrees fan setting for 10-12 minutes until they are golden brown and begin to smell nutty. Allow them to cool before roughly chopping.

Separate and wash the leaves of the chicory. Then whisk together the dressing in a large bowl.

Slice the pear into thin slices then stack the pieces and slice again into thick matchstick sized pieces.

Add the chicory leaves, sliced pear, and most of the hazelnuts to the bowl with the dressing, then use a vegetable peeler to peel in large shards of Grana Padano. Toss everything together, transfer to a serving plate and sprinkle over the remaining hazelnuts.

CHICORY, RADICCHIO, FENNEL AND BLOOD ORANGE SALAD

1 fennel bulb
1 head of radicchio
2 bulbs red chicory
2 blood oranges
4 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp wholegrain mustard
1 tsp runny honey
1 lemon
30g pistachios

Finely slice the fennel using a mandolin or sharp knife (reserving any leafy fronds for the garnish). Separate the leaves from the chicory and radicchio.

To prepare the blood oranges slice the top and base so that you have a flat bottom. With a serrated knife, work your way around the oranges to remove the peel and as much of the pith as you can. Turn the skinless fruit on its side and slice into rounds.

In a large bowl, combine the olive oil, mustard and honey with the zest of the lemon and half of its juice.

Add the fennel and leaves and toss well. Then add the blood orange slices and gently toss again.

Transfer onto a serving platter. Roughly chop the pistachios and sprinkle over the salad. Sprinkle over any fennel fronds or you could add a little chopped parsley or mint if you like.