

Spring Greens with Hazelnut-Crusted Goat Cheese & Sherry Dijon Vinaigrette

This is my idea of the perfect salad to start off just about any meal. It offers sweet, tart and savory components, vegetables and protein. No matter what comes after this initial course, it will almost surely transition very well with this crowd pleasing opener.

YIELD – 4 servings

In a mixing bowl, combine the goat cheese, tarragon and pepper. Form the mixture into a 1-inch wide cylinder. Dredge the cylinder in the hazelnuts so that it is completely coated. Wrap the cylinder in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Remove the goat cheese from the refrigerator. Unwrap it and slice the cylinder into ½-inch thick rounds. Set aside.

Lightly toss the spring greens, shallot and tomatoes together in a large bowl.

To serve, place a fourth of the salad on a round salad plate. Place 4 of the goat cheese rounds along the edge of the plate so that they overlap into the salad. Drizzle ¼ of the dressing over the salad and serve immediately.

Sherry Dijon Vinaigrette

YIELD – 2 cups

Whisk together the mustard, sherry, honey, vinegar, salt and pepper. Slowly and steadily whisk in the oil. Serve or store refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

1 cup goat cheese
½ Tbsp tarragon, finely chopped
¼ tsp fresh ground pepper
1 cup hazelnuts, pulverized
8 cups baby spring greens
¾ cup shallot, thinly sliced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
2 cups sherry Dijon vinaigrette
(recipe follows)

3 Tbsp Dijon mustard
3 Tbsp dry sherry
2 Tbsp honey
¼ cup tarragon-flavored vinegar
salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
1¼ cup extra virgin olive oil