
KITCHEN CONNAISSEUR

Spinach Salad with Hot Basil Dressing



This recipe has some unusual steps which you may not think are worth the time and effort. But they are! Using the proper ingredients and serving them at the proper time makes all the difference here! For example, letting the dressing sit for 3 hours allows the flavours to blend beautifully. Preparing fresh croutons and serving them the same day makes a dramatic difference and sieving the eggs creates an elegant touch. So take the time and make the effort - it's truly worth it! Serves 6-8.

ingredients

DRESSING

- 2 cloves** Crushed Garlic
- 1/2 cup** **Roasted Garlic Olive Oil**
- 1/3 cup** **Balsamic Vinegar (Modena)**
- 2 Tbsp** White sugar
- 1/2 cup** Fresh chopped basil (2 tsp dried)
- 1/3 cup** **Cajun Spice Sauce**
- To taste** Salt and freshly ground black pepper

CROUTONS

- 1/2 - 3/4 cup** Butter - unsalted
- 2 cloves** Whole garlic - peeled
- 3 - 4 cups** 1/2 " squares of bread (stale or dried)

SALAD

- 6 cups** Spinach - fresh, washed
- 1/2 cup** Mushrooms - cleaned and sliced
- 10 pieces** Bacon - cooked and cut into 1/4 " pieces
- 2** Hard boiled eggs - cooked, whites and yolks separated and each pushed through a sieve
- 1/4 cup** Parmesan cheese - freshly grated (preferably Parmigiano-Reggiano)
- 1 cup** Fresh croutons

instructions

Dressing:

To prepare the dressing, blend all the ingredients together and let sit for 3 hours. Just before serving, heat the dressing in the microwave until it reaches a boil.

Croutons:

In a skillet heat the butter to medium heat. Reduce heat and add garlic cloves. Cook slowly, to avoid burning the garlic cloves. Allow the flavour of the garlic to transfer to the butter (approximately 10 minutes). Add the bread pieces and thoroughly mix them into the butter. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Remove the garlic cloves before serving.

Salad:

Set the spinach in a salad bowl and top with sliced mushrooms, bacon pieces, sieved egg, croutons, and parmesan cheese. Pour the warm dressing over the salad. Toss and serve immediately.