

Butter Lettuce with Toasted Walnuts, Cucumbers, and Mustard-Shallot Vinaigrette

Included in our farmers' market "Best of the Market" bags recently were beautiful heads of organic butter lettuce from Nunes Farms. Medical center employees too busy to shop had these bags filled with goodies including the lettuces delivered to them by co-workers in their departments. Getting one of these bags is like getting a present every Friday instead of having to wait for some holiday your family celebrates. As what happens often when shopping at farmer's markets, you may not know what you are going to do with the fruits and veggies you bring home until there's time to think about it around dinner time.

There's a great new book of one-plate salad meals and pairings of produce with dressings by the well known cookbook author and chef, Joyce Goldstein, called "Mediterranean Fresh". She gave me permission to share some of her recipes on this site. To go with my fresh butter lettuces, I chose a mustardy vinaigrette which was used to marinate warm toasted walnuts chunks straight out of the oven and to dress the lettuce. The addition of farm fresh cucumber rounded out this excellent salad.

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Serves 6

2 heads of butter lettuce, washed, drained, and dried (I pull the string on the salad spinner at least ten times. You would be surprised how much water you still get after five spins)

2 cucumbers, peeled or not and sliced. (I peel the shiny and warty cucumbers but not English or Armenian cucumbers)

1 cup walnuts chopped into pieces large enough so you can still maneuver them with a fork.

Dressing

2 Tablespoons Dijon mustard

2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar

4 Tablespoons finely minced shallot

8 Tablespoons olive oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Whisk the mustard, shallots, and red wine vinegar together in a small bowl. Whisk in the olive oil. Season to taste. Toast the walnuts on a baking sheet until they get brown and fragrant, 10-15 minutes. Toss the walnuts with some of the dressing and let them absorb the flavors. Toss the lettuce, cucumber and walnuts with the remaining dressing and serve. This salad marks the beginning of another new cookbook relationship.

Nutrition Information Per Serving:

Calories: 310

Fat: 31 gm

Saturated fat: 4 gm

Trans fat: 0 gm

Cholesterol: 0 mg

Carbohydrate: 7 gm

Fiber: 3 gm

Sodium: 158 mg

Protein: 3 gm