

Butter Lettuce Hearts with Pecorino and Fava Beans

Adapted from The Cheese Course by Janet Fletcher (Chronicle Books)

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Cakebread Cellars chef Brian Streeter provided this recipe for my latest cookbook, *Gather: Casual Cooking from Wine Country Gardens*. Dukkah, an Egyptian nut-and-spice blend, is the captivating seasoning that keeps you coming back for just one more toast. You will have leftover dukkah, but that's no problem. Store it in an airtight container and enjoy it later in the classic way, as a dip for bread with extra virgin olive oil. Good spice shops carry it if you don't want to make your own. On another occasion, substitute sliced roasted beets or butternut squash for the sautéed carrots.

Ingredients

Vinaigrette

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon white wine or Champagne vinegar
1 shallot, minced
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Salad

1 pound fava beans, shelled
2 small heads butter lettuce or Little Gem lettuce
2 tablespoons minced Italian parsley
2 to 3 ounces shaveable sheep cheese, not too soft or hard



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Directions

Make the vinaigrette: In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar and shallot. Season with salt and pepper. Let stand for 30 minutes to allow the shallot flavor to mellow. Taste and adjust the balance as needed.

Blanch the fava beans in a large pot of boiling water until tender (remove one, peel and taste to be sure), 2 to 3 minutes. Drain and transfer to ice water to stop the cooking. Drain again. Remove the outer skin, which should slip off easily.

Remove the outer green leaves from each head of butter lettuce until you reach the pale green heart. (Save the outer leaves for sandwiches or other salads.) Wash the hearts, tear the leaves into smaller pieces and spin-dry thoroughly.

In a bowl, toss the butter lettuce and 1 tablespoon of the parsley with all but 2 teaspoons of the dressing. Check for salt and pepper. Divide the leaves among 4 salad plates or arrange on a large platter. With a cheese plane, shave the sheep cheese over the salad. Toss the fava beans with the reserved dressing, then scatter them over the salad. Garnish with the remaining parsley and serve immediately.

Serves 4