

Farro & Arugula Salad | By Chef Amanda DeLaura



Ciao! The markets in Firenze are bursting with produce. And it is true, the produce here is far more flavorful than most of the produce in the U.S. The baby arugula is so small, but bursting with a tangy spiciness. The strawberries are luscious and the red peppers are sweet. The season for artichokes (*carciofo*) is just ending and the season for fennel (*finocchio*) is in full bloom. They'll prepare finocchio with just about anything — think finocchio pesto, shaved finocchio on top of carpaccio, minced finocchio in pan sauce...you get the idea!

So why not add finocchio to our salad? I added grapes because they were available at the market, but I also think this salad would be phenomenal with fresh figs or perfectly ripened, juicy peaches. Mmm. Is your mouth watering yet? Give this recipe your best effort and comment on your choice of fruit below.

Serves 2

Ingredients (Salad):

2 large handfuls of arugula 1/2 cup farro, cooked

1/2 head asparagus, sliced on a diagonal 1 bunch grapes, figs (and)/or peaches

2 handfuls fennel, shaved

1/4 cup roasted hazelnuts, chopped

And a handful of fresh herbs (chives, fennel fonds, mint, or as desired) 8-10 slices of fresh pecorino

Ingredients (Dressing):

2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

2 Tbsp reduced balsamic vinegar 1 tsp raw honey

1/2 tsp dijon mustard Salt & pepper, *as desired*

1 tsp minced shallot, *optional*

Fresh herbs, *as desired*

Directions:

1. To make the dressing, combine all of the ingredients in a mason jar and shake vigorously to emulsify the olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Set aside.
2. Place farro in a stockpot and cover in about two inches of water. Add a dash of salt and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and let simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let sit for an additional 10 minutes. Remove excess water and spread on a baking sheet to cool.
3. Meanwhile, soak the shaved fennel in a bowl of water with juice from half a lemon, to ensure the fennel does not oxidize.
4. Char the grapes over an open flame or on your grill, cooking for about 2-3 minutes on each side or just till browned. If using figs or peaches, slice the fruits in half before grilling.
5. To prepare the asparagus, bring a small pot of water to a boil. Separately combine ice and water in a medium-sized bowl. Add sliced asparagus to boiling water and cook for 1-2 minutes, just till al dente. Drain immediately and dunk into the ice water. (This will ensure the asparagus maintains its bright and beautiful color)
6. To assemble the salad, first toss the farro with 1-2 Tbsp of olive oil. Then combine arugula, farro, grapes, herbs, and drained fennel and toss with dressing, salt and pepper.
7. Plate and garnish with hazelnuts and Buon appetito!