

Pear, Arugula & Candied Pecan Salad

Serves 2:

Ingredients

1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 cup whole pecans
1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
pinch of cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
pinch freshly ground black pepper
4 ounces baby arugula
6 to 8 radishes
1 firm ripe d'anjou or bartlett pear
4 ounces mild blue cheese, such as Maytag

Balsamic Vinaigrette:

1 garlic clove, crushed
2 tablespoons good quality balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon dijon mustard
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon honey, if needed
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

Preparation

In a small saucepan over medium low heat, melt unsalted butter.
Add whole pecans and toss in the butter for several minutes until toasted and golden.
In a small bowl, mix together sugars, a pinch of cayenne, kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.
Add sugar mixture to nuts in pan and toss.
Cook nuts for 6 to 8 minutes, until they caramelize. Watch carefully--they can burn in an instant.
Transfer nuts to a sheet of aluminum foil to cool.
The pecan mixture will harden like a brittle; break the nuts apart and reserve.

Wash arugula and spin dry well--wet leaves don't hold dressing well.
Wash and trim radishes and cut lengthwise into wedges; mix in with arugula.
Core and slice a firm ripe pear lengthwise.
Crumble a mild, creamy blue cheese and toss into salad with pear slices; add the candied pecans.

Make Balsamic Vinaigrette: push a garlic clove through a garlic press into a small mixing bowl.
Add good quality balsamic vinegar, dijon mustard, kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.
Mix in a bit of honey if your vinegar needs sweetness to balance it.
Whisk together and slowly drizzle in extra virgin olive oil, until emulsified.

Toss salad with dressing until well coated.
Serve immediately.

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