



Karen

KAREN CROUSE



NAPA VALLEY

Cooking with KAREN CROUSE

One of the best ways to build your confidence in cooking without a recipe is to start with salads. A simple yet savory salad can be more memorable than an elaborate entrée.



Seasonal, garden-fresh ingredients are essential to salads. How they are prepared and assembled is equally as important. Fresh lettuces have a delicate yet sweet or herbaceous flavor. Most of those readily available are fairly neutral, so any additions should complement each other. My secret rule of thumb is to include greens, fruits, cheeses, and nuts (*usually toasted and sometimes pulverized*).

Salads are more appealing and substantial when you mix flavors and textures. This is my favorite summer salad! The creamy earthiness of the goat cheese, the savory crunch of the almonds, and the sweetness of the ripe peach are a tantalizing fusion for the tastebuds. It is also picture-worthy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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SUMMER PEACH SALAD

4 Servings

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- Non-stick frypan
- Large salad bowl & tossing tools
- Knives: general utility & paring
- Wood spoon or spatula

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large head of butter lettuce
- 1 large peach
- ½ cup raw Marcona Almonds
- Coarse salt
- 1 T of Herbs (*I like Herbs de Provence*)
- 2-4 oz crumbled goat cheese
- Good quality olive oil (*I like Sevillano*)
- Balsamic Vinegar glaze or aged balsamic vinegar (*the good stuff!*)
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

Toast the Marcona Almonds

- Place the almonds in a non-stick pan set on medium-high heat, making sure to also include all of the oil from the container.
- Add coarse salt and/or herbs.
- Stir constantly until all of the almonds are lightly toasted on both sides.
- Remove from heat and cool on parchment paper. The almonds will become firmer as they cool.

Salad

- Wash and dry the lettuce. Tear (*don't cut*) the leaves into several pieces and put them in a large bowl.
- Peel and slice the peach.
- Add the peach, almonds, and 2 ounces of goat cheese to the lettuce.
- Add more almonds and/or goat cheese based on your taste. You want to make sure that you have a balanced amount of each ingredient in the salad. I typically use all 4 ounces of goat cheese so its earthy flavor is not lost to the fruit and nuts.
- Toss the salad with olive oil, adding a little at a time until the lettuce is just glistening. You want the lettuce and the other ingredients to be the star of the show, so don't drown them with oil.

TO SERVE: Divide the salad into four bowls and drizzle the balsamic vinegar on top of each salad. Serve with Cappy Shakes Cocktails Cucumber Cooler (www.cappyshakes.com) and celebrate Summer.

TIP: HOW TO CHOOSE A PEACH

A ripe peach smells sweet has a deeper yellow color and is rounder.