

TASTE WITHOUT WASTE

Crunchy Tomato, Pumpkin, Smoked Cheese & Avocado Salad

Serves 4

Ingredients

650g Japanese Pumpkin, peeled, deseeded and cut into bite sized pieces
3 tbsp olive oil
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
200g white bread (sourdough, ciabatta or thick toast), cut into 3cm cubes
1 sprig rosemary, leaves removed and finely chopped
¼ tsp garlic powder
2 tbsp pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
500g cherry tomatoes, halved (or if golf ball sized, quartered)
1 avocado, pitted, peeled and thinly sliced lengthways
150g smoked cheese, cut into 1.5cm cubes
½ red onion, thinly sliced (optional)
120g baby spinach and rocket

Maple-balsamic dressing:

1 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tsp maple syrup
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Method

Preheat the oven to 200C. Smear a large baking tray with one tablespoon of the olive oil. Tip in the pumpkin pieces and toss to coat in oil. Give a good grind of salt and pepper. Bake for 15 minutes or until just tender when tested with a skewer. Set the baking tray on a wire rack and leave to cool.

While the pumpkin is cooking, throw the pepitas into a small dry frying pan and cook over a medium to high heat for 2 minutes or until they begin to pop. Transfer to a small bowl and set aside – they will carry on cooking if you leave them in the pan.

Reduce the temperature of the oven to 175C. In a large bowl whisk together the remaining 2 tbsp olive oil, the rosemary and the garlic powder, with a little extra salt. Chuck in the cubed bread and use your hands to mix well. You won't be able to coat every cube of bread – just give it a really good mix around and that will be sufficient! Spread the bread cubes out on a baking sheet and bake for approximately 15 minutes or until crispy. Check every five minutes or so to ensure the croutons aren't browning too quickly – toss if necessary. Remove and set on a wire rack to cool.

Meanwhile, divide the spinach & rocket between four bowls. Top each pile of greens with ¼ of the sliced avocado, cherry tomatoes and smoked cheese. Sprinkle with a ¼ of the pepitas and the sliced onion if you wish.

Prepare the dressing by placing all ingredients in a small screw top jar and shaking well to emulsify.

Once the pumpkin and croutons have cooled to room temperature (takes about 15 – 20 minutes), divide between the four bowls. Drizzle with the maple-balsamic dressing and serve!

Source: Adapted from [Sam Stern's Get Cooking](#)

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