

Nicoise Salad

Serves 4

12 oz best quality tuna
¾ pound fingerling potatoes
½ pound romaine lettuce hearts, cut down to 3", and quartered
4 oz haricots vert
16 Niçoise olives, pitted
1 sweet red bell pepper, medium size, seeded, sliced lengthwise into 1/8" thick slices
8 anchovy fillets
1 small red onion, halved along core and cut into 1/8" thick slices
4 French breakfast radish, sliced very thin
English cucumber, peeled, split lengthwise, seeded, sliced into 1/8" thick slices
12 sweet 100 tomatoes (or other small tomato), halved
4 hard-boiled eggs, quartered
8 caper berries (or substitute capers, to taste, if unavailable)

For the dressing:

2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
3/8 cup good quality extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon Dijon Mustard (or to taste)
2 garlic cloves, finely minced

Preparation:

Just before assembling the salad, season the tuna with salt and pepper and sear each side very quickly in a hot pan with just a Tbsp olive oil. Remove to a cool place.

Whisk the vinegar, mustard and garlic together with a little salt and pepper. Continue whisking while slowly pouring in the oil.

Simmer the potatoes, skin-on, in well salted water until tender. Remove from water and peel as soon as they have cooled enough to handle. Split lengthwise and dress with ½ the dressing, tossing gently to coat well.

Blanch the haricots vert in well-salted water until just tender and remove to an ice bath. When completely cool, remove beans and place on a paper towel to drain off the water.

Gently toss the romaine hearts, haricots vert, olives, peppers, anchovies, onion, radish, and cucumber together with the remaining dressing. Distribute the mixed salad and potatoes evenly between the plates. Top with the quartered eggs and caper berries. Arrange the tuna slices on top and serve.

Grilled shrimp with corn & pesto

Serves 4

1 1/2 pounds shrimp (16-20 count per pound), peeled, deveined
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
one lemon, quartered, seeded
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

You should have 24-30 shrimp.

Soak some bamboo or wooden skewers in water for about ten minutes before using.

Season the shrimp with salt and pepper and toss in the olive oil to coat.

Put 2 or three shrimp on each skewer with space between each.

Grill over high heat about one minute per side. Shrimp should be lightly curled (not curled into a ball) and should have just barely turned white with pink on the outside. If the shrimp is still translucent, leave on a warm section of the grill to finish cooking.

When finished cooking, remove the shrimp from the grill and squeeze the lemon over them.

Spread pesto on the shrimp and serve with the corn.

4 ears, sweet white corn, in the husks

Butter

sea salt to taste

Soak the corn, in the husk, in cold water for ten minutes before grilling. Just before grilling, remove the ears from the water and shake off any excess water. Place on grill and turn occasionally so that all sides get heat. It should take about 10-12 minutes total. Peel the corn and immediately rub butter on it to coat. Season with salt to taste and enjoy.

Pesto:

1 cup (packed) fresh basil leaves

1 clove garlic, minced

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1/8 cup pine nuts

1/4 cup parmesan cheese, grated

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a food processor, combine the basil leaves, garlic and oil and process until basil is well chopped. Add pine nuts and parmesan and continue to process until well combined. Season to taste.

Classic Steak Frites a la comme ca

2 pounds prime beef hanger steak, cleaned, divided into four pieces
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Season the beef with salt and pepper and place on the hottest section of an oiled grill. Sear on each side 2-3 minutes or until there are good grill marks. Move to a cooler section of the grill for ten more minutes, turning ever few minutes. Before removing the beef from the grill, place one ¼” thick slice of the herb butter on top of each piece, so it starts to melt over the beef, and serve.

Herb butter:

½ pound unsalted butter
1 bunch parsley, leaves only, stems removed, finely chopped
1 bunch chives, finely chopped
1 shallot, peeled and finely minced.
Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Allow the butter to come to room temperature and combine in a mixing bowl with the parsley, chive, and shallot. Mix well with a heavy mixing spoon and scoop out to a piece of plastic wrap. Form a log , wrap well and place in refrigerator at least two hours ahead of time so the log will set.

Fries:

4 Idaho potatoes, (size: 70count)
Canola oil (enough to fill your fryer)
Fine sea salt

Peel the potatoes and cut in to 3/8” thick slices. Cut these slices lengthwise into 3/8” thick sticks. It is very important that you take the time to make the cuts uniform to insure even cooking. Place cut potatoes in cold water in the refrigerator for at least a half hour and up to overnight. The potatoes will be cooked in two stages. The first can be done a few hours ahead of time so that, when you are ready for fries, you can just put them in the fryer. The first cooking must be done at 280 degrees F°. Drain the potatoes well and lay out on a towel-lined tray. Cook the potatoes in small batches for six minutes, then remove to a sheet pan to cool. When all the potatoes have been cooked, they can be left in a cool place until ready for the second cooking and, of course, serving. Be sure to turn up you fryer to 375F° before you are ready for the second cooking and, of course, serving. Cook the fries in small batches so the oil temperature doesn't drop too much. Cook until light golden brown and crisp. Drain the oil, season with fine sea salt and serve right away.

Mayonnaise:

2 large egg yolks
4 cloves garlic, de-germed, minced

2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
2tsp white wine vinegar
½ cup olive oil
½ cup canola oil
1 tsp fine sea salt

Place the yolks, garlic (be sure to remove the tough, inner germ from the clove after splitting it), mustard, vinegar and salt in a food processor. Start food processor and process mixture for two minutes, stopping occasionally to scrape down whatever has stuck to the side walls of the processor. Combine the two oil into one container and, with the processor running, slowly drizzle the oil into the mixture. When all the oil has been added, the mayonnaise should be thick. Store, covered, in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Grilled Salmon with Green Papaya Salad

4 pieces salmon (no thin tail pieces) (preferably wild), skinless, 6 ounces each
½ cup kosher salt
1 cup sugar
1 bunch fresh cilantro, roughly chopped

Mix the salt, sugar, and cilantro and coat all sides of the salmon with this mixture. Cover with plastic wrap and place in refrigerator for one hour. Rinse off the salt and sugar with cold water and pat dry with paper towels.

If the salmon will not be cooked right away, wrap in plastic and return to refrigerator. When ready to cook, oil the grill and place fish in hottest area to sear. After about two minutes, rotate fish 90 degrees and continue cooking two more minutes. Move to a cooler part of the grill and, if not cooked to you desired degree of doneness, let the salmon continue to cook in the warm area of the grill until it is.

1 green papaya, peeled, seeded, cut into thin “matchsticks”
1 large carrot, cut into thin “matchsticks”
1 bunch cilantro, large stems removed
¼ cup toasted peanuts, crushed

Dressing:

1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 tsp. ground chili paste; more or less to taste
2/3 cup hot water
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup fish sauce
2 Tbs. fresh lime juice

Dissolve the sugar in the water and add the garlic, chili paste, fish sauce, and lime juice and mix well. Just before serving, toss all the salad ingredients together and add dressing to your taste. Place salmon on the plate and add salad on top. Serve.