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Autumn Harvest Salad

Serves 4

Just because summer is past, doesn't mean salad season is over! This salad is the perfect homage to the season replete with butternut squash and pears dressed with an apple cider vinaigrette and roasted pumpkin seeds. Does it get more autumn than this?

The secret to this salad is the roasted squash. Through the roasting, the flavors are concentrated. The diced pieces form a lovely caramelized crust on the outside and a tender, creaminess develops on the inside.

Explore the wonderful varieties of pears available this season. From a yellow Bartlett to a red Anjou or brown Bosc, pears offer a crisp, sweet, and juicy pleasure every autumn, and a perfect sweet accent to this autumn salad.

Ingredients:

5 oz. arugula (or your choice of fresh field greens)
3 green onions, sliced
1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and diced into 1/2" cubes
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 oz. shaved Parmesan cheese
1 red pear
1 yellow pear
1 lemon, freshly squeezed
4 tablespoons roasted pumpkin seeds
Sea salt flakes
3 oz. Manchego cheese

Dressing:

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon stone ground mustard
1 clove garlic, finely minced
1/3 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

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Directions:

1. **PREP THE BUTTERNUT SQUASH.** Wash the squash well, cut both ends off the squash to create a flat surface. Cut crosswise just above the bulbous part. Cut the lower part in half. Peel the squash with a peeler. Scoop out the seeds. Dice the squash into 1/2" cubes.
2. **DRIZZLE THE SQUASH** with 3 tablespoons of olive oil and toss. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast the squash in a 400 degree F oven for about 30 minutes or until the surface begins to caramelize. Every 10 minutes, flip the squash with a large turner. The roasting time will vary according to the size of the dice and the density of the pieces on the baking sheet.
3. **MIX THE VINAIGRETTE.** While the squash is roasting, mix the vinaigrette. Place the cider vinegar, honey, mustard, and garlic in a small bowl and whisk to combine. Taste, and season with salt and freshly ground pepper, as desired.
4. **SHAVE THE MANCHEGO** with a vegetable peeler or cheese slicer into thin pieces. Slice the green onions.
5. **PREPARE THE PEARS.** Juice one lemon into a medium bowl. Wash the pears, remove the core and stem, but leave the peel intact. Slice and dice into bite-sized diced pieces and place in the bowl tossing to cover all surfaces with the lemon juice. (If red pears are unavailable, dried cherries or cranberries may be substituted for the red color).
6. **ASSEMBLE THE SALAD.** Just before serving, toss the arugula, and green onion with the vinaigrette. Top with the roasted butternut squash, sliced pears, shaved Manchego, and pumpkin seeds. Serve and enjoy!