

Fresh Spring Herb Salad with Prosciutto

Color is the great mood-lifter of spring. Trees are budding and brightening the horizon. Flowers are blooming, brightening the landscape. Herb boxes are turning green, and they can brighten your salad in ways you never imagined. Fresh herbs are supercharged with flavor and pack a punch that lettuce just can't muster. (Sorry, lettuce.) Don't fret if you can't get the exact greens we call for in this salad. Stroll through the farmer's market and pick any young, tender greens that look fresh and delicious. Make your own mix.

Ingredients

1 tablespoon sesame seeds

dressing

1 large shallot, minced

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

1/4 cup olive oil

Pinch kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper

salad

2½ cups baby arugula

2 cups watercress

1 cup pea shoots

1 packed cup fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves, whole

1/4 cup fresh dill fronds, torn

1/4 cup fresh mint leaves (the smallest ones), torn

3 slices (1 1/2 ounces) prosciutto

Directions

for the sesame seeds

Spread sesame seeds in a dry sauté pan and place over medium heat. As they begin to toast, shake and gently toss the seeds. Keep them moving so that they toast evenly. If they start to pop out of the pan, remove from heat and cool them down a bit. The seeds are done when they've turned a shade darker, about 5 minutes.

for the dressing

Add the shallot and lemon juice to a large mixing bowl. While whisking, slowly drizzle the oil into the bowl, and continue whisking until the dressing thickens. Season with salt and pepper. (Makes about 1/3 cup.)

for the salad

Add the arugula, watercress, pea shoots, parsley, dill and mint to the bowl with the dressing. Use 2 large serving spoons to toss, sweeping up from the bottom and folding the greens over on each other. Sprinkle with the roasted sesame seeds. Slice the prosciutto into thin strips and scatter over the salad and serve.

Cook's Notes:

To keep lemon seeds out of the juice, place a strainer on top of a bowl and squeeze juice into it first. That's much easier than chasing them around with a spoon afterward.

total time: 25 minutes

active prep: 25 minutes

serves: 4 to 6

difficulty: *easy*