

The Perfect Winter Antipasti Salad Recipe

A beautifully muted palate on this platter of veg, meat and cheese that makes use of winter's produce. Fennel, usually so bracing in its anise flavor, mellows and softens as it roasts. Grapes, often just plopped as a bunch on the corner of a cheese plate, transform into deeply sweet and satisfying orbs when they spend time in the oven with the fennel. A flavorful and pungent paste of anchovies coats the potatoes, a surprising addition to an antipasto. Rich mortadella, a soft young cheese and some plump olives round it out nicely.

Ingredients

fennel and grapes

- 1 medium fennel bulb, trimmed, cut vertically into 16 wedges (about 3/4-inch thick) with the core intact
- 12-ounce bunch small, red, seedless grapes, on the stem
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest (from 1/2 orange)
- 1 tablespoon fresh orange juice

potatoes

- 8 ounces baby potatoes, halved or quartered if larger
- 1 clove garlic, lightly crushed
- 3 oil-packed anchovy fillets, drained
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- As much freshly ground black pepper as you like

salad

- 6 ounces (1/2-inch thick) sliced mortadella, cut into 2-inch batons
- 5 ounces young pecorino or semi-firm aged sheep's milk cheese, cut into 2-inch batons
- 1 cup (about 5 ounces) quality green olives, such as Castelvetrano
- 8 pepperoncini

Directions

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with foil.

for the fennel and grapes

Arrange the fennel in a single layer and the grape bunch on one baking sheet. Drizzle with oil and season with crushed red pepper flakes, salt and orange zest. Toss to coat and spread evenly on the sheet. Roast until bottoms lightly brown, about 15 minutes. Flip the fennel and

roast until other side browns and fennel is tender, and the grapes slump and soften, about 10 minutes.

Remove from oven, drizzle the orange juice over the fennel and grapes and set aside to cool slightly.

for the potatoes

Spread the potatoes in a single layer on the other baking sheet. Chop the garlic and anchovies together on the cutting board, sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon of the salt, and mash and chop until it's mostly a paste. Add in the parsley and chop it into the paste. Mix it in a small bowl with the oil, then scrape out onto the potatoes and toss to coat them with the paste. Sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper and toss to coat. Roast, stirring once or twice, until potatoes are golden and soft, about 30 minutes. Set aside to cool slightly.

for the salad

Arrange the fennel, grapes, potatoes, mortadella, cheese, olives and pepperoncini in piles on a platter and serve.

total time: 1 hour

active prep: 25 minutes

serves: 10-12

difficulty: *moderate*