

# Change it up Arugula Salad

***Berit Nelson, April 2023***

This is one of my family's favorite salads. The bitterness of the arugula provides a backdrop for the other ingredients, which can be changed up based on what's in season and your preferences.

Ingredients and Options:

## **Salad**

1. 12-16 oz of arugula (this should be enough for 4 side salads). Change it up: baby spinach or mixed baby greens work as well. Keeping something with some bitterness is ideal, though.
2. 1 blood orange, peeled and chopped into bite size pieces. Change it up: gala, honey crisp or green apples or roasted beets are also good.
3. 1/3 cup (or more) dried cherries. Change it up: Dried blueberries (try the Trader Joe's ones) or dried cranberries are great.
4. 2 tsp finely chopped shallot. Change it up: purple onion is just fine too.
5. ½ cup (or more) chopped spiced pecans (see recipe below or pre-purchase). Change it up: use your preferred nut; recommend something with a salty/sweet coating. Skip the nuts as preferred or necessary.
6. ½ cup crumbled feta. Change it up: Goat cheese also works well but isn't overly crumbly so it's a bit more difficult to incorporate.

## Dressing

Unless you know that you will finish the whole salad, I recommend making the dressing but drizzling a tiny bit on individual portions. You won't need much as the fruit will lend some tartness to the salad.

- 2 tbs olive oil. More if you love it!
- 2 tbs pink grapefruit vinegar (more to taste). Change it up: I love Murray's Cheese grapefruit vinegar if I am using a citrus as my fruit ingredient. But you can be highly creative here. Apple cider vinegar is great if you went the apple route. Lemon or lime juice can also work. Essentially, use your preferred acid!
- 1 tbsp. Mike's hot honey. Change it up: Be creative! Fig preserves, plain honey, sour cherry preserves, reduction of balsamic vinegar, even brown sugar. You want something sweet with some depth. Again, change the amount based on your tastes.
- Salt and pepper to taste.

Other spices to taste: I will often add finely minced fresh basil, tarragon, or mint if I have it on hand.

## Spiced pecans

Trader Joe's has some excellent options. If you are making your own:

1. Heat a non-stick pan to medium.
2. Add ½ cup or more of pecans or your preferred chopped nut and give them a minute or so, stirring often.
3. Add ¼ cup brown sugar, scant tsp of salt, tsp of cinnamon, and 1/8 tsp (dash) of cayenne.
4. Stir nuts and sugar mix together; in 1-2 minutes, you'll have that lovely chemical reaction where the sugar mix turns a bit liquid and coats the pecans. Stir quickly to make sure the pecans are fully coated and turn off heat.

## **Assembly**

Add all salad ingredients together. You can add the feta at the last minute if you aren't serving immediately. Toss.

Serve up individual portions and drizzle with dressing.



# Negroni with a Twist

***Rick Branham, April 2023***

As I pondered the theme for this year's COSUGI—Libraries Inspiring Change—I thought I'd apply that aspiration to my cocktail making. Anyone that has ever joined me for dinner or drinks knows that I'm a big fan of the Negroni, which is a classic Italian cocktail made of equal parts gin, Campari, and sweet vermouth— stirred and served on ice with an orange peel. I discovered the Negroni on a trip to Italy many years ago and instantly fell in love with the bitter-sweet yet gin-forward concoction that is not for the faint of heart.

Flash forward to 2023 when “Negroni week” is a common theme in cities around the world. I've even walked into restaurants with an entire Negroni menu. Life is good.

One thing that makes the Negroni so amazing is its versatility. The recipe in its basic format is: equal parts spirit, aperitif (a dry/bitter drink usual served before a meal to stimulate the appetite), and a fortified wine like vermouth. There are many riffs on the Negroni that I love, such as:

- Boulevardier: Bourbon or Rye Whiskey (instead of gin), Campari or Aperol, and Sweet Vermouth
- Mez-groni: Mezcal, Campari or Aperol, and Sweet Vermouth

Since visiting the Fairmont Empress Hotel in Victoria, BC many years ago, I've been thinking about trying a variation of the Negroni using Empress 1908 Gin. This amazing gin is made in Victoria and is inspired by the hotel. On top of traditional botanicals, the gin uses a blend of black tea served at the Empress Hotel and

butterfly pea blossom, an exotic herb that balances the traditional citrus notes of gin with a warm herbal earthiness, and gives the gin its natural indigo color.

## Here's the recipe

The twist isn't the citrus garnish—you'll have to come to my cocktail demo to find out what it is.

- 1 ½ oz Empress 1908 Gin
- ¾ oz clear aperitif, such as Cocchi Americano, Luxardo Bitter Bianco, or even a mild/sweet aperitif like Lillet Blanc
- ¾ oz dry vermouth
- Orange peel (not just a garnish, it's a crucial ingredient)
- Optional citrus bitters (I like orange or grapefruit), especially if you're using a less-bitter aperitif like Lillet Blanc

Stir together over ice in a rocks glass and serve with an orange peel on top of the ice or on the rim.





# Strawberry Pie (Serves 6-8)

*Lisa Witteman, April 2023*

## Ingredients

- 1 9 inch pie shell, baked
- 5 Cups Strawberries, washed and hulled
- 1 Cup Sugar
- 3 Tbsp. Cornstarch
- 2 Tbsp. Lemon juice
- 1 Cup Heavy cream
- 2 Tbsp. Confectioners' sugar

## Directions

Divide the strawberries into two piles. Slice in half the strawberries in one pile. Crush the remaining berries with a fork or potato masher.

Put the crushed strawberries in a heavy bottom saucepan and stir in lemon juice, cornstarch, and sugar. Be sure to get all the lumps out of the cornstarch before putting the mixture on the heat.

Cook, stirring constantly over low heat until translucent, and thickened. Remove from the heat and cool to room temperature.

Gently stir sliced strawberries into strawberry glaze. Put the strawberry mixture into the baked piecrust. Chill to set.

Just before serving, whip cream with confectioners' sugar. Spread over pie.

*- From the Fannie Farmer Baking Book*