

PURSLANE, MEYER LEMON, AND PEAR SALAD WITH KAFFIR LIME VINAIGRETTE

This recipe was available in print copies earlier in the season; here is a reprise, for those who did not previously pick up a copy or have joined subsequently.

The salad green's fleshy texture and subtle citrus notes work well with the gentle flavors of Meyer lemon and kaffir lime leaves.

Active time: 45 min. Start to finish: 1 ½ hr. Makes 6 servings.

For vinaigrette:

- 1 lemon
- 1 stalk fresh lemongrass, 1 or 2 tough outer leaves discarded and root end trimmed
- ¾ cup chicken stock or broth
- 1 small (1 ½- to 2-inch) dried chile (preferably Thai)
- 6 (2- by 1 ¼-inch) fresh or frozen kaffir lime leaves
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 ½ teaspoons cornstarch dissolved in 1 teaspoon water
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh oregano
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh chervil
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh flat-leaf parsley

For salad:

- 1 Meyer lemon
- 6 firm-ripe small Seckel pears (¾ lb total)
- 6 radishes, trimmed
- ¾ lb purslane, coarse stems discarded
- 1 ½ tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Fleur de sel to taste

Accompaniment: jasmine rice crackers

Special equipment: a Japanese Benriner or other adjustable-blade slicer

Method

Make vinaigrette:

Cut peel, including white pith, from lemon with a small sharp knife. Working over a bowl to catch juices, cut lemon segments free from membranes, letting segments drop into bowl.

Crush lemongrass stalk with side of a heavy knife (to release oils), then thinly slice. Bring stock, lemongrass, and chile to a boil in a 1- to 1 ½-quart heavy saucepan. Cover pan and remove from heat, then let stand 20 minutes.

Return to a boil and add lemon segments with juice and lime leaves. Cover pan and remove from heat, then let stand 20 minutes more.

Pour mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a small bowl, discarding solids, then return to saucepan and whisk in oil. Bring vinaigrette to a boil and whisk in cornstarch mixture, then simmer, whisking occasionally, 2 minutes. Cool completely. Whisk in herbs and salt and pepper to taste.

Make salad:

Using slicer, cut Meyer lemon (with skin) crosswise, pears lengthwise (discarding cores), and radishes lengthwise into very thin slices (about 1/16 inch thick) and transfer to a large bowl. Add purslane, oil, lemon juice, and fleur de sel and pepper to taste and toss gently.

Divide salad among 6 plates and spoon vinaigrette over and around each. Serve salads with jasmine crackers on the side.

Cooks' note: Vinaigrette (without herbs) can be made 1 day ahead and chilled, covered. Bring to room temperature, then whisk in herbs just before serving.

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Adapted from chef Laurent Gras
Gourmet Entertains