

Fennel, Red Pepper, Orange and Black Olive Salad

Serves 2

1 nice fat fresh fennel bulb

1 red bell pepper or long mild sweet red pepper, seeds and stems removed

1 sweet juicy orange, or several Mandarin, satsuma, clementines, (etc)

Salt to taste

Handful of flavorful black olives, unpitted (though this means you'll need to be careful not to bite down on the pit: the truth about olives and pitting is that there is an enzyme close to the pit that is part of the olives goodness. If you pit it, then put it in brine as the pitted olives are sold, then you get too much marinated/brine flavor, and not enough olive flavor; at least this is my belief). (If your olives are very salty, cut way back on the salt you use to toss the fennel and pepper.

The juices of the cut up citrus fruit

1-2 teaspoons white wine vinegar, or to taste 1-2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, or to taste

Optional: a handful of either arugula/rocket leaves, or a smaller handful fresh sweet mint leaves, thinly sliced

Thinly slice the fennel and red pepper; a mandoline will give you the most beautiful, thin, gorgeous slices, but take rapt attention and care to keep your fingers safe. You could also use a sharp knife, or the slicing attachment to a food processor. The main thing is to get the slices as thin as possible, yet keep their integrity (ie not letting them become a salsa instead of a salad).

Peel the citrus: slice or cut into chunks, saving the juice to add to the vegetables.

Toss the fennel and pepper with a little bit of salt; let sit a minute or two then add the citrus, toss well, then add their juices, the wine vinegar, and the olive oil. Taste for seasoning and balance.

Serve, now or chilled, with anything saucy or rich, barbecued, kebab-ed, or roasted; we ate it last week with gormeh sabzi. If you like, garnish the platter/bowl with either arugula/rocket or fresh mint.