

ROMAINE, GORGONZOLA, AND WALNUT SALAD

Prep Time: 20 Minutes plus 15 Minutes for Marinating

Cooking Time: 10 Minutes

INGREDIENTS:

WALNUT VINAIGRETTE

7 Tbsp (3½ fl oz / 105 ml) walnut oil.
2 Tbsp olive oil.
2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar.
1 Tbsp sherry vinegar
salt and ground pepper to taste

1 cup (4 oz / 125 g) walnuts, preferably halves

3 heads romaine (cos) lettuce and Red lettuce, leaves separated and torn into bite-sized pieces

6 small ripe figs, quartered through stem ends (optional)

1 cup (6 oz / 185 g) red or black seedless grapes, halved (optional)

2 small pears, quartered, cored and thinly sliced (optional)

½ - ⅔ lb (250 - 315 g) Gorgonzola Dolcelatte cheese or Creamy Goat Cheese at room temperature, broken into bite-sized pieces.

Preparation:

Gorgonzola Dolcelatte is the sweeter version of the fabulously rich, blue-veined cheese. If you cannot find it at your market, substitute Roquefort or a similar blue cheese. When in season, figs or grapes make a nice addition to the salad. In winter, serve it with wedges of ripe pear.

1. Preheat an oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. To make the walnut vinaigrette, in a bowl, whisk together the walnut and olive oils, balsamic and sherry vinegars, salt, and pepper. Set aside.
3. Spread the walnuts on a baking sheet and place in the oven. Toast, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned and fragrant, 8 – 10 minutes. Remove from the oven. Transfer to a small bowl. Add 3 tablespoons of the vinaigrette, toss lightly and let stand for 15 minutes before assembling the salad.
4. Place the torn romaine in a large bowl. Add the marinated walnuts and drizzle with the remaining vinaigrette. Toss well. Divide among chilled individual plates and top with the figs, grapes, or pears, if using, and the cheese, dividing all the ingredients evenly, and serve.