

Tomato, Mozzarella & Avocado Salad

Three-tomato, Wolds Mozzarella and Avocado Salad with Spiced Gazpacho and Lovage Pesto.

Ingredients: Serves 4-6

For the gazpacho

1 celery stick
2 red peppers
1 shallot
½ cucumber
1 fresh chilli
4 ripe plum tomatoes
salt & pepper
200ml tomato juice
1 clove garlic
Worcestershire sauce
50ml olive oil
50ml white wine vinegar
1 tblsp caster sugar
squeeze of lemon juice

For the semi-dried tomatoes

200g cherry tomatoes
salt
caster sugar
rapeseed oil

For the pesto

fresh lovage
fresh flat leaf parsley
2 tblsp pistachio nuts
1 clove garlic
salt
rapeseed oil

For the salad

6 mixed large tomatoes
2 ripe avocados
1 ball of fresh mozzarella
mixed salad leaf and
herbs for garnish

A classic tricolour of summer shades. It's a simple dish, so everything hangs on using the finest ingredients, especially ripe avocados and the assortment of fresh tomatoes.

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/
gas mark 4.

To make the gazpacho, peel the string off the celery and cut the celery into thin strips about 4-5cm in length. Roast the red peppers in a hot oven at 180°C/gas mark 4 for 10-15 minutes until the skin starts to blister, then place the peppers in a bowl and cover with cling film. Leave for 10 minutes, then remove all of the skin and the seeds. Finely chop the shallot, peel and de-seed the cucumber and then chop it into chunks. De-seed the chilli and finely chop, and roughly chop the fresh tomatoes. Then place all of the ingredients into a liquidiser and blend to a smooth consistency. Season with salt and pepper and pass through a fine sieve, pour into a jug, cover and chill in the fridge.

Halve the cherry tomatoes and lay them on greaseproof paper on a flat baking tray, then sprinkle with salt, caster sugar and a drizzle of rapeseed oil. Put the tray in the oven at 120°C/gas mark ½, or as low as the oven will go, for 2-3 hours to semi-dry them to intensify the flavour.

You can also use the gazpacho as a cold sauce for fish or shellfish, or make more and serve it on its own as a starter garnished with some fresh white crab meat, or as a canapé served in a shot glass.

For the lovage pesto, put a handful of picked lovage leaves, a small amount of picked parsley and the pistachio nuts into a liquidiser with the clove of garlic and a good pinch of salt. Turn on and then pour in a steady stream of rapeseed oil until the pesto becomes a thick paste.

To serve, slice and season each slice of the tomatoes and lay on a plate, halve the avocado, peel, slice and place on the plate, then tear the mozzarella into pieces and put onto the avocado, spoon over some of the pesto and finish with the semi-dried tomatoes, salad leaf and herbs. Serve with a shot of chilled gazpacho and a baked bread croûte, which is thinly sliced bread drizzled with oil and baked until crisp.

Grilled Prosciutto