

Fennel and Winter Greens Salad with Mushrooms and Truffle Oil

| SERVES 4 TO 6

If I had to choose just one, this would be my favorite winter salad. The bitter edge of the greens, the clean flavor of the fennel, the dank mushrooms, and the haunting fragrance of the truffle oil—what could be better? Serve this salad as a first or last course so that it can stand alone.

1 head butter lettuce
1 medium head radicchio
1 plump Belgian endive
1 fennel bulb, trimmed
6 large mushrooms, thinly sliced
1 large shallot, finely diced
1½ tablespoons aged red wine vinegar
 or fresh lemon juice
sea salt and freshly ground pepper
5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
truffle oil
a chunk of Parmigiano-Reggiano at
 room temperature

1. Gently tear the butter lettuce into bite-sized or larger pieces, leaving the smaller heart leaves whole. Tear the radicchio into smaller pieces. Quarter the endive lengthwise, then sliver lengthwise. Wash and dry the greens and put them in a salad bowl. Slice the fennel paper-thin on a mandoline and add it to the greens along with the sliced mushrooms. Cover with a damp towel and refrigerate until needed.
2. Combine the shallot, vinegar, and ½ teaspoon salt. Let stand for at least 5 minutes, then whisk in the olive oil. Taste on a lettuce leaf—it can be a little on the tart side. Toss the salad with enough vinaigrette to coat well, then drizzle on a teaspoon or so of truffle oil and toss again. Pile lightly onto plates. Shave some thin curls of cheese over each serving, add pepper to taste, and serve.