

Bitter Greens with Anchovy Vinaigrette & Grilled Cheese Croutons

With their assertive bitter flavor, winter greens like dandelion, frisée, and radicchio can sometimes taste a bit “weedy.” The trick to bringing out their best is balancing them with plenty of salt, acid, and fat. We like to toss them in a Caesar-y dressing with briny capers and anchovies and lots of lemon juice. That takes care of the salt and acid. For the fat, we turn to cheese, but we give it a fun twist. We make grilled cheese sandwiches with gooey Vella Toma, a local Fontina-style cheese, and cut them into croutons to toss with the greens. Paper-thin slices of raw celery root mimic the look of shaved Parmesan and add a surprising element of freshness and crunch. SERVES 4

For the anchovy vinaigrette:

1/4 cup freshly squeezed Meyer lemon juice
1 large clove garlic
6 olive oil-packed anchovy fillets
2 teaspoons capers
1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons oil from anchovy fillets
1 bunch dandelion greens
1 head frisée
1/2 head radicchio
1 small celery root (about 6 oz)

For the grilled cheese croutons:

4 large slices sourdough bread
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
5 oz Vella Toma cheese or fontina, sliced
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

To make the vinaigrette: In a blender, combine the lemon juice, garlic, anchovies, capers, and Worcestershire sauce and process until smooth. Add the olive oil and anchovy oil and process until emulsified. You should have about 1 cup. You will need only 1/2 cup for this recipe. The leftover dressing will keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

To prepare the greens and celery root: Trim off the stems from the dandelion greens, then cut the greens into 2-inch pieces. Trim the frisée, discarding the green tops and stems. Cut the pale-yellow leaves that remain into 2-inch pieces. Rinse and dry the dandelion and frisée well. Cut away the core of the radicchio, then cut the radicchio lengthwise into sixths. Peel the celery root and cut in half lengthwise. Using a mandoline, shave each half crosswise into thin slices.

To make the grilled cheese croutons: Line up the bread slices on a work surface and spread the slices evenly with the butter. Turn 2 slices butter side down, then divide the cheese slices evenly between the 2 slices. Top with the remaining 2 bread slices, butter side up.

Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the sandwiches and toast, turning once, for 5 to 10 minutes, until the cheese melts and the bread is browned and crisp. Transfer the sandwiches to a cutting board, let rest for 2 to 3 minutes and cut into 1/2-inch squares.

To assemble the salad: In a large bowl, combine the greens and celery root. Drizzle with 1/2 cup of the vinaigrette, season with salt and a generous amount of pepper, and toss to coat evenly. Scatter the croutons over the top, toss again, and serve immediately.