

Bitter Greens with Spiced Almonds, Capers and Walnut Vinaigrette

Adapted from Matthew Kenney's Mediterranean Cooking, Chronicle Books, 1997. The original recipe calls for almond oil in the dressing, but I like the walnut variation the best. And the spiced almonds (mine have a lot of kick, but you can always tone it back down) are so good you can eat them as a snack – in fact, it's really hard not to eat them on their own. But the recipe makes more than twice as many as you need for the salad, so, really, why not?

1 shallot minced
Juice from 1 lemon – at least 6 tablespoons
½ cup walnut oil
1/8 cup white vinegar
Salt and ground pepper and to taste

A mixture of bitter greens – arugula is a must, enough to serve 4.
4 tablespoons of capers, drained
8 slices of apple
½ cups of spiced almonds (see below)

In a blender, combine the shallots, lemon juice, walnut oil, vinegar, salt and pepper. Taste, and adjust the seasoning. If you are making the vinaigrette ahead of time, pour it into a pint jar, and shake it up just before serving.

Divide the greens among 4 plates, and top with capers, apple slices and spiced almonds. Dress the salads with the vinaigrette and serve immediately.

Spiced Almonds:

Olive oil spray
1 pound whole almonds
¼ cup sugar
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons chipotle powder
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons raw honey

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a shallow roasting pan with olive oil. Spread the almonds in a single layer in the pan, and roast for 15 minutes, or until well browned. Let the nuts cool to the touch (about 10 minutes), but leave the oven on.

Mix together the sugar, cinnamon, chipotle powder and salt. Taste, and add extra salt as necessary.

Drizzle the honey over the nuts, and then sprinkle on the spices, tossing until the nuts are evenly coated in the honey and spices. Put the nuts back in the oven till they are shiny – about 5 minutes. Let cool and store in an airtight container.