



My Twelve Days of Christmas & Mixed Reds & Greens Holiday Salad

Happy Holidays 2013/Volume 376

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So, I skipped Black Friday and Black Friday Eve as well as Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. Still in Thanksgiving mode, I wasn't ready for Christmas shopping. There was soup to make and people to see. (By the way, I think the small business people should put their smart hats on and come up with a new name. Small Business Saturday doesn't exactly roll off the tongue.)

Now that the calendar page has turned to December, I am ready to pull out the stops and get ready for Christmas. In the process, I will do my best to support the economy with a little shopping. But don't anyone get their hopes up too high. True love or not, I am not in the market for partridges, milkmaids or cows, lords and ladies, pipers or a drum band. My plans are a bit more modest.

On the first day of Christmas, I'll head to the farm and skip the pear tree in favor of a spruce or fir and a poinsettia or two.

For the second day of Christmas, I won't be giving anyone a dule of doves but the peace they symbolize will be in my heart.

And the third day of Christmas? Nope, I will not be building a coup for French Hens. That said; I would be more than happy to roast a chicken during the holiday season for friends and family. Will you bring the champagne?

On the fourth day of Christmas, the English sing about collie birds. A collie bird is a European black bird. This bird is hoping for at least one occasion to put on her little black dress during the holidays.

For the fifth day of Christmas, instead of gold rings, I'll look for a new bauble to decorate the tree.

For the sixth day of Christmas, if I'm not raising chickens in the backyard then geese are definitely not in the picture. Although, someone on my list might need a new goose down comforter, puffy vest or gloves. I'll make a few calls.

By the seventh day of Christmas, ice on New Hampshire ponds will keep most swans from swimming. Do you think a beautiful box of Swan chocolates would be a reasonable substitute? Or any gorgeous, artisanal chocolates for that matter.

Come the eighth day of Christmas, there will be no maids and no milking at my house but I will be in the market for a little butter and cream for some special holiday treats.

On the ninth and tenth day of Christmas, I certainly hope to be dancing in my little black dress and I'll be looking for a dashing lord (or ten) to join me.

On the eleventh, twelfth and every day of Christmas, music is a joyful part of the season. Pipes, drums, banjos, trumpets and a piano, it's all good.

Enjoy the holidays with family and friends. Bon appétit!



Mixed Reds & Greens Holiday Salad

Serve this festive salad at your holiday party or bring it along to the next potluck! Enjoy!

Serves 12

12-16 ounces mixed baby red and green lettuce
 1/2-1 head radicchio, thinly sliced
 Roasted Shallot Vinaigrette (recipe follows)
 About 4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
 About 3/4 cup dried cranberries or cherries
 About 3/4 cup toasted pistachios or walnuts, roughly chopped

Put the lettuces and radicchio in a large bowl and refrigerate until ready to serve.

When ready to serve, drizzle the salad with enough Roasted Shallot Vinaigrette to lightly coat, sprinkle with feta, cranberries and nuts and toss to combine. Serve immediately.



Roasted Garlic & Shallot Vinaigrette

Makes about 1 1/2 cups

2-3 cloves garlic, peeled and trimmed
 1/2-1 shallot, peeled and quartered
 1/2 teaspoon dry thyme
 Extra-virgin olive oil
 3-4 tablespoons dry white wine
 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Place the garlic and shallot in a small ovenproof baking dish (I use a custard cup), season with thyme, salt and pepper, drizzle with a little olive oil and the wine. Roast at 350 degrees until the garlic and shallot are very soft, about 30 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Put the roasted vegetables, vinegars and mustard in a blender or small food processor and process until smooth. With the motor running, add olive oil to taste, season with salt and pepper and process until smooth.

Cover and store leftover vinaigrette in the refrigerator.