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Shaved Fennel and Citrus Salad

SERVINGS: 4

I turn to this recipe as an alternative to a traditional lettuce salad. I adore the contrast of textures and the bright citrus flavors. This salad is at once crispy, citrusy and salty with a hint of sweetness — a refreshing Sicilian pick-me-up.

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons fresh orange or blood orange juice
2 tablespoons white or red wine vinegar
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon fennel seeds
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 fennel bulb with fronds, thinly sliced
1/2 lemon, juiced
1/2 large red onion, thinly sliced
1/4 cup oil-cured black olives
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves
Shaved Parmigiano cheese
Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

PREPARATION

Combine the orange juice, vinegar, olive oil, honey, fennel seeds, salt, and pepper. Whisk vigorously until well blended. Set aside. Cut the stems off the fennel, reserving the fronds for garnishing the salad.
Cut the fennel in half, remove the core, and cut into quarters. Using a mandoline or small sharp knife, slice the fennel pieces thinly. Place them in a bowl. Sprinkle with lemon juice and dust with a pinch of salt. Add the onion and olives. Pour the vinaigrette over the salad and toss. Place in a shallow salad bowl or rimmed platter and garnish with the fennel fronds and mint. Add sliced Parmigiano cheese (if desired). Dust with a few grinds of black pepper and serve immediately.