

SALAD OF GRAPEFRUIT + AVOCADO WITH TOASTED PUMPKIN SEEDS

Low-sodium guest: Chef Traci Des Jardins, Jardinière and Mijita Cocina Mexicana

This salad is like a beautiful waltz—a spicy, Mexican waltz—where the ingredients are perfectly in step with one another. On the first bite, the crunch of the pumpkin seeds dances with the snap of the jicama, and the lemony essence of the coriander keeps up with the citrus.

Upon a second taste, however, the ingredients suddenly switch partners and move on to a new pairing. The nutty oils of the pumpkin seeds now melt with the smooth avocado, and the bright pop of the coriander ignites the hot jalapeno.

Hot, cool, slick, and sweet, this salad hits all the right notes. It is dizzyingly delicious and a perfect example of why Chef Des Jardins is a master of her craft. It is also proof that, with the right technique, carefully chosen elements, and combination of spices, a simple list of ingredients can transform into something quite elegant.

Serves 6

1/3 cup salt-free pumpkin seeds

1 tablespoon coriander seed

1 jalapeno pepper, thinly sliced into rounds

1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon olive oil

1 medium jicama, peeled

2 ruby red grapefruits

Juice of 1 lime

1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves

2 avocados, pitted, peeled, and sliced

Toast the pumpkin seeds, coriander seeds, and sliced jalapeño in a skillet with 1 tablespoon of olive oil until fragrant. Set aside to cool. (You can also make extra pumpkin seeds and set out as a snack.)

Cut the jicama into small *batonnets* about 3 inches long. Slice off the ends of both grapefruits and set them flat on a cutting board. Using a sharp knife, remove the peel and all of the bitter white membrane from the grapefruit. Then hold the grapefruit over a large bowl (to collect the run-off juices) and use a paring knife to carefully slice between each membrane, removing the sections. Place the sections into

the bowl with all that wonderful grapefruit juice. Add the jicama, the remaining 1/3 cup olive oil, the lime juice, and cilantro leaves. At the last possible moment, add the sliced avocado and blend gently. Place onto individual plates or in a salad bowl and garnish with the pumpkin seeds, coriander seeds, and sliced jalapeños.

Sodium count:

Avocado: 14mg per avocado; Pumpkin seeds: 5mg per 1/4 cup