

BITTER GREENS SALAD

with Gruyère Fondue

SERVES 4

That old saying that opposites attract applies to food as much as it does to people. One of my favorite matchmaking techniques is to put hot and cold food on the same plate. In this combination salad and fondue, many of the ingredients can be dipped in the melted cheese. It's sort of based on a raclette, a classic Swiss dish of melted cheese served right on a plate, along with various vegetables for scooping it up. It's a stick-to-your-ribs salad, if there is such a thing.

4 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, quartered

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

10 ounces sliced bacon (about 10 strips)

½ tablespoon butter

½ tablespoon flour

1 cup dry white wine

2 medium shallots, chopped

1 cup heavy cream

About 2 cups grated Gruyère cheese (about 8 ounces)

½ tablespoon sherry vinegar

½ tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1½ tablespoons canola oil

½ teaspoon Dijon mustard

4 Belgian endive spears, cut crosswise into 3 pieces

8 ounces mixed bitter greens, such as arugula, dandelion greens, or watercress

½ medium head radicchio, torn into bite-size pieces

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Put the potatoes on a cookie sheet. Season with salt and pepper and bake until tender to a knife-tip, 35 to 40 minutes. Meanwhile, put the bacon strips on a cookie sheet and cook in the oven until crisp, approximately 7 minutes. Drain on paper towels, cut into 1-inch pieces, and set aside.

Make a roux by melting the butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in the flour and continue to cook, whisking, until the mixture is golden, but not browned, approximately 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Put the wine and shallots in a medium saucepan set over medium-high heat. Bring the wine to a simmer and let simmer until reduced by two thirds. Whisk in the heavy cream and the roux. Cook for about 1 minute, then whisk in the cheese, a few tablespoons at a time. If the mixture seems hopelessly thick, whisk in a tablespoon or so of hot water. If it seems too thin, add some more cheese. Season with salt and pepper. Keep warm over a low flame.

In a large bowl, whisk together the sherry vinegar, extra-virgin olive oil, canola oil, and Dijon mustard. Season with salt and pepper. Add the warm potatoes, bacon, endive, greens, and radicchio to the bowl. Season with salt and pepper, and toss.

Ladle some fondue onto each of 4 salad plates and top with some salad.