



Fattoush

SERVES 6-8

Fattoush is a middle eastern salad made with lots of fresh vegetables and "day-old" pita. It was likely a recipe started in Lebanon when the farmers' wives would toss stale pita into a bowl of fresh vegetables, drizzle with olive oil and call it dinner. Many recipes don't require lettuce, but I love the tender leaves of little gems mixed in with the fresh parsley and mint. I also prefer to fry my pita pieces instead of baking them, since they result in crispy chips. Ground sumac is an important ingredient in every fattoush, as it adds a bright tart flavor and beautiful color.

INGREDIENTS

12 spears of asparagus, tips only, cut into 4" pieces

1 cup fresh parsley leaves

3 pieces of pita bread, cut into 2" pieces.

1/2 cup fresh mint leaves

1/2 cup olive oil, (plus one tablespoon)

1/2 teaspoon ground sumac

16 cherry tomatoes

Dressing:

4 cups little gem lettuce leaves

1/2 cup olive oil

6 radishes, sliced thinly

juice of one lemon

1/2 sweet red onion, sliced thinly

1/2 teaspoon salt

3 small cucumbers, sliced

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

PROCESS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place asparagus on a baking sheet and drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and bake for 10 minutes. Allow to cool. In a shallow skillet, heat 1/2 cup olive oil to 350 degrees.

Carefully place the pita bread pieces into the oil. You will do this in two batches, so you won't crowd them. Fry the pita bread until lightly crispy. Remove and place on a paper-lined plate.

In a large bowl, combine the tomatoes, lettuce, radishes, cucumbers, parsley, mint, asparagus, and pita pieces.

In a small jar, combine 1/2 cup olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Shake the dressing, pour over salad and toss. Sprinkle with sumac and serve.

Note: If pomegranates are in season, add the seeds for a burst of sweetness!