

Better Homes & Gardens

[GARDEN ISSUE]

Spring Forward

41 ways to get your garden started

URBAN FARMSTEAD
A CALIFORNIA COUPLE GROWS THEIR OWN
p. 100

SPACE-SAVING GARDEN IDEAS
p. 60

plus HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE BH&G TEST GARDEN



the *artful* salad

Take a page out of salad enthusiast Julia Sherman's book with an easy spread inspired by her **Salad for President** campaign.



CITRUS-MARINATED OLIVES

ROAST CHICKEN, ARUGULA, AND CITRUS-MARINATED OLIVES

GRILLED RAINBOW ESCABECHE

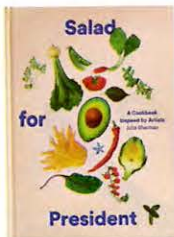
When artist Julia Sherman gathers friends in her Brooklyn garden, one thing is certain: There will be salads. Collaborating with artists and other creative professionals to compose inventive salads has become her signature—launching a popular blog, *Salad for President*, and a book by the same name. “The cool thing about doing a salad party is that when people look at the buffet, it has every color under the sun,” she says. “You can have just three ingredients and if they complement each other and you put them on the right plate, then you’ve got something that’s really impressive.”

This afternoon’s spread includes dishes to please both vegetarians and meat-eaters. “You don’t want anyone to feel like they didn’t get what they needed for dinner,” Julia says. Crunchy polenta croutons star in a simple but satisfying heirloom tomato and basil salad; pan-roasted chicken breasts and rich marinated olives pair up in another of the dishes.

The elements of a successful party—an exciting alchemy of food, conversation, and art—also come together in Julia’s book and blog. Why *Salad for President*? “It challenges the idea that salads are simply side dishes,” she says. “They are not—let them take the main stage!”

Where other artists work with paint or textiles, Julia Sherman, *right*, wields garden ingredients to compose salads that play on color, texture, and composition—as well as feed friends. Salads like the grilled vegetable escabeche (quick-pickled veggies in an oil vinaigrette), *above*, offer flexibility. “It’s the kind of thing you can scale up or down really easily,” she says.





For *Salad for President*, Julia interviewed artists, musicians, and writers, then created and documented beautiful salads with them. "Pretty much anyone has a salad they think is worth sharing," she says.



Julia delegates parts of the meal that aren't her specialty, like dessert.



HEIRLOOM TOMATO SALAD WITH CRUNCHY CORNMEAL CROUTONS

RECIPES BEGIN ON PAGE 120.

JULIA'S RULE OF THREES: IF ONE DISH IS COMPLICATED, MAKE THE OTHER TWO STUPIDLY SIMPLE.

plantyourplate
PLANTS FOR GARDEN-FRESH SALADS

One of the best things about growing your own food is you get to try plants at all different stages: the leaves, flowers, fruit, or seeds. Julia's advice: Grow things that you can't find in a market. Usually the delicate stuff isn't available because it doesn't pack and travel well.

MIXED GREENS

Mild, crunchy gem lettuces (like compact, miniature romaine heads) grow well in mild climates or as an early- or late-season crop. Grow delicate heads of mâche (aka corn salad or lamb's lettuce) to add nutty flavor. Snip shade-loving mizuna, a Japanese mustard green, when leaves are small, before they get too spicy.

CHERVIL

Chervil's lacy leaves have a subtle anise

flavor. Its life-span once cut is brief, but chervil grows well in shade and during the cool times of summer. The tiny white blossoms are delicious, too: Use them anywhere you would tarragon.

CORIANDER LEAVES, BERRIES & FLOWERS

Use coriander leaves (aka cilantro) and the tender stems while fresh, but the real fun begins when the plant flowers and goes to seed. The white blooms have a subtle cilantro flavor, and coriander berries (the fresh seeds) deliver an intensely aromatic pop in your mouth. (Think of it as vegetable caviar.)

COLUMNAR BASIL

Columnar bush basil or pistou basil grows tiny, densely packed leaves. The mild basil flavor works well in salads. ■

**“CHECK OUT
MY SWEET
CANNON-BOWL!”**



**FROSTED SWEET.
CRUNCHY
WHEAT.
FEED YOUR
INNER KID**

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RECIPES FROM PAGES 66-68

THE ARTFUL SALAD

Author and blogger Julia Sherman's penchant for building impromptu meals for a party started when she and her husband were running a nonprofit gallery in Los Angeles. The gallery events often spilled over to their nearby home. Julia found her garden provided ingredients for easy dishes she could quickly scale to feed a crowd.

**ROAST CHICKEN,
ARUGULA, AND
CITRUS-MARINATED
OLIVES**

"Mature arugula—as opposed to baby arugula—is peppery and sturdy enough to hold up well even after being dressed," Julia Sherman says. Watercress and dandelion greens make good substitutions.

HANDS-ON TIME 15 min.

TOTAL TIME 1 hr. 5 min.

- 1½ Valencia oranges
- 3 cups pitted Castelvetrano olives (or other mild pitted green olives)
- 1 cup plus 2 Tbsp. grapeseed oil

- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 Tbsp. whole black peppercorns, crushed
- ¼ cup chopped fresh tarragon
- 4 7- to 9-oz. boneless chicken breasts, skin on
- 8 oz. mature arugula
- ½ lemon

1. Using a vegetable peeler remove strips of zest from oranges, being careful not to remove the white pith; cut strips into thin slivers. (Wrap and reserve oranges for another use.)
2. For Citrus-Marinated Olives: In a large saucepan heat orange zest, olives, ¾ cup of the grapeseed oil, the olive oil, bay leaf, and peppercorns over medium-low heat. When oil just starts to boil, reduce heat to low; simmer 30 minutes. Add 2 Tbsp. tarragon; remove saucepan from heat. Set aside.
3. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°F. Pat chicken breasts dry with a paper towel. (Don't skip this step, or you won't get a crispy skin.)
4. Heat a 12-inch ovenproof sauté pan or cast-iron skillet over medium heat 5 minutes. Add remaining 6 Tbsp.

grapeseed oil; swirl to coat pan. Season chicken with *salt* and *freshly cracked black pepper*. Add to hot pan skin side down. To get a golden sear, press chicken down 10 seconds; cook 10 minutes without moving. Turn skin side up; transfer pan to oven. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until chicken is done (165°F). Let rest uncovered on cutting board 5 minutes.

5. Place arugula in a large serving dish. Squeeze lemon over; drizzle with 1 Tbsp. of the olive marinade. Season with salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Toss to coat.

6. Slice chicken into ½-inch-thick strips; arrange on arugula. Using a slotted spoon, place some Citrus-Marinated Olives on chicken; pass remaining. Top with remaining 2 Tbsp. tarragon. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

PER SERVING 317 cal, 24 g fat, 63 mg chol, 497 mg sodium, 4 g carb, 2 g fiber, 1 g sugars, 22 g pro.

HEIRLOOM TOMATO SALAD WITH CRUNCHY CORNMEAL CROUTONS

The croutons are crispy on the outside and soft on the inside.

HANDS-ON TIME 15 min.

TOTAL TIME 4 hr.

- 2** cups vegetable or chicken broth
- ½** cup tomato-base vegetable juice
- 1** cup coarse-grind cornmeal, such as Bob's Red Mill
- 1** Tbsp. minced fresh Italian parsley and/or basil
- 1** tsp. ghee* or melted butter
- 2** Tbsp. grapeseed oil or vegetable oil
- 2** medium heirloom tomatoes (about 1 lb. total), cut into 2-inch wedges
- 1** cup heirloom cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½** to 1 tsp. sea salt flakes, plus more for finishing
- 1** clove garlic, smashed and peeled
- ½** red onion, thinly sliced
- 1** Tbsp. sherry vinegar
- 3** Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- Fresh basil leaves

1. For croutons: In a medium saucepan bring broth, 1 cup water, the vegetable juice, and ½ tsp. salt to boiling. Gradually stir in cornmeal. Reduce heat to low; simmer gently, stirring frequently to prevent cornmeal from clumping or sticking to bottom. Cook 40 minutes or until thick. Remove from heat; stir in parsley and ghee.

2. Pour mixture into a greased 9×5-inch loaf pan; let cool 5 minutes. Refrigerate, covered, at least 2 hours or overnight.

3. Slide a sharp knife around pan edge to loosen cornmeal; invert pan to release cornmeal. Cut into ¾-inch cubes.

4. Coat a rimmed baking sheet with grapeseed oil. Place in oven while it preheats to 425°F. When oven reaches 425°F, place cornmeal cubes on baking sheet. Bake 15 minutes. Turn cubes; bake 15 minutes more or until light brown and crispy. Let cool 5 minutes.

5. Meanwhile, assemble tomato salad: In a medium bowl gently combine tomatoes, sea salt, garlic, onion, and vinegar. Let stand until tomatoes release their juices, 5 to 10 minutes. Discard garlic.

6. For dressing: Place 2 Tbsp. of the tomatoes' released juices in a small bowl; slowly whisk in the olive oil until thick and emulsified.

7. To serve, using a slotted spoon, place tomatoes in a large serving bowl; top with croutons. Drizzle with dressing; season with sea salt flakes and *freshly cracked black pepper*. Scatter torn basil leaves on top. Serve immediately. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

***NOTE** Ghee, aka clarified butter, is butter that has been slowly melted until the liquid separates from the milk solids. Further cooking browns the solids and evaporates the liquid. The result is pure butterfat that has a nutty flavor.

PER SERVING 331 cal, 20 g fat, 3 mg chol, 903 mg sodium, 36 g carb, 8 g fiber, 8 g sugars, 4 g pro.

“CRUNCH ATTACK!”

FROSTED SWEET. CRUNCHY WHEAT. FEED YOUR INNER KID