

# An Arresting Salmon and Potato Salad

After something casual, such as grilled chicken wings, or cocktails and dips (pages 118-21), this salad is the sort of main course that can bring the guests to the table. The components for the salad can be presented separately, allowing guests to determine the particular tastes and proportions they desire; for a less casual lunch or dinner, the salad can be composed in the kitchen, plate by plate.

If the main course is not preceded by food from the grill or a long cocktail hour, a warm soup such as the Almond Buttermilk Soup (page 125) makes a comforting start for this salad meal. If the soup is served first, bread—a French-style baguette or a crusty peasant loaf—transforms this light salad into genteel sufficiency. The savory Tomato-Lemon Biscotti (page 69), however, are an even better match. On a cool night, if you are willing to risk some last-minute preparations, Pepper-Chive Popovers (page 27) would also make a fine companion to this salad meal.

Given the light character of the food, a tart such as Mr. D.'s Strawberry Almond Tart (page 84) or a toasted Blueberry Crumb Cake (page 100) topped with a compote of blueberries, strawberries, or peaches provides a sweet and satisfying finish.

## THE SALMON

- 1¼ pounds salmon fillet
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt, or more to taste
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1½ teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon thinly sliced fresh mint

## THE ASPARAGUS

- 24 asparagus spears, ends snapped off
- ¾ pound sugar snap peas, strung
- 1½ cups cooked fresh peas
- 3 tablespoons Lemon Vinaigrette (page 68)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

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## THE POTATOES

1½ pounds small red potatoes, cut into ½-inch slices

¼ cup mayonnaise

5 tablespoons plain low-fat yogurt

¾ teaspoon grated lime zest

1½ teaspoons fresh lime juice

¾ teaspoon kosher salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 scallion, green part only, thinly sliced, for garnish

12 cups salad greens

3 tablespoons Lemon Vinaigrette

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Place the salmon on a baking sheet and season with the salt and a sprinkling of pepper. Bake until just cooked through, about 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fillets. Let cool, pull off the skin, and flake with a fork into large chunks. Place in a bowl and gently toss with the lemon juice and with salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with the mint.

2. Separate the asparagus tips from stalks. Peel the stalks and cut into 1-inch pieces. Blanch the stalks in boiling, salted water for 2 minutes. Add the tips and blanch 1 minute more. Drain and refresh under cold running water. Set aside. Blanch the sugar snaps until crisp-tender, about 4 minutes; drain and refresh. Place the asparagus, sugar snaps, peas, and vinaigrette in a bowl and toss. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

3. Place the potatoes in a saucepan, cover with cold water, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat, cover, and simmer until just tender, 5 to 10 minutes. Drain and let cool. Whisk together the mayonnaise, yogurt, lime zest and juice, salt, and pepper. Toss the potatoes with the dressing. Place in a bowl and garnish with the scallion.

4. Place the salad greens in a large bowl and toss with the vinaigrette. Pass the dishes separately, letting guests build their own salads.

*Serves 6*

## Lemon Vinaigrette

This vinaigrette can be used to dress greens, blanched green beans, or grilled vegetables. It's a fine dressing for steamed artichokes and also makes a lovely marinade for mushrooms that have been lightly blanched in salted water, drained, and then tossed with the vinaigrette while warm. A fresh herb such as thyme, minced chives, parsley, dill, or basil can be added to this vinaigrette as well, to add more flavor to green salads, or if used as a sauce for grilled food, to meat, vegetables, or fish. The vinaigrette can add a splash of newness to almost anything left over from a previous meal.

- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup extra-virgin olive oil

Whisk the mustard, lemon juice, salt, and pepper together. Whisking constantly, slowly drizzle in the olive oil.

*Makes about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup*

