

# A Simple Salad with a Fancy Flair

*And marinated mushrooms on the side*

By Susie Iventosch



Salad with goat cheese-stuffed artichoke bottoms

Photos Susie Iventosch



Marinated mushrooms with a fresh sprig of rosemary

Sometimes you just want something a little bit fancy to serve for salad, especially for a dinner party, but you don't necessarily want all that work that comes along with making an intricate salad when there is still the rest of the meal to worry about! This recipe, with the goat-cheese stuffed artichoke bottoms, is a great option, because you can buy artichoke bottoms all ready to go, either canned or frozen, and all you need to do is stuff them and broil them. Actually, the hardest part of this recipe is not eating all of the prepared stuffed artichokes before you serve the salad! They are so easy to just gobble

down.

The marinated mushrooms make an easy, light and appetizing hors d'oeuvre, and are really fun. Try to find the smallest whole mushrooms you can, otherwise you will probably need to quarter or halve the mushrooms to make them a good appetizer size.

Both of these recipes work well for salads or to serve as stand-alone appetizers. They both can be made ahead of time and stored in the refrigerator. I originally made the marinated mushrooms just as an appetizer, but then decided to throw some on my salad one night and it was fantastic!

## Salad with Goat Cheese-stuffed Artichoke Bottoms\*

(Serves 4)

### INGREDIENTS

- 5 or 6 ounces of baby greens (or the micro greens from Trader Joe's are wonderful in this recipe)
- 16 cherry tomatoes, cut in half (use multiple colors, if you can)
- 8 artichoke bottoms (Napoleon packages them in a can, or you may find them frozen, too)
- 4 ounces goat cheese
- Dressing
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon thyme
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to broil. Place artichoke bottoms in a baking dish. Fill cavities with goat cheese. Place under broiler for a few minutes, just until cheese is turning golden brown. Remove from oven and set aside until ready for dinner. Can be made ahead and refrigerated until ready to serve, but bring back to room temp before serving. Mix vinegar, olive oil, thyme, sea salt and pepper in a container with a tight-fitting lid. Shake well. (Can add a dash of Dijon, if you like a Dijon vinaigrette.) Place a large handful of baby or micro greens on the individual salad plates. Arrange two artichoke bottoms on greens along with halved cherry tomatoes. Drizzle dressing over all.

\*These stuffed artichoke bottoms also make a great hors d'oeuvre; just cut them in halves or quarters and serve with toothpicks.

## Marinated Mushrooms

### INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces white mushrooms (the smaller the size, the better, or else you have to quarter or halve them)
- ½ cup dry white wine
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sea salt (I use the Himalayan pink salt for this recipe)
- 1 sprig-worth of fresh rosemary leaves (stripped from stem)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

### DIRECTIONS

Clean mushrooms and slice off just the very bottom of the stem, leaving most of the stem intact. Dry mushrooms.

In a sauce pan, bring wine, white wine vinegar and Himalayan pink salt to a boil, and boil just for a minute or so, to allow salt to dissolve. Reduce heat and continue to simmer for another 5 minutes or so over low heat. Toss in the mushrooms, and continue to simmer for another 4-5 minutes. Remove from heat and cool completely. Transfer mushrooms along with brine to a container with a lid, and drizzle the olive oil over the top. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Serve as an appetizer using toothpicks.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and [www.taxbites.net](http://www.taxbites.net). Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com).

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## 'Monkey Kingdom'

*A treat for all ages!*

By Derek Zemrak



"Monkey Kingdom" is the latest Disney nature film to be released around Earth Day, April 22. Previous Disney nature films include: "Bears" (2014), "Chimpanzee" (2012) and "African Cats" (2011). "Monkey Kingdom" is a fascinating look inside the social structure of the macaques in Sri Lanka. The documentary follows a newborn monkey, Kip, and his mother, Maya, as they struggle with their kingdom of the "haves and have-nots." You will learn their competitive social hierarchy is much like the world in which we (humans) live.

Overall there is no "monkey business" with filmmakers Mark Linfield and Alastair Fothergill ("Chimpanzee") as they stay true to

Disney's goal for capturing and educating audiences of all ages about the natural world and animal behavior. If you have never ventured out to see one of these beautiful nature films, "Monkey Kingdom" is a good one to start with. Tina Fey delivers an excellent narration, which is an added bonus.

Showing at the Orinda and Rheem theatres, "Monkey Kingdom" is rated "G" and has a TRT (total running time) of 81 minutes.

Come to learn as you enjoy the beautiful cinematography and the cuteness of the monkeys. Plus for the first week of the release, Disney will be donating a portion of the ticket sales to help preserve the monkey kingdom.



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