



Roasted Fennel with Crispy Olives

A Funny Little Root

Have you ever seen fennel at the store? It looks like a plump, pale bulb with feathery hair. My grandson once called it a “celery onion.” I still laugh at that. It has a gentle, sweet taste, like licorice and sunshine mixed together.

Roasting it changes everything. The heat turns it soft and sweet inside. The edges get crispy and golden. It becomes something new and wonderful. That is the magic of a hot oven. What is your favorite vegetable to roast? Mine will always be carrots.

Why We Start with Water

Our first step is a salty water bath. This matters more than you think. The salt water gets into the fennel. It seasons it all the way through. It also helps it steam under the foil later. This makes it tender before we let it get crispy.

We lay the wedges cut-side down. This gives them a flat surface to brown. It's like giving them a good seat in the oven. Then we cover them up tight with foil. This is our little secret for perfect, soft fennel every time.

The Crispy Olive Trick

Now for the fun part: the olives. Oil-cured olives are wrinkly and rich. We are going to make them crunchy! We dry them in the microwave. *Fun fact: This is my favorite kitchen hack. It turns soft olives into salty, crispy bits.*

Watch them as they heat. They will stop sticking together. Let them cool. Then chop them with lemon zest. The lemon wakes up the salty flavor. It makes the topping bright and happy. Doesn't that smell amazing?

The Final Sizzle

After the fennel steams, we take the foil off. This is when the magic happens. We let the heat hit it directly. The side touching the pan gets a beautiful brown crust. We flip each piece carefully. We give the other side a chance to shine.

That crispy edge is the best part. It matters because texture makes

food fun. Soft inside, crunchy outside. It's a party in your mouth. Do you prefer your veggies soft or with a crunch? I love a bit of both.

Putting It All Together

When the fennel is beautifully browned, it's done. Place it on a big plate. Sprinkle those crispy olives all over. Don't forget the pretty green fennel fronds! They add a fresh, herby finish.

This dish feels fancy but is so simple. It teaches us to be patient. Good things take time in the oven. It also shows how one ingredient can change. Sweet fennel, salty olives, bright lemon. They become friends on a plate. What new food combination should I try next? Tell me your ideas.

See also [Midnight Berry Lavender Christmas Cake](#)

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Fennel bulbs	2	bases lightly trimmed, 2 tablespoons fronds chopped coarse, fronds discarded
Water	2 tablespoons	
Kosher salt	1 teaspoon	
Vegetable oil	3 tablespoons	
Pepper	1/4 teaspoon	
Oil-cured black olives	2 tablespoons	coarsely chopped
Lemon zest	1/4 teaspoon	grated



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Instructions

Step 1: First, get your oven ready. Move a rack to the middle and heat it to 450 degrees. Grab a baking sheet with a rim. Give it a quick spray with oil. Now, let's prep the fennel. Cut each bulb into eight wedges. Keep the core! It holds everything together. Whisk water and salt in a big bowl. Toss the fennel wedges in it. This little soak is my secret for tenderness.

Step 2: Drizzle oil and pepper over the wet fennel. Toss it all gently. Place each wedge cut-side down on your sheet. Pour any leftover water from the bowl over them. Cover the whole sheet tightly with foil. Roast for 20 minutes. The steam will cook them softly. What vegetable do you love roasting the most? Share below!

Step 3: Time for the crunchy olives! Put paper towels on a plate. Spread your olives on top. Microwave them in short bursts, stirring each time. They'll get dry and crumbly. Let them cool completely. (Trust me, hot olives will turn into a paste!) Then, sprinkle on the lemon zest. Chop it all together until it's like confetti.

Step 4: Carefully take the foil off the fennel. It will be hot! Let it roast a bit more until the bottoms brown. Flip each wedge to its other cut side. Roast until that side is golden too. The smell is just amazing. Transfer your beautiful fennel to a serving plate. Sprinkle the olive crunch and those pretty green fronds on top. It's ready to share.

Creative Twists

This recipe is a wonderful friend. It loves to play dress-up! Try a sprinkle of parmesan cheese in the last five minutes of roasting. It gets all crispy

and golden. For a little spice, add a pinch of red pepper flakes with the oil. You could also swap the lemon zest for orange zest. It makes the flavor sunny and sweet. Which one would you try first? Comment below!

Serving & Pairing Ideas

This dish makes any meal feel special. I love it next to a simple roast chicken. It's also wonderful tossed into warm pasta. For a pretty plate, scatter some extra fennel fronds on top. To drink, a chilled glass of crisp white wine is lovely. For a non-alcoholic treat, try sparkling water with a slice of lemon. It cuts through the richness perfectly. Which would you choose tonight?

See also [Christmas Bites in a Hurry](#)



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Keeping Your Fennel Fresh and Tasty

Let's talk about storing this lovely dish. It keeps well in the fridge for three days. Just pop it in a sealed container. I don't recommend freezing it, though. The fennel gets too soft and watery.

To reheat, use your oven or toaster oven. Spread the wedges on a sheet. Warm at 350 degrees until hot. This keeps them from getting soggy. The microwave will make them soft.

You can batch-cook the fennel up to step two. Roast it with the foil. Then let it cool and store. Finish the browning steps when you're ready to eat. This saves you time on a busy night.

I once tried to freeze roasted vegetables. They were a mushy mess! Now I only make what we'll eat soon. Batch cooking matters. It gives you a head start on a good meal. **Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!**

Simple Fixes for Common Fennel Fumbles

First, your fennel might not brown. The pan was too crowded. Give each wedge some space. This lets the heat crisp the edges nicely.

Second, the olives might not get crunchy. Do not skip the paper towels. They soak up extra oil. I remember when I rushed this step. My olives were chewy, not crispy.

Third, the dish could taste bland. Be sure to use the salt-water mix. It seasons the fennel all the way through. This step matters for big, full flavor in every bite.

Getting these right builds your cooking confidence. You learn how heat and space work together. **Which of these problems have you run into before?**

Your Quick Questions, Answered

Q: Is this recipe gluten-free?

A: Yes, it is naturally gluten-free. Just check your oil spray label.

Q: Can I make it ahead?

A: You can roast the fennel early. Do the final browning just before serving.

Q: What if I don't have oil-cured olives?

A: Kalamata olives work fine. Pat them very dry with towels.

Q: Can I double the recipe?

A: Yes, but use two baking sheets. Switch their oven racks halfway through.

Q: Any optional tips?

A: A tiny drizzle of honey at the end is nice. It balances the salty olives.

Fun fact: Fennel seeds are often used in Italian sausage! **Which tip will you try first?**

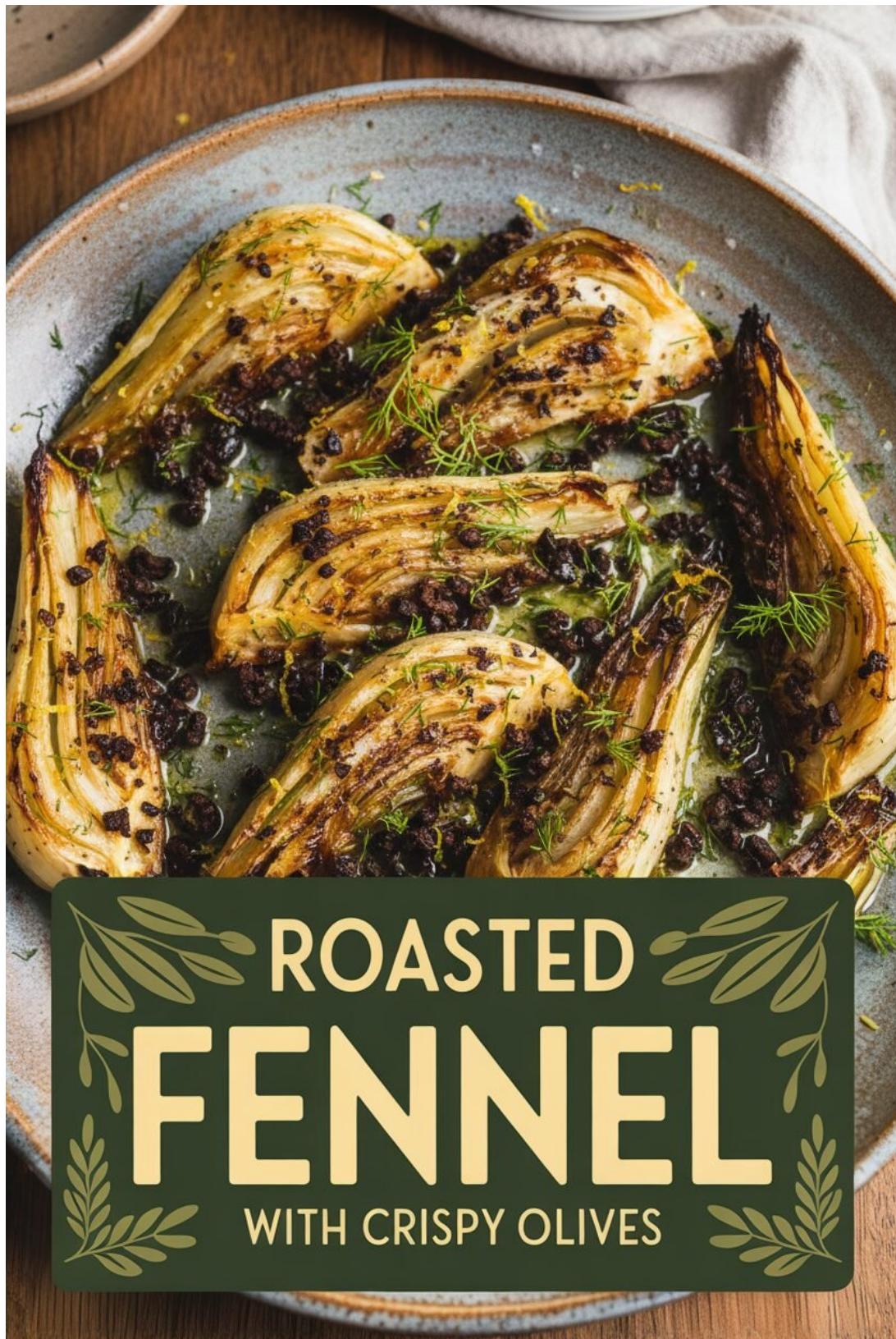
See also Crispy Bacon and Parsley Celery Root Puree

From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope you enjoy this recipe. It turns a simple vegetable into something special. The crispy olives are my favorite part. They add a wonderful salty crunch.

I love hearing from you in my kitchen. Your stories make cooking more fun. Tell me all about your own food adventures. **Have you tried this recipe?** Let me know how it went.

Happy cooking!
—Elowen Thorn.



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Roasted Fennel with Crispy Olives

Author: Elowen Thorn

Cooking Method:[Roasting](#)



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Cuisine: [Mediterranean](#)

Courses:[Side](#)



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Difficulty: **Beginner**

Prep time: **15 minutes**



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Cook time: **36 minutes**

Rest time: **10 minutes**

Total time: **1 hour 1 minute**

Servings: **4 servings**



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Calories: **130 kcal**

Best Season: Summer

Description

Experience the delightful contrast of textures and flavors with this

Roasted Fennel with Crispy Olives, featuring tender roasted fennel and crunchy oil-cured olives.

Ingredients

Fennel: 2 fennel bulbs, bases lightly trimmed, 2 tablespoons fronds chopped coarse, fronds discarded 2 tablespoons water 1 teaspoon kosher salt 3 tablespoons vegetable oil 1/4 teaspoon pepper

Topping: 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped oil-cured black olives 1/4 teaspoon grated lemon zest

Instructions

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Spray rimmed baking sheet with vegetable oil spray.
2. Cut each fennel bulb lengthwise through core into 8 wedges (do not remove core). Whisk water and salt in large bowl until salt is dissolved. Add fennel wedges to bowl and toss gently to coat. Drizzle with oil, sprinkle with pepper, and toss gently to coat. Arrange fennel wedges cut side down along 2 longer sides of prepared sheet. Drizzle any water in bowl evenly over fennel wedges. Cover sheet tightly with aluminum foil and roast for 20 minutes.
3. While fennel roasts, line plate with double layer of paper towels. Spread olives on towels. Microwave, stirring every 30 seconds, until olives start to dry and no longer clump together, 2 1/2 to 3 minutes.

Let cool for 10 minutes. Transfer olives to cutting board, sprinkle with lemon zest, and chop until olives are finely chopped and mixture is homogeneous.

4. Remove foil from sheet and continue to roast until side of fennel touching sheet is browned, 5 to 8 minutes longer, rotating sheet halfway through roasting. Flip each fennel wedge to second cut side. Continue to roast until second side is browned, 3 to 5 minutes longer. Transfer to large plate. Sprinkle with olives and fennel fronds and serve.

Notes

For best results, ensure the fennel wedges are arranged cut-side down on the hot sheet to promote browning. The olives can be crisped ahead of time and stored in an airtight container.

Keywords: Fennel, Olives, Roasted, Side Dish, Vegetarian