



Winter Citrus Salad with Toasted Fennel

A Sunny Bowl for Gray Days

Winter can feel long and gray. I know it does for me. But this salad is like a spoonful of sunshine. It is bright and cheerful. The oranges glow like little suns in your bowl.

Making it always lifts my mood. The smell of citrus fills the whole kitchen. Doesn't that smell amazing? It reminds me that good things grow even in the cold. That is why this matters. Food can change how we feel.

The Fennel Surprise

Now, fennel might seem strange in a fruit salad. I thought so too, the first time. It looks like a pale, round celery. But it has a gentle, sweet taste like licorice.

Toasting it in the dressing is the magic trick. It softens the flavor. It makes the fennel friendly with the oranges. *Fun fact: In old gardens, fennel was called the “meeting seed.” People would chew it during long church services!* Have you ever tried fennel before?

My First Citrus Salad

I learned this from my friend Rosa. She brought it to a snowy potluck. The bowl was empty in minutes. Everyone kept asking for the recipe.

I still laugh at that. We were all so surprised. A salad was the star of the meal! It taught me a good lesson. The simplest dishes are often the most loved. That is why this matters. You do not need fancy things to make people happy.

Putting It All Together

Start with the dressing. Whisk the oil, shallot, and spices in your biggest bowl. Add the thin slices of fennel. Let it sit and get happy together.

Then, prepare your oranges. Cut away all the white peel. Slice the fruit into pretty rounds. This part is messy but fun. What is your favorite type of orange to eat?

A Cheese Like No Other

The recipe calls for ricotta salata. Do not let the name scare you. It is just a firm, mild cheese. It crumbles like a soft, salty snow over the salad.

If you cannot find it, that is okay. A bit of crumbled feta works nicely too. The cheese gives a creamy break from the sweet fruit. It makes every bite more interesting.

Your Turn to Toss

Now for the best part. Gently toss everything in the bowl. Add most of the mint. The green specks make it look so fresh.

Season with a pinch of salt and pepper. Then pile it all on a platter. Sprinkle the last of the mint on top. It is ready. Do you think you will make this for a special dinner, or just for yourself?

See also [Pistachio Apricot Christmas Butter Cookies](#)

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Extra-virgin olive oil	1/4 cup	
Shallot	1, minced	
Table salt	1 teaspoon	plus more for seasoning
Sugar	1 teaspoon	
Lemon zest and juice	1/2 tsp zest plus 2 1/2 tbsp juice	

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Navel, blood, Cara Cara oranges, or mandarins	1½ pounds	plus ½ teaspoon grated orange zest
Ground cumin	½ teaspoon	
Ground cinnamon	¼ teaspoon	
Fennel bulb	1 bulb	stalks discarded, bulb halved, cored, and sliced thin
Ricotta salata	4 ounces	sliced thin
Fresh mint	¼ cup, chopped	divided



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Hello, my dear. Come sit at the table. The winter sun is so pale, isn't it? We need a little sunshine on our plates. This salad does just that. It's like eating a bright, cheerful morning. I learned it from a friend many winters ago. I still make it when the days feel short.

It mixes sweet oranges with a surprising, cozy spice. The fennel gets so friendly when it sits in the dressing. Doesn't that smell amazing? It's a hug in a bowl. Let me show you how we make our sunshine.

Step 1: First, let's make the magic dressing. Grab your biggest bowl. Whisk the olive oil and minced shallot together. Then add the salt, sugar, and all those zests and spices. The cumin and cinnamon make it smell like a holiday. It's a warm, toasty scent. (My hard-learned tip: zest your citrus before you juice it. It's much easier on your fingers!) Give it a good whisk until it's all happy together.

Step 2: Now, take your sliced fennel. Toss it right into that spiced dressing. This lets the fennel soften and soak up all the flavor. It loses its sharp bite. It becomes sweet and mellow. I think it's the best part. Set this aside while you prepare the oranges. The waiting is part of the magic.

Step 3: Time for the oranges. Carefully cut away all the white peel and pith. We want just the juicy fruit. Then slice them into pretty, round wheels. See how the juice glistens? **Which citrus is your favorite to eat? Share below!** Add these orange wheels to the bowl. Be gentle when you toss. We don't want to crush our sunshine.

Step 4: Finally, add the thin slices of ricotta salata cheese. It's a salty,

crumbly cheese. Sprinkle in half of your fresh mint. Give everything one last, very gentle toss. Taste it. Does it need a pinch more salt or pepper? Now, lay it all out on a nice platter. Top it with the rest of the mint. It's ready to bring light to your table.

See also [Frosted Apple Raspberry Winter Crisp](#)

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Yield: 4-6 servings

Category: Salad, Side Dish

Three Bright Twists to Try

This salad loves to play dress-up. You can change its outfit for any occasion. Here are three ways I like to tweak it. They are all simple and full of character.

The Nutty Crunch: Toast a handful of almonds or pistachios. Sprinkle them on top just before serving. The crunch is wonderful.

The Green Goddess: Add a big handful of peppery arugula. Toss it in with the oranges. It makes a fuller, greener meal.

The Sweet & Savory: Dot the top with a few pomegranate seeds or dried cranberries. Their little bursts of tartness are a delight.

Which one would you try first? Comment below!

Serving Your Sunshine Salad

This salad is a wonderful friend to other foods. I love it next to simple roasted chicken. The juices mingle so nicely. It's also perfect with a

bowl of lentil soup. The bright salad cuts through the soup's richness. For a pretty plate, lay the orange rounds in a circle. Pile the fennel in the center.

For a drink, a glass of crisp white wine is lovely. For a treat without alcohol, try sparkling water with a slice of blood orange. It echoes the flavors on your plate. **Which would you choose tonight?**



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Keeping Your Citrus Salad Bright and Fresh

This salad is best eaten the day you make it. But I know life gets busy. If you must store it, keep the dressing separate. Toss everything together just before serving. This keeps the fennel crisp and the mint perky.

You can slice the fennel and make the dressing a day ahead. Store them in separate containers in the fridge. The oranges can be peeled and sliced a few hours early. I once mixed it all the night before. The salad was a bit sad and soggy the next day.

Storing parts separately matters. It saves you time on a busy day. You still get that wonderful, fresh crunch. **Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!**

Simple Fixes for Common Salad Hiccups

Is your salad too sharp? The shallot might be the culprit. Soak the minced shallot in the lemon juice for five minutes. This softens its bite beautifully. I remember when my first bite was all onion!

See also [Ultimate Thick and Chewy Gingerbread Gems](#)

Finding ricotta salata can be tricky. Feta cheese is a fine swap. Use a mild, creamy feta and crumble it gently. This matters because cooking should be flexible, not frustrating.

Is your fennel hard to slice thin? Use a sharp knife or a mandoline. Thin slices mean better flavor in every bite. Getting the texture right builds

your kitchen confidence. **Which of these problems have you run into before?**

Your Quick Questions, Answered

Q: Is this salad gluten-free? A: Yes, all the ingredients are naturally gluten-free.

Q: Can I make it ahead? A: Prep parts separately, then combine them right before eating.

Q: What can I use instead of ricotta salata? A: Try crumbled feta or even shaved Parmesan cheese.

Q: Can I double the recipe? A: Absolutely! Just use a much bigger bowl for tossing.

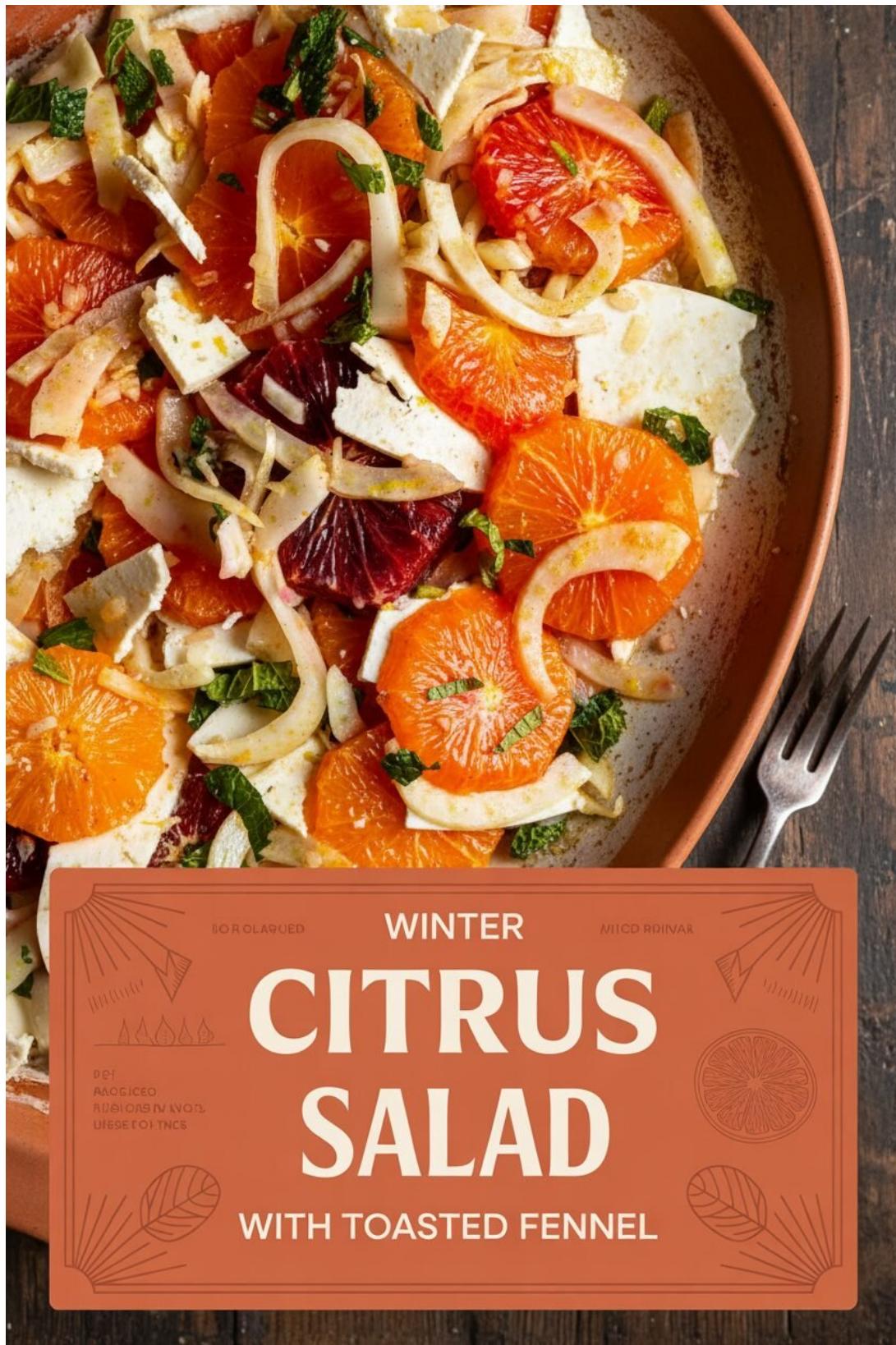
Q: Any optional add-ins? A: A handful of pomegranate seeds adds a lovely, juicy pop. *Fun fact: fennel seeds and the fennel bulb are from the same plant!* **Which tip will you try first?**

From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope this salad brings a little sunshine to your table. It always reminds me of my winter garden. The bright colors just make everyone smile.

I would love to see your creation. Sharing food is one of life's great joys. **Have you tried this recipe? Tag us on Pinterest!** Use our handle @Savorydiscovery.

Happy cooking! —Elowen Thorn.



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Winter Citrus Salad with Toasted Fennel

Author: Elowen Thorn



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Cooking Method:[No-Cook](#)

Cuisine: [Mediterranean](#)



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Courses:[Lunch Side Salad](#)

Difficulty: **Beginner**



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Prep time: **20 minutes**

Cook time: **minutes**

Rest time:

Total time: **20 minutes**



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Servings: **4 servings**



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Calories: **280 kcal**

Best Season: **Summer**

Description

A vibrant and refreshing salad featuring sweet citrus, aromatic toasted

fennel, and salty ricotta salata, all brought together with a spiced citrus dressing.

Ingredients

- ▢ $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ▢ 1 shallot, minced
- ▢ 1 teaspoon table salt
- ▢ 1 teaspoon sugar
- ▢ $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon grated lemon zest plus $2\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons juice
- ▢ $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds navel oranges, blood oranges, Cara Cara oranges, mandarins, or a combination, plus $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon grated orange zest
- ▢ $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cumin
- ▢ $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ▢ 1 fennel bulb, stalks discarded, bulb halved, cored, and sliced thin crosswise
- ▢ 4 ounces ricotta salata, sliced thin
- ▢ $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh mint, divided

Instructions

1. Whisk oil, shallot, salt, sugar, lemon zest and juice, orange zest, cumin, and cinnamon together in large bowl. Add fennel and toss to combine; set aside.
2. Cut away peel and pith from oranges, then slice fruit crosswise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick rounds. Add oranges, ricotta salata, and 2 tablespoons mint to bowl with fennel and toss gently to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. Transfer to serving platter and sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons mint. Serve.

Notes

For a variation, try substituting the ricotta salata with crumbled feta or goat cheese.

Keywords: Citrus, Fennel, Orange, Salad, Winter, Mint