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Leafy Green Salad with Lemon-Basil Goat Cheese

Serves 4

In this salad, I've combined the salad greens with a goat cheese appetizer that a friend, Hilary Noyes-Keene once brought to a party. The goat cheese was topped with lemon zest, garlic, and fresh herbs. Farm-fresh greens or arugula will taste best here. Serve this salad with a sliced, freshly baked baguette or a loaf of country-style bread for spreading the cheese.

6 to 8 ounces of your favorite goat cheese
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
1/2 teaspoon finely minced garlic
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper
6 to 8 cups arugula or mixed baby greens, washed and dried
4 to 6 fresh basil leaves
1 baguette or loaf of country-style bread, sliced

BALSALMIC VINAIGRETTE
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
5 to 6 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper

1. Using either a mold or your hands, gently form the goat cheese into 4 disks measuring approximately 2-inches wide by 1/3 to 1/2-inch thick. In a small bowl, mix the lemon zest, garlic, oil and pinch of salt. Place the rounds of cheese on a plate, season with freshly ground pepper and evenly pour the mixture over them. Cover plate and refrigerate until ready to serve.
2. To make the dressing, in a small bowl, whisk together the balsamic vinegar and oil; season with salt and pepper.
3. Place arugula or greens in a bowl and add the desired amount of dressing; mix well. Divide the greens among 4 salad plates. Top each serving with a disk of the goat cheese, including the mixture they marinated in. Sliver the basil and sprinkle over the goat cheese. Place a few slices of baguette on each plate.