



Mangia Bene E Vivi Bene!

By FRANK ZEOLI



Utica Greens is a central New York classic with escarole, cherry peppers, prosciutto, cheese, and seasoned breadcrumbs which are baked until golden. The key is the combination of bitter escarole, salty prosciutto, Parmesan cheese, and vinegary cherry peppers. Don't skimp on the peppers. They're what give Utica Greens its distinctive bite. This makes a great side dish or snack.

Utica Greens

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES | COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

- 2-3 large heads of escarole (washed thoroughly and roughly chopped)
- ¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil
- 4-5 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 oz prosciutto, diced or thinly sliced
- ½ cup hot or sweet cherry peppers (sliced, plus 1-2 tablespoons pepper juice)
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup Italian-seasoned breadcrumbs
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper (to taste)
- Pinch of red pepper flakes, optional



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the escarole and cook for about 5-7 minutes, until tender. Drain very well, pressing out excess water.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add the prosciutto and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for about 1 minute, being careful not to let it brown.
3. Stir in the cherry peppers and their juice. Add the drained escarole and toss everything together, and cook for about 5 minutes.
4. Stir in about half of the Parmesan cheese. Taste before adding salt; the prosciutto and cheese are already salty. Add black pepper and red pepper flakes for extra heat.
5. Transfer the escarole to a baking dish. Combine the breadcrumbs with the remaining cheese and sprinkle generously over the greens.
6. Bake in a 400°F oven for 10-15 minutes, until the top is golden brown and crisp.



Serve hot with plenty of crusty Italian bread.



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