2013: Spinach, Apple, and Bacon Salad

This classic fall salad—a slight variation on 2011's Bosc Pear Salad—features crisp, local North Central Washington apples—the finest apples in the world!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Yield: 12 servings

INGREDIENTS:

6 ounces bacon, coarsely chopped (for best results, use natural pork apple wood bacon from Wenatchee's Mike's Meat and Farmers Market (http://mmfm.biz/)
3 small shallots, minced
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 ½ tablespoons sherry vinegar
1 ½ teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 ½ teaspoons finely chopped fresh thyme leaves
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
15 ounces baby spinach leaves, washed well and dried thoroughly
3 crisp apples Washington apples (e.g., Fuji, Honey Crisp, or Cameo), cored and thinly sliced
6 ounces fresh, mild goat cheese, crumbled

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a small frying pan over medium-high heat, cook bacon, stirring often, until crisp. Transfer to a paper towel to drain.

2. Discard all but 1 ½ tablespoons fat from pan. Add shallots and stir over medium-high heat until soft, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat and whisk in oil, vinegar, mustard, and thyme. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Put spinach and sliced apples in a large bowl and gently toss with dressing. Arrange salad on plates. Crumble goat cheese on top and sprinkle with bacon.

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