



Crab Salad Cocktail with Mango Vinaigrette

Makes 4 first-course servings

Mango salsa is a long-time summer favorite that takes me back to my summers at the Jersey shore. Since then, the addition of black beans (a la Bobby Flay) and my expanded repertoire of vibrant-fruited wines have completely changed my love for the versatility of the flavors in this the salsa. Here I use those flavors to make vinaigrette that complement the crab in this dish. Note that most salsa recipes call for red onion, which can create a bitter taste reaction with wine. When wine is paired with this dish, substitute shallots instead.

Ingredients:

For Mango Vinaigrette:

Makes about 1/3 cup

2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 cup fresh orange juice

2 teaspoons minced jalapeno, from 1 small chile stemmed and seeded

1 ripe mango, pitted, peeled; one half coarsely chopped, the other half finely diced

1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped

2 large shallots, minced

1 clove garlic, peeled and smashed

Up to 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil (can substitute vegetable or canola oil)

1 cup black beans, drained and rinsed

Sea Salt

For Crab

2 cups jumbo lump crab meat, picked over

1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro

1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin, mild olive oil

1/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste

1 package fresh watercress (about 10 ounces)

1 fresh Belgian endive, outer leaves removed and sliced horizontally in 1/2" strips

Preparation:

For Mango Vinaigrette

Place the lime juice in a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat. Add in the fresh lemon juice and fresh orange juice, stirring to combine. Simmer the juices until the liquid is reduced by two-thirds.

In a blender, combine the large mango pieces and the reduced citrus juices until smooth. With the blender running, slowly add the olive oil in a thin stream until a smooth, emulsified vinaigrette is created. Remove to a non-reactive bowl.

Fold in the minced mango, cilantro, jalapeno and shallots. Add the smashed garlic and allow to infuse for about 30 minutes to an hour. Remove before using vinaigrette.

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For Crab

In a large, non-reactive bowl, toss crabmeat with cilantro, oil, and salt.

Service:

In a large bowl, combine the watercress and endive. Lightly dress the lettuce with a small amount of the vinaigrette. Add in the black beans and gently toss to coat the beans and incorporate into the lettuces, judiciously adding additional vinaigrette as needed.

Place some of the dressed salad greens into a pita pocket, or flat bread. Mound the crab salad on top of the dressed greens. Add a drizzle of the remaining mango vinaigrette.

Alternatively, layer the dressed greens and the crab salad in a small shallow serving bowl. Lightly drizzle with remaining vinaigrette. Serve with corn tortilla chips (with lime, works well too), or pita or other flat breads. Garnish with mango slices and cilantro.

Chef's notes:

Vinaigrette can be made up to 8-hours in advance, covered and stored in a non-reactive container in the refrigerator. Remove garlic after infusion. Whisk to re-emulsify ingredients before using, if necessary. For best flavor, allow the vinaigrette to come to room temperature before serving, as chilling the dressing can mute the flavors. The dressing can also be served warm.

Crabmeat can be picked over 1 day ahead and crab mixture can be prepared up to 4 hours before serving. Cover bowl and chill in the coldest part of the refrigerator. Allow to come to room temperature. Gently re-toss the mixture before using.

Wine Recommendation: trying pairing with a crisp Sauvignon Blanc

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